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MICHAEL FISH: A FRIEND OF WINDSOR STATION AND LAFONTAINE HOUSE

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# Quebec Heritage

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Vol 6, No. 1 SPRING 2011

## News



### Ways of Memory

Oral History meets neighbourhood activism in Montreal

### Conservation, controversy, commemoration

Redpath, Overdale and the Sherbrooke Rand

### Martial Artists

The Irish Swift Stick and the French Foil

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# Quebec Heritage News

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Quebec Heritage Magazine is produced four times yearly by the Quebec Anglophone Heritage Network (QAHN) with the support of The Department of Canadian Heritage and Quebec's Minsitère de la Culture et des Communications. QAHN is a non-profit and non-partisan umbrella organization whose mission is to help advance knowledge of the history and culture of English-speaking society in Quebec.  
Canada Post Publication Mail Agreement Number 405610004.  
ISSN 17707-2670



Canadian Heritage Patrimoine canadien



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Cover image: Thanks to Héritage Montréal, the Guaranteed Milk Bottle is now a permanent part of the Montreal landscape. (Photo: Rod MacLeod)

## Jackhammer logic by Rod MacLeod

**H**oly Trinity Church is gone now, but a few weeks back I took a walk down Viger Street at the border of Old Montreal to check on its state of demolition. It was a sad and gruesome sight. Only a chunk of it was left: the main façade with fragments of its flanking towers and a lone shelf of cantilevered ceiling, plus other vestiges of smaller rooms and doorways. Gazing up into the underside of its crumbling roof was vaguely obscene, like seeing the inner parts of a corpse. That even this delicate relic of the church's former glory was still standing was testament to its fundamentally solid construction. As if to drive this point home, a worker with a jackhammer stood atop the scaffolding pinned against the façade and drilled away at the tower, with no discernable effect. Except that eventually it did the trick.

I found myself wondering what goes through such a fellow's mind as he stands there tearing cruelly at a noble piece of church. I imagine that, like loggers, he has little sympathy for the building-hugging set, or, if he does, he rationalizes the act by saying it's just a job. Aware of the many great crimes committed in history in the name of just doing one's job, I do admit that I am glad it is he and not I doing that rationalization. Besides, given the state to which a building like Holy Trinity had been reduced, and given the unsuccessful arguments and initiatives to save it over the past months and years, there wasn't much choice. At that stage, *somebody* has to pick up the jackhammer and finish the job. I mean, buildings don't just demolish themselves, right?

Right.

I was also struck, in hindsight, by the motive for my visit. I wanted to see Holy Trinity before it was too late – like that visit to an elderly relative whom you know might not be around next summer. But this was also my

first visit to Holy Trinity. Despite having read much about its history I had never actually gone to look at it, even in its heyday. This is shameful, yes, but also I think quite typical of many of us, even avid heritage buffs. There isn't time to get to know all the heritage sights, certainly not in a huge place like Montreal. Too often we pay attention only when death is imminent – and even there, we are more likely just to follow the debates in the news. We respond more on principle than we do on a gut level, the way we would if it were a building we used and loved. Just as we take the heritage sights we love for granted (often until it's too late), we also take for granted the heritage activists without whose efforts all kinds of things would disappear without our realizing it.

So much is just unsung heroism – but leaving it to the activists lets the rest of us off the hook. Apathy over politics and poverty is dangerous in a democracy, but even when it comes to heritage matters we should strive to be informed and clear. Who we are, and how and where we live, are crucial aspects of our lives, not to be delegated to authorities of any stripe.

Heritage is not always black and white, after all. I discovered this as I followed the other big preservation story of this past winter: the Redpath mansion. Again, I had never seen the building in question, and was puzzled. What were they talking about? Knowing as I do rather more about the Redpath family than is probably healthy, I could not account for this house. John Redpath did not live there, as many contributing to the debate were claiming (including the *Héritage Montréal* website), though the lots on which it was built did originally form part of his estate, which he sold off at great profit in the 1840s and 50s. There were many more significant Redpath family houses in the area that have not survived, including the one on Sherbrooke Street where

John's daughter-in-law and grandson were victims of an infamous double murder (or double suicide? The jury is still very much out) in 1901.

Then *The Suburban* weighed in on February 2 with a page 2 article by "Suburban Staff" purporting to give the "final word on 3455-57 Du Musée (Not Redpath Mansion)" and stating: "John Redpath nor any of his children ever lived here. There is NO mansion, NO house and NO more than part of one wall. What was there was demolished with a valid permit in 1986." Well, ok. That made sense, given what I knew of the Redpaths and the mountainside. But learning that *Suburban* editor Michael Sochaczewski was also one of the developers planning the condo on the Redpath site made me realize that the plot was thickening.

Things got quite bizarre when a letter to *The Gazette* appeared (February 9) claiming that Dinu Bumbaru of *Héritage Montréal* represented an age-old elite bent on strangling the life of the city, while Sochaczewski represented the little guy trying to make the place work. Where does one begin with such a claim? I won't even try here.

Suffice it to say I realized I had to see this fabled house-that-was-not-a-house for myself. It took a bit of searching along streets I've known for years – but there it was, at last: a noble-looking shell, lovely detail, crumbling walls and broken windows. A wonderful home – once. It certainly doesn't have the heritage pizzazz of a Van Horne mansion, a Papineau house, or even an Overdale Avenue, although that shouldn't matter, of course. Could it be saved – that is to say, restored? To me it didn't seem beyond hope. Should it be saved? I found myself thinking of the work entailed and was glad it wouldn't be me that had to do it.

I'm also glad it isn't up to me to have to pick up a jackhammer and finish the job.

# Whole parts

## A new look at Quebec's English-speaking history

by Matthew Farfan and Shaun L Turriff

What place should Anglophones have in Quebec's collective narrative? Scholars from various domains gathered at Concordia University on February 11<sup>th</sup> to explore this interesting question. The event was organized by Dr Paul Zanazanian, Postdoctoral Fellow at Laval University as well as an instructor in the Department of Education at Concordia University, and Dr Lorraine O'Donnell, Coordinator-Researcher at the Canadian Institute for Research on Linguistic Minorities at Concordia University. They wanted to bring together individuals and organizations that have been exploring this question independently and hopefully foster a community of study surrounding this subject.

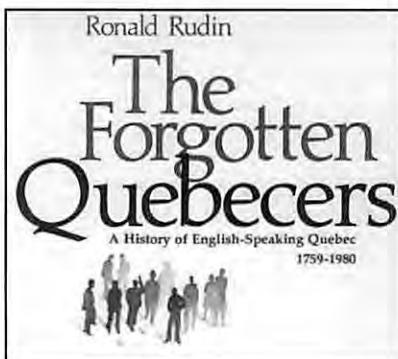
"We created a space where people who have been working independently on this question can come together," said O'Donnell. Zanazanian added that they had been careful not to imply this space was open only to English-speaking Quebecers. "Francophones want to know more about the Anglophone community," he said. "They are open to discussion

at a scholarly level. We didn't want just Anglophones talking to Anglophones, but also Francophones talking to Anglophones and Francophones talking to Francophones about Anglophones."

And it worked. "It was an exciting day of people exchanging ideas across the linguistic divide, to use the cliché," Zanazanian explained.

Speakers included Roxanne dela Sablonière, a psychologist from Université de Montréal working on questions of collective memory, and Louis-Georges Harvey from Bishop's who looks at the role of English speakers in Quebec's early nineteenth-century political and intellectual life. Zanazanian's own expertise lies in the study of how history is taught in the classroom.

O'Donnell hopes that people who attended the conference came away with a sense of a new network interested in the subject of Anglophone history in Quebec. She noted that it was one of the first times something like this had been addressed in this kind of forum, in a university setting, with a many senior scholars and practitioners from the field.



# Identity block

## Anglo label misleading, warns scholar

"Many in the room will know that when we read a work of history, we're not only getting an analysis of some point in the past," declared Concordia history professor Ronald Rudin. "So this would be historical writing as a kind of secondary source, but also as a reflection of the time in which it was written."

Rudin is the author of *The Forgotten Quebecers: A History of English-Speaking Quebec, 1759-1980*, a seminal work – and to date the only comprehensive work – on the history of Quebec Anglophones. Naturally, Rudin was one of the historians asked to speak at the seminar.

Rudin wrote *The Forgotten Quebecers* a quarter century ago because he sensed a need for more information on the subject of the history of Anglophones in the province. The idea arose after a discussion with Bishop's University sociologist Gary Caldwell about the lack of documents on this population's history.

"I said, there's no book on it. He said: write it," said Rudin, laughing at the memory. Before writing the book he said he had to consider populations

with various religions, diverse ethnic origins, and wider range of social classes.

Thinking back on the writing of *The Forgotten Quebecers*, Rudin says he would not make the same decisions today that he made then.

"In a sense, in the early eighties when I wrote this book," he said, "I was trying to write the category 'English speaker' into the fabric of Quebec history by using the term as broadly as I could." If he were to rewrite the book now, he would address a question he did not previously explore: "To what degree, for the large group of people that I focused on in *The Forgotten Quebecers*, did the fact that they were English speakers play a fundamental role in their lives?"

When it comes to identity, labelling a group by their linguistic background is a notion that Rudin questions.

"It's one thing to simply say we're going to identify these people as a group and talk about them," he said. "But isn't it important that those people, those subjects in the past, who can't speak for themselves, and we're giving them voice, that maybe they should have thought of themselves in

those terms if we're going to use that identifier?"

Rudin thinks that English speakers in 1985 might not have acted as part of a linguistic minority. If so to what extent, he wonders, does their heritage matter in understanding Quebec history?

"Could it be an obstacle in [studying] the past," said Rudin, "by imposing an identity on people that they may or not have held themselves."

He suggested that other factors should be considered when identifying a group, such as religion, ethnicity and language. Rudin believes that people

have multiple identities. "Not simply to assume that one marker, such as language, was always pertinent," he added.

Rudin challenges the notion of an Anglophone Quebecer, and proposes more questions to consider in the study of the history of English speakers. "I think we need to reflect on how much being English speakers affected them in that particular place," he said. "The pertinence of the concept 'English speaker' is neither natural nor fits. It is constructed, to a considerable extent."

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## Unknown quantities

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### *The search for shared memory in today's diverse classrooms*

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**P**aul Zanazanian believes that historical memories have a great deal of importance.

"Shared historical memories in the common past offer group members a sense of cohesion between the past, present and future," said Zanazanian, a post-doctoral fellow of the Canada Research Chair in the Contemporary History of Quebec at the Université Laval. "They provide a sense of common knowingness and agency."

He believes this common memory transmits historical experiences of the past. It lets people know about important characters, heroes, customs, and gives a sense of what sort of history our ethnoppeers had. Zanazanian believes a lot of shared historical memory is learned in school. This is where he studies the success or failure of including Anglophone history in the collective memory. A metaphor he uses to support this theory is the subject of French and English conflicts.

"I find that this whole notion of French-English conflict weighs heavily and people in my study. Teachers and students, they have to somehow deal with that. A lot of them somehow kind of repeat it or justify it, or else kind of refuse it or reject it." He

explains that everyone deals with the past differently depending on where they stand.

Is there a lack of Quebec Anglophone history resources in schools? Mathew Russell believes so. Russell, a teacher at D'Arcy McGee High School in Gatineau, Quebec, was at the conference to comment on Zanazanian's presentation.

"I had parent-teacher interviews last night," said Russell. "And there was a lot of explaining to Anglophone parents about the textbooks that we have been given by the ministry. They have concerns about the type of history that their children are learning, and the lack of Anglophone perspective."

This is why he believes supplemental resources would be invaluable to history teachers. These resources can be used to challenge the current textbooks, and the set narrative of the history of Quebec.

Alternative sources give different perspectives, which allow students to develop their own interpretations of history. Unfortunately, the shortage of resources and documents on Anglophone history poses an obstacle towards a complete Quebec narrative.

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## LETTER

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Sometime ago, I began to research my family history. Because of many conflicting facts, this has been a long journey. Unlike the claims of "Ancestry," pertinent data has not leapt from my monitor! My journey has taken me to large and small archives and libraries. I have purchased or borrowed several books. I have approached any "experts" I could find. I am ready to conclude that a lot of Canadian history has been sadly distorted or ignored.

In my grandfather's day there was a conscious effort to bury the family's time in Lower Canada. In "Orange Ontario," popular thinking made all people from Quebec, particularly those with a French name, Roman Catholic. I still get this kind of response, even from Quebec researchers.

Through my contact with Missisquoi Archives and Historical Society, I became aware of the *Quebec Heritage News*. I usually find all articles interesting and informative. I am impressed with the effort made to highlight so many little known Quebec

stories. I hope that one day, I will find an article about the Huguenots who came to Lower Canada as a result of the American Revolution. I can contribute two confirmed families and of course my Labares/LeBars. I am aware that, being a small group, they integrated with other nationalities, largely the Germans from the Mohawk Valley. I have discovered that, later, some did marry into Quebec French families and did convert to Catholicism. I loved my grandfather, but am afraid that he would be horrified at this recognition.

Well done to those who I am sure work very hard to produce an appealing and readable record of Canadian history.

**Lorraine Y. LeBar**  
Toronto, Ontario

# Death by neglect

## City backs Redpath mansion tear-down

by Chris Curtis

**A**fter narrowly avoiding destruction this past February, Montreal's Redpath Mansion continues to slowly rot on the side of Mount Royal.

The 125-year-old house was thrust into the centre of a city-wide debate on urban planning and development this winter when Mayor Tremblay supported a plan to destroy the mansion and transform it into condominiums.

Although the proposed seven-story condo project violated height restrictions on a zoning bylaw by nine metres, Tremblay was prepared to give its developers, Ari and Michael Sochaczewski, a derogation.

"After the Sochaczewskis bought the mansion, they signed an agreement to maintain it," opposition city councillor Alex Norris said on January 27. "And now they are essentially being rewarded for their neglect of the building."

The project would have destroyed one of the last remaining examples of Queen Anne architecture. Built by Sir Andrew Taylor in 1886, the imposing brick house was once at the centre of Golden Square Mile, a wealthy neighbourhood where the city's elite carved out a piece of the English countryside in Quebec.

The Redpath family - who helped build the Lachine Canal, founded Canada's first sugar refinery and were instrumental in ushering the country into the industrial revolution - sold the house in the early twentieth century. By the time the Sochaczewskis bought the mansion, in 1986, it was a convalescent home falling into disrepair.

Almost instantly, the developers began the process of tearing down the house to build a \$4 million housing project. After the Quebec Superior Court issued an injunction halting the building's destruction, the Sochaczewskis made no effort to keep the mansion from continued erosion.

"The city should enforce measures to have the Redpath Mansion properly preserved," said Dino Bumbaru, the executive director of Héritage

Montréal. "It's a historical part of Montreal and it's falling apart."

The latest plan to destroy the mansion caused a public outcry against Tremblay and his Union Montreal party. Representatives from the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts were particularly outraged. The MMFA, which sits down the street from the Redpath house, had just finished a series of renovations costing roughly \$40 million - including a sunroom that looks up onto Mount Royal. The proposed condo

tower would have significantly hindered the room's view of the mountain.

"We respected the city's zoning bylaw when we built [the sunroom]," museum spokesperson Danielle Champagne said on January 31. "Why can't they [the Sochaczewskis]?"

Norris even suggested that Tremblay's support of the project was politically motivated.

"Now I think it's worth mentioning that the Sochaczewskis are the owners of *The Suburban*," he said. "Their newspaper strongly endorsed the mayor's candidacy in 2009, telling their readers it was the most important municipal election of their lifetime and to get out and vote for Tremblay."

Ultimately the mayor withdrew his support for the development after the city's urban planning department suggested the

project be halted.

"There was a concern that the condos would block the MMFA's view of Mont Royal," said Ville Marie borough councillor Sammy Forcillo. "And that doesn't just affect the borough, it affects tourism and the 600,000 people who visit the museum every year."

The Redpath house may have avoided death by wrecking ball but it continues to slowly fall apart before Montrealers' eyes. Its red brick façade is cracking, its wooden shingles are fading and the building's wooden frame has almost completely rotted.

"Every time one of these buildings is destroyed," said Norris. "Montreal loses a part of its soul."



Redpath Mansion.  
Photo: Rod MacLeod

# Fairbairn House celebrates Heritage Week with Two Culture-Filled Events

by Anita Rutledge



In February 2011, directors of the Fairbairn House Heritage Centre, now under development at Wakefield, Quebec, were in a celebratory mood.

First, they organized a luncheon on Heritage Day and invited local history buffs to gather and share moments of historic importance. Twenty-five people attended.



Prizes were offered for the best stories. The top prize was awarded to Norma Geggie for her story about her father-in-law's arrival in Wakefield a century ago. That's when a young medical doctor named Harold Geggie arrived by train at the local railway station to apprentice with the established country doctor in the village. Intending to remain for two years, his plans changed soon after as he found himself in charge after the sudden death of the older doctor. Dr Geggie ended up staying on for the rest of his life, becoming the much-loved doctor who created the hospital and medical centre now so important to valley residents. The second luncheon prize went to Louise Schwartz who traced the steps taken, over many years, to finally create the mountainous Gatineau Park, now a familiar part of our back yard.

Later in heritage week, Fairbairn House directors joined the innkeepers at the village's Wakefield Mill Inn and Spa to hold a gala fund-raiser for interior renovations of a farmhouse built in the 1860s by pioneer and inn founder William Fairbairn. The farmhouse is now the future home of the Fairbairn House Heritage Centre. The hosts for the evening were joined by bass player John Geggie and CBC radio host Rob Clipperton in welcoming about eighty guests to the rich historic surroundings in the old Mill. At the before-dinner reception, guests had ample time to mingle, exchange ideas and enjoy the ambience, music and the "Fairbairn Fizz" cocktails as they visited the silent auction tables to make their bids. Eighteen items were offered by local businesses and individuals in aid of more funding for the Fairbairn House Heritage Centre.



The four-course dinner menu had interesting choices. Included were frogs' legs or wild game with mains of lamb or pickerel, all with excellent wine pairings. And the desserts were irresistible! A fitting feast for Fairbairn's friends!

All in all, it was a very enjoyable evening, thanks to the imagination and generosity of the Wakefield Mill Inn owners and staff as well as supporting local businesses. Everyone worked together to help us realize another \$5,000 for interior renovations on the old house, scheduled to be carried out this summer. The first phase of renovations, the outside of the house, was completed last year. The third phase will see exhibits and live programming put in place, ready for the centre's opening in 2012.

Now the Fairbairn House board and its supporters are hard at work planning new fund-raising events. In April, a show by wilderness photographer Mike Beedell will be displayed showcasing his recent experiences swimming with giant humpback whales and other daring adventures. And in May there will be a concert in the park with Canadian folk singer and songwriter Rodney Brown.

# Ways of Memory

## *Notes from the next wave in urban heritage activism*

by Matthew Farfan and Shaun L Turriff



**H**elen Fotopulos (member of the City of Montreal Executive Committee responsible for culture, heritage and women's issues) officially opened the event, noting Montreal's importance as a hub of cultural expression, and therefore of intangible heritage. She spoke of the new heritage policies that recognize the need to preserve less concrete forms of heritage. Fotopulos also drew attention to "Anglophone" heritage that was not directly related to Anglo-Saxon or Irish/Celtic groups. Of Greek background and schooled in the Protestant English school system, Fotopulos claims that she herself "thinks and dreams in three languages." Fotopulos closed with what amounted to a call-to-arms, hoping that



we continue to "look beyond what we [usually] call heritage" and to "share, network," and "make tangible" some of the intangible elements. The charismatic Dinu Bumbaru (policy director

at Héritage Montréal) gave the Keynote Address, after joking about getting lost with Michael Fish in the Hall Building.

Bumbaru noted Montreal's long history as a "cultural metropolis," but from a heritage perspective also noted the differences that make up the community: Francophones hold a more historical notion of heritage, while Anglophones focus on architecture; among other communities there is an emerging sense of "neighbourhood."

He pointed out that over time, the understanding of what constitutes heritage has changed dramatically - especially over the past few decades. Now we embrace a larger definition, one that includes not only built and archaeological heritage, but also



landscape and memorial heritage. "Landscape heritage," Bumbaru explained, includes many things - a tree-lined street, for instance. "One tree is not so important; you need a whole row of them. Just like the staircases on the Plateau. You need to preserve the whole row."

In terms of memorial heritage, one can include whatever involves the collective memory of the city, everything from a popular or ethnically-rooted tradition (the St Patrick's Day parade, for example) to the name of a street or neighbourhood (Griffintown, for example) to a specific business or landmark (Schwartz's Deli or the Montreal Bagel Factory, for instance). Schwartz's is not a historic monument, he wryly observed, "but remove Schwartz's and a whole piece of Montreal falls into the river."

The new provincial definition of heritage even encompasses institutions, Bumbaru said. "So the Royal Montreal Curling Club, which is the oldest

*Top left: Helen Fotopulos. Right and lower left: Dinu Bumbaru address Ways of Memory attendees. Photos: Rod MacLeod and Matthew Farfan*



sports association in the Americas, would be recognized as a part of our heritage.”

Bumbaru also addressed Héritage Montréal's mandate and chronicled a few of its successes. He made it clear that its role is that of a promoter of heritage, not a protector; the real responsibility to protect heritage lies with the owners of heritage buildings, largely the private sector. (This is a sentiment that would be picked up to a certain extent

later in the day by Michael Fish, in his acceptance speech on receiving an award from QAHN.) Important to remember, claims Bumbaru, is that heritage is not about the past, but rather about the present and the future. Challenges are many, such as the issue of Quebec's religious heritage, an important element of the Montreal landscape and history, as well as issues surrounding the imperial past of the city - Dominion Square, for example.



1. Exhibit booths.
2. Organizers Joan Donnelly and Kathy Teasdale.
3. The lunch buffet.
4. Hugh Maynard of Qu'anglo gives a workshop on Federal government funding.
5. Sabrina McFadden of COCo demonstrates how confusing provincial funding can be.
6. The workshops were well-attended.

# Upload archive

## *Doing history in the digital age*

by Shereen Ahmed Rafea

The traditional image of a grandparent sitting on a rocking chair recounting stories of the old days is what comes to mind when we think of oral history. That simple act of storytelling is in fact a vital and priceless tool for preserving history and keeping it alive. Valuable information of triumphs and defeats, insight into life generations ago and traces of our ancestors are all things we can gain from oral history. Since the year 2006, the Centre for Oral History and Digital Storytelling (COHDS) at Concordia University has been hard at work utilizing digital resources to record history.

"It's beyond just sort of studying the past, just for the sake of studying the past," said Steven High to attendees at his workshop. "It's a means of connecting the past and the present."

High is a professor and Canada Research Chair in Public History at Concordia, as well as a member of the centre. His workshop on oral history was part of a one-day conference, *Ways of Memory: The Montreal Experience*.



"Our biggest project is called Montreal Life Stories," High said. "It's about Montrealers who've come from all around the world who've escaped large scale violence, such as genocide in Rwanda in 1994, or genocide in Cambodia, or war, or people in Haiti." They work towards learning more about vanishing communities and Montreal heritage.

High believes that now that people are in Montreal, their stories become ours. He emphasizes the use of proper ethics in the centre's interviews such as consent forms, respect and rights of use. This, he believes, helps ensure that the interviewee's point of view is heard.

"What's really important is to have time to cover the ground," said High. "Not just your ground, but their ground. Oral history is about understanding history from "their point of view."

The centre also works at archiving the history of people without a voice, such as homeless or schizophrenic adults. "Homeless people are studied," he said, "but not often heard."

High believes that oral history is a way for them to connect and open up. New media also presents opportunities to record high quality interviews in audio and video. This creates a new method of archiving for years to come.

"There's a power when you can put a face to the name in history," said High, "and you make it personal, because history is personal."

According to High, the centre has received great responses from the wider community; a lot of people are expressing interest in getting involved.

"We've already established ourselves internationally," he said, "so we're getting a lot of people coming in. We're now moving beyond Quebec and really connecting projects," he added. "The challenge is always, there are only so many hours in the day."



The centre is made up of students and faculty members who each have different majors and specialities, but all have an interest in the field. They use new digital recorders, cameras and other equipment to conduct research projects and in-depth interviews to archive oral history.

# Picket signs for preservation

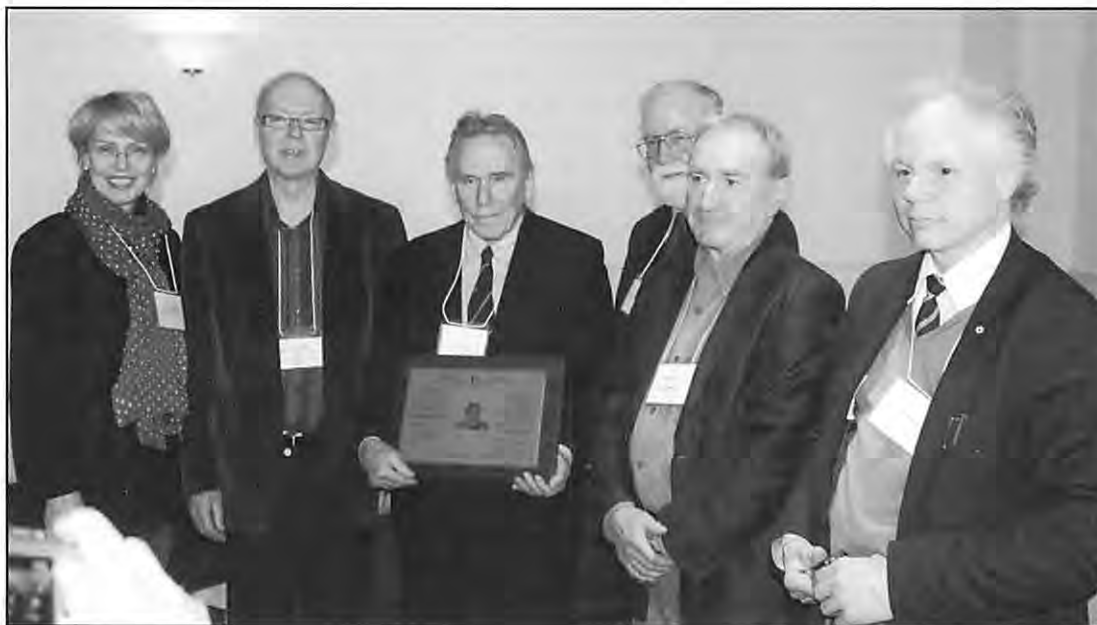
## *Michael Fish honoured for lifetime achievement*

by Celia Ste Croix

“I stand on the shoulders of many people in this room,” Michael Fish said, acknowledging those in the heritage and historical community who have fought to protect significant sites in the Montreal area over the years.

Stand on the corner next to the guy with the picket sign.”

He also stirred up the room a bit by saying that Mayor Drapeau had been a great conservationist. He explained that the former mayor of Montreal



Fish was honoured at the Ways of Memory conference at Concordia University on March 26. The Quebec Anglophone Heritage Network presented this lifetime achievement award to the architect for his many years of hard work saving Montreal landmarks. QAHN president, Kevin O'Donnell made the presentation and there was a standing ovation in the room as Michael Fish accepted it.

Fish has been defending built heritage in Montreal for almost 40 years. He is noted for being instrumental in protecting the Windsor Train Station and for being a founder of Friends of Windsor Station. He also helped found Save Montreal, which has worked with Héritage Montréal and other groups to protect historically relevant sites such as the Redpath Mansion and to raise awareness about the importance of cherishing our past. As recently as this past February, Fish was standing in solidarity outside the LaFontaine Mansion as part of a student-organized peaceful advocacy for the preservation of the building.

In his acceptance speech he said: “A lot of historians want to sit back and chronicle, and there's nothing wrong with that, but don't be afraid to be engaged.

wanted to protect double the area of Old Montreal when he was in office but the business community wouldn't hear of it. “He prevented the Ville Marie expressway from running along the harbour,” Fish went on in his defence of Drapeau. “He did all he could when no one would support him.”

After his speech, he told *Quebec Heritage News* magazine that he was very flattered to receive the award. “It's not so much the award as the spirit in which it is given,” Fish said. “I'm just a soldier marching along with a very good troupe of people that do the same thing I do,” he added.

When asked if he thought of himself as an activist he had this to say; “Depends what you mean by activist. I've always considered myself a pragmatist. I was as much in the development business as I was in the business of picketing with a sign to save a building. I never figured that any property owner should be penalized because somebody was asking him to save his building. And I never tried to save a building without making sure that it would make money. Am I an activist? I don't know. You have to learn a bit about writing if you're going to do anything, so I consider myself, to a certain extent, a pamphleteer.”

## OFF THE WALL

### *Spreading diversity one mural at a time*

by Shereen Ahmed Rafea

**M**ontreal is a city of multiculturalism and diverse heritage. While there are many ways to preserve and spread that diversity throughout the country, one group has chosen to adopt a visual approach to heritage. EN MASSE, a non-profit organization that started two years ago, aims to spread the message of sharing heritage and involving a community by using art.

"There are several advantages of using this as a process," said Darryl Climan, speaking at the final session of Ways of Memory conference at Concordia University on March 26. "It's a method that involves bringing heritage into a medium that is new and user-friendly and to actually engage with artists."

Climan and co-presenter Jason Botkin are part of EN MASSE. They work to bring together artists and students to produce collaborative murals and projects in black and white. The project initially involved new or successful artists, but as it grew it also started expanding to include students, such as the project in John Abbot College last year.

"We involved 50 or 60 students and 6 artists," said Climan, "and we engaged the artists and the students in

dialogue before the event took place to decide what their goals were for the project, what they thought would best represent themselves and the college."

The students and artists collaborated and drew on a 350-foot-long construction wall near the college. According to Climan, multiculturalism and history were the elements they were looking for. In the college, they have students born in 110 different countries," he says. "It really is a good opportunity. It's a method that engages participants."

Botkin also explained that it is a way for street artists to have a place to showcase their work. "They don't have a platform for expressing themselves," he said. "Not in the way that, if I'd gone to Concordia or some university, I could walk into a gallery and say, 'Here are my credentials; I would like a show here.' The EN MASSE project offers them a way to do that."

EN MASSE works on multiple projects in different venues, from schools to museums and festivals. Botkin mentioned an event that they have held before called *Nuit Blanche*,



which was open to the public.

"Anybody who came to the wall who felt like picking up a marker or a brush could work with us," he said. "And there are a few artists on hand to facilitate the process. It's ultimately about creating something larger together."

Throughout all their work they have attempted to use art to merge a community of artists and students, regardless of talent or success. "We feel it's one of the most important factors in allowing heritage to continue forward," said Climan. "To engage people in something that attracts them to participate, to gain ownership."



## BOTH SLOW BURN

# *Students rally to save former LaFontaine house*

by Celia Ste Croix

**A**s many with an interest in preserving Montreal heritage know, there has been a long and frustrating battle to protect the Louis-Hippolyte LaFontaine mansion at 1395 Overdale Avenue in downtown Montreal. LaFontaine, you may recall, is the man who helped create responsible government in Canada and defend the rights of Francophones in the country. He is a founding father, a key figure in our nation's history. So why is his mansion at risk of crumbling into the ground?

Ashley Clarkson and Selina Antonucci want to know just that. What started out as an assignment for a Public History class in Concordia's History Department has grown into a campaign for preservation. The pair organized a petition and a peaceful advocacy demonstration which took place outside the mansion on February 23, 2011. Their efforts have also brought about television and newspaper coverage and a meeting with Helen Fotopulos, a member of Mayor Gerard Tremblay's executive committee.

"Right now the city is really indifferent about the building," Clarkson said at the advocacy demonstration. "They have made the owner preserve it. He's not allowed to demolish it. But they're not doing anything with it, so we are hoping, with this petition and raising awareness, the city will show interest in the building and hopefully restore it into maybe a museum for responsible government."

These two students are awakening an issue that people have been struggling to resolve for twenty years or more. Architect Michael Fish has been fighting to protect heritage buildings in the downtown core for thirty years and he has watched the LaFontaine Mansion

fall apart for decades.

"It's as if I'm in Virginia watching Mount Vernon [George Washington's House] burn slowly over a period of thirty years," Michael Fish said sadly, looking up at the house covered in graffiti, with smashed windows and boarded up doors.

Anthropology teacher Anna Deaguayo was also at the demonstration. She is currently teaching at Dawson College and was part of Les Amis de la Maison LaFontaine in 2006. They were a group



of responsible government.

"It is one of the only buildings of that era," explained Deaguayo. "The parliament buildings are gone; they are actually trying to preserve the base of those buildings by digging down because it's important - yet this [gesturing at the house] from the same time period, it's just being left. It's such a shame."

The owner of the building is said not to be interested in preserving it, and, to look at the state of the house, that seems like a fair guess. The city has the power to expropriate the building and, according to Deaguayo, the provincial and Federal governments would then be willing to put money into it. But despite numerous petitions and efforts of grassroots organisations over the years, the city has not moved to protect the building.

Land owner Robert Landau had no comment on the matter when reached at his Sherbrooke Street art gallery the day of the demonstration.

Clarkson and Antonucci met with Helen Fotopulos, responsible for culture, heritage, design and the status of women for the City of Montreal, on March 3<sup>rd</sup> to present their petition. The students were told by Fotopulos that the City cannot



of Canadian Studies and History teachers that came together to draw attention to the situation surrounding the mansion. They also wanted to turn it into a centre for the interpretation

afford to expropriate the building at this time.

"She said they haven't been as indifferent as we may have believed," said Clarkson after the meeting. "She gave us copies of letters Mayor Tremblay has been sending to the Federal Government asking them to help him with the LaFontaine Mansion. Fotopolous was explaining to us that they can't do anything without the help of the Federal Government and they don't seem to be interested."

Fotopolous suggested they should try to find a politician interested in championing the idea so Clarkson and Antonucci have now turned their efforts to the Federal Government.

On March 15<sup>th</sup> Clarkson received a reply from Parks Canada and the

office of Environment Minister, Peter Kent. The letter explained that the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada (HSMBC) needs the owner's permission to do an evaluation of a site's potential national historic significance.

"As the endorsement of the owners of the Louis-Hippolyte LaFontaine house has not been forthcoming," the letter went on to read, "the HSMBC cannot give further consideration to this matter at this time. Parks Canada has no current plans to acquire and develop the site or to create an interpretive centre."

Clarkson and Antonucci continue to send e-mails and letters. Their petition is at 124 signatures and growing. They intend to send it to the Federal government when it is larger

but the meeting with Montreal City Hall has taken some of the wind out of their sails.

"It seems every level of government wants to brush the issue aside," said Clarkson, "when this building is not only historically important because of LaFontaine, yet also architecturally because John Ostell built it and it is speculated to be the last known residence he built still standing."

Visit Clarkson and Antonucci's website for more information, updates and to sign the petition [www.lhlafontainemansion.webnode.com](http://www.lhlafontainemansion.webnode.com).

*Celia Ste Croix is a journalism student at Concordia University and lives in The Point where she has been discovering the area's rich history.*

## IMMIGRANT? MOI? by Shaun L Turriff

**D**olores Sandoval and Greg Robinson represent MOI (Musée-observatoire de l'immigration / Museum Observation Immigration), a new project seeking to address current issues vis-a-vis immigration in Quebec. "Canadian Museums," said Sandoval, "see only British, French and...Aboriginal." The MOI would seek to explore the contributions of immigrant communities to the life of the city and province. Sandoval and Robinson noted that "immigrant" is often a dirty word, and that many of the so-called visible minorities are in fact, invisible.



The MOI, which seeks to acquire the old Dow observatory as a location, would be a place for scholarship, and would make use of the potential of digital information. Sandoval said that she is always surprised to learn that people who study Greek immigrants in Montreal never seem to

know people who study Italian immigrants, or that people who study Black Francophone communities never seem to know who studies the English ones.

Robinson noted also that immigration is a dynamic process, and needs to be studied as such, citing the local example of French Canadian migration to, and back from, New England in the nineteenth century. They closed by noting that Montreal is very cosmopolitan, and that the contributions of the immigrant communities are everywhere, if we look for them.

# FROM SHILLELAGH TO QUEBEC Renaissance of the Irish martial arts

by Maxime Chouinard



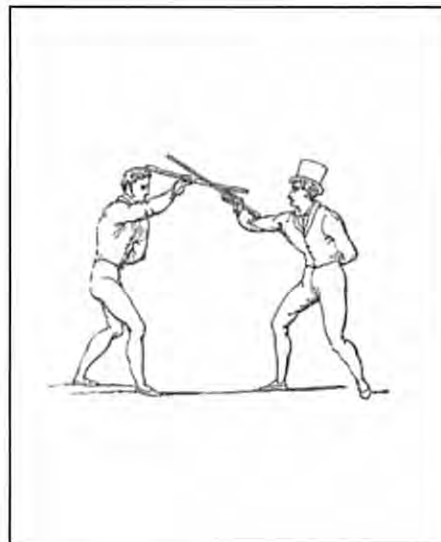
The past few months the Literary and Historical Society of Quebec (the Morrin Centre) offered a course in an ancient Irish martial art, the An Maide Mear (the swift stick). The course, given by Maxime Chouinard, offered a glimpse of a living tradition – basic fighting techniques as well as the history and traditions of this art.

survived: Collar and Elbow wrestling and Bataireacht or Fighting stick. The first references to these arts come from Elizabethan writers, but the fighting stick only became a real staple of the Irishman in the eighteenth century. It was associated with the faction fights – those early versions of Irish gang warfare when clans would battle over politics or religion or just for fun, at weddings, wakes and country fairs. Because of penal laws enacted to prevent such a custom from sprouting, and because they had been prohibited by the British from carrying weapons, the Irish found their means of defence in a club disguised as a walking aid.

Thus was introduced the famous Shillelagh.

Contrary to most held beliefs, the Irish were quite adept at this art. Several instructors made a living out of teaching its use to young men before a fair or an important fight.

and “Ramsey” – from county Antrim, Northern Ireland. These styles were barely saved from extinction, and at the moment are not taught openly in Ireland. The only places you can actually learn these techniques are in Glasgow, Scotland, and in Quebec City.



Often this role was held by travelling dance masters, or by school masters. It is said that many families had their own style, passed down through the generations.

Today only two of these styles are still commonly practised: “Doyle”

The Antrim style’s history can be traced with certainty to the mid-nineteenth century, when a gentleman nicknamed “Tickelyboot” became famous in his county for his mastery of the weapon. Following the demise of the Factions and beginning of Irish Independence, this art was viewed in a negative way, and slowly disappeared from most families. Fortunately a Renaissance movement has been growing, mostly in North America but also recently in Ireland, promoting the return of this long lost tradition.

For anyone interested in reconnecting with their roots, or simply learning a fun and uncommon martial art, you can communicate with Maxime Chouinard at

max.d.chouinard@gmail.com

Courses are given twice a month at the Morrin Centre in Quebec City, special courses can also be arranged in any other location.

In most people’s heads, the words ‘martial art’ conjure ideas of a mystical Asia. Even though the word finds its origin in a seventeenth-century fencing treaty, it is now totally disconnected from the western hemisphere in our pop culture. It is surprising to learn that all countries in Europe once had several native martial arts, and that some of them are still alive: *Savate* and *Canne de combat* from France, *Jogo Do Pau* from Portugal, *Juego del Palo* from the Canary Islands or *Bastone Siciliano* from Italy. But even though for nearly two centuries Ireland has produced widely renowned boxers, the simple mention of an Irish martial art raises many eyebrows.

At one point several martial arts were practiced in Ireland, including swordsmanship, spear throwing, wrestling, and boxing. Today only two distinctly Irish martial arts have

## CUT AND THRUST

# J.B. Girard was Canada's first fencing master

by Elena Cerrolaza

On March 16, 1816, an advertisement appeared in the *Montreal Herald* announcing that Mr. John Palmer, pastry cook, had taken on a new confectioneer and partner. Henceforth, the business of *Palmer & Girard* would continue offering to the public pastry cooking in all its branches as well as cordials, syrups and West India sweetmeats. Mr. Palmer also thanked the public for their liberal encouragement over the years.

This sort of advertisement was common enough at the time. What was a little less usual was the notice that appeared on the same day, penned by Mr. Jean-Baptiste Girard, announcing the opening of his Fencing School. He would be teaching the small sword, cut and thrust, and broad sword exercise in the modern style. Gentlemen who wished to be instructed in this most useful accomplishment could be taught in either English or French as Mr. Girard was competent in both. Enquiries were to be made at the premises of *Palmer & Girard*.

The discovery of this advertisement became the first step on a circuitous, sometimes arduous, but very rewarding journey that took me through several newspapers of the early nineteenth century. In searching through them for Mr. Girard, I came to appreciate what a remarkable resource for historical and genealogical exploration such seemingly innocuous advertisements can be.

I did not stumble on this ad quite by accident. In recent years I've rekindled an interest in fencing that dates back to my adolescence, reading the novels of Alexandre

Dumas and subsequent research in seventeenth-century art and culture. Now, in middle age, I've acted on my childhood interest and actually taken up the sport of fencing. But quite apart

the ad. I assume Wilson was just as intrigued as I was by this unusual entry. The implication from the Fencing Federation reference was that Girard's school had some permanence to it and so I looked for further announcements. The ad was repeated again the following week, but I have yet to find any other similar notices in the *Montreal Herald* or in any of the other Montreal papers of that time and the few years following.

I did come across another curious notice in Wilson's compilation. On April 6, less than a month after announcing their joint business, *Palmer & Girard* notified the public of the dissolution of their partnership by mutual consent. No reason was given, but all financial issues were to be addressed to Girard. This seemingly unusual circumstance piqued my interest enough to want to know a little more about Canada's first fencing master.

Considering that I began knowing virtually nothing about Jean-Baptiste Girard,

it is surprising how much I've been able to glean about the major and smaller events in his life. Most of this information has come to light through newspaper ads and notices. The story I've been able to compile has been almost entirely assembled from the comfort of my couch and laptop. So far, I've gone further afield only to consult a few newspaper issues on microfilm at McGill University, as well as some notarial records at the Bibliothèque et Archives Nationales du Québec in Montreal.

My key sources have been online databases of scanned newspapers. The most useful of these was Genealogy-Bank.com which contains hundreds

**Fencing School.**  
**MR. GIRARD** respectfully informs the  
 Gentlemen of Montreal, that he will  
 open a  
**FENCING SCHOOL,**  
 for the purpose of teaching the **SMALL  
 SWORD, CUT and THRUST, and BROAD  
 SWORD** exercise in the modern style. Any  
 Gentlemen who wish to learn this useful ac-  
 complishment will call on Mr. Girard, at  
*Palmer and Girard's St. Vincent Street*  
 where the conditions will be known. Any  
 person wishing private tuition, may be  
 waited upon upon at his lodgings. As Mr.  
 Girard is competent of talking English and  
 French, it will be an advantage to those who  
 speak either of the two languages.  
 Montreal, 16 March, 1816; 3 wks.

from its practice, I've also become curious about its origins and history and have indulged in a little recreational research in this area.

I first became aware of Girard, the fencing master, from the Canadian Fencing Federation's website which lists "Maître Girard" as having established Canada's first fencing school, in Montreal, in 1816. The researcher in me was intrigued. I had on hand a copy of Lawrence M. Wilson's *This was Montreal in 1814, 1815, 1816 and 1817*, a selection of articles and advertisements published in the *Montreal Herald*. Much to my surprise, I found 'fencing school' listed in the index leading to the full transcription of



of American newspapers spanning about 300 years. Its very efficient search engine provided quick results. For Canadian newspapers, I turned to Google News Archive (news.google.com/newspapers). The number of papers available is impressive, but the search engine is of little use. Fortunately, the images are generally quite clear and easy to browse.

I also did general internet searches which, though often very fruitful, were sometimes misleading. A straightforward Google search of Jean-Baptiste Girard produced about 87,000 hits, but it was quickly apparent that my Montreal Girard was not to be confused with the famous General Jean-Baptiste Girard who died in battle in 1815 or the infamous Jesuit priest Jean-Baptiste Girard who in 1731 was accused of seduction and witchcraft. More useful was Google Books which yielded a large number of published genealogies, memoirs and histories. Among the sources available online is Thomas Doige's 1819 *Alphabetical List of the Merchants, Traders, and Housekeepers Residing in Montreal*. The Directory proved very helpful in putting together a picture of Montreal businesses, but was typical of some of these early sources in the misspelling of names, listing Girard as Gerrard.

Then, through Google Books I stumbled upon Joseph Sansom's *Travels in Lower Canada*, published in London in 1820. Sansom, an American, visited Montreal in the summer of 1817 during a tremendous heat wave (97°F), but notes that a "French confectioner, at whose house I called occasionally, had known the thermometer at Pondicherry as high as a hundred and two." Sansom adds: "This adventurer had been in the campaigns of Moreau, upon the Rhine, from thence to the East Indies, thence to the United States, where he had married, and was now lately transferred to Montreal, for the benefits of Catholic communion. His name was Girard..." This had to be the same person - but an enormous window opened up: it seemed that Girard was not Quebec-born, as I had assumed, and not only from France but a veteran of the Napoleonic wars who had traveled in India and the United States before settling in Montreal. American newspaper searches confirmed my Girard's presence in several New England

towns and sources gleaned from military online discussion boards told a fascinating tale of subcontinental intrigue - which is, unfortunately, very far removed from Palmer & Girard's Montreal confectioners.

As I gathered more clues, by piecing some solid facts together, and turning to *what if?* scenarios to come up with different angles to investigate, Girard's life gradually came into focus. It reveals a rather colourful existence concealed behind the unprepossessing label of confectioner by which Girard was introduced to the Montreal public.



Jean-Baptiste Girard was born in France around 1777, and by the time he was a young adult, he had enlisted in Napoleon's army and was involved in the campaigns on the Rhine, which ended in victory in 1800. He was then sent to Pondicherry, France's colony in India, where he was eventually taken prisoner by the British. Girard's activities during the three years following his return to France at the end of the summer of 1804 remain a mystery for the time being, but his previous association with several French officers who had run afoul of the new Emperor and were exiled to the United States may well have precipitated his own decision to move there, particularly given his subsequent association with several French military émigrés in Boston and other towns.

The first direct newspaper

reference to Girard appeared in the *Columbian Centinel* [sic] of Boston on January 27, 1808. Girard, together with a partner, Mr. Tromelle, offered fencing lessons according to the principles of the French Academy of Arms. Enquiries were to be directed to Mr. Chapouil, confectioner, with premises on Middle Street. Even from his earliest days in the Americas, it seems that Girard had a connection to both fencing and confectionery. Girard and Tromelle appear to have made a success of their lessons since a year later they were advertising fencing exhibitions in Boston as well as lessons in Dorchester, Charlestown, Roxbury and Newburyport. During the three years Girard spent in Boston, ten other fencing masters regularly advertised. All but two had French names which, together with their profession, were perhaps an indication that exiles from the Napoleonic wars continued to arrive. Given that the threat of war lurked on the American horizon, and that young men were encouraged to join militias and hone their military skills, these 'maîtres d'armes' found ready employment for the skills they had imported.

In April 1809, Colonel Delacroix, one of the exiled officers, announced that he had hired two excellent instructors, Girard and Tromelle, for his Modern Military School in Boston. In addition to carrying out their duties at the school, Girard and Tromelle were permitted by Delacroix to present regular public exhibitions. The frequent ads for these events gleefully boast that duels between the two masters would continue "until one of the parties falls weltering in blood."

In August 1809, Girard married Sarah Moses, three years his junior but already a widow with two children. Sarah's husband, Richard Locke, had died in a logging accident - but it seems the marriage was already in difficulty. In 1805, Locke announced that, since his wife had "behaved in an improper manner and refused [his] bed and board," no one was to harbour or trust her on his account and he would not pay her debts. The marriage with Girard did last, and their son John Baptist was born in September 1810.

Girard continued his fencing partnership until mid-1810, but



with his new family responsibilities he may have found it necessary to diversify. The 1810 Boston directory indicates that he was also an umbrella and toy maker. By late 1810, Girard was no longer advertising his fencing school. It is unclear how long he was in the umbrella and toy-making business or if he managed to make a success of it because by November he had left Boston and moved to Portsmouth, New Hampshire. The move was probably not haphazard. By that time, Colonel Delacroix had opened a branch of his Military School there, and the prospect of further military employment seems to have encouraged Girard. He set up shop on Congress Street and advertised both a Fencing and Military school "similar to the one he kept in Boston" and a Umbrella and Parasol Manufactory. It is curious that his umbrella business was located within the same premises as a new Confectionery & Distillery belonging to Anthony Labatut, another French émigré. For the next couple of years, Girard continued to promote his school, clearly taking advantage of the developing political situation. One of his ads read: "Let Americans remember that to preserve

their Independence, valor and patriotism may be insufficient, without a knowledge of military tactics." However, local interest in acquiring these skills clearly began to wane. By 1813, Girard's ads focused mostly on his umbrella business which now included confectionery, ice cream, and space to accommodate six or eight gentlemen boarders. He adds that "if there is enough interest he will open his Fencing and Military school."

For the next two years, the Portsmouth papers are silent concerning Girard's fencing, umbrella, and confectionery businesses, but he is mentioned in connection with real estate. In 1813, he appeared as a contact for the sale of some property by one Mark French, who happened to be Sarah's brother-in-law. French later made the headlines in several papers as "a most notorious imposter and thief." He fooled the Mayor of Albany by feigning distress and creating a plausible story about needing to return to his family in Montreal. The Mayor granted him license to ask charity, but French's greed landed him into more trouble and a trunkful of stolen goods was discovered on him. Not surprisingly, by 1815, Girard was

handling the land sales on his own.

In January 1816, Girard advertised that he was about to leave town and was selling what appears to be, literally, everything he owned: feather beds, tables, chairs, glass and crockery, 20 cords of excellent wood, a turning lathe, umbrella maker's tools, 20 bottles of best Martinique cordial, a chaise and wagon, and two good cows. Two months later, Girard and his family had taken up residence in Montreal, sharing a house with John Palmer.

John Palmer had arrived in Montreal in 1812 and set up his business, *Palmer & Co. From Quebec, Pastry Cooks and Confectioners*. In Quebec, Palmer had been located at the Upper Town Market Place where he kept an inn which happened to be one of the locations for departure of the Quebec/Boston stage. In 1805, a John Palmer is listed in the Boston directory, having an inn on St Anne Street which was the terminus for the Boston/Portsmouth stage. The possibility of an earlier connection between Palmer and Girard is intriguing.

In Montreal, Palmer made a name for himself, gradually expanding his business and moving to occupy

a spacious location on St Vincent Street, within view of the court house on Notre Dame. By 1815, his establishment was known as *Palmer's Hummums*, a name inspired by a well-known inn and bath house in Covent Garden, London (Palmer was British born). The Hummums was frequented by members of the Beaver Club, the Mechanics' Institute, and the Sons of St David. Newspapers described elegant suppers, dancing 'till one in the morning, rousing songs and general hilarity.

Palmer had chosen his location well. St Vincent Street is but two blocks long, but it connects Notre Dame and St Paul Streets, the two major commercial arteries in Montreal at that time. St Vincent was the address of silver-smiths, coopers, grocers, a boarding house, a boarding school, lawyers, and the sheriff's office. In 1819, the Bossange Bookstore, a branch of the Parisian parent company, also settled on St Vincent Street. This bookstore would later be known as the *Librairie Fabre*, and in the 1820s and 30s it became a favoured gathering place for the leaders of the *Parti Patriote*. Among those who attended these meetings was Louis-Michel Viger, militia officer,

lawyer, and owner of the building across the street, the location of Palmer & Girard. However, despite the bustling character of St Vincent street, by the time Girard arrived, Palmer's Hummums was no longer in operation. The articles of co-partnership for the firm of Palmer & Girard provide a possible explanation.

On March 11, 1816, notary Henry Griffin recorded the lengthy contract between Palmer and Girard. Apart from the usual stipulations concerning the sharing of profits and expenses, the agreement indicated that "the said partners parties hereto do also covenant and agree that themselves and families shall reside and live together in the same house." What prompted Palmer to restrict his business to pastry and confectionery and turn the Hummums' rooms into a private dwelling to be shared with a partner is not clear; perhaps the business was failing. The arrangement seems to have been designed to provide practical solutions for two families: Palmer, his wife Catherine Winchelov and three-year-old son William, and Girard, wife Sarah, their six-year-old son, and Sarah's two teenage children, Moses and Anna Locke.

Then, on March 30, 1816, Palmer and Girard cancelled their partnership. The notarial record gives no explanation. Curiously, Girard is the one designated to handle all the payments and debts attendant to the closing of the business. Palmer also transfers to Girard all rights and interests in their house, owned by Viger. In addition, it is stipulated that all their present stock in trade, household furniture and effects belonging to the partnership are to be sold or disposed of at public sale. Accordingly, an announcement appeared in the *Canadian Courant* offering for sale all of Palmer and Girard's beds, bedding, bureaus, sideboards, tables, chairs, china and glassware, looking glasses, stoves, kitchen utensils, two horses, harnesses, a double sleigh, and an assortment of confectionery, spirits and cordials.

At first glance, this brief partnership and seemingly radical conclusion with the sale of everything each family possessed suggests a rupture between the partners. One could note the clause in the partnership contract that neither of the parties, during the term of the partnership, was "to enter into any other concern trade or



business whatever." In light of this statement, Girard's intention to open a fencing school would have been a flagrant violation of this clause which could have precipitated an annulment of the agreement. However, the fact that Palmer seems to very clearly transfer all of his business responsibilities to Girard suggests that this was part of some prearranged transfer of ownership. The seemingly peculiar process they followed may have been in order to take advantage of legal loopholes to reduce the costs that might normally have applied. There are few details concerning Palmer after 1816. There is a Mr. Palmer cited in the Doige directory in 1819 as a tavern keeper which could indicate that Palmer had returned to his previous profession. We know that Palmer's son William worked for the Treasury Commission, and his grandson Joseph Lawrence Palmer became Deputy Postmaster of Montreal. The Palmer family does not appear to have fared too badly.

For his part, Girard continued the confectionery and pastry business. Right below the announcement of the dissolution of the partnership, Girard advertised that business as usual would continue on St Vincent Street and added that "handsome rooms will be fitted up for the reception of ladies and gentlemen." It would seem that the space vacated by the Palmer family was being put to good use. However, a month later, Viger, owner of the property, was offering it for let. Girard relocated to the north side of Notre Dame Street, still within view of St Vincent. By late 1816, Girard was describing his business as a Confectionery and Cordial Distillery. His lengthy ads list a great variety of produce as well as Christmas boxes and New Year's gifts, soup and restoration, facilities for holding ball parties and weddings, and ice cream available from 8am to 10pm. No mention is made again of the fencing school.

Over the next three years, Girard continued his business but did not advertise. The most positive conclusion that can be drawn is that things were going well, that he had a steady clientele and had no pressing need to draw new customers. Unfortunately, on the night of October 27, 1819, while Girard was out of town, his business and home caught fire. The blaze

began either in Girard's attic or that of his neighbour, Paul Kauntz, a fellow confectioner. Whichever the source, the fire spread remarkably quickly, in part because Girard had been storing 400 corn brooms in the attic. The blaze was so intense that the two buildings quickly burned to the ground and the flames jumped the street, setting fire to the Bossange bookstore. Fortunately, Sarah and the children were able to escape unscathed. Girard had wisely ensured his stock and belongings for £750 and therefore the family was not left destitute. The owner of the building, Mr. Berthelet, had not been insured.



The fire was dramatic enough that it received extensive coverage in the local papers which reported instances of people taking advantage of the misfortune of others. "Some literary characters made free with Mr. Bossange's books - and some votaries of Bacchus appeared not by any means dissatisfied with the taste of Mr. Girard's wine." The city's garrison was also criticized for not having given their help. The officers in charge responded to the accusation by pointing out that they were not allowed to act without the orders of a fire magistrate, but no fire magistrate had been present. There had been a concern that given the nature of soldiers, if they were "permitted to run indiscriminately with the crowd, a commanding officer [could] not be responsible for the depredations [they] may commit."

It is not clear if Girard was able to restart his business after the fire. The Doige directory lists him living on Viger Street (today's St Amable Street, just off St Vincent), and his professions are pastry cook, confectioner, and now bailiff as well. There are at least a couple of notarial records that do bear witness to Girard practicing his new profession, but there are no

more advertisements for his confectionery and pastry business.

On November 23, 1820, a brief notice in four Montreal newspapers announced the death of Jean-Baptiste Girard, "bailiff of His Majesty's Court of King's Bench, formerly a confectioner." There were no details to explain the cause. He was forty-three-years old.

Although I remain surprised that I was able to discover so much about someone who was little more than a name in an ad, I can't help feeling frustrated that Girard's story remains incomplete, perhaps precisely because the abundance of sources was as rewarding as it was unexpected. Significant details such as Girard's birthplace and what happened to his son John Baptist leave glaring holes in a portrait that has gradually taken on many colours. But apart from these factual bits of information, there are others, less tangible, but that give tantalizing glimpses into the actual character of the man. The brief reference in Joseph Sansom's travel journal describes Girard as "a man of observation" and connoisseur of fine wines who advised drinking Lisbon wine rather than Madeira which does not fare well when crossing the sea. Girard himself drank only Port, Claret, and Spanish wines. Such seemingly banal details give Girard personality and even a voice. In an effort to hear that voice more clearly, I am continuing to explore other avenues of research, including the National Archives at Kew which keep lists of French prisoners held by the British, as well as the French military records kept at Vincennes. If Girard's military record survives, not only would it trace his career before his emigration, but it would provide a physical description. The rest is for the imagination to fill in, using every little fact and insight to reassemble the private life of Jean-Baptiste Girard, French Revolutionary soldier, fencing master, umbrella and toy maker, confectioner, pastry cook, distiller, and bailiff of His Majesty's Court of King's Bench.

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## SOUTH WINDS BLOWING

# *Skyscrapers, pink Cadillacs and other American imports*

by Sandra Stock

The continuing and inescapable American influences upon Montreal proceeded into the twentieth century, picking up steam culturally although certainly abating politically. There was no longer any threat of direct take overs or invasions from the United States, as in the days of the American Revolution or even the Fenian Raids. However, with the growth of what we term “pop culture” and media, Montreal could not avoid being infused with various aspects of the American Way – some of it positive, some negative (or perhaps at least banal) but all impossible to counteract.

Of course, as we said in Part One of this theme (Autumn 2010), Montreal had always embraced the new, the profitable and the interesting. In this, Montreal has always run in opposition to the rest of Quebec society on some level, even in the French colonial period when Ville Marie traded with the “strangers” of all ilks and, in contrast, Quebec City fortified its walls against them. The Medieval saying that “town air breaths free” was true here as well. As so many of the both French- and English-speaking rural inhabitants of the province left the farms to work in the city (generally for Montreal) they changed both collectively and individually from the rather sheltered and controlled parochial life to the open, and often radical, influences of an urban environment.

This process had started mid-way through the nineteenth century, with the expansion of transportation, especially railways, which needed a large labour force, skilled and unskilled. The port facilities, the newly-built bridges – starting with the iconic Victoria that is still probably our sturdiest, if scariest, one to the South Shore – and the growing textile and other manufacturing industries all attracted people into Montreal. Although living conditions were abysmal in

many areas, partly due to this rapid population growth, plus on-going immigration, the opportunities for access to better education and training and thus to greater wealth, continued to change the rural-urban demographics. By 1900, Montreal was by far Canada’s largest and richest city – and stayed that way until the 1970s.



The most apparent American influence was the visual appearance of commercial and public buildings in Montreal. Architectural styles shifted, slowly, but irrevocably, away from European models to the International style that was not in origin “international”, but American. The Beaux Arts and Second Empire styles, directly imported from France, and even the Scottish Baronial examples found among the homes of the Victorian super rich, faded from the Montreal streetscape by the end of World War I.

The first skyscraper in Montreal was the New York Life Insurance

Company building, now the Société de Fiducie du Québec building, erected in 1887 at Place d’Armes. In 1850, a safe passenger elevator was designed in the United States. Along with the use of structural steel frameworks (here an exception, as the chief inventors were Eiffel and other Europeans), buildings could now reach any reasonable height. When the Sun Life Building was completed in the 1920s, it was seen as a wonder of the world – the highest and largest office building in the British Empire.

More of these new edifices were to come, changing the focus of the Montreal skyline from church spires to commercial towers. This visual and architectural change reflected the social change that Montreal underwent in the the twentieth century. Even with a few setbacks – la Grande Noirceur (the Great Darkness) of the Duplessis regime, and the very weird reign of Mayor Camillien Houde – Montreal moved steadily onward, becoming more and more American.

The enormous social impact brought about by the changes to the nature of work, the increase of literacy and access to education for a wider part of the population, and the invention and spread of communications media like radio, movies and even the telephone, indirectly and directly led to the greater Americanization of Montreal. This happened in the French-speaking milieu of course, but to a much greater extent in the English-speaking sector. Not just language, but the degree of social and cultural openness was, and is, the most probable reason. However, quite American phenomena, such as the cult of Elvis and rock n’ roll from the 1950s on, and even country and western music, had an enormous popularity with *Québécois de Souche* – in spite of such things being viewed as “kitaine” by the French-speaking intellectual elite. Although the Quebec countryside remained effectively in the

nineteenth century until nearly the middle of the twentieth – electricity only reached private homes in some districts in the 1950s – Montreal was, as the financial and cultural leader of Canada at this time, at the head of all sorts of new, mainly American, innovations.

Montreal was always a great newspaper town, as we mentioned in Part One. From the 1920s to the early 1960s, an interesting aspect of especially the English papers was the “man about town” gossip columnist, directly modeled on an American, specifically a New York, ideal. Reading some of this rather cringe-making prose today does make us wonder, Where was the Editor? – but different times, different styles. In William Weintraub’s highly entertaining book *City Unique*, which concentrates on this period, he describes this phenomenon as it reached its apogee in the 1940s:

*A handsome, dapper, man about town, Al Palmer with his fedora*



*firmly on his head and his press pass in his pocket, was – or strove to be – a hard drinking reporter out of a Hollywood movie. He knew everything and hobnobbed with everybody – gamblers, gangsters and the proprietors of drinking places. In many ways, he personified the Montreal – New York connection. His lingo and his breezy, slangy style was much influenced by the Broadwayese of columnists like Walter Winchell and Leonard Lyons, and above all, by the guys and dolls in the tales of Damon Runyon.*

Palmer was just one of several newspaper men (Montreal newspapers were male bastions, excepting the social page, until the 1960s) that adopted this kind of writing. Fitz (Gerald FitzGerald) at *The Gazette* and Sean Edwin at *The Herald* did the same thing.

The New York influence was also seen in the entertainers appearing in Montreal nightclubs – who either were booked from New York or were locals who adopted the clothes and manners of American performers. Jazz clubs appeared in the 1920s and introduced this most American of musical genres to Montrealers. Although society was hardly as open and tolerant as we hope we are now, this medium, along with

popular music in general, gave an opportunity for Black performers to reach a mixed audience. In Montreal, things were perhaps not great, but certainly more welcoming for Black citizens than most of the United States. Advertisements for Montreal nightclubs at this time often said that their acts were “straight from New York.” However, down on St Antoine Street, the hub for jazz, the ads said “straight from Harlem” (Weintraub, 123). The most famous club was Rockhead’s Paradise, owned and operated by Rufus Rockhead, who had started out as a railway porter on the run to New York. Rockhead’s lasted into the 1960s and was a launching pad for serious, well-known local musicians such as Oscar Peterson.

The Darker Side also came from New York: the bootleggers of the 1920s American Prohibition era and the ongoing links with organized crime, New York gangsters of all ilks. Of course, Montreal always had plenty of home grown crime as well – more of the vice sort – gambling, prostitution, crooked politicians, bent policemen, and so on. Actual violence was always rather rare here, compared to the major American cities, but there was certainly a strong rogue element flourishing here in the decades from the ‘twenties to the Second World War.



*Above: Al Palmer's Montreal Confidential, 1950. Lower: 1956 Cadillac Eldorado at the Rassemblement Rigaud Car Show, 2008. Photo: Bull-Dosier*

The prohibition of alcohol never caught on in Quebec, although there were some ludicrous Sunday “blue laws” that forbade ordering a drink without a meal in bars and hotels. Older Quebecers can remember the ancient cheese sandwiches that were trotted out to constitute a “meal” for the thirsty. American vice, or what was perceived as vice, always did much better here than American virtue.

There always had been a fine dining tradition in Montreal, generally at the hotels and exclusive clubs. This cuisine was invariably European French, or at least aimed to be, with a certain infusion of British roast beefs and hefty desserts. However, in the 1940s and 1950s Montreal saw a proliferation of American style eateries. The most interesting examples of this were located on the Decarie Boulevard strip, their heyday being before the creation of the Decarie Expressway in the 1960s (the big ditch), which led to an economic decline in the area – mainly because no-one could easily stop, never mind park, a car very easily any more.

Although it specialized in Americanized Chinese cuisine, it also offered a wider menu and was really more of a Chinese-themed spot than anything authentically Asian.

The 1950s was the golden age for the automobile. Big gas guzzlers, ornamented with fins and plenty of chrome. American cars: a white Lincoln convertible, a two-toned Pontiac Parisienne, a Studebaker, the awful Edsel, the pink Cadillac. Nice big comfy living rooms on wheels and really cheap prices for fuel. Cruising along the Decarie restaurant roadway where you could be served by car hops on roller skates at Piazza Tomasso. This kind of 1950s experience was quintessentially North American, an example of a mobile, free-wheeling (literally) society, with its roots in Detroit, New York and, increasingly, California. It's

interesting to note that one of the most influential works of American literature to come out of the fifties was Jack Kerouac's, *On the Road*, which celebrated the liberating effects of car travel among other things. Kerouac's family origin was from among the thousands of French - speaking Quebecers who in the late nineteenth century left Quebec for the textile towns of New England.

The 1960s and 70s brought Montreal into the world that we see now, with the building frenzy of expressways, the metro, Expo '67, and more (but not necessarily better) bridges. The American influences of course continued – Montreal was a centre of social change and political activism in the late sixties and early seventies. We even had the first real student protest “riot” in Canada at Sir George Williams University in 1969. Although this event had some home



grown elements, it was quite reminiscent of earlier uproars at Berkeley and other institutions in the United States. Montreal was also a popular destination for American draft evaders and other Americans disillusioned with the United States at that time. The deeply ingrained and thriving artistic and bohemian traditions of Montreal attracted and welcomed these people. This was a very creative time for Montreal, when, as always, the new, the interesting and the “stranger” was enthusiastically adopted into the bilingual and increasingly multicultural population of our city. It wasn't until 1976, that Montreal suddenly lost its dominant status as Canada's largest and richest city, displaced by Toronto.

However, in spite of many mainly political factors that have made recent Quebec more insular, the new (American!) technology of the internet and other devices of the digital revolution have helped keep Montreal still traveling along that wide open (mostly American) road.

**Sources:**

*Jean-Claude Marsan, Montreal in Evolution, McGill-Queens University Press, 1981.*

*William Weintraub, City Unique, Montreal Days and Nights in the 1940s and '50s, McClelland & Stewart Inc., 1996.*



There are a some survivors though: the Orange Julep, shaped like an orange, that had drive-in service patronized by mainly young people from the area and returning Laurentian weekenders, and the still functioning (although now morphed into a hotel) Ruby Foo's. In its prime (1950s) Ruby Foo's was the top “see and be seen” venue for Montreal.

# IRON GIANTS AND BRAVE MEN

## *Remembering the Rand of Sherbrooke's industrial legacy*

by Marie-Eve Gingras



**T**he Story of Sherbrooke's Ingersoll - Rand, commonly just called the Rand, is not only the history of a prolific industry, but a glimpse into the lives of the thousands of men and women who worked there. In Sherbrooke, almost everyone knows someone who worked in the sprawling west-end shops of the Rand. Taking its current name in 1910, the Rand sparked the growth of an entire neighbourhood and was for decades the catalyst for countless feasts, frolics and family fun. As any Rand alum will attest, the Rand was like a family.

### A Century of Manufacturing

At the end of the 1830s, Sherbrooke was seeing the first signs of the Industrial Revolution. The Sherbrooke Cotton Mills, Canada's first cotton plant, was founded there in 1837, and other factories began to spring up on the shores of the Magog River, a key location for the city's development. In 1851, the first Sherbrooke company to use compressed air in manufacturing, the Jenckes Machine Company,

was founded (though it would only be named the Jenckes as of 1888). Throughout the 1870s and 1880s, the Jenckes Company rode the mining boom, specializing in winches and drills, and many others followed suit: the Ingersoll Rock Drill Company of Canada was established in 1882, and the Canadian Rand Drill opened a branch on Bank Street in 1889, producing mining equipment for operations in the region and across the country.

The first Rand shops were modest, but by 1896 the company had outgrown its Bank Street location and the small factory moved to Lansdowne Street. A fire three years later proved to have a silver lining when the Rand moved again to set up shop near Courcellette, in the west end, where its proximity to the Canadian Pacific station meant inex-

pensive exports for the Rand's heavy machinery.

Throughout the twentieth century, as the company prospered, additional buildings were erected and existing shops were expanded to include a foundry and metal-pressing, drilling and machining shops. In 1912, the Rand merged with the Ingersoll Rock Drill Company. By the 1930s, the Rand complex covered over 30 acres and, at its peak, had approximately 50 buildings.

What exactly was going on inside those buildings? Like its neighbour and competitor the Jenckes Company, the Rand used compressed air, and for several decades specialized in manufacturing equipment for the mining industry. Many of its winches and drilling machines were gigantic, towering over the men who built them. The Rand even had a brush





with celebrity when its Crawfair rock drills were first on the scene of the future site of Expo '67. The Rand also played an important role in the pulp and paper industry, manufacturing washer drums and debarkers until the late 1980s. Whatever the contract, hours of effort went into manufacturing and delivering the goods on time to clients everywhere.

### Blood, Sweat and... Cheer

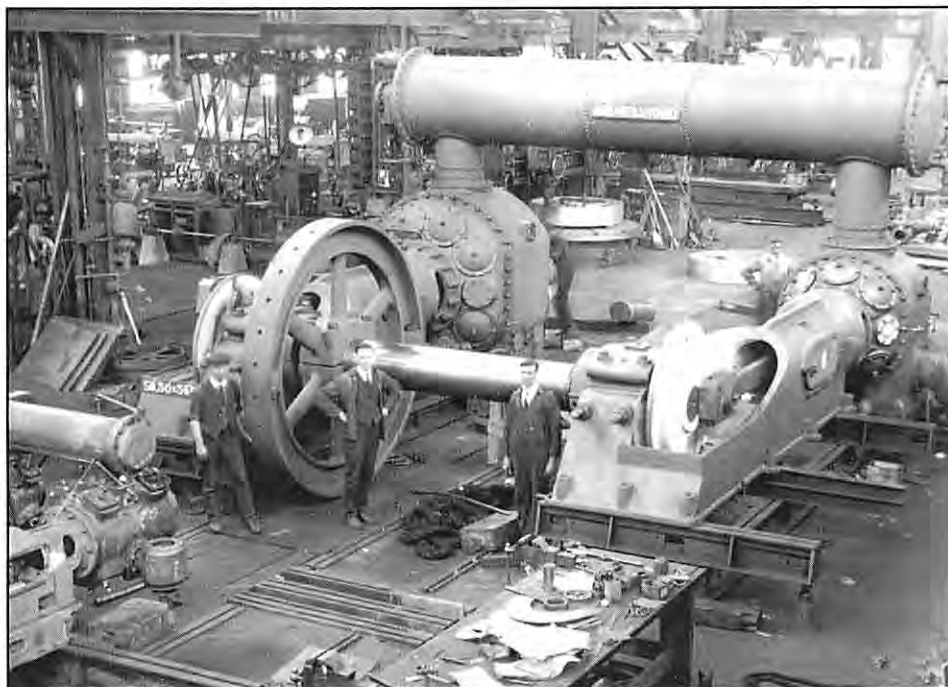
Working conditions could be rough at the Rand. The days were long, the heat was intense, especially in the foundry, and the sheer weight of the materials made the work exhausting. It's no surprise that accidents happened. At that time, the pressure of compressed air was poorly controlled, which caused explosions, and handling enormous pieces of steel could easily lead to bumped or crushed limbs. Some workers lost fingers, while others got off with just a few bruises. Only a few unfortunate accidents resulted in fatalities. Some former Rand employees still recall helplessly watching as a co-worker was crushed under the weight of cast iron, or even, horribly, literally cut in two by defective equipment. Bob Corriveau, who worked in the Rand offices for over thirty years, remembers with a gleam in his eye that "anyone who says he worked hard at the Rand is a liar," a claim those who worked on the floors are quick to counter with a jab of their own at the office staff. The one thing everyone can agree on is that the Rand was a friendly place to work.

After their long days, the Rand employees were no strangers to letting loose, at glamorous events like the annual banquets, the Long Service Association's ladies' evenings, the St Andrew's Ball or the oyster dinner. Venues across the city and in nearby towns - the Lennoxville Bellevue Club, the Hôtel Le Baron in Sherbrooke, or the Auberge des Pins in Deauville - were packed with revellers. The athletically inclined could join lacrosse, bowling, softball or hockey teams, depending on the season, while music-lovers were involved in the local orchestra or choir. Workers' families were also part of the Rand family, participating in annual sugar-shack trips, Christmas parties and Labour-Day picnics that brought

smiles to the faces of the young and the young at heart.

The immediate surroundings of the Rand stretched to a part

industry, the plant's main client, was in decline. In 1997, Beloit International acquired the Sherbrooke Rand; the complex was closed for good in April



of Belvedere South and Galt West streets and to de la Princesse, Short, St-Louis, Saint Martin, Alexandre and even Larocque, covering a significant portion of the town's west end, including the area known as Little Canada. From the end of the nineteenth century onward, Rand workers and their families settled here, near their workplace, and the neighbourhood soon bustled, as schools, Catholic churches, and all manner of businesses such as groceries, snack bars and shoemakers popped up during the first half of the twentieth century to serve the several thousand men, women and children of the west-end working class; there was even a local movie house, the Rex, which opened in 1945 at 519 Galt West.

From their forty or so employees at the turn of the last century, the Rand would become, between the 1930s and the mid-1980s, one of Sherbrooke's largest employers. Between the 1940s and the 1970s, the Rand hired over 1,200 people. By 1981, the Ingersoll-Rand International had 115 facilities, and still employed approximately 800 people in Sherbrooke. Fifteen years later, however, the ageing Sherbrooke plant could no longer keep up with the market, and the pulp and paper

1998. That day marked the end of an era, over a century in the making, of the industrial, economic and social history of Sherbrooke.

*Marie-Eve Gingras is outreach coordinator for the Sherbrooke Historical Society*

(Translation: Katia Grubisic)

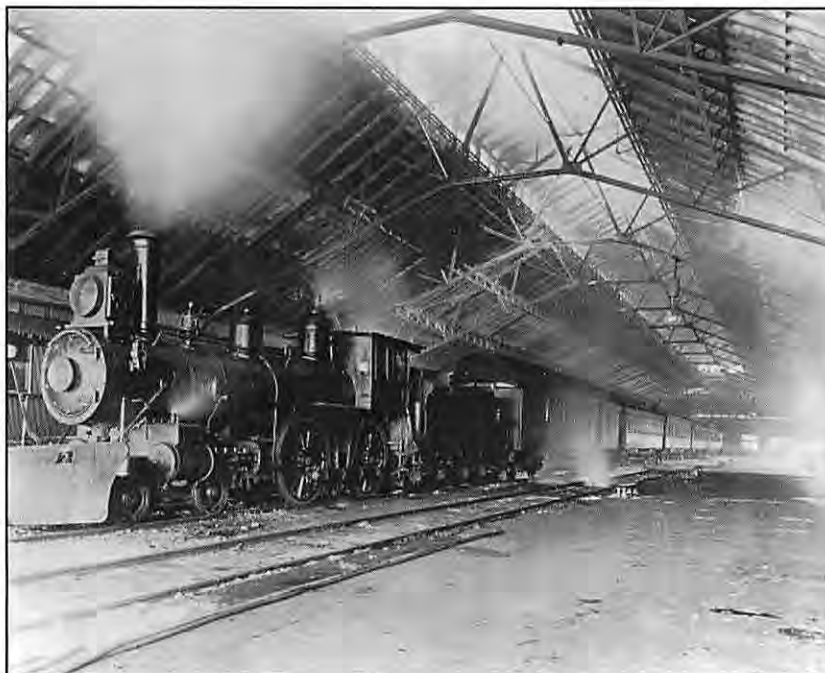
*La Rand: des géants de fer et des hommes de coeur/The Rand: Iron Giants and Brave Men will be presented at the Sherbrooke Historical Society, 275 Rue Dufferin, Sherbrooke, Salle de l'American-Biltrite, until May 15, 2011. Salle de l'American-Biltrite ...", 275 Dufferin, Sherbrooke 819 821-5406 [www.histoiresherbrooke.com](http://www.histoiresherbrooke.com)*

# WINDSOR STATION

## *Sixty years of corporate credulity and greed*

by Michael Fish

*In response to a plan to connect Montreal's airport to the downtown by diverting the existing CPR tracks around the Bell Centre and old Windsor Station to a new elevated terminus with multi-story commercial and office space, Michael Fish has publicly expressed his opinion that it would be cheaper to demolish the Bell Centre and reopen the old Windsor Station as a commuter terminus. This article, which explores the history of the problem and evaluates the current situation, appears with the gracious permission of the author.*



In the 1960s, the then one-hundred-year-old Canadian Pacific Railway Company ceased passenger service in Canada. Faced with increasing travel by bus, plane and automobile, the company decided to redevelop many rail properties for new real estate uses. In Montreal, these included the seven-kilometre-long rail line from Montreal West to Peel Street, the 175,000-square-metre marshalling yards at the Glen in Westmount, and a similar sized train turn-around yard in NDG. The crown jewel, however, among these opportunities for redevelopment was the 37,000-square-metre site under Windsor Station and its enclosed track fan: six platforms with eleven train tracks and room for more.

Built between 1880 and 1956, the station complex was a unique collection of buildings with national historical importance. The corporate giant that had built what would be its head office for eighty years was itself an historical icon. Its initiatives, its colourful per-

sonalities had done more to create and develop the Canada we then knew than any other institution. The station building itself was equally highly appreciated, as much for its architecture and its creators as for rich association with the stories of the city and the country.

In the late 1960s, Canadian Pacific chose architect Arthur Ericson to imagine a continuous residential and commercial mega-building along the seven kilometres of the rail right-of-way. Even without being published, knowledge of this idea got everyone's attention, for, as a part of this plan, the rail terminus would find itself not downtown but in Montreal West.

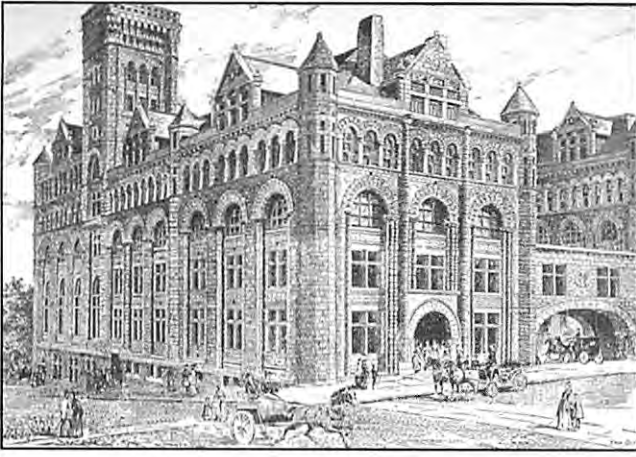
In 1970, Canadian Pacific announced that they would demolish all of Windsor Station. Replacing it would be a hotel and two office towers, at least one of which would be sixty-odd stories high. The architect was to be the American, Minoru Yamasaki, whose twin-towered World Trade Centre in New York had recently started construction. Vague references to other new plans were put

forward in 1972. These too entailed wholesale demolition of the station. All announcements were heavily criticized. No plans were ever published.

In time, abandonment of the rail line was refused, but the Glen Yards and the turn-around were allowed to be sold for development, without significant public notice or debate. However, in late 1972, approval was given to reduce the number of tracks in the station from eleven to eight and (temporarily, it was hoped) to terminate the rails

some 700 feet from the glass-roofed waiting room. The number of tracks in a terminal track fan determines the usefulness of a station. Most contain twenty to thirty tracks. There are eighteen in Montreal's Central Station, nine in active use. Grand Central in New York has 67 tracks on two levels and is building a third, even lower level, to raise the number to 75.

In late 1973, another American consultant, Landauer and Associates, proposed a dozen office, residential and hotel towers between 30 and 60 stories high. With a large shopping plaza, this project would cover the station land as well as most of the three blocks to the north, touching René-Lévesque Boulevard. Older parts of the station bordering Peel Street and St George's Church on de la Gauchetière would be spared. David and Boulva were to be the Montreal architects. A year-round outdoor ice rink would be a part of the public area of the site. In 30 pages of what we would today call a charming, naive report, Landauer also recommended that French-Canadian 'salesgirls' be



hired for the new shops in the area, as 'Montreal was largely a French-speaking city.'

Thanks to the election of the Parti Québécois in 1976, Canadian Pacific moved to Calgary, and the Banks that had promised to move their head offices to Dominion Square instead moved to Toronto. The only major building demolished on the site – in 1976 – was the Art Deco, 23-storey, 1,000 room Laurentien Hotel – itself only 28 years old, very profitable, and recently renovated. Nothing was then done on its site until a glassy 24-storey office building replaced the hotel in the early 'eighties.

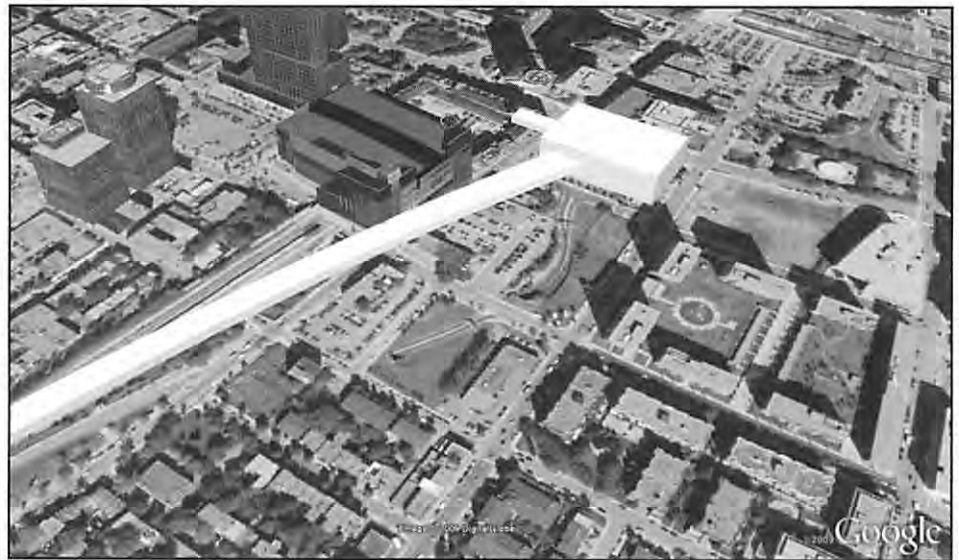
In 1986, Molson Breweries, owners of the Montreal Canadiens and their hockey stadium, the Forum, began a hunt for a site for a slightly enlarged arena. They turned down several sites south of the downtown core. Two years later, a new company president took over: Marshall "Mickey" Cohen, hired from the Reichmann brothers' real estate empire just before its collapse under a mountain of speculative debt. Molson's, looking to diversify their business and advised by planners representing CP, the city and their own interests, decided to purchase the Windsor Station site. They did so not only to locate a new hockey stadium there, but also to profit from a theoretical eventual rise in the value of development rights on the site. The economic promises of the new developments and their sad results are a separate story.

In 1992, following an exaggerated publicity campaign without precedent in the history of Montreal, and in spite of many serious and responsible protests, the city authorities under Mayor Jean Doré approved a develop-

ment plan allowing the construction of a new hockey stadium and three new office towers – one at 20 storeys and two at 45 or 50 storeys (the height of the Mountain, 236 metres) – on the old station property. The tracks would terminate yet another 600 feet farther west from the old waiting room.

The new stadium was erected at the western end of the site.

After forty years, Windsor Station was free from its mission as a rail terminal. The future of the old station from then on would rest on the value of its large, mostly open site. Land speculation, in a free enterprise system, is often an easy way to multiply an original investment. Sadly, it is invariably damaging to existing buildings on such a site.



Few main rail terminals in all the world move away from the centres of cities that they serve. One, probably to be regretted soon, was at Viger Station on Berri Street in 1951. Another was at Ottawa, in the 1960s – now almost universally recognised as a bad move; its reversal is under active consideration. In Montreal, despite several responsible warnings in 1992, the removal of tracks from the Windsor site is now accepted as equally wrong-headed. This is the more manifestly so, now that the AMT (Agence métropolitaine du transport) proposes to move the

rail head 15,000 feet to the east, effectively returning it to Peel Street.

Every authority should have vigorously defended the mission of the Old Windsor Station after every announcement by CPR since 1950, all of which have damaged passenger transportation.

The hockey stadium is now a fact. For at least another generation, its placement is pretty well settled. We now have to deal with the results of the actions of 1960 to 1992 on local rail transportation. This can be done now, in a transparent, civilized way. It can be done free from the hype, the public relations blitz, the kind of extraneous non-pertinent points of debate, insults and accusations that coloured the public shouting matches on the demolition of Windsor Station and on the placement of the present hockey stadium. But for this to happen, all of the documents supporting future plans to again relocate the tracks have to be made public now.

The AMT of 1992, under its

president Robert Perrault, had the duty to protect our rail system from being shortened in order to satisfy land speculators. Unfortunately, he and his people stayed silent on the matter. At that time, reasonable requests for letters, professional planning and economic studies in possession of the Authority (which must have justified their decision not to protect the tracks) were met with disregard, discourtesy, delay, denial and finally a challenge to force a court case under Right to Information Laws. Resorting to the courts is always prohibitive for

disinterested citizens no matter how right their cause.

The recently-announced half billion dollar budget for a new terminus, and the geometry involved, for starters, now require the fullest public disclosure. The plans imply a huge super-structure to run train tracks back to Peel Street, south of the old Windsor Station. Tracks will run high across a main street and a highway to finish far from its present metro connection. With a budget at half a billion to start with, this station will cost an amount near that of one of our new super-hospitals. We are talking about a sum of money ruinous to Quebec, let alone to Montreal.

People commenting on this whole picture tend to focus on the future of the stadium, home of Montreal's beloved team. That is natural. The stadium is in the news every day. Probably 500,000 different Montrealers use it every year, most several times. The new station would be used by many fewer people in a year, but the concentration of their use will be much more important. Almost all travelers will use it twice a day, every weekday. Fully millions of trips would start and end here every year. Faced with such numbers, the stadium replacement and its lesser costs and ramifications are relatively small compared to what would happen with a new station and its costs and ramifications, especially considering the ongoing expense of taking new tracks back to Peel Street south of the Old Station.

Solutions? Why not restore old Windsor Station as a commuter terminal?

If necessary, the existing number of rails at Lucien L'Allier could be

increased by one or two. Moreover, there are several spare platforms and tracks at Central Station which could be pressed into use for a long time. A large parking garage, also at Central Station, can be adapted for a bus terminal - two of them, if necessary.

An ultimate intermodal solution can probably wait a generation or two until the current hockey stadium becomes obsolete and is moved away. In the meantime, the existing stadium volume is adaptable at relatively modest cost while remaining in place. Heroically, the rink and the stands could be raised over the level of the tracks - a solution strongly advocated in 1992 by, among others, local architect-urbanist Jean-Claude Marsan. Alternatively, its function as the 22,000-seat stadium could easily be relocated and the greater parts of the existing building over the tracks adapted for other useful purposes. Quais and tracks would occupy no more than 30% of the volume of the existing stadium building; the building itself would be essentially saved. Not only would it not need to be demolished, but the capacity of the whole site would be unchanged for future high rise development. Moreover, there are substantial real estate values to be conserved on properties all around the block to the south of old Windsor Station.

Nobody can maintain that the project announced by the AMT with a train station sixty feet in the air, with two bus terminals and parking garages underneath, could do anything but damage the quality of the local environment for at least a block all around, forever. Nor would a quality, high-rise tower, nor a viable shopping centre selling more than

gum and magazines, be viable on top of such activities on the site.

But nothing can be intelligently understood, let alone discussed or decided, until the AMT and provincial and municipal authorities come clean about all their arrangements with the developer, Cadillac-Fairview, the ultimate financial beneficiaries of AMT's stated plan to relocate the train terminal. One knows that these agreements exist. Nobody commits \$150 million of pension fund money to a real estate purchase without knowing exactly how that money will be paid back - quickly, and with substantial profits.

Neither does anyone announce that they plan a half-billion dollar expenditure for an intermodal train terminal without very detailed plans. The pretty but inaccurate coloured perspective drawings recently released to papers are insulting to the intelligence. Real documents should be revealed immediately. The sceptics await. Nobody wants another costly error like the one that placed the hockey stadium where it should never have been placed. We have to end the last fifty years of costly bad ideas for the Windsor Station site and its users. They tell their own compelling story about this historic site - one of corporate greed and cupidity meeting public negligence.

*Michael Fish is the President and co-founder of the Friends of Windsor Station founded in 1969.*

**From the Cadillac Fairview website (cadillacfairview.com)**

**Aug. 4, 2009 -**

*The Cadillac Fairview Corporation Limited is proud to announce that it has acquired the Windsor Station complex and other real estate assets from The Canadian Pacific Railway Company. Windsor Station is located at 1160 De la Gauchetiere in downtown Montreal and represents an important heritage property. It was originally built between 1887 and 1889 to serve as both a station and the head office for the Canadian Pacific Railway Company. Subsequent additions were made to the building and surrounding lands between 1900-1906, 1909-1914 and 1953-1954 to evolve with the needs and times of a growing cosmopolitan city.*

*Windsor Station currently houses more than 300,000 square feet of leasable office space and serves as an important hub for commuters to access the Montreal underground and Montreal Metro subway system. Its impressive architecture and rich history remain an iconic symbol for the heart of downtown Montreal and a major point of interest in the city's urban landscape.*

*Under the ownership and management of Cadillac Fairview, Windsor Station's historical significance and heritage designation will be fully respected.*

# Quintessentially Canadian – in Cornwall

## *Oldest Canadian canoe found in England*

by Renee Giblin

**L**ike a true Canadian, the first thing Bob Bennoll wanted to do when he retired was to build his own canoe.

Well, maybe not every Canadian dreams of sanding for long hours and meticulously placing slabs of wood side by side, but most Canadians do feel a bond with the craftsmanship and the history of the canoe.

Bennoll's passion for canoes started at a young age. He often paddled in the Quebec lakes and rivers, and when he started his own family he taught his kids to canoe. Now he lives with his wife alongside a lake north of Montreal.

Just like Bennoll, many Canadians have taken family camping trips and canoed to their island getaways. Most Canadian campers have spent entire summers perfecting the J-stroke, the sweep or the draw. And the majority of Canadians dream of winning the Olympic gold in the rowing events. So, as if following a beacon luring him to the coastal shorelines, Bennoll challenged himself to re-create a boat that the First Nation people mastered centuries ago.

He wanted to make the boat that every Canadian links to the country's history. A boat that takes patience to put together, but one that is extremely difficult to preserve. A boat that rots and decays if left in damp places. A boat that, if not taken care of, disintegrates and becomes once again part of the land that bore it. Like a true boat-lover, Bennoll diligently works on the upkeep of his canoe.

Unfortunately, not all canoes have the same fate. Some owners forget their canoes and leave them outside their summer cottage. Or, like what happened at the Enys estate in Cornwall, England, they leave them in a shed for centuries.

The Enys family, one of the oldest and most influential in Cornwall, discovered a two-hundred-fifty-year-old Canadian birchwood canoe stored in their barn. It was a family heirloom that had been forgotten for decades. So how did such an ancient relic – dubbed the oldest Canadian canoe ever found – survive so many years of neglect?

"I expect if the canoe was hanging from the rafters and stayed dry," Bennoll said, "then it could last for decades."

According to Bennoll, the secret to preserving a birchwood canoe is to keep it out of damp and sunny areas. The sun and the rain destroy the colour and warp the wood until eventually the canoe breaks down.

A couple of months ago, Andy Wyke, curator at the National Maritime Museum in Cornwall, received a call from a member of the Enys family saying they had found an old canoe in a barn on their land. Wyke immediately felt the canoe would have an unusual story, since the family has had a long military history and their ancestor Lieutenant-Colonel John Enys had been in Canada during the American War of Independence in 1776.

"The canoe was just lying in the shed," Wyke said.

It had been covered in dirt and dust after years of disuse. For decades, it had never left the shed or seen daylight. It was in two parts, split down the middle. The

original canvas had been replaced and touched up. Wyke added that whatever decorative marks had been carved into the sides were now obliterated. But Wyke emphasized that the structure of the body resembles the Maliseet canoes found in Eastern Canada.

"The canoe is not complete," Wyke said, "and will be sent back to Canada where it belongs."

This fall, it will be taken to the Canadian Canoe Museum in Peterborough, Ontario, where a team of experts will work on uncovering the boat's historical secrets.

"We have a lot to learn," says Jeremy Ward, the Canoe Museum's curator. It will be exciting if they are able to connect the canoe to the Maliseet First Nation community who are well-known for their birchbark canoes. The Maliseet lived in eastern Quebec and New Brunswick. He said the deep middle, the hanging ends and the canoe's sheer size (18 feet long) are classic to the Maliseet canoes.

The Maliseet constructed sturdy canoes to be able to withstand the rough coastal waters and harsh conditions. They also used their boats to store food and sometimes for shelter. Ward insisted, however, that he cannot confirm the origin of the boat until it arrives in Canada.

"John Enys's travels didn't take him into Maliseet country," Ward said.

Enys kept a diary of his voyages. The diary describes his enchantment with canoes but it is unclear if he took a route into eastern Quebec.

Ward feels that the canoe will give Canadians a rare snapshot into Canada's history. He zeroed in on the fact that boats are fragile and to see one that has withstood the elements of time is fascinating.





"It's wonderful to see how many Canadians are excited about this discovery," Ward said.

Wyke also mentioned that the canoe sparked a lot of interest from First Nation communities and Canadians. He made contact with the Maliseet community and is hoping to gather a team that includes First Nation people. The team will look into repairing this relic and uncovering its history.

"It will clear up some of the guess work of building canoes," Wyke said.

Canoes are constantly changing and techniques are always being updated, Bennoll said. Before beginning his own adventure into the complexities of the sport he researched the topic. He read books and checked websites. He used his past experience of building kayaks – and even then he did not realize the time it would take to complete his last task of building a canoe.

The last slab of wood needs to slip into the

grooves of the spine and is the longest piece to place in order to complete the puzzle. Craftsmen need to start at the bow of the canoe and work their way to the stern while following the line of the keel. Bonnell said it takes hours of work to complete – close to five hours in his case. Builders need to pay attention to every detail. They need to meticulously sand and paste so there are no defects. Once that last element is done the canoe is ready to hit the waters.

"The canoe is the quintessential Canadian way to travel," Bennoll said.

*Renee Giblin is a journalism student at Concordia University, where she combines writing with a love of research. Her passion for history started some years ago at university where, after a course of twentieth century world history, she quickly switched from Childhood Education to reading documents about fifteenth and sixteenth century culture and lifestyle.*



# Homage to Anglophonia

## *Writing in the Time of Nationalism: From Two Solitudes to Blue Metropolis*

by Linda Leith

Signature Editions, 2010

When writers want to really get inside a subject, sometimes the best way is to write about the process of discovery itself. Some subjects you explore; others you have to live. George Orwell made the hands-on experience an art form: having tackled vagrancy and poverty as a kind of embedded journalist he set off to fight in the Spanish Civil War with no agenda, barely escaped with his life, and then wrote the kind of book about that struggle he could never have done from archival sources or even interviews. *Homage to Catalonia* is not autobiography; it's a book about how the author came to understand something, and we learn all the more as a result.

Linda Leith does something similar in her crisp and engaging *Writing in the Time of Nationalism*. True, Leith emerges from her journey with fewer battle scars than Orwell did from his, and her tale is infinitely more uplifting, but the process is similar. We enjoy learning about these authors as much as we do their stories; we value them as narrators and guides – not so much because they lived through what they write about (itself very important, of course) as that we live their discoveries with them. Orwell was astonished by the Spanish Republic's ability to tear itself apart in the face of imminent danger; Leith also came up against a self-destructive community, albeit one that managed to find its way despite fear, apathy, and a culture intricately fashioned to deny its existence.

The community in question, Leith's subject, is the set of people who over the last half century have written literature in English, in Quebec. This community has had to struggle to exist in a time of nationalism – Quebec nationalism, that is, or more specifically a Quebec in which the French language emerged as the dominant, even official, form of cultural expression. From the post-war heyday when Montreal literary colossi such as Hugh McLennan and Mavis Gallant straddled the world's continents, English-language-writing fell into sharp decline with the advent of the Quiet Revolution and then, with the election of the Parti Québécois and

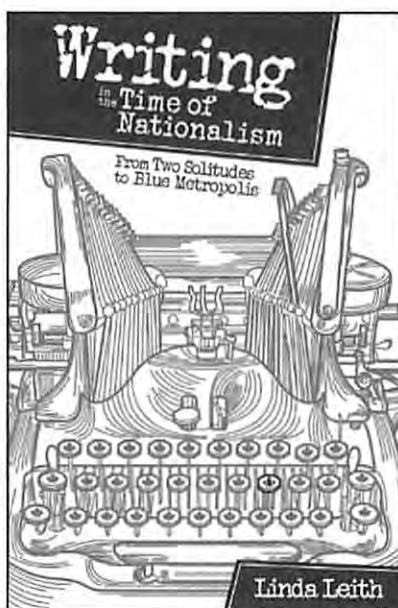
the implementation of the “language laws,” all but disappeared down the 401. So much is the history of Quebec Anglophones – but for Anglophone writers, what is remarkable is the self-inflicted damage done by those who stayed but sat tongue-tied. Writing in a time of nationalism was a great challenge, but the enemy was not nationalism, nor for the most

part nationalists – or at least not in the way one might think. The real enemy was loss of voice. Orwell was shot in the throat while fighting in Spain; English-Quebec writers almost perished by shooting themselves there.

This silence was in the background when Linda Leith grew up. Though not Canadian-born, and blessed with an international perspective gained from living in several countries as a child, Leith's adolescence and emergence as a writer took place in the Quebec of the late 1960s and 70s, when English speakers were inclined to look elsewhere for inspiration and justification, as if they really were the ex-pats many nationalists accused them of being. Leith's account of her own gradual

discovery of Montreal's English-language-writing community (Montreal remains her prime focus throughout the book, as she tells us up front) is as thoughtful and as revealing as her treatment of the larger political and social history. Anglophone writers found their voices at the same time that they came to embrace the predominantly French-language culture that surrounded them. Some found voice by refuting the idea that to be Anglophone was somehow shameful; others tackled their guilt or their fears in creative ways. The result was a distinctly English-Quebec literature.

Except that, apparently, there was no such thing. The biggest challenge from Quebec nationalism (which at no point can be said to have discouraged, let alone oppressed, English writing) came from its too-comfortable assumptions about Canadianness. Canadian nationalism, as it emerged in the 1960s and 70s, gave lip service to official bilingualism but operated essentially in English. In practice, culture that expressed itself in English was Canadian, with its heart, and certainly its stomach, in Toronto;



culture that expressed itself in French was Québécois. When Leith and other English-Quebec writers in the 1990s began to promote their output, they met with encouragement from their Francophone counterparts and even from broader political and social circles. When they began to assert their literary identity, however, the reaction was hostile. People who wrote in English in Quebec were part of Canadian literature, Leith discovered; you could not be part of Quebec literature unless you wrote in French. To acknowledge otherwise was to admit that Quebec culture was other than essentially Francophone.

Matters grew even more Orwellian (in the usual sense of the term) when Leith embarked upon her grandest project (so far): the creation and artistic direction of the literary festival that would gain international fame as Blue Metropolis. The story of the festival's genesis emerges as the most engaging part of this already absorbing book; anyone who has helped run, let alone been involved in the establishment of, a community-based-cultural organization will find much that is disquietingly familiar here – and yet be taken aback by the size and number of the hurdles Leith had to get over for it to see the light of day. Most fascinating is the difficulty Leith encountered by deciding to make the festival bilingual – sorry,

not “bilingual,” Leith learned early on to insist on calling Blue Metropolis a festival in two languages. In Quebec, bilingualism can sound like encroaching federalism. Ironically, some of the nationalist opposition to Blue Met was not over its Englishness (that would have been fine) but over its claims to be French as well. Equally bizarre was the Federal Government's refusal to fund the festival on similar grounds; had Blue Met been an Anglo affair, it likely would have been eligible as a service to a linguistic minority community. To Leith and her colleagues, a literary festival in two languages was a natural statement of pride in a newly confident and accommodating (though predominantly and officially French-speaking) Quebec. To others it was a plot.

The story of Blue Metropolis personifies the struggle of Quebec's English-speaking writers to find their voices and form a literature that does exist according to at least one definition. It is also the culmination of Leith's own discovery of this literature which is also an act of self-discovery – and like all good tales of self-discovery it lets us learn about ourselves.

*Reviewed by Rod MacLeod*

## Ancestors in the Attic, Bodies in the Basement

*Bury Your Dead*

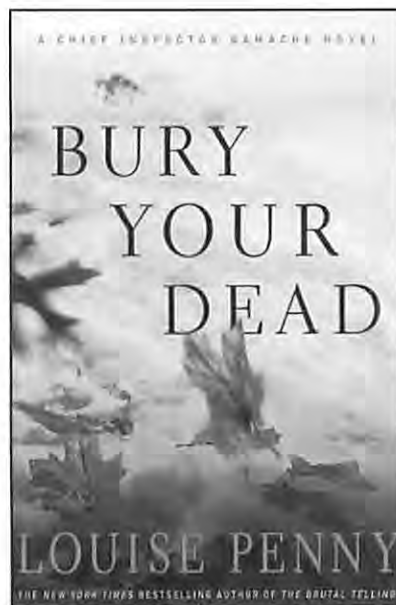
by Louise Penny

Sphere (Little Brown book group, London, G.B.) 2010

Some locations cry out for mystery. Usually the very best of them mix the slightly outre with the everyday mundane. An example is Quebec City's Morrin Centre, the never-named but so apparently described scene of the crime in Louise Penny's outstanding murder-cum-novel *Bury Your Dead*.

This is the Morrin Centre that houses the venerable Literary and Historical Society English library. The action takes place before the centre's recent renovations (thank you, levels of government!) and peppy new incarnation as a successful community meeting place and performance venue. Anyone interested in English-speaking Quebecers, Quebec City, Samuel de Champlain, winter in the Townships and/or attractive policemen should read this book.

This mystery novel is probably as close



as we may come to a thoughtful depiction of one of our oldest and most unusual cities, huddling within its stone walls in a cold and dark winter. In spite of Carnavalé going on in the streets, evil lurks in the old root cellar under the eighteenth century prison cells of the Morrin Centre. Penny is an excellent creator of contrasts – some overt, some subtle, and some more successful than others. The parts of this story set in Quebec City are credible and our main character, Chief Inspector Armand Gamache of the homicide section of the Sûreté du Québec, is appealing, intelligent and totally realistic. However, the alternating chapters set in Three Pines – a kind of Eastern Townships lost

world – do jar somewhat. Perhaps Penny is trying for a bit of magic realism (Brigadoon?) but somehow we can't quite feel the same empathy for the many





John Berendt's *Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil*, a non-fiction best seller of some years past, murder happens in a heritage home in steamy Savannah, Georgia.

As a member now for some years of various historical and heritage organizations, I am quite amazed, not that some murders have occurred in our milieu, but that they have been so few.

This June, QAHN will be holding its Annual General Meeting at the Morrin Centre in Quebec City.

Be careful going to the basement...

*Reviewed by Sandra Stock*

(maybe too many) characters living in this rural art colony with a spa hotel, hermits in the woods, odd locals and so on. To be fair, what place could ever compete with Quebec City?

Many of the elements of classic mystery genre are used and used well. The victim is a strange, disagreeable man with a historical mania for finding Samuel de Champlain's grave site. He has offended and pestered everyone (in both official languages) for many years. Yet he surely didn't deserve to be pummeled to death with his own shovel and buried in the root cellar. The nervous directors of the "Lit & Hist" (Literary & Historical Society) are mostly embarrassed by the negative publicity and, with the exception of a likeable and intelligent older lady, aren't too cooperative with the police. Image and maintaining the status-quo are their priorities. Unfortunately, I guessed "who-dun-it" well before it was revealed but this is hardly important, given the interesting nature of this book.

I should mention here, speaking as a life-long reader of crime and mystery literature and as someone interested in history - especially wonderful old buildings like the Morrin Centre - that there is a definite sub-genre of murder tales, both true and fictional, set around historians, heritage house buffs and even historic gardens. The clever Miss Marple, in Agatha Christie's classic *Nemesis* goes on a House and Garden tour in leafy southern England and the participants are embroiled in murder. In



# Memories of Marianna O’Gallagher

**M**arianna O’Gallagher was my second cousin and in her last years a true confidant and friend.

As a child I remember this smiling Sister of Charity at many family events. In my junior high school years she was also my teacher. I was treated with the same care and attention as the others and that was with a no-nonsense but clearly defined rule of interesting course work.

She had a passion for history, as I do, and we shared many conversations discussing the Irish immigration through Quebec. Her writings, books and seminars on the subject would leave the audience with an overwhelming appreciation for her hard work. Ever serious about her endeavours she brought to the conversation great wit and a warming sense of humour.

When visiting Quebec City, I would always meet with Marianna, enjoy lunch at a bistro or Sunday brunch at the house after Mass at St Pat’s. Every couple months she would write to let me know what she was up to and of course all the news from home. She would always leave me, and I’m sure all of us, with astonishing admiration of her dedication to preserve the Irish legacy.

I last spoke to her a few days before she passed. She was trying to finish the last chapter of her most recent book. She was tired but so interested in our family. We ended the call with her exclaiming “I’ll be seeing Mom and Dad soon.”

God Bless Her.

**Joe Delaney**  
*Dryden, Ontario*

In the late 1990s, after a few attempts at locating copies of Marianna O’Gallagher’s books in Quebec City, I finally ended up at La Maison Anglaise where the clerk told me that Marianna’s books were out of stock at the moment but that if I called Marianna, the clerk was certain that she would accommodate me. The clerk found Marianna’s telephone number and called her from the store. A friendly voice answered. It was Marianna. I explained my dilemma in regard to locating her books and that I was only in the city for a few days. When I told her the name of the pension I was staying at on Rue St-Louis, Marianna assured me she would drop books off early the next morning. Since I am not an early riser, we agreed that I would leave money at the front desk. Sure enough, the books were waiting for me when I checked the next day.

Over the years I would hear stories about Marianna every time I came up to the city from Maine. I thought I was finally going to meet her during the St Patrick’s Parade and celebrations in 2010, but the crowds were too large and the media

attention and extensive orchestration prohibited me from introducing myself. Being a photographer, I followed the parade down Rue St-Jean, taking numerous photographs of all the participants, but my main goal was to capture Marianna as she celebrated her Irish heritage in the city she loved so much. A couple of times, our eyes met and I was looking forward to getting to know this extraordinary woman. Sadly, we never met, but I will cherish my photographs of Marianna and always remember her smile and grace as she rode through the crowds in her beloved Quebec.

**Darrell McBreairty**  
*Allagash, Maine, USA*

My cousin, Marianna, with whom I always had a very close relationship, is being missed by me and many others I am sure since she left us last Spring.

When she took on the task of writing the book on Grosse-Île and other books related to the Irish community of Quebec City, some people would ask me why she would undertake such a difficult project at this late stage in her life. My answer was always the same: “For the love of the Irish and her own roots therein.”

In actual fact, her father’s influence had a lot to do with her motivation. In this connection, my uncle Dermot sometime in the late sixties or early seventies decided it was time for him to visit Grosse-Île, not having done so in recent years. What he found was a complete absence of care both for the property and for the Celtic cross that had been erected in 1909 in memory of those Irish immigrants who flew the famine of 1847 in Ireland only to die before or on arrival at Grosse-Île.

Marianna immediately started working with the Federal Government (owners of the property) to have the island officially designated a historic site. This would automatically put the island under the care of Parks Canada.

With the help of the minister in charge, a Mr. Whalen, of Irish descent, Marianna was able to accomplish this feat, and within a short period of time, the island was so designated. In recognition of her work for the Irish community, in the 1980s she was decorated with the Order of Canada by the Governor General at that time.

This, I believe, will always remain her legacy to those of Irish descent in this country and in North America as a whole.

**Tony Conway**  
*Westmount, QC*

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