

# QUEBEC HERITAGE NEWS

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## HEROES AND HEROINES



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## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### STICK TO THE HISTORY PART

For a group that should be neutral and promoting anglo heritage, the following segment from your website is inappropriate.

*"Having survived Law 101, the exodus of kin, declining enrolment in their schools, workplace discrimination and the abiding contempt of hardline nationalists for more than three decades, English-speaking Quebecers now seem poised to attract an unprecedented wave of academic interest."*

Stick to the history part and keep the biased comments to yourself. Not all anglos necessarily agree with you and it would be nice if anglo sites focused on our contributions to Quebec and our openness to French culture rather than falling into the typical anglo complaining mode.

**Heather Kirk, Montreal**

### Dear Heather,

Thank you for your interest in the Quebec Anglophone Heritage Network (QAHN). The words you object to came from an article that I wrote for the March-April 2005 issue of Quebec Heritage News, QAHN's bimonthly history magazine, and which was subsequently posted on QAHN's administrative website, [www.qahn.org](http://www.qahn.org). You are quite right to say that QAHN's main object is to promote appreciation for Quebec's anglophone heritage but wrong, in my estimation, to imply that this should or even could disqualify writers who contribute to the magazine from expressing some sort of bias. Besides, ignoring or denying that discriminatory language laws and depopulation concern English-speaking Quebecers would be patently unhistorical.

I happen to share your view that English-speaking Quebecers have much to celebrate about living in a vibrant French-speaking society, but I also believe that promoting heritage

involves much more than saving old buildings, remembering wars and combing names from gravestones: it requires a state of mind alert to present-day risks as well as opportunities for advancing knowledge. For instance, I have personally argued for and continue to maintain that Quebec Heritage News, in addition to providing a forum for sharing stories about our past, should strive to attract curious and engaged readers like yourself by developing new content that probes the roots of Quebec's lively French cultural scene – clearly not the sort of content that sticks very well to history.

**Dwane Wilkin**  
Interim executive director, QAHN

### ORGAN DONOR LOOKING FOR HOME

I would like to enquire as to whether or not a museum or other heritage organization in your province would be interested in the donation of an historic musical artifact from Quebec.

We have an antique pump organ built by the Smith Organ Company of Brome, in the Eastern Townships. It has seen better days and requires repair, but it is still a lovely item, and at one time, played quite well. Due to an upcoming move into an apartment, we will not be able to keep the organ, and would like to see it return to its place of origin.

As mentioned, it will require some skilled work to repair damage caused by years of storage, but perhaps there is a local artisan who would enjoy working with it. If you are interested in it, please let me know as soon as possible. We will be moving within a few weeks, and must make arrangements accordingly.

**Kathryn Baker, Ottawa**  
613 247-1038 or [kr.baker@rogers.com](mailto:kr.baker@rogers.com)

## PUBLISHER'S MESSAGE

### Heritage at risk

## Instead of me saying 'I'll see what I can do'...

Those of you who attended this year's AGM in St-Constant seem to have been enthusiastic about QAHN's initiative on Heritage at Risk. Those who weren't able to come will surely approve. QAHN's aim is to establish procedures for dealing with buildings, sites or other places that are in jeopardy. In the past, QAHN has spoken out about such issues, sent letters of support to local campaigns, and publicized the historical importance of these sites, but no systematic procedure has ever been drawn up. QAHN should lend its weight to any attempt to preserve heritage, at least as a service to members and certainly because, as a heritage organization, it has a moral obligation to do so. Moreover, as a provincial body, QAHN should have a voice that people listen to and take seriously. (We're not quite a household word yet, but we're on our way.) The trick, of course, is to get beyond "should" and plunge headlong into "this is how."

What got this particular ball rolling was a call I received last winter from Bev Loomis, who is prominent in the Little Forks UEL and one of the wizards behind the restored Hyatt school house project in Milby, south of Lennoxville. The "Hyatt" in the school house's name is the same as the one that used to be on a section of Highway 143 running through Milby, the "chemin Gilbert Hyatt." If you don't know who Gilbert Hyatt was, you are in very interesting company, namely most of the members of the Waterville municipal council (Waterville is now the MRC in which Milby currently finds itself) who decided last year to remove the name Gilbert Hyatt from all Route 143

signs, claiming that the additional information was irrelevant. Mrs Loomis's plea to me was for QAHN to do what it could to protest this change. I proceeded to write a letter to the Waterville council stating, on behalf of a provincial heritage organization, my deep concern for their failure to preserve a piece of our heritage. I also sent a letter to the *Montreal Gazette* and *Sherbrooke Record* arguing that heritage preservation is not just about buildings, that every time a significant name disappears from public view we lose a connection with history.

Now, I don't know if my interventions did any good, although I am delighted to report that the provincial Toponymie commission has ruled that the name Gilbert Hyatt should be restored to the appropriate signs. Again, of course, we are dealing with "should." Will the municipality comply, especially given that it has the advantage of inaction on its side? We shall see. If not, Mrs Loomis has one significant recourse, namely (I love this) the Office de la Langue Française, which of course deals in matters of signage and, I gather, upholds the rulings of the Toponymie commission. This may be an interesting case to follow! In any event, QAHN's Heritage at Risk procedure marks a major improvement in the services the network provides. Instead of me saying "I'll see what I can do," you will find an office full of helpful information regarding legalities and precedents and a committee ready to go to bat for your cause. I like to see us being useful! And if you really don't know who Gilbert Hyatt was - well, you'd better get busy!

— Rod MacLeod

Do you know of an important heritage site in your community that lacks protection? Are town councillors and your provincial Member of the National Assembly doing everything in their power to keep it safe? If not, the Quebec Anglophone Heritage Network (QAHN) can help. QAHN's board of directors has voted unanimously to support individuals and groups seeking

official recognition for historical landmarks and local heritage sites. We believe public officials have a moral obligation to protect this heritage. Together we can hold them to the task.

Here's what you can do: Identify endangered heritage in your community and tell us about it by filling out our Heritage Alert form. This will help us determine how QAHN should best respond. For instance, designated heritage sites in Quebec are listed in the Register of Cultural Properties. We can help prepare written citation requests and send letters of support to politicians. We can solicit advice from other QAHN members and friends who may have had similar experiences trying to preserve heritage in their own communities. And we can raise public awareness by sharing your story with local news media.

So what are you waiting for? Let's save a piece of history today!

— Dwane Wilkin

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THE QUEBEC ANGLOPHONE HERITAGE NETWORK

PRESIDENT RODERICK MACLEOD

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR VALÉRIE BRIDGER

INTERIM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR DWANE WILKIN

QUEBEC HERITAGE NEWS EDITOR CHARLES BURY

HERITAGE PORTAL COORDINATOR MATTHEW FARFAN

OFFICE ASSISTANT KATHY TEASDALE

400-257 QUEEN STREET, LENNOXVILLE QUEBEC JIM 1K7

1-877-964-0409, (819) 564-9595, FAX 564-6872

HOME@QAHN.ORG; WWW.QAHN.ORG

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# HEROES AND HEROINES

She married a Prussian prince, joined in U.S. and Mexican wars

## Colourful 'American' heroine was MADE IN CANADA

By Karen Ingalls

Missisquoi Historical Society

Missisquoi County's history is full of courageous, adventurous and colourful individuals but, perhaps none with quite as unique a story as one Eliza Agnes Joy.

Though she was born in the small rural community of St. Armand West, Quebec, Christmas Day 1840, her vivacious spirit and lust for life and adventure would soon take her to the Americas, Cuba, Mexico and Europe.

Leaving home at 16, she joined a travelling circus and became their star bareback horse rider-under the name Agnes Le Clerq. Her travels took her to Havana, Cuba where she lived for several years-changing her profession, once again, to that of an actress.

In 1861, when visiting her sister, Hannah Delilah Joy Johnston in Washington, D.C., the French "Mademoiselle



### SOLDIER PRINCESS



*The Life  
& Legend  
of Agnes  
Salm-Salm  
in North  
America,  
1861-1867*



DAVID COFFEY

Agnes Le Clerq" made the tour of the many parties and receptions brought about in the Capital by the Civil War.

It was at one of these gatherings that she met her soon-to-be husband, the tall, dark and handsome Felix zu Salm-Salm, Prussian Prince of the Holy Roman Empire. The prince was smitten immediately, not only by Agnes's sultry dark eyes and curvaceous petite figure but also by her natural charm, quick wit and indescribable magnetism. Though she had this effect on all the men, she only had eyes for the dashing Prince Salm-Salm. Shortly thereafter, they were married on August 30, 1862.

A soldier by profession, the Prince took leadership roles in the battles at Chattanooga and Nashville. On the same battlefields, his darling wife, Princess Salm-Salm who, with her trusty terrier, Jimmy, rode among the wounded, dead and dying soldiers, offering them first aid assistance when possible. The soldiers referred to her as their soldier princess. Princess Salm-Salm was granted a captain's

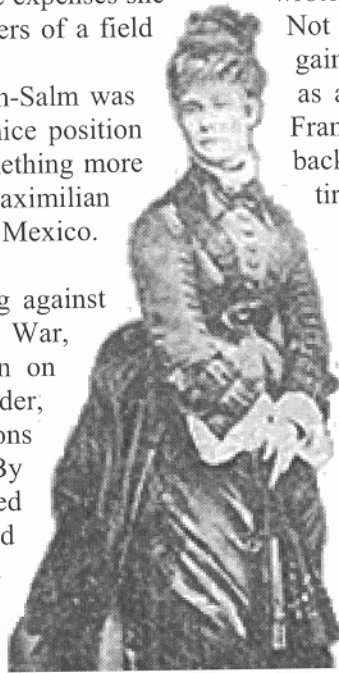
commission and a captain's pay to repay the expenses she incurred in buying provisions for the soldiers of a field hospital in Tennessee.

At the end of the war in 1865 Prince Salm-Salm was appointed military governor of Atlanta—a nice position but the Prince and Princess longed for something more adventurous. Luckily for them, Emperor Maximilian was embroiled in a bloody revolution in Mexico. The Salm-Salms were on their way!

Unfortunately, global events were working against them. With the end of the American Civil War, Washington was re-evaluating its position on the European presence south of the border; Napoleon was strapped for funds and relations with Prussia were fast deteriorating. By March 1866 the French Emperor had thinned out his expeditionary force of 28,000 and left Maximilian with next to no militia and 60,000 Mexican guerrillas outside the walls of Mexico City, where Maximilian was holed-up.

It was a desperate situation, which ended with Maximilian and the Prince being imprisoned by the Mexican President Juárez. A famous painting by Manuel Ocaranza depicts Princess Salm-Salm's melodramatic meeting with Juárez. Despite the courageous efforts of Princess Salm-Salm to gain the freedom of these two men, only her husband was released. Maximilian awarded Agnes the Order of San Carlos for her attempts on his behalf. He was executed at sunrise on June 19, 1867. Agnes returned to New York where she was declared a heroine and received "an immense quantity of bouquets".

Together they returned to Westphalia, Prussia only to be pursued by the Prince's creditors. After being bailed out of debtors' prison by his friends, the couple, taking the name von Stein, settled in Lake Constance, Switzerland and



wrote their Mexican memoirs.

Not content with his new profession, the Prince gained employment with Queen Augusta's Guards as a major. In 1870, when war broke out between France and Prussia, the Prince and Princess were back on the battlefields, in their element. She worked tirelessly in the field hospitals; such as they were at the time. Not even with news of the death of her husband on the battlefield at Gravelotte, did she take time to mourn. A veteran of countless battles, highly revered and decorated, now, at thirty years of age, the Princess was a widow.

Her partial memoirs, *Ten Years of My Life*, were published in 1875 in Germany, England, the United States and Canada. She remarried (Charles Heneage) but soon drifted apart from him and settled in Bonn, Germany and later to Karlsruhe, where she passed away in 1912.

Interestingly enough, there are several locations in the U.S. which claim that Princess Salm-Salm was born an American citizen and was an American heroine. Franklin, Vermont for example maintains that she was born there on December 25, 1844. "Soldier Princess" by David Coffey claims that she had an "unknown past". However, in the 1851 St. Armand West, Quebec census, she is listed with her family; father William Joy (Harness Maker) born in the United States, mother Julia (Willard) born in Canada, sister Sarah A., born in the United States, brother George I., born in the United States, then Eliza A., born in Canada, followed by Jane M., Emily A., Hannah D., Henry W. and Julia all born in Canada. At the time of her death, her nephew Felix Salm-Salm Johnson stated that the Princess's last wish was to be buried in the family plot in Philipsburg QC. Unfortunately, our Princess was buried in Germany and never returned to her humble beginnings.

1851 St. Armand West Census.

PERSONAL CENSUS — ENUMERATION DISTRICT, No. one Parish.					
Names of Inmates.	Profession, Trade or Occupation.	Place of Birth.	Religion.	Residence if out of limits.	Age next birth day.
1	2	3	4	5	6
William Joy	Harness maker	United States	Presbyterian		59
Julia Joy		Canada	"		36
Sarah A. Joy		United States	"		17
George I. Joy		"	"		15
Eliza A. Joy		Canada	B		14
Jane M. Joy		"	B		10
Emily A. Joy		"	B		9
Hannah D. Joy		"	B		7
Henry W. Joy		"	B		4
Julia Joy		"	B		1

## HEROES AND HEROINES

William Bennett Best: His courage saved hundreds

# Snubbed by history, Quebec railway man has intrepid ally

By Dwane Wilkin

Two scrapbooks salvaged from the junk heap have launched a Quebec man on a personal crusade to honour a forgotten Canadian hero.

Jim Belknap, a self-described history buff and part-time genealogist from Dixville in the Eastern Townships, says he's downright steamed by Canada's indifference toward William Bennett Best. "Compared to a lot of people who get honoured, I think he's a hero," Belknap said. "He saved the lives of 500 people. He was a Canadian and a Quebecker."

A native of Lennoxville, Best was working as an engineer on an American railroad when he was hurled to fame in 1894 for his part in a daring train rescue in the northern Minnesota town of Hinckley (See opposite). Against the protests of some of his colleagues, Best held his engine in the middle of a raging forest fire so that townspeople could squeeze aboard the train and escape to safety.

Best later returned to Canada where he rose to prominence in Winnipeg as a trade-union leader, serving as General Chairman of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers. He moved back to Quebec when he retired, living in Coaticook until his death in 1934.

Descendants of people Best saved from the so-called Great Hinckley Fire have not forgotten his name. The northern Minnesota town has a museum that tells about the fire and the brave deeds of Best and his fellow trainmen. There's even a street named after him. But in Canada he is virtually unknown.

Belknap himself never heard of Best until he stumbled onto a pair of tattered ledger books while cleaning out an elderly woman's attic in Coaticook in the late 1990s.

"It's a wonder that all this stuff didn't get pitched before," Belknap said,



carefully leafing through page after page of newspaper clippings, railroad passes, photographs and personal mementos dating from the 1890s to the 1930s.

After years of research, Belknap suspects that Best's notoriety as a union leader probably overshadowed his role at the throttle of the Minnesota mercy train.

### Railwaymen as humans

What we are working for," Best told a Winnipeg newspaper in the early 1900s, "is the recognition of the fact that railwaymen are humans, that they require rest, sleep and a chance to

eat like other people, and we are going to keep on demanding it until we get it."

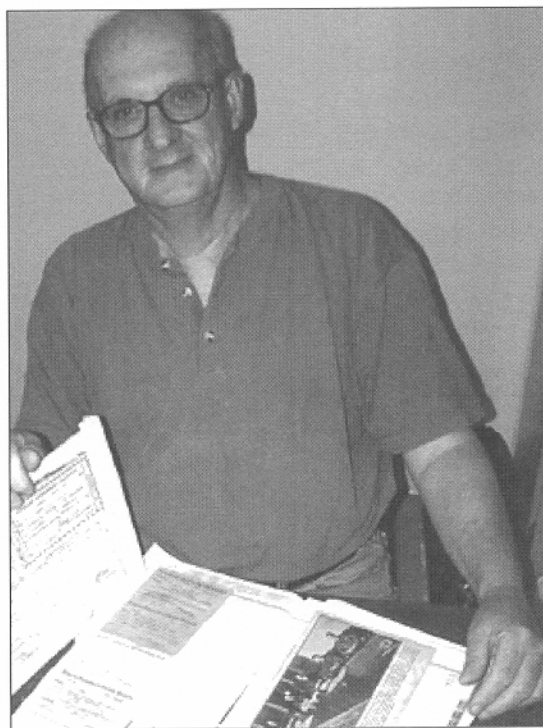
Correspondence found in his papers suggests that Best was a friend and admirer of American Socialist Party leader and presidential candidate Eugene Debs, who began his political career with the U.S. Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen.

Belknap has tried in vain for years to gain some sort of official recognition for Best. In 2000, Canada's Historical Sites and Monuments Board turned down his request to have a commemorative plaque erected in his honour for lack of evidence that his actions made any lasting contribution to Canadian history.

The Quebec Anglophone Heritage Network recently took up Belknap's cause by asking the City of Sherbrooke to honour Best by naming a street after him or by erecting a suitable marker in the city's Lennoxville borough.

As for the scrapbooks, Belknap believes they're of important historical value and he's determined to hang onto them until he's satisfied that Best's story won't end up locked away in an attic for another fifty years.

"If I can get recognition for him," Belknap said, "I'll turn over all this stuff to the Railway Museum."



# Mercy train saved 500 from Minnesota forest blaze

*The following is an abridged account of the Hinckley Fire rescue based on the book, From the Ashes (1979), written by Grace Stageberg Swenson, with extracts from printed sources in the collection of the Minnesota Historical Society.*

**W**illiam Best pulled Passenger Train No. 4 out of Duluth, Minnesota around one o'clock on the afternoon of September 1, 1894, hauling two parlour cars, two day coaches and a combination smoking car and coal car on the daily run south to the state capital, St. Paul. Engineer Best, a native of Lennoxville, Que. left Canada as a young man years previous hoping to strike it rich in the California gold fields. After a short stint as a miner he'd joined the railroad, quickly rising through the ranks during the industry's great westward expansion.

Duluth-to-St. Paul was a fast train on the Eastern Minnesota Railway line that normally made the 185-mile trip in six hours. But on this day the woods were filled with a smoky haze from summer fires. Best's engine headlight and cab lamps lit a path through the gloom. As the crew approached the village of Sandstone north of Hinckley, smoke began to thicken ominously. Just after 3 p.m. Best eased his trainload of 100 passengers across a narrow 115-foot high, 1,600-foot long wooden trestle spanning the Kettle River and crept into Hinckley 20 minutes later just as flames began to sweep into the town's south end.

Best's crew did its usual switching and moved to the water tank in the freight yard. Fireman George Ford managed to get water aboard but was driven away from the spout three times. But by the time Best had backed away from the tank, the freight station, boxcars and railroad ties were ablaze and it was evident the train could proceed no further southward.

The crew of a returning northbound freight train on the same line had waited nervously on the side-tracks for Best's arrival, since in those days passenger trains had the right-of-way. Engineer Edward Barry, at the controls of train No. 24, had reached Hinckley 45 minutes earlier to find the local fire department battling in vain to keep the flames from spreading throughout the settlement.

The heat was so intense that neither engineer could get onto the turntable to reverse their engines. The crews conferred hurriedly, decided to couple their trains and beat a hasty retreat, taking with them as many townspeople as possible. According to company rules, when trains were coupled and two crews were on duty, the conductor of senior rank was to assume charge. In this case, responsibility fell to Best's own car conductor, Henry Powers.

Conductor Powers ordered the Barry's freight engine to connect to three empty boxcars and couple to the end of the passenger train. Barry's engine was first, followed by his coal car, three boxcars, a caboose, the passenger cars, another coal car and Best's engine at the end. Both engines were in reverse, Barry's engine pulling at the front and Best's engine pushing and applying air brakes from the rear.

Now came the mad rush for life. Frenzied Hinckley residents swarmed the depot on foot and wagon from all directions to board the rescue train as wind-whipped flames devoured houses, shops and mills. Trainmen crammed people into coaches and boxcars as fast as they could, but with every passing minute fire

drew closer. A dispute arose between the engineers as to how long they could safely stay.

At one point, two sharp blasts came from Engineer Barry's whistle to signal that he was leaving. Cars began to lurch forward as ever more townspeople rushed aboard.

The next few minutes proved crucial ones that would test the extreme limits

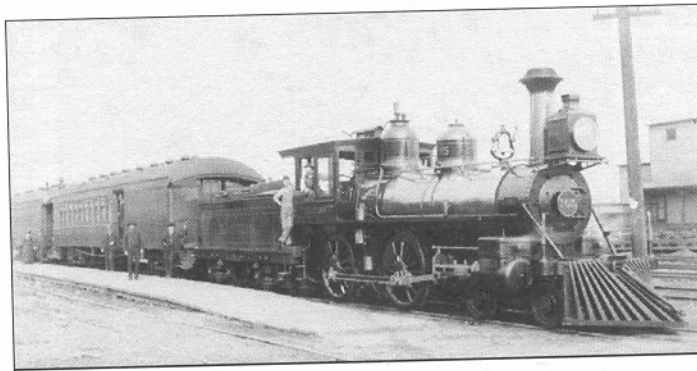
of Best's resolve. He and Conductor Powers both felt the train should be held a few minutes longer, so Best jumped in his engine at the rear and applied the air brakes.

Some of the passengers pleaded to go. Engineer Barry whistled again, threatening to pull the pin and pull out alone, but Best kept a firm grip on the brakes, later stating in his report that, "I would not let them off until we had used up all the time we could. It was the hardest place I ever stood in. I was thinking, what if I should lose the train after all?" About 350 refugees were able to escape the doomed town because of Best's cool-headed fortitude. Forty more were picked up on the other side of a nearby river.

At last even Best could hold out no longer and the train began its retreat. "I will never forget," he afterward related, "the poor people running and falling in the street and with cattle with them, calling out, 'For God sake, hold the train.'"

It would be many miles before the retreating train emerged safely from the smoke and heat of the blaze and not until the trainmen had faced further dangers along the fiery route. By the time the combined train had reached Sandstone, the lower timbers of the Kettle River Bridge were already burning. Conductors from both crews recommended against crossing, but Best and Barry overruled them. A wise decision, it turned out, since Sandstone was completely burned within an hour.

The heavy train lumbered across the flaming structure, reaching the other side just minutes before the supports collapsed.



**Above and on the cover: Lennoxville hero William Best at the controls of his Eastern Minnesota RR locomotive**

## HEROES AND HEROINES

Hirsch Zvi Wolofsky, 1876-1949

### Polish immigrant helped make Montreal a better place

**W**e often view as heroes and heroines people who responded quickly in an unexpected situation, but heroes can also be people with a vision of a better world who give themselves over to realizing it. Hirsch Wolofsky is one such hero.

Born a Jew in a small town in Poland, Hirsch Wolofsky was not entitled to a public education, but learned in the customary way from the rabbi and the religious teachers. Having no academic options, he still learned to read Hebrew and Yiddish and dreamed of working in those languages. He and his wife Sarah arrived in Montreal in 1900, pushed out of their native Poland by persecutions after the assassination of Czar Alexander II. Discovering his health would not stand up to factory work, the usual employment of the recent immigrant, he established himself in a small fruit and vegetable store on St. Lawrence between St. Catherine and Ontario streets. He abandoned his dreams of letters and resigned himself to the life of a merchant. Two unforeseen events changed all that in 1907: his eldest child, playing with matches, caused a fire that destroyed his small store, and the Russian revolution failed.

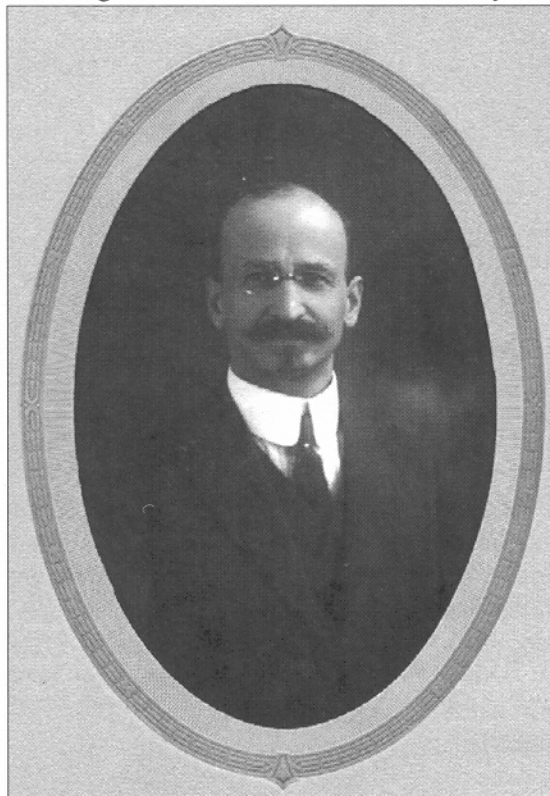
At the beginning of the 1900's the Jewish population of Montreal was 7,000. They were generally of British, German, or Western European stock and were well integrated into Montreal English society. They did not choose English over French, the choice was made for them. New France had been a Catholic state that refused entry to non-Catholics, and under the British regime which followed, Jews could not educate their children in French without converting to Catholicism. The Church controlled the French-language schools and refused Jewish community approaches that would offer separate classes on religion.

The Russian Empire was in decline during this period and Jews, the only non-Christians in the Christian regions, had been living in ghettos or in rural isolation in the Pale of Settlement. They were not entitled to the full rights of citizens under the czars, being forbidden to farm or to work in industry, and were the scapegoats for society's ills. Their communities regularly sustained pogroms, violent unprovoked attacks often from off-duty military personnel or unhappy citizens and with the full knowledge of the government, but nothing was done to punish the perpetrators. In 1907, the Russian Empire suppressed a

revolution, triggering a huge exodus, particularly of Jews, as the pogroms increased.

The Jewish communities of Eastern Europe always valued a good education, and so, even though it was illegal to speak Yiddish and Hebrew, the boys were educated in these two languages. Yiddish is a dialect of German, and it is written in Hebrew characters. Hebrew was the language of education and was used in a way similar to Latin. The holy books were written

in Hebrew, and its alphabet evolved in the Semitic culture between 2000 and 1000 BCE. Its letters are similar to ancient Phoenician and it was one of the early phonetic forms of writing. Experts trace it back to a shorthand used by Semitic workers in ancient Egypt, and through the Phoenician alphabet, it was passed along to the Greeks, the Romans, the Arabs and the Russians. All of the phonetic alphabets in common use in our culture trace back to this ancient Semitic script. The Jews have used their written form continuously for thousands of years, and their system of education created students who were taught from a young age how to read and how to learn. They could adapt to the modern world that flooded over the Russian borders from Western Europe and America in the late 1800's, but this ability to adapt only increased resentment, making matters worse for



them. In 1907 an exodus started that would bring thousands of Jews to America, and the Montreal community grew from 7,000 in 1900 to 58,000 by 1930.

Montreal Jews did not speak Yiddish prior to this influx, and the older well-established community had no reason to learn it, but as the population increased, people coming from the Baltic states, Russia, Poland and the Ukraine had only Yiddish in common.

That same year, witnessing the large numbers of fellow Yiddish-speaking immigrants from many different countries in Eastern Europe, Hirsch Wolofsky took the insurance money from the fire that burned his store and started a Yiddish-language newspaper, the *Kanader Adler* (Canadian Eagle).

According to Pierre Anctil, a historian who learned Yiddish and a respected authority on the history of the Montreal Jewish Community, it was not a language that lent itself easily to this kind of publication. It had garnered very little respect as a written



language and had no serious archive. Young Jewish men had learned the Hebrew characters in their study of the Torah and the Talmud, (the Bible and rabbinical commentaries), and over time transcribed a German dialect into Hebrew characters. Wolofsky saw a sea of immigrants who could not speak English or French and who were desperate for news and the written word. They spoke Russian, Polish, Latvian, Lithuanian or Ukrainian, but they all spoke Yiddish as well. These were people from many different countries thrown together in a strange land, and Wolofsky's initiative gave them an identity, a sense of commonality, of community. His was not the first Yiddish newspaper; Yiddish papers were available from New York, but they did not address the needs of the new Montrealers, all coming together from different places with different experiences, all pooling their knowledge and recreating themselves as Canadians. The new community that his paper identified rapidly made its presence felt. Yiddish became the third language of Montreal as the Protestant school populations rose to become 45% Jewish, and English today carries many words of Yiddish such as schlep, chutzpah, klutz and kibitz.

Inevitably the offices of the Kanader Adler became the centre of this immigrant community and every event passed through its journalists to be interpreted and shared with readers. Wolofsky knew how to promote his enterprise. When interviewing one man as editor, he informed the new man that he was a Zionist, someone who favours the re-establishment of a Jewish State in the Promised Land. The new man told him that he was definitely not a Zionist, a very divisive topic in the Jewish world of the time. Wolofsky hired him and told him to write his argument in the newspaper and Wolofsky would argue for the other side. They would let the readers decide for themselves. Among his readership were Zionists, opponents to Zionism, socialists, communists, secular and religious Jews. They represented every different interest group and political idea in vogue and taken together formed a dynamic, chaotic think-tank boiling over with new ideas and ambition but with nothing but each other and the resident community to help them along and the Kanader Adler to chronicle it.

Hirsch Wolofsky rose to the challenges presented by the growth of the paper and chose every opportunity to build the community. His name is associated with everything from United Talmud Torah School to the YM/YWHA, the building of the Jewish

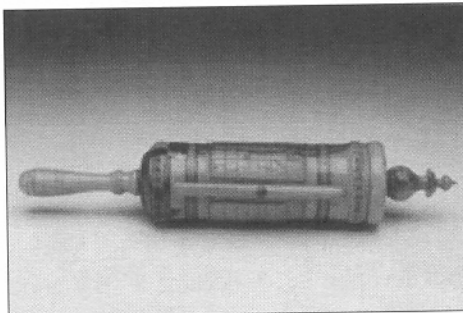
General Hospital to the creation of what became the Canadian Jewish Congress and the Combined Jewish Appeal. His hand can be found in every conceivable Montreal Jewish community organization and charity from that period, and his influence went beyond the community and across the country. If Canadian Jews speak with one voice today, this is his legacy. When he began his paper, it was not so. The new immigrants represented so many conflicting ideologies that speaking with one voice was unimaginable, and small, isolated communities co-existed not just in the large cities, but in smaller towns right across Canada. With his success in Yiddish, he went on to publish the Canadian Jewish Chronicle in English, increasing his reach.



unimaginable, and small, isolated communities co-existed not just in the large cities, but in smaller towns right across Canada. With his success in Yiddish, he went on to publish the Canadian Jewish Chronicle in English, increasing his reach. A. M. Klein, the poet, became its editor and among its journalists and contributors were Ted Allan (Lies My Father Told Me), A. B. Bennett (father of Avi Bennett of McLelland and Stewart) and David Lewis (father of Steven Lewis). Wolofsky travelled extensively in Canada, meeting with community leaders, organizing, co-

ordinating activities and uniting different groups. He also travelled several times in Europe and was among the founders of what would become Israel.

We are less than two years away from the centennial of the founding of the Kanader Adler yet for all of his remarkable achievements, no biography exists of the man himself, other than a modest memoir, first written in Yiddish, and published in English in 1945 in a translation by A.M. Klein. This book, a series of reminiscences, portrays the character of the times, but contains almost no dates and is not chronological. Pierre Anctil attempted to correct some of these shortcomings when he translated it into French in 2000. Considering how much the small Jewish community has contributed to the fabric of Canada, and how much Wolofsky had to do with it, his biography would be a valuable documentation of our history.



References: *Journey of my Life (Mayn Lebns Rayze in Yiddish and French)* -Hirsch Wolofsky (translated by A.M. Klein to English and by Pierre Anctil to French); *Through the Eyes of the Eagle*, -David Rome; *Language Visible*, -David Sacks; *A Coat of Many Colours*, -Irving Abella; *Jews of Montreal and their Judaisms*, -Mackay L. Smith; *A Very Red Life* -Cy Gonick; *Hirsch Wolofsky is the great-grandfather of my wife*, Sheila Eskenazi. Thanks to her and Jack Wolofsky, grandson of Hirsch, for additional information.

Photos on these two page: Hirsch Zvi Wolofsky, 1876-1949, The honour roll was presented to Wolofsky by the Jewish community in 1936. The masthead from a 1914 issue of the Kanader Adler shows the headline of an editorial 'The Jews of Russia' by leading writer Reuben Brainin. Photos, Canadian Jewish News.

# HEROES AND HEROINES

*He loved the sun and spring; he loved all the seasons and their textures, colours and smells*

## Donald Petzel: St. Lawrence college honours champion

By Michèle Thibeau and Michaël Déry  
Quebec Chronicle-Telegraph

Champlain-St. Lawrence officially dedicated the Donald Petzel Memorial Library on June 2. Over 50 friends and colleagues were at the event.

Donald Petzel taught for 46 years, 36 of them at St. Lawrence College, the Quebec City campus of Champlain Regional College. He died 2004 while still employed there.

"Whenever we come into the library, we'll think of Don," said Jean Robert, dean of students, after the unveiling of the plaque.

Petzel taught Robert in high school and the two remained friends while Robert was in university. Later, Robert became Dean of students at SLC and they became colleagues. "It was weird going from calling him Mr. Petzel to Don," said Robert.

"What a wonderful tribute this is," said long-time friend and colleague Mary Robertson. She shared an office with Petzel for 19 years.

Petzel's closest friend and former student Hubert Radoux read Petzel's favourite prayer, the Prayer of St. Thomas Aquinas Before Study. The text was sent from another close friend, Jerome Kramer, the dean of Arts & Sciences at the University of St. Thomas in Houston, Texas.

Petzel was a devoted teacher who never retired, even after becoming ill. He was also an avid reader and a proponent of the importance of libraries. As a testament to this devotion he willed over 150 books from his collection to the St. Lawrence library.

Petzel was described as a Catcher in the Rye who, in his 46 years of teaching, helped countless students.

"Mr. Petzel was loved by all," said Radoux. The plaque that now hangs in the Donald Petzel Memorial Library reads "May those of us who carry on the tradition of teaching excellence for which he proudly stood, continue to 'push back the forces of darkness' as he did so masterfully for so many years."

"Don Petzel was a colleague who represented the best of what St. Lawrence is and he gave virtually all of his professional career to the betterment of his students," campus director John Keyes said when the re-naming decision was announced in January. "There could be no more fitting commemoration of his memory than the library."

"I was touched to see so many former students at the funeral," Keyes added.

Petzel had not been teaching for the last year, but helped students out with English at special workshop sessions.

"I think it's just magnificent, marvelous; it's the most appropriate remembrance that could ever be done in his name," said retired SLC teacher Mary Robertson; who shared an office

with Petzel for close to 20 years. "The library was such an important place for Donald. He cherished the written word. He always thought you should never get rid of any books."

"He was such a scholarly man, very erudite," Robertson said in January. "Naming the library after him is the supreme celebration of his life. It is so great that St. Lawrence cherishes his memory in that way. I'm just so thrilled."

Petzel died suddenly on Friday, December 17, at the age of 73.

Born in Cleveland, Ohio, Donald Petzel was a student of St. Thomas Aquinas. He came to Université Laval to study philosophy under Dr. Charles De Koninck. He taught briefly at Marymount before taking up his post at St. Lawrence, where he devoted over 40 years to teaching.

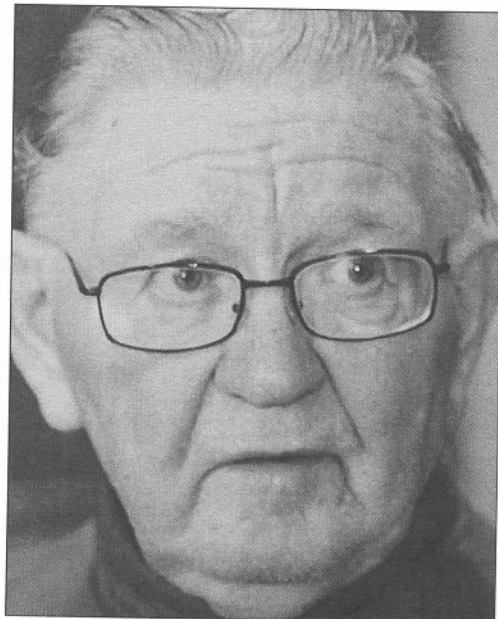
Don Petzel was a philosopher, poet, horticulturalist, gourmet, basketball fan and movie buff; he loved life and took time out to admire its beauty, encouraging those around him to do the same.

At the time of his death some who knew him well said that there was another side to Petzel, one that endeared him to many of his students over the years. Over the years, "He became a very good friend of the family. I knew him for 28 years," said former student Robert Lachapelle. "There were a lot of different aspects to Don Petzel that you could like. He was always trying to get you to think about the meaning of life and get to know God through literature and philosophy."

Petzel "was a giving person, always ready to help students," he added. After graduation, "My friends and I used to have a reading group. We read Aristotle and St. Thomas and discussed it. He used to be the mentor for our group." Most importantly, "He helped mould our religious understanding, philosophically and theologically."

Lachapelle's brother Kevin played basketball. "[Petzel] was a fervent supporter of St. Lawrence basketball," said his brother Robert. "He had so many kids that he kept in contact with. He was an integral part of all of our lives. We're going to miss him a lot."

Petzel shared "about the meaning of life; the Truth. He always



tried to get people to think about the important things in life.” “He was a devout Christian,” said Karen Lachapelle. “Through Don, you had a relationship with God. Studying literature with him “would undoubtedly lead to those bigger questions. The end result was that it either deepened your faith or actually led you to discover your faith.” After speaking with him, “You saw things a little more clearly and more beautiful. He didn’t have any children, but he had many children. The legacy that he leaves behind is profound because every student who really was open to receiving what he had to give was changed in a very significant way.” And she remembered his advice: “Everything is in the introduction.”

Kevin Lachapelle said, “I think that his impact as a teacher ... was that he brought out what was particular and good about a student. He considered everybody’s opinion. As a young man, that was very important.”

And he admired Petzel’s poetry on “the idea of birth and rebirth. He always looked at it from a religious theme. For somebody who was really a practicing Catholic he was very attached to the individual things of life – the beauty of a sunset, a simple tree, a painting, and chocolate.”

SLC academic dean Robert was also a former student. “Over the years, I probably saw Don almost every day. Rarely a day went by that I wouldn’t stop for a chat in his office, and we had weekly lunches. It’s going to seem strange not having him on campus.

He’s going to be missed because he was one of our pillars.”

Former SLC campus director Edward Murphy also knew him as a professor at Laval, where he taught English literature. “He had degrees in English literature, philosophy and theology,” added Murphy. “He was a very intellectual man. I found it tremendous to have a man like him around [St. Lawrence] to seek guidance from and to ask questions of. He had great patience. He was fluent in Latin and Greek. He was a great scholar of St. Thomas Aquinas.

“When people like Don Petzel die,” said Murphy, “the old traditions go with them.” He will miss “the intellectual stimulation that [Petzel] provided for people, to me.”

“He was a generous and kind person,” added retired colleague Mary Robertson in a December interview. “The aim of his life was to ponder life and he really believed in the meditative existence.”

“He thought teaching was most noble profession of all; [as teachers] we had to push back the forces of darkness and lift everybody out of the cesspool of ignorance. He was one of the wittiest people I’ve ever known,” said Robertson.

He would spend hours meditating and thinking about some of the crucial issues that surround us. He was never going to retire

and he didn’t. He was on sick leave and he never retired,” said Robertson.

“He was a very profound Christian,” she added. Petzel attended mass at the Basilica until arthritis made it impossible, so he attended Église St-Thomas-d’Aquin.

When it came to basketball and life, Petzel would say, “Winning is everything. With everything in life you should try to win. He believed in academic excellence.”

“His quest led him to be a good person of God and a great teacher. [For his students] he tried to bring them up to excellence, that was most exciting thing. The student who had the hardest time was not discounted by Don; he would spend hours with a student explaining in the most simple terms; this was his magic!”

And, recalled Robertson, “He loved food. He really tasted it; he took the time to enjoy life and pondered the meaning of life. He meditated upon it when sitting in his office, in his apartment and during his many drives around Quebec.”

For all his love of the seasons, especially spring and fall, Petzel hated winter. “He loved Quebec. He would take long drives into the country. He

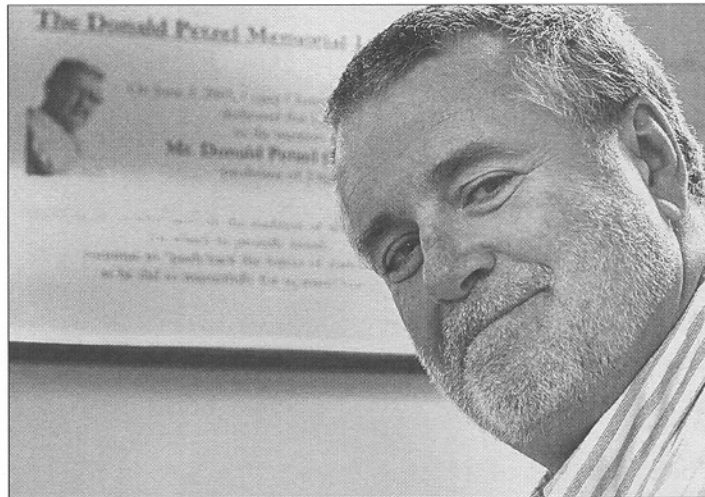
would sit and park and just look at the world and nature around him. He loved gardening and flowers and would take hours to choose what he wanted. In our office we always had geraniums. We had flowers blooming all winter.”

Donald Petzel “really savoured life,” said Robertson. “And he savoured it in a way that he was able to share it with everybody else. As a teacher, he was incredible.”

When his vocal chords prevented him from teaching one year, Petzel found it difficult. At the end, Robertson said, “It killed him to stop [helping with the workshops]; he just couldn’t go [anymore].” Until the end, Donald Petzel was “helping students achieve excellence.”

When he visited Petzel’s empty apartment, Jean Robert found an unfinished note that summed it up: “Donald Petzel, teacher.”

In the spring of 2003, former SLC student Geneviève Lessard interviewed Petzel for SLC’s *Broadside*. She asked him why he became a teacher. So Donald Petzel told her. “Because of St. Thomas,” he said, “There’s no greater act of charity that you can do for another person than to lead him or her from ignorance to knowledge.



**Photos: Donald Petzel, loved by colleagues and students for his enthusiasm and integrity. Hubert Radoux stands by the newly unveiled plaque of his former teacher and long-time friend., photo by Mike Reshitnyk, Quebec Chronicle-Telegraph.**

## HEROES AND HEROINES

# Dr. Curtis Lowry – big-time doctor in a small town

*Editor's note: The following story resulted from a Sawyerville Elementary School oral history project carried out in 1998 in conjunction with the Compton County Museum. I have left the creative grammar and spelling as the children wrote it.*

*Dr. Curtis Lowry practiced medicine for 55 years. Although he wished to continue, in 2003 the Quebec college of physicians (l'Ordre des médecins du Québec) withdrew Dr. Lowry's licence. He continues to provide advice and comfort to many former patients, and is also writing his memoirs. – C.B.*

By Joe Hamel, Kimberly Matthews, Jason Sylvester, Jessica Phaneuf, Ryan Stickles

### Introduction

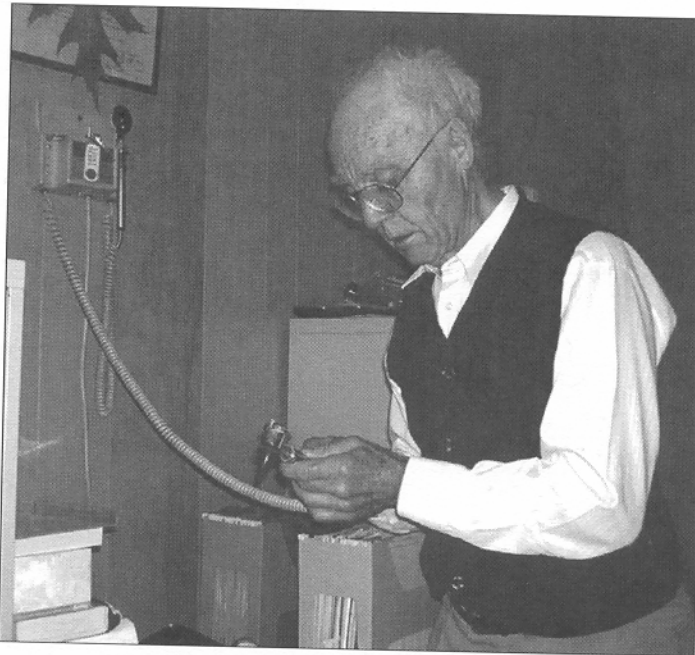
**D**octor Lowry was bound to become a hero. For as long as we can remember, he has always been a doctor, there to help us and care for us. In this book we'll talk about Dr. Lowry's past in Sawyerville, and what he plans to do in the future. You will learn what led Dr. Lowry to own 2400 acres of land and why he chose to settle in Sawyerville. If you read on, you will find out more about his life and his family.

We think Dr. Lowry is a hero, and after you read this book you will think so too.

### Schooling

Dr. Lowry always loved schoolwork since he was a little boy: When Dr. Lowry grew up he did not have the money to become a doctor so he decided to become a teacher. The first school Dr. Lowry ever taught was at Saint Bennies, teaching grades 9 and 10. He did not like the way it was run so he went to Infanas. The next year Dr. Lowry was offered more money so he went to Val d'Or. There was no grade 10 so Dr. Lowry went to teach in Montreal.

Dr. Lowry worked hard at teaching for four years. Dr. Lowry wanted to study medicine, so when Dr. Lowry got



enough money he became a doctor. Dr. Lowry said that he only teaches incidentally now.

### Why Sawyerville?

When Dr. Lowry came back to Sawyerville he moved into the house he is living in now. He has been there for years. The Christmas that Dr. Lowry came back, Dr. Beaton came to him and asked, if he could take over his clinic and stay in Sawyerville. Dr. Lowry said he would think about it. A few days later Dr. Lowry went to friends of his in Cookshire and asked what should he do? Dr. Lowry

kept on asking his friends and family. About six days later Dr. Lowry said "yes", he would.

Dr. Lowry was born and raised in Sawyerville. Dr. Beaton was going to sell his land but Dr. Lowry said he would buy it because he liked to walk in Sawyerville, especially in the woods. Dr. Lowry had no intention of coming to Sawyerville but he had a lot of memories from there. Dr. Lowry had planned on coming back soon.

### Past

Dr. Lowry became a doctor because he was interested in people and he wanted to learn more about them. Dr. Lowry said that one of the easiest ways of becoming a doctor is studying medicine. He said that there is always work to be done and his exact words were "personal satisfaction". Dr. Lowry's father wasn't a doctor.

Dr. Lowry is obliged to go see people that can't come to see him. When he goes to see people that are close he walks, but if they are far away he has to drive. He

occasionally goes to Bishopton, East Hereford, Bulwer, Stanstead, and sometimes the States, which is around a 20 mile distance. Dr. Lowry delivered about 2400 babies in his life but some doctors in his graduating class delivered a lot more than him.

Before Dr. Lowry was at the clinic there were six or seven doctors there before him. There was Dr. Beaton, Mckray,

*In Dr. Lowry's spare time he likes to play piano if it is bad weather and when it is good weather he likes taking walks in the woods. He also loves working in his garden.*

# HEROES AND HEROINES

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Mckerdy, Thompson, Miller, Greenage, Anible and now there is a Lowry.

In Dr. Lowry's spare time he likes to play piano if it is bad weather and when it is good weather he likes taking walks in the woods. He also loves working in his garden.

## Future

Dr. Lowry said that he would be a doctor for as long as he could live. The only minor surgery he'll do now is cut off a little piece of toe nail.

He tries to have books around the house. Dr. Lowry looks after old people over the age of 75.

He has some collection of diplomas! One is State of Vermont and another one is from when he was teaching in 1948.

He also had some animals he grew up with - mostly pigs and horses.

## Land

Dr. Lowry was interested in land and it was this interest that led to him to buying so much of it. Dr. Lowry owns around 2400 acres and 11 houses. Two of the houses he bought beside his house because one house had a tractor and snow plow truck which always revved up at 4 in the morning, so when it came up for sale he bought it. The other house had geese and turkeys, which had to be annoying so that is one of the reasons he bought it. Dr. Lowry also bought the houses around him for more gardening space. The Mackeys from Cookshire who knew Dr. Lowry came to live in one of his houses.

Once Dr. Lowry bought a little land everybody kept wanting him to by their land. Everybody thought he was loaded. Dr Lowry bought all the land because he did not want to see it all go to waste: Oncè someone tried to sell land to Dr. Lowry for more than he was

asking. Dr. Lowry did not think that people should take advantage of him because he had a lot of money.

Dr. Lowry actually helped some people. He helped his aunt by getting her \$10,000 for her property when she almost let it go for \$9000.

Some people tried to rip Dr. Lowry off by trying to get him to buy land that he already had a deed for. Dr. Lowry did not rip most people off or at least he tried to be fair.

Dr. Lowry said, "There is no reason" to sell land he will have to pay high taxes on. Dr. Lowry has paid taxes on some land for 50 years.

Dr. Lowry's father had an eye on a piece of land that Dr. Lowry had bought so when his father retired he sold it to him. Later when his father was done with the piece he tried to sell it for \$8000 but Dr. Lowry said he would give him \$10,000.

Dr. Tomson managed to make money while he was practicing medicine so after he retired he left to go to Vermont. Dr. Lowry did not think it was right to make all that money then just leave.

## Family

Dr. Lowry's sister lost her husband in the war so he came to keep her company but he also wanted to stay with his family. Dr. Lowry's sister's kids were sick so he came to Sawyerville to help them.

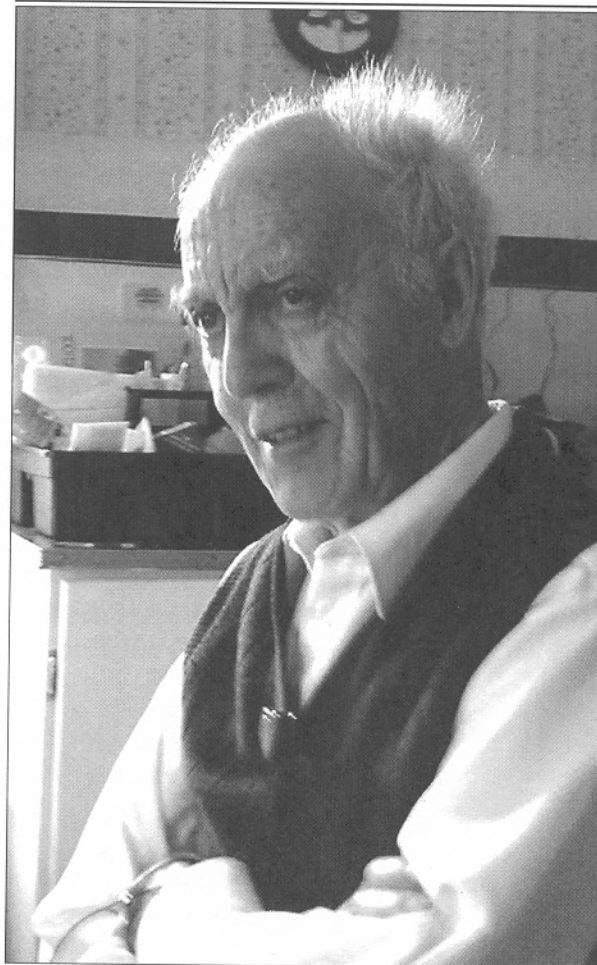
Dr. Lowry's kids' names' are Voker, Rainer, Uwe, Dieter, and Brigitta (Bisey). His kids names are German because he felt obligated to have their names in the language of his wife.

The house that Dr. Lowry is living in now has 15 rooms, so his wife keeps busy cleaning. She also keeps the bees and sometimes she sews.

*Dr. Lowry looks after old people over the age of 75.*

*He has some collection of diplomas! One is State of Vermont and another one is from when he was teaching in 1948.*

*He also had some animals he grew up with - mostly pigs and horses.*



Photos by Bruce Patton

## THE THEATRE NOW

### Judy and Mickey revisited

# Montreal West Operatic Society: 'Let's put on a show!'

By Rod MacLeod

Quite possibly it was not the first time in history that a theatre company found itself short of money - but when you're short, you're short.

In May 2004 the Montreal West Operatic Society found itself at the end of a stunning, if somewhat under-attended, production of *Iolanthe* with its finances severely depleted. Without enough funds to mount another full-scale show, it looked very much as though the society's final curtain could soon be rung down. Sixty five years into its prestigious history, MWOS ("Canada's Premiere Gilbert and Sullivan society") saved itself by returning to the collaborative spirit of community theatre and putting together a "bright little, tight little" show on a shoestring.

Like all of MWOS' productions, *Iolanthe* was professionally directed and featured elaborate professionally-designed sets, lighting, and costumes as well as a professional orchestra. The sets in particular - large screens suggesting a woodland glade that reversed in Act II to become the mullioned windows and benches of the British parliament - were sensational, but did not come cheap. After careful study of the society's bank book, the MWOS board of directors regretfully decided that the next production, *Ruddigore*, would have to dispense with this professional input and be merely a "concert" version.

There was some dismay at this news among MWOS members. The departure from the customary downtown theatre to a high school auditorium (albeit the historic Villa Maria) was one thing, but the prospect of simply



standing in a line and singing through the numbers left many cold. *Ruddigore* is one of the more dramatic Gilbert and Sullivan shows, featuring an elaborate wedding scene and old paintings spookily coming to life; a concert version meant forgoing all that. There was also the question of whether devoted G&S buffs would be willing to put down money to see what would be in effect only half a show, and of whether MWOS fans would go away seriously disappointed.

Over the autumn and winter MWOS held a number of fund-raising events just to have some cash to work with. Weekly rehearsals were led by experienced choir director Dimitris Ilias and accompanied by MWOS regular pianist Anne-Marie Denoncourt, who had also agreed to provide a piano version of the music for the performances at Villa Maria. Dimitris brought the best out of performers' voices despite continuing doubts as to how the whole thing would materialize on stage.

Early in March a small group of MWOS members met to give serious thought to the show's prospects. One proposal was that, even without professional involvement and despite the little time remaining, a full production be attempted - but on a shoestring, rather in the time-worn spirit of summer stock. In the old movies, Mickey Rooney and Judy Garland just said "Hey, let's put on a show!" and before you knew it the thing took magical shape. Everyone at MWOS liked this idea - as long as the person who made the proposal do the actual stage directing (perhaps an argument that you should never open your mouth with a creative suggestion!) The proposer, Elena Cerrolaza, agreed to direct the blocking and overall staging, but requested that Jeff Freeman, the group's most experienced actor, coach the principals.



There followed two very hectic months. Judy and Mickey (that is, Elena and Jeff) turned singers into a cast on the rehearsal stage of the Montreal West Town Hall. Meanwhile, Rachel Germinario spearheaded a costume production team; MWOS luckily owned a number of costumes suitable for Ruddigore's early 19th century setting, but all had to be adjusted and many more created from scratch - resulting in the near total obliteration of the Germinario living room for several weeks. Another team raided Dollar Stores and Reno-Depots for materials, and turned them into various props and set pieces, taking over yet another living room and back yard for construction. The results: flower bouquets for the wedding, a balustrade, a rotten apple (which one of the characters routinely offers to cheer people up), chattering teeth and a pound of snuff (presents for local orphans), a wall of ivy, and four full-size picture frames which the ghosts (all dressed in historic costumes, from a medieval jester to Henry VIII to an Anglican bishop) step out of when they must terrorize the hero. Members lent items such as chairs, tables, a broomstick, a top hat, and canoe paddles. MWOS' usual props person, Mirna Morelli, was upgraded to stage manager, and a former stage manager, Beth Cummings, was recruited to work the lighting board - transforming what would have been a sterile stage into a palette of weather and moods.

There were problems with the Villa Maria auditorium: the floor squeaked with every shift of weight, the chairs were hard, and it was very, very hot. One could not breathe in the wings without being heard at the back of the hall. Women's dressing rooms were down a very long hall;



men's dressing rooms were down that hall and then down a very long staircase. Actors went on stage and off by climbing through large windows - what had once been exterior windows in the days when Villa Maria was the governor general's residence. And yet, somehow it worked.

#### AND PEOPLE CAME

All performances neared capacity and the Saturday night show exceeded it - in that the number of chairs put out by the stage crew proved insufficient and more had to be found. There was also the traditional road show to the Haskell Opera House, the grand little theatre that literally straddles the Canada-US border at Rock Island, QC and Derby Line, VT. MWOS made money. Not a lot. Not enough, even, to avoid having to do next year's Gondoliers in Judy and Mickey fashion too; but enough for there to be another show, to survive yet

another year.

There is a grand old tradition in Canada of community theatre - or "amateur dramatics" as my grandparents would have called it. This can mean amateur or semi-professional drama or opera societies putting on standard works in established theatrical venues - or for that matter in makeshift settings such as school gyms, town halls, old barns, etc. This may not be Broadway, but it is often extremely good, and for audiences there is great enjoyment seeing future stars and fading thespians alike. Community theatre can also mean a whole lot of people pulling together in a flurry of creativity to produce something exceptional out of thin air, something they may not have thought themselves capable of doing. Certainly this year's Ruddigore restored to MWOS members a sense of wonder at their own abilities, even as it brought a sense of financial relief.

**Photos: Co-directors Jeff Freeman (Sir Roderic Murgatroyd) and Elena Cerrolaza (bridesmaid); Four Ghosts - David Lambert, Gil Michael Frolick, Bruce Thicke; Sailing O'er Life's Ocean - Peter Blair (Robin Oakapple), Jacinthe Thibault (Rose Maybud), Luis Rino (Richard Dauntless).**

#### Scottish Country Dancing workshop to be held in Montreal

Montreal will be hosting a workshop to be presented by Linda Gaul on Saturday October 1st. The workshop will be held in conjunction with our Opening Social. Music for the workshop will be provided by Laura Risk (fiddle) and Nicholas Williams (piano). Music for the social will be Laura & friends. Please join us! Brochure & registration form are available at: [www.scdmontreal.org/LindaGaul\\_Mtl\\_brochure.pdf](http://www.scdmontreal.org/LindaGaul_Mtl_brochure.pdf). This workshop is part of the trip organized by Lydia Hedge & the Bon Accord SCD group in Nova Scotia, who will host a Teachers Workshop with Linda on October 9th. - best regards, Norah Link - <http://www.scdmontreal.org/> Classes, events, teachers, contact & membership information, news, resource information & links Come enjoy learning from one of the best! Visiting from Scotland, former Chair of the RSCDS & Chair of Summer School, Linda Gaul is a delight and brings a lively sense of humour and genuine warmth to her classes. Linda will tailor her classes to all levels of dancers, from beginners with 1 year experience to advanced dancers, with something special for everyone. Live music will be provided by Laura Risk (fiddle) and Nicholas Williams (piano). Advance Registration Required: for classes & lunch by September 27. Email [fallworkshop@scdmontreal.org](mailto:fallworkshop@scdmontreal.org). - Sent in by Lou Dawson

## THE THEATRE THEN

# Montreal stage pitted left and elites through turbulent '30s

By Guy Rodgers

The 1930s were seminal years for Canadian theatre, and nowhere was this more evident than in the thriving metropolis of Montreal. Governor-General Lord Bessborough, who had boasted the best equipped private theatre back in England, was shocked to discover that theatre was non-existent in Canada. One of his first official acts was to create the Dominion Drama Festival in 1932 to stimulate the creation of a national theatre.

Lord Bessborough may or may not have been aware that Martha Allen had founded the Montreal Repertory Theatre in 1930. The MRT would quickly become a major force in the Dominion Drama Festival. Martha Allen's vision for the Montreal Repertory Theatre was to give amateur actors a thorough training in the classics, ancient and modern. MRT alumni would contribute to the creation of a professional Canadian theatre when it emerged in the late 50s and early 60s. Herbert Whittaker would become Canada's leading theatre critic, working first with the Montreal Gazette (1935-49) and later with the Globe and Mail (1949-1975). Other MRT alumni who went on to professional acting careers in film and theatre were Hume Cronyn, John Colicos, Yvette Brind'Amour, Denise Pelletier, Gratien Gélinas, Jean-Louis Roux and Christopher Plummer.

A very different vision of theatre lay behind the creation of the New Theatre Group in 1936. The Group was devoted to socially relevant theatre and was inspired by the quality of MRT productions, but not their bourgeois drawing-room repertoire. The first major production of the New Theatre Group was *Waiting For Lefty*, Clifford Odets' hard-hitting drama about the misery of unemployment during the Great Depression. Many NTG members were workers and socialist students, but the founding director was Westmount intellectual Lillian Mendelssohn, and the first production was, perhaps ironically for a socialist workers' theatre, staged at Westmount's Victoria Hall. *Waiting For Lefty* was an immediate hit due to the strength of the script and the fervour of the actors. In the coming years *Waiting For Lefty* toured many of Montreal's suburbs and performed to workers on strike and the growing army of unemployed. It didn't take long for the New Theatre Group to attract the attention of Premier Maurice Duplessis. The subversive reputation of the Group was compounded by their Crescent Street Studio occupying the same building as the

Jehovah's Witnesses. Attracting Duplessis's ire meant repression and the threat of padlocks. Nothing could have been more stimulating to the rebellious spirit of the New Theatre Group and their supporters.

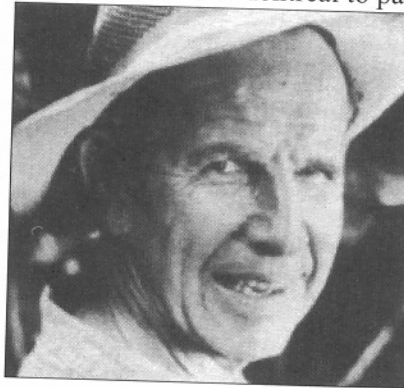
One evening in 1936 a man in a grey turtleneck sweater came to see *Waiting For Lefty* and invited the cast to a garden party at his home on Beaver Hall Hill. The actors arrived to find a group of doctors and nurses debating the socialist concept of universal medicare. Their host was none other than the notorious Doctor Norman Bethune who had just returned from the USSR as a member of the Communist Party and was about to depart for the Spanish Civil War. Bethune was so impressed by the New Theatre Group that he gave them a donation of \$10, which was a fortune at the time. Two years later the New Theatre Group had become so prominent in socialist circles that Clifford Odets, the author of *Waiting For Lefty*, came to Montreal to pay them a visit and make a donation of \$50.

*Waiting For Lefty* was the only play ever produced by both New Theatre Group and the Montreal Repertory Theatre. Martha Allen was so impressed by the on-going play qualified as a modern classic. Nonetheless she was so sensitive to the play's subversive reputation and her patrons' possible negative reaction that before each presentation she came out and announced, 'We are not doing this play because it is propaganda, but because it is good theatre.' Members of the NTG came to see the MRT production and had to stifle guffaws when Edna, desperately poor wife of unemployed taxi driver Joe, entered

wearing an immaculate tweed skirt and a silk blouse, as if she had escaped from a drawing room farce by Noel Coward.

The New Theatre Group was active from 1935-1940. The Montreal Repertory Theatre was an institution from 1930-1961 and provided training for young actors like Christopher Plummer, William Shatner and Barry Morse, who would all go on to international careers. Those stories will have to wait for future articles.

*Guy Rodgers is director of ELAN, the new English Language Arts Network that unites artists working in all disciplines and all regions of Quebec. Visit [www.quebec-elan.org](http://www.quebec-elan.org) for more information, or sign up for free membership if you are an artist. Organizations are invited to add a link to ELAN on their website.*



**Canadian actor Hume Cronyn got his start with the Montreal Repertory Theatre**



# NEWS & NOTES FROM AROUND QUEBEC

## An Uncertain Future

### Maple Grove School, Mille Isles, Argenteuil County

By Sandra Stock

The tiny Lower Laurentian hamlet of Mille Isles was once a thriving town centre for an active pioneer farming community. Settlement began as early as the 1830s by mainly Irish Protestant emigrants. Today the Municipality of Mille Isles, which is only a 40-minute drive from Montreal, is a growing residential area for both commuters and second homes on its many small lakes. However, other than a municipal office and hall, two churches that are only seasonally opened, and the building that concerns us here, generally called Black's Store, originally Maple Grove School, there is now no town centre, any commercial establishments nor any community institutions.

The Maple Grove School building, also known as Mille Isles School Number 2, was built around 1860 of squared log construction. The land was

donated by Fredrick Rogers. In the early 1900s this building was covered with dressed lumber and even later, expanded by a large addition in a compatible style. Maple Grove was one of three elementary schools in Mille Isles, along with Cambria and Hazel Land schools of which no traces remain.

Children walked or were driven by sleigh in winter. Shirley Captain, of the Mille Isles Historical Society, remembers her father, Melvin Dey, telling her how when he attended the school (around the time of the first World War) his very large dog, Pep, pulled him to school by a small sleigh and then waited until school ended to take him home. The first boy to arrive at school would light the wood fire.

The building functioned as a school for over ninety years until 1948 when improvements in both transportation and education led to the closing of many small schools and the bussing of pupils to larger facilities. For the children of Mille Isles, that meant the newer, bigger school of Morin Heights, which by 1960 offered a complete secondary education as well. Formerly, once pupils finished with the small local

elementary schools like Maple Grove, those who went on to high school went to Lachute - much farther away and they had to provide their own transportation and usually they boarded in Lachute.

After this building was no longer a school, it was sold to Cannon Horace Baugh, then Willis Black, who operated it as a local general store and added an addition. In the first years, the store prospered as Mille Isles still had a town core with a garage, a few other small businesses and two thriving church

congregations. There was still a sense of community identity and an active social life for residents of all ages. In 1970 the store was sold to Don Vipond who continued to run a store in the building, in latter years only seasonally, until his retirement around 2000. The now dwindling and aging population of the local Mille Isles residents, plus easier

access to larger stores in Lachute or Saint-Jérôme, certainly contributed to the decline of the little store.

The Municipality of Mille Isles bought the building in 2003. It was, and is, in excellent condition, having always been well

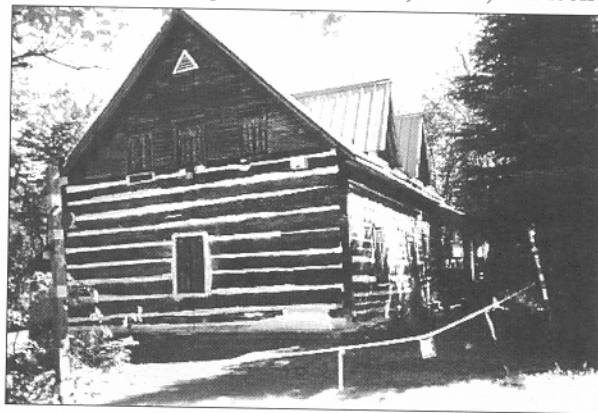
maintained inside and out. The municipality declared it an historic property in 2005 and installed a new well. This summer, the Mille Isles Historical Society is using the building to present an exhibit honouring the 150th Anniversary of the organizing of the Municipality of Mille Isles and pioneer life.

However, now the municipal administration feels that this building should pay its way and as

of September, it will be again opened as an attempt to revive a general store and coffee shop by a new tenant.

There is much local concern about the ultimate fate of Maple Grove School and we hope that it can be preserved as an officially declared heritage building and be used for appropriate functions.

Sources: Shirley Dey Captain, Mille Isles Historical Society, Morin Heights Historical Association archives.



Photos: Maple Grove, The Dawson homestead, circa 1850. Mille Isles has many buildings from the pioneer era.

## RESTORATION

New owner has plans for Pierce House in Stanstead

# Townships' first customs house will be renovated

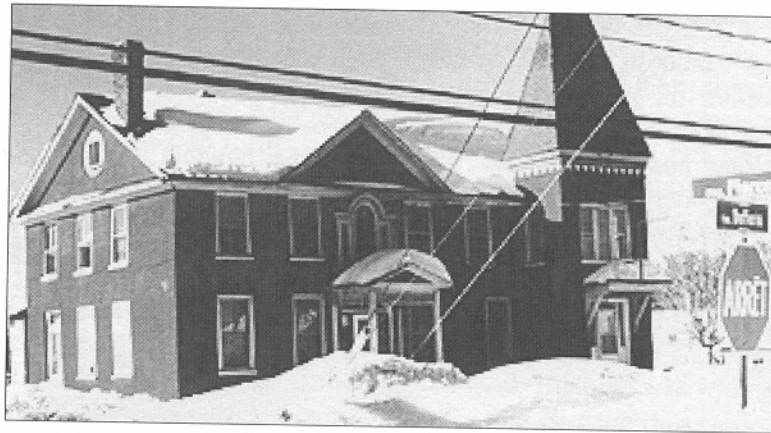
Matthew Farfan

**D**erelict and unoccupied for years, falling further and further into disrepair, and seen by many as an eyesore beyond repair, the first and oldest surviving customs house in the Eastern Townships has just been granted a reprieve.

A new owner, according to the Stanstead Journal, will soon be taking up residence and restoring the "Pierce House" -- or the "Canada House" -- as it was once called, to its former grandeur.

This is indeed welcome news for local heritage activists who have long held that the building is worth saving, not merely for its history but for its architectural importance. According to Harry Isbrucker, past-president of the Colby-Curtis Museum, it was definitely "excellent news." He said that he hopes "the new owner has the interest and wherewithal to turn the building into something truly beautiful."

Located in the heart of Stanstead, on historic Dufferin Street, and built around 1813, the building is one of the oldest in the area. Built entirely of brick in the symmetrical style known variously as "federal" or "Georgian" and popular in New England, the building contains a number of interesting neo-classical elements, including a rare second-storey Palladian window and heavy pediments in each of the two gables. Originally a curved "fan light" and two narrow "side lights" graced the front door, but these



**The Pierce House, last winter, Photo, Matthew Farfan. Dufferin Street, c.1910. The Pierce House is on the left, Photo, Farfan Collection.**



have long since disappeared. The imposing tower on the northeast corner is a later Victorian addition.

Before the customs department set up its first Townships branch here in 1821, the building served as the home and store of Wilder Pierce, one of

the wealthiest merchants in town. The side street directly across from the building bears the name "Pierce" to this day.

Over the years, the building was home to a number of commercial establishments, including the once powerful Eastern Townships Bank (a walk-in vault may still be seen on the first floor). In more modern times, it served as a restaurant and eventually as apartments. Not surprisingly, with so many changes in ownership and vocation over the years, the

building has suffered. The interior has been gutted and remodeled extensively, and the roof, brickwork, and

windows need immediate attention.

According to the Journal, new owner Pierre Massue has big plans for the house. "I want to restore it to what it looked like when it was first built... At first I didn't notice this place. But then I saw it and thought it was perfect." Renovations, the Journal

reports, will take Massue two years to complete. When the job is finished, the new owner plans to open an art gallery in the building.

From QAHN's Quebec Heritage Web site, [www.townshipsheritage.com/](http://www.townshipsheritage.com/)

## PEOPLE

## Numismatic Association bestows gold on Townships archivist

## Collector Freeman Clowery receives highest honour

By Giancarlo La Giorgia,  
The Sherbrooke Record

One man's trash is another man's gold. Or, in Freeman Clowery's case, his gold coin.

The 82-year-old retired archivist for the Bank of Montreal is an avid collector of just about everything: stamps, license plates, autographs, paper money, and Governor General medals, among others.

In fact, he has been such a prolific collector and promoter of numismatics (coin collecting) that, last month, he was awarded the J. Douglas Ferguson Award at the Canadian Numismatic Association convention in Calgary, Alta.

The medal is awarded by the foundation established by the late-J. Douglas Ferguson -- the CNA's first president, born in Stanstead -- to "the living numismatist who has contributed most to the science of numismatics in Canada."

"I guess they figured I'm on my way out, so they better give the old-timer something," joked Clowery.

His sense of humour provided a counterpoint to the more profound thoughts that marked our 40-minute conversation in his cozy, and surprisingly uncluttered, living room (perhaps because the house actually belongs to his second wife, Velma Lavallee, 83, a widow and friend of over five decades to whom he's been married since 2000.)

Contrary to the stereotype of the antisocial, reclusive collector, Clowery expressed a depth of emotion and passion for his lifelong pastime that can't help but rub off on anyone within earshot.

It's a passion that extends to the people and places -- especially in the Eastern Townships -- whose stories inhabit all the knick-knacks and memorabilia that hang on walls, spill out of filing cabinets, boxes and bookshelves and cover most other surfaces in the basement of Clowery's live-in museum.

"My interest in history got me onto collecting, especially local history of Sherbrooke and the Eastern Townships. This is an area that has produced a lot of interesting characters most people, even most Townshippers, don't know about," said Clowery.

One of those characters -- the late-Bill McCallum of Sawyerville, supposedly able to push a nail through glass with his bare hands without breaking it -- was the subject of a book

Clowery wrote in 1993: The Imps and Bill McCallum the Glass Man. He even has a few examples of McCallum's bizarre parlour trick, which no one has yet figured out (I couldn't either)

McCallum's story is just one of the countless yarns waiting to be told by Clowery for anyone interested to hear them (the one about receiving a letter from Ronald Reagan about the then-U.S. president's mother was particularly interesting.)

However, the most fascinating tale, and certainly a major factor in Clowery's recent award, is his relationship with Rideau Hall, in Ottawa.

In 1975, when then-Governor General Jules Leger wanted to acquire a collection of medals bestowed by his predecessors, he turned to Clowery, who had written a book on the medals of the Lieutenant-Governors of Canada in 1972.

Unbeknownst to Leger at the time, the decision proved to be a very fruitful one.

"The (Governor General's office) called me up to ask me if I would put together a collection of medals for them. I asked them how many they had and they said, 'None... (but) would you act as our representative.'" Clowery said that he asked for half an hour to think it over.

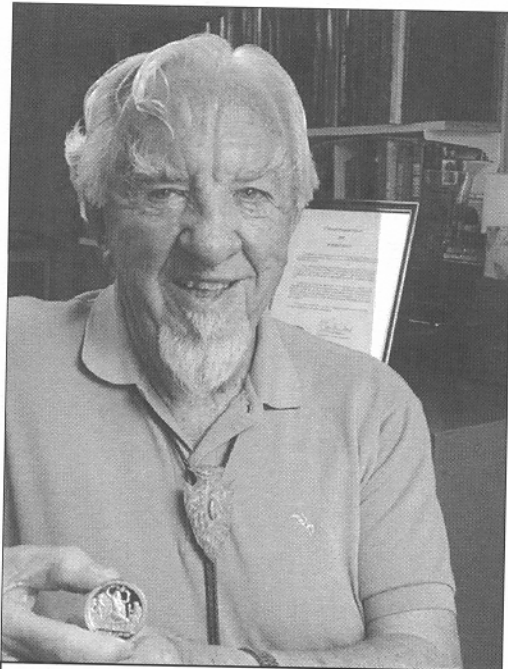
"After talking about it with my (late) wife, I called them back and said, 'I hope I didn't take too long, but I have your collection ready'."

What the dumbfounded aide hadn't known was that Clowery already had a complete collection of 21 medals spanning almost 100 years, from 1873 to 1972.

Although, Clowery said he would have rather done without the fanfare, his donation was warmly accepted by Leger himself at a banquet dinner at Rideau Hall, where they've been on display ever since.

"I insisted that they forego the publicity, but they told me that 'You can't just walk in through the back door of Rideau Hall and leave the medals on the kitchen counter,'" Clowery said, the slight exasperation belying the pride over his important contribution to Canada's history.

Then again, considering the many other prized items that have yet to see the light of a museum, it probably isn't the last.



**Freeman Clowery was awarded the numismatic association's highest honour for his contribution to Canada's history. Photo, Perry Beaton.**

## FROM THE ARCHIVES

### More than Un beau souvenir du Canada

# When la Capricieuse came to Montreal for Bastille Day

By Joan M. Schwartz  
Visual and Sound Archives  
Library and Archives of Canada

On July 14, 1855 - Bastille Day - the French naval vessel, La Capricieuse, under the command of Captain Paul-Henri de Belvèze, put into port at Quebec City. It was the first warship to fly the flag of France on the St. Lawrence since 1760. When de Belvèze set sail from Quebec City six weeks later, he carried with him the hand-coloured half-plate daguerreotype shown here of a man posed with four boys in historical costumes. One hundred and thirty years later, this daguerreotype returned to Canada as a gift from General André L'Homme, a descendant of de Belvèze, to mark the visit of French Prime Minister Laurent Fabius in 1984<sup>1</sup>.

The daguerreotype was originally housed in a second box, now lost, made of birch bark and richly embroidered with porcupine quills. The colourful design of beaver, maple branch, rose and festoons, considered a work of art in itself, was the handiwork of a talented young Canadian woman whose name was not revealed. A hand-written inscription on a slip of paper attached to the green velvet lining inside the case explains the content of the image as well as the context of its creation (\* indicates translated passages):

*To Commander de Belvèze  
in Canada*

-----  
*These small persons who figure in the Fêtes Nationales of Montreal recall all the religious and patriotic memories of French Canadians*

-----  
*St. Jean-Baptiste, Patron Saint of Canada  
Jacques Cartier, who in the sixteenth century discovered the country and introduced the Gospel  
The native chief, who welcomed the French to Hochelaga  
A young Canadian, wearing the colours of France*

*Alfd Chalifoux\**

Another, more extensive inscription, on a silver plaque originally affixed to the case but now lost, identified the costumed figures, explained the presence of the gentleman wearing the medal, and revealed the purpose of the daguerreotype:

*The one who accompanies them and has the honour to present them to Her Imperial Majesty is her very humble and respectful servant*

*Alfred Chalifoux  
French Canadian\**

#### A TAYLOR

Alfred Chalifoux was a Montreal tailor. Only weeks before the arrival of La Capricieuse, the boys dressed in historical costumes made by Chalifoux had figured prominently in the annual fêtes nationales celebrations in Montreal. These festivities received widespread notice in the newspaper. A detailed account of the proceedings published in La Minerve paid particular attention to the four boys, identified by name, described by role, and admired for their costumes and appearance.

One (Charles Chaput) represented France, having among other remarkable insignia a small flag on which shone the colours of the three allied powers, France, England and Turkey [fighting at the time in the Crimea]. The second (Mr. Loïsele) represented the patron saint of the celebration, St. Jean-Baptiste. Another (Théodore Deschambault) posed as Jacques Cartier, and the fourth (Jean Damien Rolland) as the Native chief. Each of these small persons was dressed, decorated and armed according to historical fact and admired for the beautiful effect of the costumes and its gracious appearance<sup>2</sup>.

The origins of the daguerreotype are further clarified by a report in La Minerve which appeared a week after the departure of La Capricieuse.

The stay of Mr. de Belvèze in Montréal gave the opportunity to Mr. Alfred Chalifoux, who is so well-known for his four little historic figures that everybody had a chance to admire during the latest holiday period, to offer to Her Imperial Highness a beautiful memento of Canada. This small picture represents these characters executed on a daguerreotype by Mr. Doane; it is stored in a velour and shagreen box that is intended by the style of the ornamentation and by the particular style in which it was executed, to characterize the nobility of the present that was thus offered to HIM.\*

La Minerve also confirmed that this "French Canadian tableau" was created by Chalifoux and photographed at his request and expense. This happy idea, it reported, is entirely due to the zeal and intelligence of Mr. Chalifoux, who alone had it made at his own expense.\*

ONE of the most beautiful daguerreotypes in the photography holdings of the National Archives of Canada, it merits attention as a visual object for its extraordinary quality and as the work of one of the leading daguerreotypists in the Canadas - if not the best in British North America. It demands close scrutiny as a visual image for the factual details it preserves and transmits about the St. Jean-Baptiste celebrations of 1855. But it also deserves study as a visual document created to express religious and patriotic memories, cultural assumptions and political aspirations. Indeed, it was and remains more than a special commemorative gift, more than a photographic reminder of a long forgotten event, more than un beau souvenir du Canada. Through an exploration of its content, context and text, the links between visual facts, photographic meaning and archival value become clear. Returned to the "action" in which it participated and filtered through nineteenth-century sensibilities, it emerges as the visual evidence of a performance of identity on the one hand, and the material residue of an act of communication on the other.

The opening phrase of the inscription reveals the social, political and functional contexts within which the daguerreotype was created. De Belvèze was on a mission to restore economic and cultural relations between France and Canada when British free trade policy opened new markets to its colonies and at a time when Britain and France were allied against Russia in the Crimea. During his tour of Canada, de Belvèze visited Quebec, Montreal, Ottawa and Toronto, and held discussions with prominent individuals on a variety of subjects. His report on the mission of La Capricieuse covered economic, cultural and military matters, and included a chapter on the struggle of "the Franco-Canadian element" to

preserve "its language, moral standards, institutions, religion." De Belvèze concluded that "the establishment of a consulate and communication are

two major objects of importance." 3

This daguerreotype was clearly a tribute to Chalifoux's skill as a tailor and evidence of Doane's talents as a daguerreotypist. It is of historical interest as a record of the costumes worn in the St. Jean-Baptiste Day parade in 1855 and as a reflection of prevailing cultural notions and national aspirations. It represents the use of photography to preserve one event (the St. Jean-Baptiste Day parade) and to commemorate another (the visit of La Capricieuse). However, visual facts are never inert; they are invested with and generate meaning. The meanings of the visual facts preserved in this daguerreotype must, therefore, be understood as being framed by Chalifoux's personal vision, by the boys' participation in the

fêtes nationales and by the mission of de Belvèze to Canada.

From *The Archivist*, No.

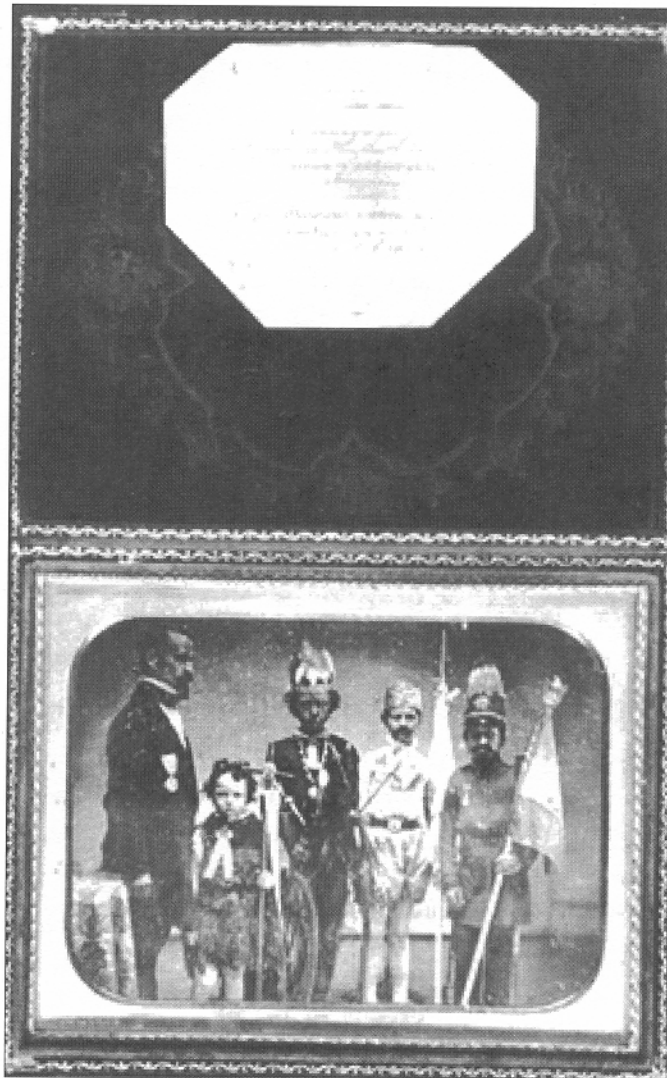
118 [www.collectionscanada.ca](http://www.collectionscanada.ca).

*Footnotes:*

1. I am grateful to my colleagues Brian Carey who first carried out research on this daguerreotype ("*An Imperial Gift*," *History of Photography*, 10, 2, April-June 1986, pp. 147-149), and George Bolotenko who subsequently included it in his exhibition and publication, *A Future Defined: Canada from 1849 to 1873*. Ottawa: National Archives of Canada, 1992, pp. 82-85

2. *La Minerve* (Montreal), 26 June 1855

3. A report on his travels and discussions is held by the National Archives of Canada. *Paul-Henri de Belvèze Papers / MG 24, F 42*.



## HERITAGE ISSUES

### National Assembly to begin church heritage hearings in September

The heritage committee of the Fédération des sociétés d'histoire du Québec (FSHQ) has failed in its efforts to postpone public hearings into the province's religious heritage. The National Assembly's standing committee on culture had invited religious groups, heritage organizations and members of the public to submit briefs no later than September 2, 2005 but the FSHQ said the date conflicts with summer holidays and asked the province to set a new deadline of October 14. However as of August 17 the deadline had not been changed.

Public hearings into Quebec's religious heritage are being held in response to widespread concern about the future of the province's estimated 4,000 church buildings, many of which have ceased to function as places of worship. Nearly 500 of them have been classified as protected heritage sites.

The standing committee intends to study Quebec's religious built heritage as well as the cultural heritage of the many different religious traditions that have evolved here since the time of the first French colonists. Bernard Brodeur, Member of the National Assembly for Shefford, will preside over the hearings, which are to get underway September 20.

To participate, persons or groups interested in religious heritage must supply the standing committee with 25 copies of their written brief. The committee will then choose from among the submissions which persons or groups may appear before the hearings. People can also make their opinions known by answering a questionnaire on the committee web site located at [www.assnat.qc.ca/fra/37legislature1/commissions/cc/index.shtml](http://www.assnat.qc.ca/fra/37legislature1/commissions/cc/index.shtml)

## Bring your stories to the world



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# BOOKS BOOKS BOOKS BOOKS BOOKS BOOKS

Transport-Québec comes up with a gem

## New book on the last 88 covered bridges of Quebec

By Matthew Farfan

Les Publications du Québec has just released a new book, titled *Les ponts couverts du Québec*.

Produced in association with Quebec's Ministry of Transport, the book is the first comprehensive study of the covered bridge phenomenon in the province.

Under the direction of Jean Lefrançois of the Ministry of Transport, this magnificent volume was written in large part by Gérald Arbour, a former president of the now-defunct Société québécoise des ponts couverts. The 215-page volume, which is available in hardcover and in French only, is lavishly illustrated with contemporary and archival photographs borrowed from the Archives nationales du Québec and from private collections.

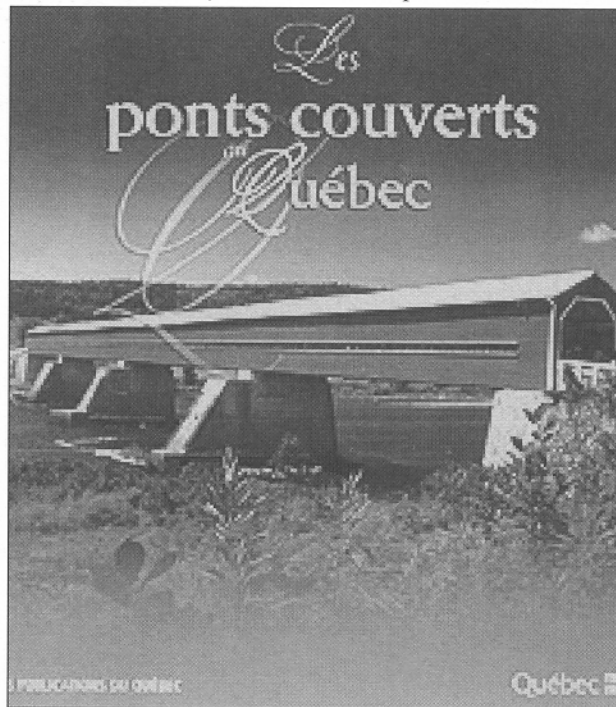
The result of nearly thirty years of research, *Les ponts couverts du Québec* is a beautifully-produced work. Amongst its pages, we discover how the covered bridge evolved in this province, beginning in the early nineteenth century. We learn of the various styles and techniques employed by covered bridge builders over the years and in different parts of the province. We come to know some of the key figures associated with Quebec's covered bridge past. And we find that vast numbers of

covered bridges were built by the Ministry of Colonization, beginning in the late nineteenth century, right up until the late 1950s, when the ministry abandoned the covered bridge as its official bridge-building technique.

*Les ponts couverts du Québec* is divided into chapters, including one which focuses on the "pearls" of Quebec's covered bridge network. This chapter is really an invitation to readers to get out and visit these fascinating pieces of our heritage for themselves. A comprehensive list of all 88 authentic covered bridges remaining in the province, accompanied by maps indicating their locations, a glossary of terms, a bibliography, and an index, complete the volume.

With all of the fascinating history and lore associated with the covered bridge in Quebec, *Les ponts couverts du Québec* is indeed a captivating read. Its splendid photography, however, elevates it into the realm of the "coffee table" book. An indispensable resource for covered bridge enthusiasts -- and for anyone who appreciates our built heritage -- *Les ponts couverts du Québec* sells for \$34.95 at local bookstores.

*Matthew Farfan is Editor of the Quebec Heritage Web (www.QuebecHeritageWeb.com)*



## Historical Society publishes story of Greenfield Park

The Greenfield Park Historical Society has published a comprehensive account of the origins and development of this once predominantly English-speaking community that sprang up on the south shore of the St. Lawrence River across from Montreal in the early 20th century. Author John Riley's work, *The History of Greenfield Park: 1910-1975*, chronicles the transformation of this once sparsely populated rural area into one of the city's first planned commuter neighbourhoods.

Early land deals, the first roads and bridges, the building of homes, schools, churches and businesses are all documented here as is the impact that the coming of the

Montreal and Southern Counties Railway had on the town's development. The book contains stories and reflections from Greenfield Park's earliest inhabitants.

Although rapid urban sprawl brought on by the exodus of Montrealers to South Shore suburbs has gradually obscured the region's English-speaking heritage, a number of Greenfield Park residents have begun working to preserve the memory of such communities as Croyon, Mackayville, Montreal South and Brookline.

John Riley's book sells for \$24.95, and can be ordered from the General Store Publishing House by calling 1-800-465-6072 or by email at [orders@gsph.com](mailto:orders@gsph.com).

## OPINION

*'It is a gnome because it has a goatee beard, a pointed hat, fat lips and nose'*

### The Spirit of the North – is it Amerindian or Celtic?

By Gérard Leduc PhD, Potton Heritage Association

The *Stanstead Journal* recently reported the acquisition by the Musée Beaulne in Coaticook of a peculiar carved stone with well defined traits of a human face. It was first discovered in 1976 at Lake Guérard in Northern Quebec, 200 km north of Schefferville by a group of caribou hunters from Baldwin Mills. At the Museum, I examined the stone carved on one side. It measures about 24 cm long by 9 cm wide and 5.4 cm thickness.

This artifact moved around quite a bit since its discovery on a boulder near the shore of the lake, and still continues to raise questions about its origins. In 1979, it was shown to Thomas E. Lee, archaeologist at Laval University who, on the basis of ancient Scandinavian iconography, proposed it had been carved by Vikings, long before Columbus came to America.

It was later given to the Sherbrooke Seminary Museum where it was recently rediscovered. Professor Yves Robillard from the Université du Québec à Montréal and specialist in Art history, a resident of Baldwin Mills, took an interest to it and, last June, published a news release.

Professor Robillard believes that, on the basis of Amerindian iconography, i.e. the illustrated representations of a subject, this carved face represents a gnome, The Spirit of the North. He stated: "It is a gnome because it has a goatee beard, a pointed hat, fat lips and nose. Algonquins call gnomes Naddaway or Nature Spirits". To hear about gnomes mingling among their legends poses no problem. As a matter of fact, an historical geography map of 1550 for North Eastern Quebec, indeed illustrates pygmies with pointed hats. Fact or fancy, it does not matter. It's the legend.

However, I express reservations about Professor Robillard's description and interpretation of The Spirit of the North. He sees a pointed hat. I rather see a bonnet leaning on one side. On the other hand, there is an obvious error when he sees a goatee beard, because there is none! The chin is beardless and clearly shows a vertical commissure, a skin fold often seen in everyday life. Before seeing a gnome with a goatee beard, one must be realistic!

In addition, Robillard declares that the stone was carved in the period 1945-1955. How can one propose such a narrow bracket? It is true that iconography of a period can suggest a date but to be so precise calls for an explanation. When an archaeological artefact is presented to the public, one would expect a more realistic description and rigorous approach. It is not enough to believe, one must know!

Indeed, the Celtic iconography suggests a very different cultural origin and a much older date as 7th century AD Celtic Irish carved stones show intriguing similarities with the Spirit of the North, namely fat noses and lips.

When one compares, side by side, the two carved faces illustrated here, the implications become very interesting. The one from Maine, carved out of a rock face and presently in the Sturbridge Museum in Massachusetts, obviously displays a Celt, owing to his physiognomy, and, specially, the head adorned with leaves and acorn of the Swamp White Oak, *Quercus bicolor*. Iconography speaks for itself here, telling that this tree was sacred to the Celts. Both face display large noses and lips and, in particular, a chin commissure. As the authors Warren W. Dexter and Donna Martin wrote in 1995, "... the same artist possibly carved the two stones"!

Although there is yet no definite proof, the Spirit of the North's face could be of a very ancient European source rather than of 1945-1955 Amerindian origin. The possibility of an ancient Celtic presence in the Quebec Northeast should be no surprise, given the widespread occurrence of Ogam petroglyphs associated with their culture which were observed in North America, namely New England, West Virginia, Colorado, Oklahoma and the Province of Quebec.

What could the Celts have been doing in the Schefferville area? Extract iron ore as other unknown people took copper from the Memphremagog mine in Potton and at Capelton near North Hatley, several hundreds years, if not thousands of years ago before the better known exploitations of the 19th and 20th centuries, plausible dates based on physico-chemical and ecological observations on the mining residues.

#### Montréal Adopts Heritage Policy

Communiqué – On May 31, City Council adopted Montréal's first Heritage Policy. This was the final step in a process undertaken 18 months earlier, when Montréal gave a group of residents chaired by Gretta Chambers the mandate of preparing a directional statement for a Heritage Policy. The draft policy was tabled by Gérald Tremblay in fall 2004 and submitted for public consultation by the Office de consultation publique de Montréal. Dozens of Montrealers, speaking on their own behalf or as group representatives, expressed their views on the city's proposal. Francine Sénécal, Vice-Chair of the Executive Committee and member responsible for culture and heritage, pointed out that Montrealers now have the opportunity to appeal to the Montréal Heritage Council regarding all aspects of heritage management by the city administration, which has taken the bold step of announcing its priorities and the means it intends to use to accomplish them. Montréal Heritage Policy Full English version: [http://patrimoine.ville.montreal.qc.ca/doc\\_enonce/politiquea.pdf](http://patrimoine.ville.montreal.qc.ca/doc_enonce/politiquea.pdf)