

WESTWARD HO! QHN FEATURES JOHN ABBOTT COLLEGE & MONTREAL'S WEST ISLAND

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Quebec Heritage

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News



“An Integral Part of the Community”

John Abbot College celebrates seven decades

Aviation, Arboretum, Islands and Canals

Heritage Highlights along the West Island Shores

Abbott's Late Dean

The Passing of a Memorable Mentor

Quebec Heritage News

EDITOR

RODERICK MACLEOD

PRODUCTION

DAN PINESE; MATTHEW FARFAN

PUBLISHER

QUEBEC ANGLOPHONE
HERITAGE NETWORK
3355 COLLEGE
SHERBROOKE, QUEBEC
J1M 0B8

PHONE

1-877-964-0409
(819) 564-9595

FAX

(819) 564-6872

CORRESPONDENCE

EDITOR@QAHN.ORG

WEBSITES

QAHN.ORG
QUEBECHERITAGEWEB.COM
100OBJECTS.QAHN.ORG

PRESIDENT

GRANT MYERS

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

MATTHEW FARFAN

PROJECT DIRECTORS

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GLENN PATTERSON

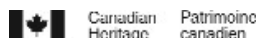
BOOKKEEPER

MARION GREENLAY

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EDITOR'S DESK

Vocation Spot

by Rod MacLeod

We think of things going out in a puff of smoke, but in the case of the campus of John Abbott College in St. Anne de Bellevue it was a puff of smoke that created it. Except that the guy behind it didn't smoke.

Fresh from bankrolling several grand science buildings at McGill University, abstemious tobacco tycoon William Christopher Macdonald turned his attention to the public education system. For some time, progressive-minded reformers within Quebec's Protestant school system had been promoting better school facilities, particularly in rural areas, where the one-room schoolhouse prevailed. Macdonald underwrote the investigation carried out by Scots educator John Adams, whose 1902 Report called for a complete overhaul of rural schooling, including consolidated schools (separate grades in designated classrooms) and more effective teacher training. Impressed, Macdonald offered to pay to build a "model" consolidated school to serve as a showcase for the new ideas. Ormstown in the Chateaugay Valley was the designated location for this ambitious building, but when local opposition scuppered this plan, Macdonald looked to St. Anne de Bellevue, which lay at the western tip of the Island of Montreal right on both the CPR and Grand Trunk railway lines. This largely rural area would become home to two interrelated Macdonald projects: an agricultural college (an idea he had been pursuing for some time with Canada's first Agriculture Commissioner, James Wilson Robertson) and a school for teachers (the original notion of a "model" school). Both were affiliated with McGill, constituting a second campus for the university.

Teachers had been trained at McGill

since 1857, when its Normal School opened in a building on Montreal's Belmont Street – a respectable location, but female student teachers coming from outside the city had to board privately, their lives subject to constant scrutiny as they navigated the "dangerous" urban space between boarding house and classroom. Despite these challenges, a surprising number did come from rural areas, particularly the Eastern Townships, mostly with an eye to obtaining social advancement through good teaching jobs. More often than not, they opted for city schools, which paid better and seemed more in tune with the



Normal School training.

The Macdonald School for Teachers revolutionized the education of teachers by providing a more relaxed atmosphere, modern learning facilities, standardized accommodation, and a location easily accessible by train. When the Normal School closed in 1907, McGill's student teachers moved to brand new residences in St. Anne and studied in grand red-tiled-roof buildings designed by Protestant education's favourite architect Alexander Cowper Hutchison.

The main buildings were grouped around a grassy oval, rather like a village green, which gave onto yet more greenery leading down to the waters of

Lake St. Louis. Idyllic as well as practical.

A lot less practical, however, by the second half of the twentieth century. By that time, teacher training had become Education, involving higher degrees and increased specialization. In 1965, McGill created the Faculty of Education, which absorbed the former School for Teachers and sought to consolidate instruction downtown. Six years later, student teachers moved out of the Macdonald campus and into the new Faculty of Education building on McTavish Street, leaving the Faculty of Agriculture in St. Anne with buildings it did not absolutely need.

Not for long. Indeed, already in the works was John Abbott College, one of a handful of English-language "CEGEPs" that formed in the wake of the Quiet Revolution. Accredited in 1970 but in need of a permanent home, John Abbott secured a lease from McGill of several Macdonald campus buildings – notably those surrounding the oval green. Within a few years, the CEGEP was ensconced in the facilities where generations of teachers

had learned their craft and proceeded to nurture students in all corners of Quebec. It is fitting that this seminal institution's successor is also devoted to nurturing youth in a gorgeous setting.

It is in this spot that QAHN will hold its Annual General Meeting and Convention in June, marking both its own twentieth anniversary and John Abbott College's fiftieth. *Quebec Heritage News* is pleased to showcase the college, and the larger region known as the West Island, in this issue.

Happy reading! There will be a short quiz next period.

WHO ARE THESE ANGLOPHONES ANYWAY?

*An Address to the 10th Annual Arts, Culture
and Heritage Working Group Meeting, Montreal*

by Matthew Farfan

The Arts, Culture and Heritage Working Group Meeting, held at Thomson House, McGill University, Montreal, on February 11, 2020, consisted of representatives from community organizations and from the federal and provincial governments.

I'd like to talk a little bit about Anglophones.

I guess we could say that 2019 was the year of the “historic Anglo.” That term’s use by some politicians in Quebec has led to a fair amount of confusion, considerable irritation, and not a little humour among the Anglophone community, historic or otherwise.

Leaving off the “historic” part, let’s talk about the term “Anglophone.” Most dictionaries define Anglophone simply as “someone who speaks English.” Seems plain enough. But could this not include Francophones who also speak English, or even multilingual people who speak English? It’s a word that came into popular use in Quebec in the 1970s; it tends to connote those who speak English as their mother tongue (as opposed to “Francophones,” whose mother tongue is French, or “Allophones,” whose mother tongue is neither English nor French, but who may speak one or both of those languages). That said, many Anglophones still cringe when they hear the word, especially when it’s applied to them. Is that because they don’t like being labeled? Or maybe because the word seems to imply unilingual?

Admittedly, the term “Anglophone” has always made some of us at QAHN wince a little bit. It’s only slightly less awkward sounding than “English-speakers,” or “English-mother-tongue-speakers.” So, it’s ironic that we have it in our name: the Quebec Anglophone Heritage Network. But, we tell ourselves that the “A-word” is a daily reminder of our mission: “to preserve and promote the history, heritage and culture of Quebec – and, in particular, Quebec’s English-speaking communities.” It also lends an all-important vowel to our acronym, allowing us to say QAHN, instead of QHN (insert mumbling sound here).

More importantly, though, who are these “Anglophones” whose history, heritage and culture we’re trying to preserve and promote? In our view, they’re anyone who self-identifies with the English-speaking community, and who speaks English as a first or second language. That’s a broad definition. This is deliberate because our community is made up of people of diverse histories and cultures. In short, it’s about inclusiveness, which “historic Anglophone” is not.

Over the course of our 20-year existence, QAHN has worked to make space for the diverse cultures that comprise Quebec’s “Anglophone” community. We’ve tried to dispel the popular misperception that being “Anglophone” means that you or your ancestors came from England, Scotland, Wales, Ireland, or from some former British colony somewhere in the world, like Tasmania or, like my dad, Trinidad and Tobago.

Obviously Great Britain, Ireland, and the Commonwealth are

hugely important pieces of Quebec’s Anglophone puzzle. But our community also includes members of other cultural and visible-minority groups that for various reasons have tended to gravitate towards English-speaking Quebec. One only has to think of the many members of the Jewish, Black, Italian, Chinese and Indigenous communities, among others, to see the diversity that characterizes English-speaking Quebec.

References to diversity appear throughout QAHN’s Strategic Plan. Emphasis in that document is placed on outreach to cultural communities, and on partnerships with Indigenous communities that “promote heritage and foster reconciliation and understanding between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Canadians.”

So, it has long been our policy to define “Anglophoneness” very broadly. Back in 2007, we hosted a colloquium at the McCord Museum on multiculturalism. That was the year of “reasonable accommodation” in Quebec; we submitted a brief to the Bouchard-Taylor Commission underlining the historic diversity of Quebec’s English-speakers. In 2010, we co-hosted a Gaspesian Regional Heritage Summit in New Richmond. That event was trilingual and tricultural: English, French and Mi’kmaq. QAHN’s quarterly magazine, *Quebec Heritage News*, has featured countless stories about the disparate cultural groups that make up the Anglophone community.

Our recent project, “Diversity and Achievement in Anglophone Quebec,” funded by Canadian Heritage, included a bilingual exhibition on the contributions of cultural groups ranging from the Irish to the Jews to the Blacks; from the Chinese to the Haudenosaunee (or Iroquois). It included a book, *Your Story, Our Story / Votre histoire, notre histoire*, designed both for general use and as a supplement to the woefully inadequate history curriculum currently being taught in Quebec high schools. And it included a walking tour of Black Little Burgundy, and presentations at high schools by Indigenous and non-Indigenous speakers. “Diversity and Achievement” was one of our most successful initiatives, and the enthusiasm expressed by teachers and others speaks volumes about the importance of inclusion in our society.

QAHN continues to reach out to Indigenous communities in an effort to reconcile the widely divergent views of our shared history. For three years, our “Heritage Talks” lecture series has included prominent Indigenous voices. This spring, we’re holding a day-long Indigenous-themed colloquium, “Reconciling History: Indigenous Voices in Quebec Heritage,” which will take place in St. Jean in April.

All the while – and this too is part of our mission – we’re collaborating with our counterparts in the French-speaking heritage sector. Our partnership with the Fédération Histoire Québec, for example, is ongoing, and has included a joint annual convention in Montreal, and a regional heritage fair which will take place in the Eastern Townships this fall.

THE WEST ISLAND

A Brief History

by Jim Hamilton

Senneville. St. Anne de Bellevue. Baie d'Urfé. Beaconsfield. Pointe Claire. Dorval. St. Geneviève. Pierrefonds. Kirkland. Roxboro. Île Bizard. Dollard des Ormeaux. These are the municipalities that are usually said to constitute the West Island, that nebulously-defined region at the western end of the Island of Montreal. Lachine and LaSalle are sometimes considered, informally, to be part of the West Island. Some of these municipalities have been merged with the City of Montreal; most remain independent towns or cities within the Urban Agglomeration of Montreal.

Each of these communities has its own history, but the (European) history of this region starts with the founding of the mission at Ville Marie by Maisonneuve in 1642.

The history of LaSalle and Lachine starts with the explorer Robert le Cavalier, Sieur de la Salle, who set out from Ville Marie to look for an inland water route to China. Unable to sail through what are now called the Lachine rapids, La Salle had to start over and build a ship at a point further west, above the rapids. There is a legend that the village of Lachine was so named because La Salle set out with the intention of sailing to China, and that was as far as he got. Apparently LaSalle's detractors wanted to embarrass him by underscoring his failure. The explorer was later revered when the nearby municipality of LaSalle was named after him.

As the fur trade developed during the seventeenth century, a trading post was established at Lachine. There is now a museum dedicated to the fur trade, located in the town, beside the canal. Before leaving to go into the wilderness, and to give thanks when they returned, the voyageurs were said to have prayed in the parish churches of Lachine, Pointe Claire (on the point), and St. Anne de Bellevue. The fur trade was a hazardous occupation, and the voyageurs knew when they departed for the season's trading, that some of them would not return.

As the colonists moved westward from Ville Marie, they established villages and farms on the shore of today's Lake St. Louis at places such as Dorval, Pointe Claire and Beaurepaire (now part of Beaconsfield). Abbé François-Saturnin Lascaris d'Urfé founded a mission on the site of the town that now bears his name: Baie D'Urfé. A fort was built at Senneville to defend against First Nations warriors who came down the Ottawa River

to attack Ville Marie. The village of St. Geneviève was established on the shore of Lake of Two Mountains.

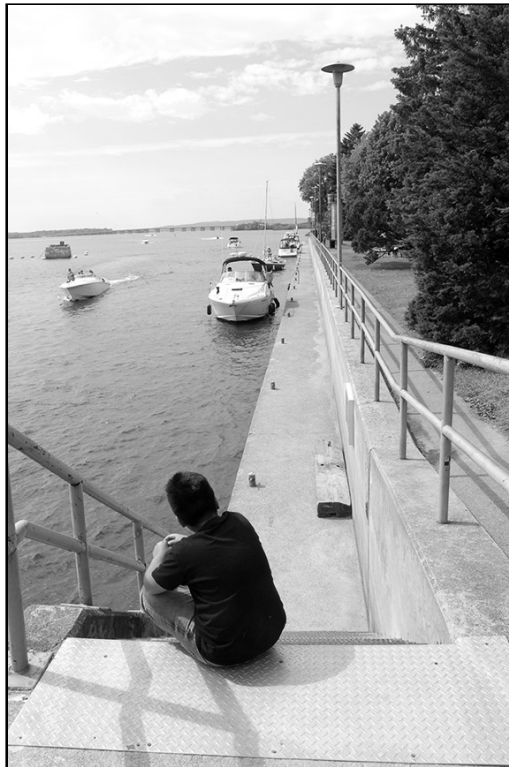
The West Island has always been an important link between Montreal and points west: first the canal, which enabled ships to bypass the rapids and sail up the St. Lawrence River to the Great Lakes, then the railways, and then the Trans-Canada Highway. As a waterway for shipping, the Lachine Canal was made obsolete by the St. Lawrence Seaway, which opened in 1959; the canal is now used for recreational boating.

As of the late nineteenth century, a number of wealthy Montreal families built large summer homes on the shores of Lake of Two Mountains at Senneville. These included the Morgans (of Morgan's department store), Edward Clouston (president of the Bank of Montreal), R. B. Angus (of the Angus Railway shops), Senator Forget, and Sir John Abbott. Mull Hall (now Stewart Hall) in Pointe Claire and the Forest and Stream Club in Dorval were originally private homes. The Morgan family donated land for the Morgan Arboretum, Braeside Golf Course, and the St. Anne de Bellevue Curling Club (now closed).

After World War I, the federal government established the Veterans' Hospital at St. Anne, and greatly expanded it after World War II. Because of the declining number of veterans as patients, administration of the hospital has been transferred to the Quebec government. It will be used as a long term care facility, although the remaining veterans are still there.

World War II spurred population growth on the West Island, and led to the building of the airport at Dorval. In those days, when there were no jet planes, all of the aircraft heading from Canada to the United Kingdom had to take off from Dorval, with stops at Gander in Newfoundland and Shannon in Ireland. The Montreal Aviation Museum, located on the campus of Macdonald College, holds many vintage aircraft which have been lovingly restored – mostly by retired personnel from the aviation industry. Some of these aircraft date from World War II, or even earlier.

The opening of Autoroute 20 and the establishment of the commuter train serving the Lakeshore area enabled the West Island to grow and develop as "bedroom communities" where people can live and commute to Montreal. The Trans-Canada Highway (Autoroute 40) opened in the 1960s, leading to the





establishment of many industries, hotels and shopping centres along that route.

Macdonald College, built in 1907, was the West Island's first major educational establishment. When the Quebec government created the CEGEP system in the 1960s, a group of people in the West Island applied for a charter to open a CEGEP there. The new college, named after John Abbott (Canada's first Canadian-born prime minister), opened in 1971 in buildings rented from Macdonald College; ownership of these buildings was later transferred to the Ministry of Education. John Abbott College now has a full time population of more than 6,000 students. It also provides facilities for athletic and cultural events, and is a major source of income and employment for the West Island. Gérald Godin CEGEP was established in the 1980s to serve the West Island's growing French-speaking population. The Salle Pauline Julien, part of this CEGEP, provides an excellent program of

theatre, dance and musical concerts.

In addition to the athletic and recreational facilities at John Abbott, the West Island boasts the Royal Montreal Golf Club, now located on Île-Bizard, and the Royal St. Lawrence Yacht Club, located in Dorval; these are, respectively, the oldest and most famous clubs of their kind in Canada. Many international tournaments, competitions and regattas have taken place on the West Island over the years.

Jim Hamilton, a chemical engineer by profession, has lived in Senneville since 1981. His "retirement" activities include the Sainte-Anne-du-Bout-de-l'île Historical Society, the Friends of Stewart Hall, the celebration of the 125th anniversary of the incorporation of Senneville as a village, and singing Scottish and Irish songs at Burns and St. Patrick's Day suppers.



Top: Henry H. Hopkins, *Atlas of the City and Island of Montreal*, 1879, showing the West Island.

Bottom left & right: William Notman & Son, *Royal St. Lawrence Yacht Club House, Dorval*. McCord Museum, VIEW-3238.1; VIEW-6649.

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Monday, March 23rd, 1:30-2:30 p.m.

Château Ramezay, 280 Notre-Dame Street East, Montreal
Building a Monument Park: The Fight for the Irish Commemorative Stone

by **Fergus Keyes**, Director, Montreal Irish Monument Park Foundation. **Limit 50 ppl. First come/First served.**

Sunday, April 19th, 1:30-2:30 p.m.

Chalet Bellevue, 27 rue Bellevue, Morin Heights
The Evolution of Ski Trails in the Laurentians

by **James Jackson**, Director, Morin Heights Historical Association

Wednesday, April 22nd

***LECTURE: 3:30-4:30 P.M. / WINE & CHEESE: 5:00-7:00 P.M.**

BANQ Vieux-Montréal, 535 avenue Viger Est, Montreal
Eaton's Ninth Floor: The Journey to Preserve an Art Deco Masterpiece

by **Gérald-McNichols-Tétreault**, Architect, Urbanist
***RSVPs are mandatory: home@qahn.org / 819-564-9595**

Saturday, April 25th, 10:30-11:30 a.m.

QAHN, 3355 College Street, Sherbrooke
Fake and Foul: Quebec's New History Textbook

by **Sam Allison**, Author; and **Jon G Bradley**, Author

Wednesday, April 29th, 6:00-7:00 p.m.

Benny Library, 6400 Monkland Avenue, Montreal
To Do Away with the Injustice: Syrians in Montreal and Canada's Racial Immigration Regime, 1908-1950

by **Brian About**, Ph.D

Sunday, May 3rd, 1:00-3:00 p.m. CEMETERY WALKING TOUR
Meeting Point: 226 Champlain Avenue, Philipsburg
Missisquoi's Cemeteries: Loyalists in Black and White

by **Heather Darch**, Curator, Missisquoi Museum



VISIT QAHN.ORG FOR COMPLETE PROGRAM & DETAILS



Saturday, May 9th, 10:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m.*

Colby-Curtis Museum, 535 Dufferin Street, Stanstead
Tales From The Townships: Storytelling & Live Gaelic Music

by **Ann Rothfels & friends**
Light refreshments and a snack will be served
\$12 for members of the Stanstead Historical Society / \$15 for non-members. *Reservations required: 819-876-7322

Monday, May 11th, 7:00-8:00 p.m.

Uplands, 9 Speid Street, Sherbrooke
The Politician and the Camera, or How Photography Became a Political Weapon

by **Samuel Gaudreau-Lalande**, Director-Curator, Colby-Curtis Museum

Friday, May 22nd, 8:30-10:00 p.m. WALKING TOUR*

Meeting Point: Place Fletcher's Field, —Avenue du Parc, Montreal
QAHN & Haunted Montreal Present: Haunted Mountain

by **Donovan King**, Historian, Tour-Guide
***FREE, Reservations Required, 514-266-9682**

Saturday, May 30th, 10:30-1:00 p.m.

Golden Rule Lodge, 560 Dufferin Street, Stanstead
The Mysteries of Golden Rule Lodge — and Freemasonry on the Canada-U.S. Border

by **Grant Myers** and **Jean-Jacques Rousseau**, Past-Masters, Golden Rule Lodge
Light refreshments and a snack will be served.
\$12 for members of the Stanstead Historical Society / \$15 for non-members. *Reservations required: 819-876-7322

Friday, June 12th 12:30-1:30 p.m.

Atwater Library, 1200 Atwater Avenue, Westmount
The Irish Language in Canada

by **Danny Doyle**, Author

JOHN ABBOTT COLLEGE

50 Years of Success

by Heather Darch

John Abbott College (JAC) is one of Quebec's five English-language public colleges, and lies in the charming community of St. Anne de Bellevue, near the western tip of the Island of Montreal. Its location on the shores of Lake St. Louis, near the confluence of the St. Lawrence and Ottawa Rivers, makes it one of the most beautiful CEGEP campuses in the province. For 50 years, it has been a leader in the delivery of outstanding English language education and innovative student services. We asked five key staff members -- Gordon Brown (Academic Dean), John Halpin (Director-General), Lison Desclos (Manager, Communications and Foundation Office), Debbie Cribb (Communications Officer / Media Relations), and Doug Brown (Dean of Career Programs) -- to reflect on this significant anniversary in the school's history, and on the college's importance to Anglophone Quebecers and Quebec's history as a whole. Their comments reveal a real sense of honour and pride of place.

Let's start at the beginning. Can you briefly tell me about the founding of CEGEPS and John Abbott College?

Quebec's first colleges of general and professional training (known by their acronym, "CEGEP") opened their doors in 1967, a few months after the adoption of the General and Vocational Colleges Act or Loi des collèges d'enseignement général et professionnel. This uniquely Quebec education system was created to offer both pre-university programs, including social science, natural science, history, visual arts, science, music, dance, fine arts, computer science and mathematics, as well as technical training programs such as biology, agri-food, physics, human technologies, administration, arts and communications and graphic arts.

JAC opened in 1971 with a staff of 149, including 77 teachers, 10 professionals, 8 technical staff, 26 support staff, 10 people in administration and 4 in management positions. Of the 1,237 students who registered for the 1971 fall semester, only 14% chose the technical training program. Mind you, there were only

two technology programs: Nursing and Business Administration.

Classes started on September 7, 1971, and were scattered throughout the then Macdonald Campus: Herzberg, Laird Hall and the Poultry Building. The following year, the Barton Building (Barton Barn) was converted to twenty-six classrooms.

The college is housed in beautiful heritage buildings. Was this always the case?

No! Although many programs were offered at the St. Anne de

Bellevue campus, several were offered in the Kirkland Pavilion from 1973-1979 due to a shortage of space on campus. This brand-new building was on Hymus Boulevard and a shuttle bus connected the two. The beautiful early twentieth-century buildings you see when you arrive at the college with their red tiled roofs and red bricks were once part of McGill University's Faculty of Education. In 1973, the college was consolidated in St. Anne de Bellevue by constructing the



Casgrain Centre and renovating the existing buildings.

Is there something about the early years of the college that you find fascinating?

At the beginning of that first week in September 1971, while some teachers had classes full of students, other teachers and students were criss-crossing the halls and campus looking for the rooms in which they were meant to be. Horror of horrors – they walked across “The Oval”! They were unaware that Macdonald College had a tradition protecting this circle of lawn. These CEGEP people's casualness in using it as a shortcut was seen as deliberate provocation. Macdonald students tackled the John Abbott students. A real Donnybrook ensued. When they were finally separated and started to pick up themselves and their belongings, one of the young John Abbott teachers, who had once been a student at Macdonald, suddenly realized he had been fighting on the Macdonald side!

What is JAC's historic connection to the community?

The historic connection is most apparent with the names on campus. Sir John Abbott, Canada's third Prime Minister, was born in 1821, an hour north of Montreal. Sir John was widely viewed as one of Canada's most successful lawyers in his time, and was also key in founding the Royal Victoria Hospital in Montreal, the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, the Fraser Institute, the Canadian SPCA, and the Canadian Pacific Railway. The Herzberg Building was named in honour of Nobel Prize winner Gerhard Herzberg, a pioneering German-Canadian physicist and chemist. Hochelaga was the original name of Montreal and the Hochelaga Building is named in honour of the Indigenous people on whose land the campus sits. The Penfield Building was named for neurosurgeon Dr. Wilder Penfield. The Science Building commemorates JAC alumna Anne-Marie Edward, who died in the massacre at the École Polytechnique. The Casgrain Centre is named in honour of Thérèse Casgrain, a leader in Quebec's women's suffrage movement. Stewart Hall is named after Mr. and Mrs. Walter Stewart, benefactors to Macdonald College. And Brittain Hall is named in memory of Dr. W. H. Brittain, former Vice-Principal of Macdonald College.

What is the school's current relationship to the community?

John Abbott College has been an integral part of the community since opening its doors to students in 1971. Over 60,000 students have attended John Abbott to date, making it a cornerstone of post-secondary education in the community as well as an important employer with over 15,000 faculty and staff since its incorporation in 1970. The West Island Readaptation Centre has been on campus for over 20 years. It enhances the quality of life for approximately 25 adults suffering from intellectual disabilities. They develop the skills, habits and attitudes required to cope with everyday life and ease their integration into society.

We also offer courses that take students in the community to volunteer their time; one in particular brings students to the St. Anne's Veterans Hospital. Another sees students volunteer in Francophone centres so they can perfect their French-speaking skills while helping people or groups in need. Many people and organisations come to campus to take advantage of its idyllic location, too. It has been used by multiple commercial movie pro-

ductions and is popular for weddings, birthday parties, conferences, summer camps and charity events.

Trying to get a new CEGEP off the ground is hard enough without having to contend with government computers that spew out incorrect or unfinished high school examination results. But John Abbott College's admissions team (from left to right) Juanita Boselli, admissions officer; Claude Lafon, humanities; Allar MacKinnon, registrar; Lloyd Wood, arts/humanities coordinator; Wendy de Yaeger, support staff and Stan Asher, English department are managing to get through the work with a smile. John Abbott opens Sept. 7. — Davis Photographers.

Getting ready

John Abbott College staff readies for fall registration

Does JAC have a distinct mission and role within Quebec's CEGEP system?

We serve the English-speaking community, but we also encourage Francophone students to expand their knowledge of the English language and to explore possibilities that will enable them to become world citizens. Consultation is at the heart of our decision-making process. We value employees and students' experience and input. That is more than a tradition, it's part of our culture.

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What are some of JAC's significant successes, both past and present?

The first graduation ceremony was held on May 17, 1973, in the Macdonald College Auditorium, now home to the JAC Library. As of June 2019, it's an astonishing 61,021 students that have



Top: Newspaper clipping, September 1971. Newspaper unidentified; "Davis Photographers." Courtesy of John Abbott College.

Bottom: Cafeteria, John Abbott College, 2012. Photo: johnabbott.qc.ca.

left with a JAC diploma in hand. Our programs are varied and include anthropology, biology, business administration, dental hygiene, environmental studies, pre-hospital emergency care and police technology, to name a few.

Inclusion has always been very important at JAC. In the 70s, when the Lakeshore Vocational Training Centre was seeking employment for disabled young adult clients, JAC offered to give them supervised experience. Those who were able to do the job would remain; JAC became and still remains an equal opportunity employer.

Another success is our state-of-the-art Gold LEED Certified (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) Anne-Marie Edward Science Building which opened in 2012.

What are some of the challenges the school faces 20 years into the 21st century? Are these challenges very different from 50 years ago?

In terms of facilities, 50 years ago was a time of uncertainties trying to find a permanent site for the new CEGEP. Today's challenges are the renovation of our existing spaces and the plans of creating new ones as JAC currently has a space deficit of 3,106 square metres.

Every new generation of students brings new challenges. In this digital age we know that virtual communications reduce the ability to understand non-verbal communications and that there is a significant increase in mental illnesses; thus the need to increase our delivery of holistic services to our students.

The "peace and love" attitude of the seventies has been replaced by an urgency to act responsibly to climate change concerns.

What are some of the college's plans to mark its 50th anniversary milestone?

It will be a full year of celebrations starting with a very special Homecoming Weekend, September 18-20, 2020, including a food festival, the induction to the Hall of Distinction of the last eleven VIPs to complete our list of 50 inductees, the traditional football game, live bands, a dance with a 1970s theme, and more. All regular and special events will be held with a festive 50th anniversary feel.

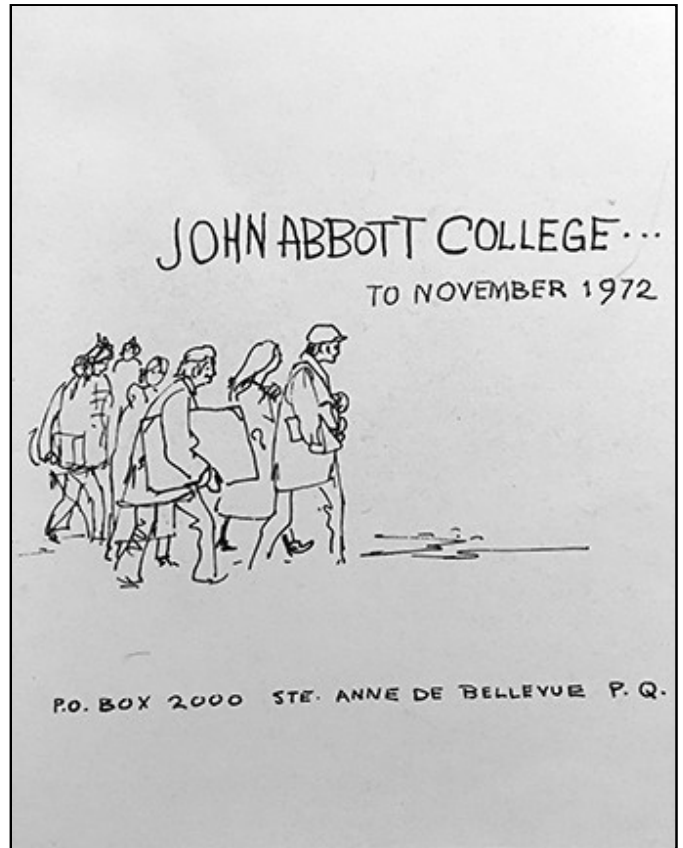
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Image from an early John Abbott College publication, drawing by Steve Bloomer, Fine Arts Department. Courtesy of John Abbott College.

THE MAN FROM ARGENTEUIL

The Life and Times of Sir John Abbott

by Jim Hamilton

Imagine a quiz with the following questions:

1. Who was Canada's third prime minister?
2. Who was Canada's first Canadian-born prime minister?
3. Which Canadian prime minister retired in Senneville to plant orchards and breed Guernsey cattle?
4. Which Canadian prime minister's family has a town in southern Quebec named after them?
5. Which Canadian prime minister mentored a famous female doctor?
6. Which Canadian prime minister had a brother who supervised the building of the Canadian Pacific Railway?

In all cases, the answer is Sir John Abbott. (The town in Question 4 is St. Paul d'Abbotsford, the female doctor of Question 5 is Maude Abbott, and the railway builder of Question 6 is Harry Abbott.)

But many Canadians would ask: Sir John Who?

John Abbott is not one of Canada's better known political leaders, for a number of reasons. For one, he was a quiet, reserved individual who didn't like publicity. For another, he only served as prime minister for 15 months, then had to retire because of illness, which proved to be terminal. And yet, a partial list of his accomplishments includes the following:

- Member of the Legislative Assembly of the Province of Canada, 1860-1867
- Member of Parliament, 1867-74 and 1880-87
- Canadian senator, 1887-93
- Solicitor General, 1862
- First Canadian-born prime minister
- Mayor of Montreal, 1887-89
- Dean of the McGill Law Faculty
- A founder of the Royal Victoria Hospital
- A founder of the Art Association of Montreal (later, the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts)
- President of the Fraser Institute (later, the Fraser-Hickson Library)
- A founding member of Canadian Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals

- One of the first breeders of Guernsey cattle in Canada
- In his time, the most eminent commercial lawyer in Canada
- Knighted in 1892

Apart from these formal duties, Abbott had some other interests, including service as a militia officer and the founding and leading of a choir. His biographers have recorded that Sir John had a fine and very powerful voice.

When I first saw this list of accomplishments, I thought that Abbott must have lived to be very old, but no; he died at the age of 72, a normal life span at that time.

Sir John was said to be intelligent, hardworking and dedicated to his career, but he started out with many advantages. The Abbott family arrived in Lower Canada at a time when the population was expanding and money was being invested here. The Abbotts were English-speaking, and most of the money was controlled by English-speaking people. John Abbott's father, the Reverend Joseph Abbott, was an Anglican clergyman and school teacher, who had an extensive library, to which his children had free access. John Joseph Caldwell Abbott was born in St. Andrews East, Quebec, (now Saint-André-d'Argenteuil) in 1821, not long after James McGill had died and stipulated in his will that his Montreal farm would be used as the



campus for a college. When McGill College opened in 1843, Joseph Abbott was appointed bursar, the office that controlled the finances. Reverend Abbott recruited his son John as one of the first students. Because of his father's influence, John received a very good education – better than most in the colony.

But the most important advantage that John Abbott had was the fact that he was male. During most of Abbott's lifetime, women could not vote, run for public office, attend university, practice law or perform any of the functions on which John Abbott's career and fortune were built. To his credit, in his later years, Abbott was an early advocate of university education for women, and he used his influence at McGill to support the admission of the first group of female students. One of these students was his distant cousin and protégée, Maude Abbott. Maude and her sister were orphaned at an early age and grew up in abject poverty. As a girl, Maude was resigned to the idea that she would

have to leave school and earn a living as a domestic servant. “Cousin John,” who by this time was quite wealthy, said no: Maude must stay in school and decide on a career. Maude became one of the first women in Quebec to graduate in Medicine. As Dr. Maude Abbott, she had a distinguished career as a specialist in children's heart disease, and for many years was the curator of McGill's medical museum. Sir John did not live to see Maude graduate from McGill. He died in October 1893, some months before she finished her medical degree.

John Abbott was largely home-schooled and self-educated, but he did attend some classes at his father's mission school at Grenville. He was said to be “a voracious reader,” and completed the equivalent of secondary school when he was seventeen. He then went to work in Montreal for the firm Laurie & Sons Dry Goods, but had to return home because of illness. When he recovered, he went to work for a wholesale firm in Gananoque, where his duties were bookkeeping and accounting. He “read law” with the firm of William Meredith, Strachan Bethune, and Christopher Dunkin. Abbott was admitted to the bar in 1847, and was a partner of McGill professor William Badgley. In 1854, he received a BCL from McGill, and the following year he succeeded Badgley as Professor of Law and Dean of the Faculty of Law, a position he retained until 1880. Among his many illustrious students was Wilfred Laurier.

Abbott specialized in commercial law, which includes bankruptcies, contracts, partnerships and banking. He became one of the wealthiest lawyers in Canada. His clients included John Molson, Hugh Allan, Bell Telephone, Standard Life, and the CPR. Abbott was described as a quiet, dispassionate person who avoided conflict, display and emotion. He preferred counselling clients and negotiating contracts to courtroom pleading.

Abbott is famously quoted as saying: “I hate politics... I hate notoriety, public meetings, public speeches, caucuses, and everything that I know of that is apparently the necessary incident of politics, and would prefer just doing public work to the best of my ability.” This statement is perhaps surprising for a politician, but apparently was not to the people who knew him.

Even so, given this attitude, why did he enter politics?

The answer is railways. In Abbott's day, railways could not be built without government support. It was said that politics were about railways.

Railways were just beginning when John Abbott and his brother Harry, an engineer, were young men. Both were keenly interested in this new industry, and, in the 1840s and 50s, both held stock in several railway companies. This led to their participation in the building of the Canadian Pacific Railway, for which Harry became the chief engineer. John was legal advisor to shipping tycoon Hugh Allan, who envisaged a railway reaching to the Pacific coast. John Abbott's involvement in this venture included drafting a charter for the CPR, arranging for its incorporation, serving as a

provisional Director, and going to London to float bonds for construction.

John Abbott was a central figure in the political scandal resulting from corrupt practices used to build the CPR. In 1873, Prime Minister John A. Macdonald resigned amid accusations of railway-related bribery, accusations derived from documents leaked from Abbott's legal offices. After weathering the storm, however, Macdonald returned to office in 1878 and resumed efforts to build the CPR. Abbott revised his proposals and recruited important investors such as George Stephens and Donald Smith. In 1885, Abbott became a Director of the CPR, though he resigned when he was appointed to the Senate two years later. Macdonald appointed him Senate house leader and cabinet minister without portfolio.

Abbott succeeded Macdonald as prime minister when the latter died in 1891. Abbott remained in office for 15 months, and then had to resign because of ill health. He died in 1893 and is buried at Mount Royal Cemetery – the only Canadian prime minister buried in Montreal.

In his later years, John Abbott purchased a large estate in Senneville, where he pursued an interest in agriculture, including planting orchards and breeding Guernsey cattle. Several generations of the Abbott family have lived in Senneville. Christopher Plummer, the actor, is a descendant of Sir John, and as a child spent his summers on the Senneville estate.



Top: William Notman & Son, Residence of J. J. C. Abbott, St. Anne de Bellevue vicinity, 1911. Photo: McCord Museum, II-184264.

Bottom: Abbott monument, Mount Royal Cemetery, 2019. Photo: Robincantin.

A SYMBOL OF PEACE IN ST. ANNE DE BELLEVUE

by Heather Darch

In a peaceful corner of Kelso Park along St. Anne de Bellevue's waterfront, a white pine stands as a tribute to the early history of this community. A symbol of the Haudenosaunee or Iroquois Confederacy, the pine tree, known as the Great Tree of Peace, is said to have taken root on Turtle Island (North America) as a result of the actions of a man named Rononhsionni:ton, the Peace Keeper. Rononhsionni:ton played a major role in the formation of the Five Nations Confederacy comprised of Mohawks, Oneidas, Onondagas, Cayugas and Senecas. Under the White Pine, the Rotinonhsionni, the People of the Longhouse, are united as one family within the Teiotiokwahnakston, the Great Binding Law of the Iroquois. Sitting under the Great Tree of Peace, weapons of war are buried so that the Great Peace will always prevail.

Kelso Park's white pine and its accompanying plaque were situated there by the municipality of St. Anne de Bellevue as part of a cultural exchange program with Kahnawake and as a way to acknowledge the early history of this region. It is intended to be a symbol of peace and good will between the Mohawk Nation and St. Anne de Bellevue, and as a symbol of a shared commitment to protecting the environment. In three languages, the plaque states:

In the spirit of reconciliation this White Pine was planted in 2005 in honour of the Mohawk (Kanien'kehá:ka) nation on whose traditional territory St. Anne de Bellevue is situated. It was planted as part of a tree-planting project funded by Tree Canada. The White Pine is considered to be the Great Tree of Peace by the Mohawk people and it is hoped that its presence will contribute to stimulating peace and goodwill amongst all nations.

St. Anne de Bellevue is located on a strategic site used by Indigenous people long before the arrival of Europeans. Original names for this location include both the Algonquin *Tiotenactokte*, meaning "Here are the last encumbrances," and *Skanavetsy* in Iroquois, meaning "place of rapids." Samuel de Champlain is the first known European to have visited and mapped the region when he came up the Ottawa River in 1613. The Indigenous nations who knew this area and who guided him through the waterways understood the tactical importance of this point at the confluence of the Ottawa and St. Lawrence Rivers for trade and fishing and hunting. European encroachment into these sacred hunting grounds, with the establishment of mission sites and the clearing of land by early French settlers, was an affront to the people who regarded this region as their tradi-

tional territory. The intense struggle for control over resources and access to trade routes resulted in the permanent dispersal of First Nations in this area.

History texts tend to begin the history of St. Anne de Bellevue with the establishment of the parish St. Louis de Haut de l'Île in 1663, then located on a point of land which is still called Pointe-à-Caron and which forms part of the present-day Baie d'Urfé. François-Saturnin Lascaris d'Urfé, Marquis de Baugé (1641-1701), was a Sulpician priest who was appointed to this mission with the task of saving the souls of French settlers and Indigenous people alike. Records in d'Urfé's own hand indicate the privations of life in New

France, but also the bloodshed his mission faced. Eight entries tell of burials at Pointe-à-Caron, including two soldiers and six settlers killed by the Iroquois from September 21 to October 18, 1687; five people on one day. The first victim was farmer Jean Vincent, and the five slain on September 30 included Jean de La Londe dit l'Esperance, now considered Baie d'Urfé's first citizen. On October 18, two soldiers were slain by the Iroquois and shortly after, d'Urfé himself narrowly escaped an attack.

The 1701 Treaty of Montreal established a peace between the Iroquois and New France resulting in a renewed interest in settling the region. A new stone church was erected closer to Fort Senneville opposite the rapids in the "fief Bellevue" (very close to the present community). As a result, Saint-Louis de Haut de l'Île was no longer

the centre of the religious life of the Parish, but it was renamed d'Urfé in honour of its first priest. The White Pine in St. Anne de Bellevue's park serves to remind us about the early history of this region, on whose land the community actually rests and the spirit of reconciliation that exists today between the municipality and Kahnawake.

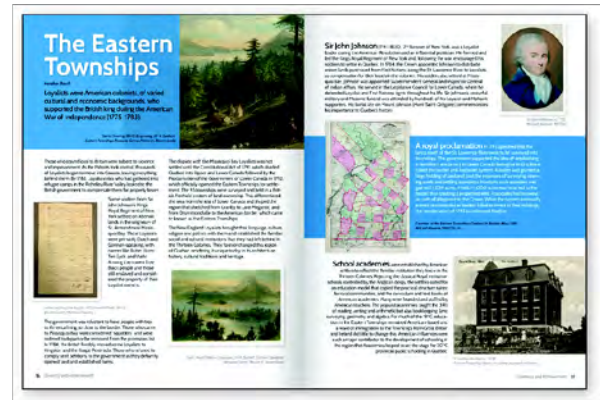
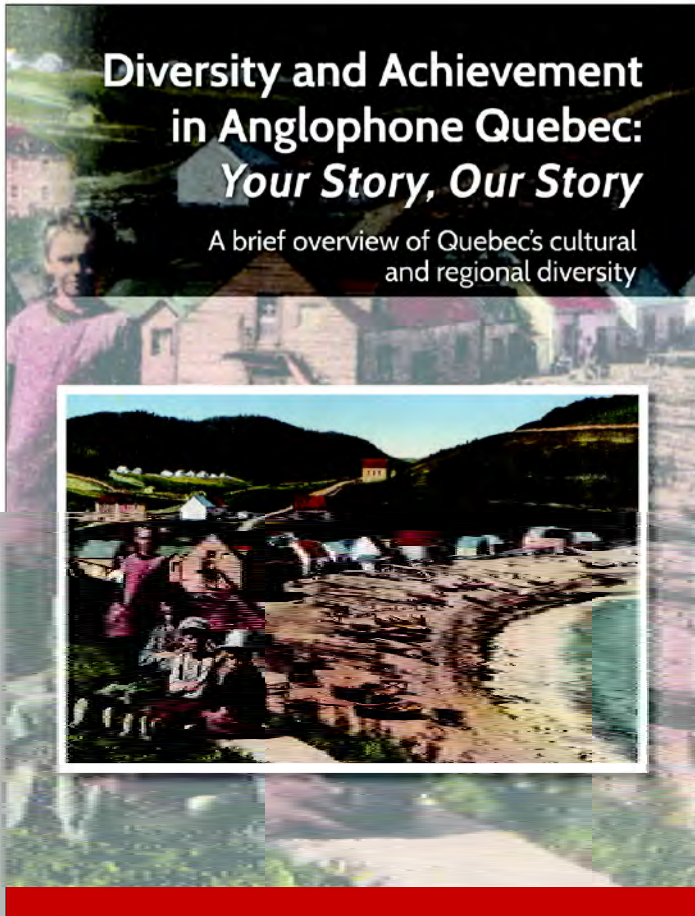


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A BACKYARD TREASURE ON THE WEST ISLAND

by Heather Darch

Imagine having a fort in your backyard! No, not a tree fort, a real seventeenth-century stone fort. The ruins of Fort Senneville sit in the backyard of a residence on the shore of Lake of Two Mountains and opposite the mouth of the Ottawa River, in the municipality of Senneville, Quebec.

The site saw many occupations prior to its first use as a fort. Its strategic location meant that Indigenous people utilized the site for trade long before the French built a wooden fort to secure the region as their own. In fact, archaeologists have discovered clay pipes and trade beads dating from the Late Woodland period (900-1650).

In 1672, the Sulpicians ceded the land later known as Senneville to Michel-Sidrac Dugué de Boisbriand (c.1638-1688), a captain in the Carignan-Salières regiment, in the hope that he would promote settlement in this region. Instead, Dugué de Boisbriand operated a fortified trading post on the site until 1678. The following year, he sold his fief to wealthy fur trader Charles LeMoine (1626-1685) and his brother-in-law and business associate Jacques Le Ber (1633-1706), who eventually became the sole owner. The trading post was well-used by Indigenous traders on their way to market in Montreal. Many preferred to exchange their goods with merchants here for better deals and to avoid the treacherous Lachine rapids.

In the early 1680s, the Iroquois renewed their war on New France and, in response, Le Ber built a stone mill that also served as a watchtower near the wooden fort, which could provide the inhabitants of the area with a secure shelter in case of attack. In 1687, the fort was attacked by Iroquois and, while this strike was repulsed, the Iroquois returned in greater force in 1691 and burned the wooden structure to the ground; only the windmill remained.

In 1702, Le Ber had a new fort erected in 1702. Fort Senneville was a quadrangle enclosure with a stone curtain wall, tower bastions and cannon and musket ports. Its inner courtyard had a two-storey house, several outbuildings, a cistern and latrines. There is some dispute as to whether the fort was constructed for military purposes, as its construction was carried out after the signing of the Great Peace of Montreal with the Iroquois Confederacy in 1701, and there was no immediate danger from the English at that time. In addition, with the exception of Fort La Montagne, most of the other forts in New France were built of

wood and surrounded by a simple palisade, which would have been enough to counter the Iroquois threat. It seems that Fort Senneville was built to reflect Le Ber's prestige, secure his fortune and control trade to his advantage. The activities held in the fort also seem to have been mostly illegal, as royal ordinances limited trade outside of the bigger centres to moderate the fall in fur prices on an already saturated French market.

After Le Ber's death, trade at the fort slowly declined. The reopening of trade to the "Pays d'en haut" in 1725 made the fort obsolete. Around 1774, Jean-Baptiste-Jérémie Testard de Montigny (1741-1784) tried to re-establish trade at the fort, but the fortification was destroyed in 1776 by the troops of British General Benedict Arnold (1741-1801) as he retreated back to the United States.

The land on which the ruins of Fort Senneville stood were purchased in 1865 as a summer residence by Sir John Abbott (1821-1893), later prime minister of Canada. "Point Abbott" was sold in 1898 to Edward Clouston, the general manager of the Bank of Montreal. Clouston renovated

the house but left the old fort a picturesque ruin. Since then, the property and its fort have been privately owned. This nationally and provincially recognized historic site, once so important to the fur trade in New France, is protected by Quebec's Ministry of Culture, but it is quite out of view and off-limits to the general public; few people even know its location and its remarkable history.

Since then, the property and its fort have been privately owned.

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BOISBRIAND'S LEGACY

A Brief History of Senneville

by Jim Hamilton

There is a jewel located at the western tip of Montreal Island.

It is very small and is not easily found. In fact, it is easy to miss.

That jewel is called the Village of Senneville, and it has been there, in one form or another, for about 350 years.

Senneville owes its existence to its location at the confluence of two of the major rivers of Eastern Canada. It is surrounded by water. Where the water from the Ottawa meets the water from the St. Lawrence, these two rivers swell into two large lakes: on the south, Lake St. Louis, which borders Montreal's West Island, and on the north Lake of Two Mountains, which borders the north shore of the Island of Montreal.

The (non-Indigenous) history of Senneville can be traced back to the 1660s, when the king of France sent the Carignan-Salières Regiment to New France to protect the colonists from First Nations raids, particularly "the Iroquois." In 1672, a soldier named Boisbriand, who served with the Carignan-Salières Regiment, received a land grant from the Sulpician Order, seigneurs of the Island of Montreal. The land granted to Boisbriand included the area where Senneville is located today.

Boisbriand built a wooden trading post for the purpose of exchanging furs with local First Nations and European trappers. Some reports say the post also dealt in illegal commodities, such as whiskey. Sometime later, the land was purchased by two brothers-in-law, Charles le Moyne and Jacques le Ber. For the next several decades, the development of the Boisbriand estate was due to the efforts of le Ber.

Born in France in 1633, le Ber arrived in the colony in 1657 and settled in Montreal. As a soldier, he took part in many defensive campaigns, but he also traded furs, fish, and other commodities, both locally and with the West Indies, and became very rich and influential. When Le Moyne died in 1686, Le Ber purchased the Boisbriand estate, naming it Senneville, after his birthplace in Normandy.

The colonists constantly felt threatened by the Iroquois, and so Le Ber built a fort with a stone tower on his estate. In 1687, the Iroquois attacked the fort but were driven off. Two years later, they attacked the settlement at Lachine and captured, tortured and killed many of the colonists. In 1691, they returned to attack the settlement at Fort Senneville, setting fire to it before being driven off. As a result of that attack, Le Ber ordered the construction of a

stone fort with swivel guns that could fire across the lake as any enemy approached the fort or passed on the way to attack Montreal.

In 1703 or 1704, Le Ber purchased a title from the king; he could now call himself Sieur le Ber de Senneville. He died in 1706, but the estate remained in the Le Ber family until 1757. It appears to have been ceded to the British at the time of the

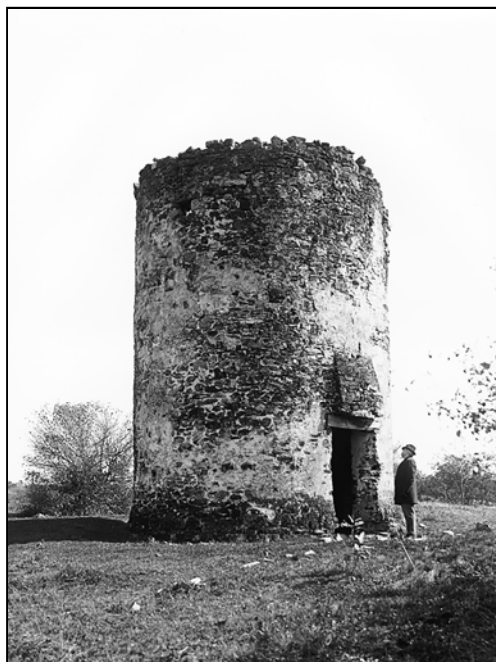
Conquest. In 1775, General Benedict Arnold, who was then serving with George Washington's Continental Army, captured Fort Senneville and burned it. The ruins of the fort can still be seen on the shores of Lake of Two Mountains.

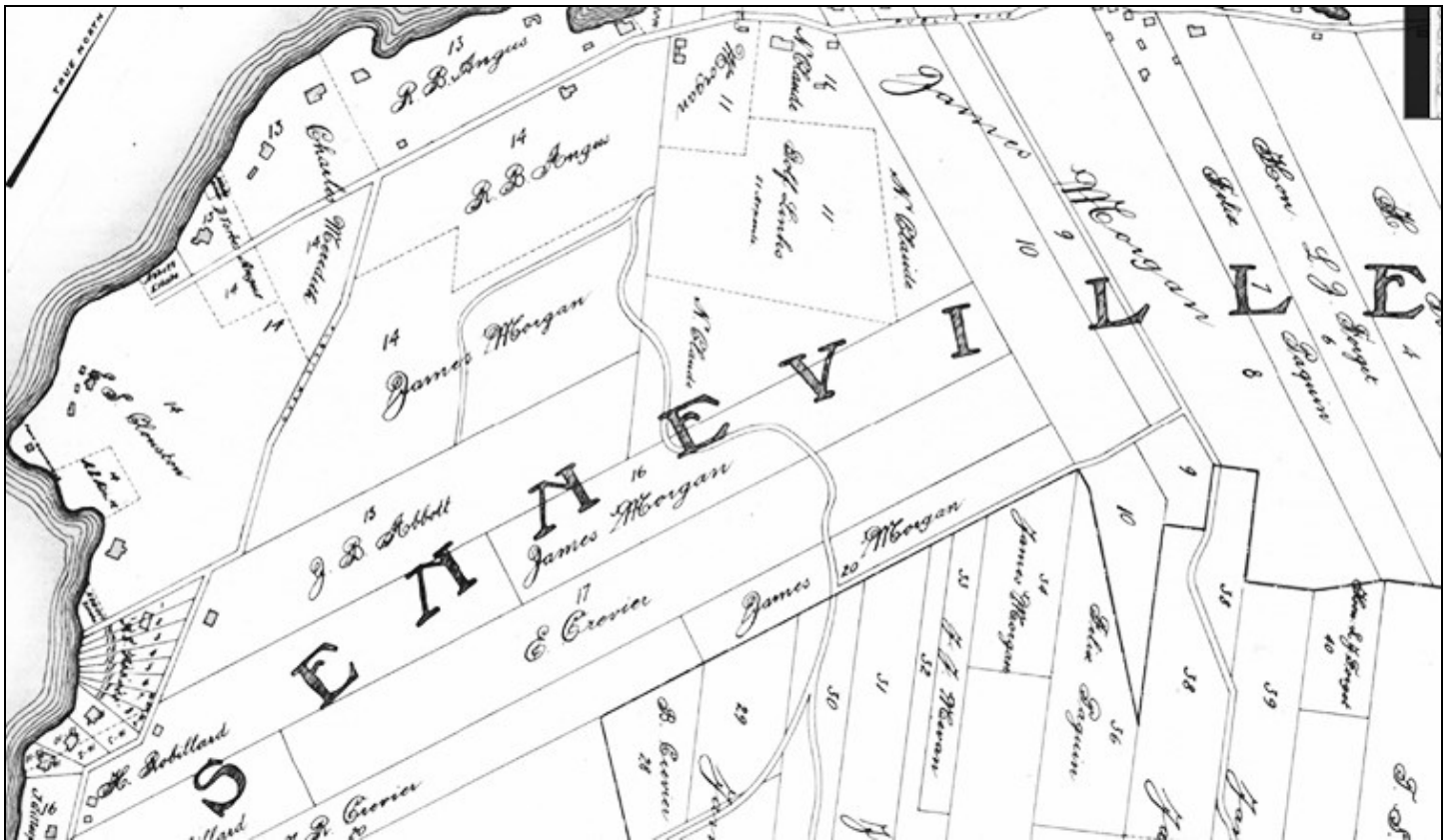
Development of the settlement at Senneville proceeded slowly until the latter part of the nineteenth century, when several wealthy Montreal families purchased property there and built summer homes. One of these properties, owned by John Abbott and later by Edward Clouston, was named Boisbriand, as the original grantee's name was often spelled. Other property owners in the area included John L. Todd, Louis-Joseph Forget, R. B. Angus, and Charles Meredith.

The Village of Senneville was incorporated in 1895. This year marks its 125th anniversary.

A section of land along the shores of the Lake of Two Mountains has been designated the Senneville Historic District since 2001. The site includes 1,400 acres of land and 82 buildings dating from between 1860 and 1930. Many of these buildings were designed and built by the Maxwell Brothers, well known Montreal architects who were largely inspired by the Arts and Crafts Movement. Other well-known architects of Senneville houses include Percy Nobbs, Frederick G Todd, James and Charles Nelson, Robert Findlay, and Edward and William Maxwell,

In 1920, following World War I, the St. Anne veterans' hospital was established in St. Anne de Bellevue, and many of the staff lived in Senneville. In 1923, the St. Anne de Bellevue curling club was built on land donated by the Morgan family, who also donated land for the creation of the Morgan Arboretum in 1945. Following World War II, a rehabilitation facility for veterans was built on the site of a former golf course. In the 1990s, administration of this facility was taken over by the Village of Senneville, and in the following decade the federal government sold the land to a real estate company. It is now being developed for residential and industrial use.





Angus Estate Heritage at Risk

Recent plans to demolish two small buildings on the former Angus Estate at 218 Senneville Road, Senneville have met with opposition from local residents and from conservation organizations such as the National Trust for Canada, Heritage Montreal and QAHN. As Senneville celebrates its 125th anniversary in 2020, it would seem only logical to celebrate its built heritage rather than encourage its destruction. Pine Bluff, the country house built by railway promoter Richard B. Angus in 1886, was demolished 70 years ago, but a greenhouse and a “peach house” remain. In December 2019 QAHN wrote to the municipality urging respect for these buildings.

Village de Senneville
35, ch. de Senneville
Senneville, QC H9X 1B8

RE: Proposed demolition at 218 ch. Senneville, Village de Senneville

On behalf of the Quebec Anglophone Heritage Network (QAHN), I am writing to urge the municipality in the strongest terms to reject any demand to demolish the remaining accessory buildings situated on the historic Angus Estate (218 ch. Senneville), notably the greenhouse and the peach house.

As you know, this splendid property forms part of the Senneville Historic District National Historic Site of Canada. This designation is a prestigious one, and not conferred lightly. The buildings themselves on the Angus Estate are the work of nationally renowned Maxwell firm of architects.

In recent years, Quebec has seen a veritable epidemic of



demolition. Heritage buildings of every style, function and era have fallen victim to the wrecking ball. Whether the result of prolonged and willful neglect by careless owners, or the desire by property developers to remove buildings that they deem obstacles to greater profit, the effect is the same: the destruction of Quebec's built heritage.

We appeal to Senneville, therefore, to stand firm against this trend and to safeguard the historic gems that lie within its borders. Heritage is precious. And demolition is forever.

Yours very sincerely,

Matthew Farfan
Executive Director, QAHN

cc. National Trust for Canada
Sainte-Anne-du-Bout-de-l'Île Historical Society
Heritage Montréal

TAKING FLIGHT ON THE WEST ISLAND

by Heather Darch

Humans have been flying in airplanes for nearly 120 years. The first flight near Kittyhawk, North Carolina, by the Wright brothers occurred on December 17, 1903. Since that first gasoline-powered, propeller-driven biplane stayed aloft for 12 seconds and covered over 36 metres, we can say that we have literally come a long way. In the intervening years, we have flown across oceans and created commercial airlines; we have utilized airplanes as weapons of war, to fight fires, to carry supplies, to rescue people, to entertain and even to race. We have seen the invention of supersonic jets that break the sound barrier and now engineers are developing a propulsion system to enable hypersonic air travel that would allow aircraft to fly from New York to London in two hours rather than the typical seven.

One of the best places to find airplanes and talk to passionate pilots, designers, mechanics and engineers is right here in Quebec. The Montreal Aviation Museum is the only one of its kind in the province. It is also a bit of a well-kept secret, located in an old stone barn surrounded by farmland on the Macdonald College campus of McGill University in St. Anne de Bellevue. The museum commemorates the history of flying and is committed to fostering an appreciation of the importance of flight to humanity, with a particular focus on Quebec's contributions to flight. The collection includes various aircrafts built by volunteers who share a passion for airplanes. Exhibits tell tales of ingenuity and courage, war and peace, society and culture. On display are aviation objects and memorabilia, dozens of finely detailed model aircraft, and an art gallery featuring aeronautical-themed paintings by renowned Canadian artists depicting the history of civil and military aviation.

The Montreal Aviation Museum, first known as the Canadian Aviation Heritage Centre, was founded in 1998 by Godfrey Stewart Pasmore, an aviation enthusiast who passed away in 2016. The founder's father, Hubert Pasmore, was a Canadian World War I pilot who later headed Fairchild Aircraft Ltd. in Longueuil, which built utility bush planes used for forestry, aerial surveying, fire detection and reforestation in Canada's north from the 1920s to 1950. The museum was Godfrey Pasmore's tribute to his late

father, but he also wanted to preserve and promote Quebec's little-known aviation history.

Since the museum's establishment, its volunteers have undertaken to restore and build historically significant aircraft. Currently the collection includes a Blériot XI, a Fairchild FC-2, a Curtiss-Reid Rambler, a Bristol Bolingbroke, a Canuck, a Nimmo NAC SB-1 biplane and a Stinson Model 10a. The first aircraft that museum volunteers completed from original drawings was a near exact replica of the 1927 "Razorback" Fairchild FC-2.

Although it has a wooden engine, it is a symbol of early bush flying and the plane that Hugh Pasmore flew for the first international airmail delivery from Quebec to Ottawa in 1927.

Volunteers spent 15 years building a flying replica of the 1909 Blériot XI Scarabée, the first airplane to have flown over Montreal, in 1910, "with the lightness of a pigeon." It was piloted by Count Jacques de Lesseps, who incidentally also flew his Blériot monoplane over Toronto later that same year and who helped to aerially

survey the Gaspé coast in the 1920s. The museum's Blériot actually flew in August 2014 with a Canadian Research Council test pilot at the controls. A lack of resources to keep the plane serviceable means it is now grounded, but it was a remarkable accomplishment that came out of the restoration shop in the museum.

The best aviation museums capture the achievements of the pilots, designers and engineers who risked 'life and limb' but held on to a dream. This small non-profit museum does just that. While the museum and workshop are not always open and it is important to call ahead, it is well worth the experience of discovering the collection and having a chat with a volunteer, who will not only tell you about the mechanics of flight but will instill in you as sense of pride about Quebec's contribution to aviation history. Enjoy the ride!

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Heather Darch, a frequent contributor to the QHN, is the curator of the Missisquoi Museum in Stanbridge East and a heritage consultant. She has co-managed a number of QAHN projects, including "Security for Heritage," "Diversifying Resources to Ensure the Advancement of Mission (DREAM)," and, most recently, "Diversity and Achievement in Anglophone Quebec," completed in 2019.



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MUSKRATS AND RUINS ON DOWKER ISLAND

by Heather Darch

It may come as a surprise to many that the Island of Montreal is one of more than 300 islands in what is known as the Hochelaga Archipelago. Its islands and islets of varying sizes stretch from the Ottawa River and the Lake of Two Mountains to the eastern tip of the Island of Montreal in the St. Lawrence River. Each island is unique in its history, size and biodiversity, with riparian wetlands, prairie grasses and wildflowers, and around 80 different bird species recognised throughout the territory.

Dowker Island is one of the smaller islands in the archipelago, and is located in Lake St. Louis approximately one kilometre south of the western end of Montreal Island. A level, wooded, and uninhabited island, about a kilometre in length and width, Dowker Island currently serves as a muskrat habitat and a bird sanctuary and is a popular stopping place for kayakers and canoeists in summer and ice fishermen, cross-country skiers and snowshoers in the winter.

At one time, Dowker Island and neighbouring Madore Island and Daoust Island were collectively known as the Îles Sainte-Geneviève. These islands were granted in 1672 to François-Marie Perrot, Governor of Montreal from 1669–1684, by the Intendant of New France, Jean Talon, along with the much larger Île Perrot. As the new Seigneur de Sainte-Geneviève, Perrot established a busy fur-trading post on Île Perrot, using the smaller islands as camps, and employed coureurs de bois, despite the fact that such ventures were forbidden by royal edicts governing the fur trade.

Older navigational charts of the nineteenth century indicate Dowker Island was at one time known as Lynch Island. The island was likely owned by Peter Lynch (1802-1874), a native of Ireland who settled in Beaconsfield and married Marie-Sophie Leblanc, whose father once owned the island. Leslie Rose Dowker (1853-1945) purchased the island from the Lynch family in 1887. Dowker was born in New York State in 1853 and immigrated to Quebec in 1855 where he settled with his parents Lt. Colonel George and Susan Dowker at Sainte-Anne-du-Bout-de-l'Île, now known as St. Anne de Bellevue. The Dowker family prospered in their new home, with one of their sons, Vivian de Vere Dowker, becoming the first mayor of Baie-d'Urfé in 1911.

Leslie Dowker, like his father, was a prosperous merchant in Baie-d'Urfé. Beginning in 1888, he built a stone house, a barn

and storage buildings on the north-east side of his island. In "A History of the Town of Baie d'Urfé," a Mr. Nash recalls: "Old Mr. Dowker's one-lunger (small motor boat) could be heard for many miles going across to Dowkerts [sic] Island, from a right-of-way next to Henault's, (in the east end of town)." In early winter or in spring, he would pull his light-weight boat behind him in case the ice was too thin and gave way.

Dowker lived in his home until his death in 1945; he is buried in Mount Royal Cemetery. In the 1940s, Pointe Claire notary Gerard Tardiff occupied the residence, but in 1960 a fire damaged the house, and then another in 1985. Despite extensive renovations, the ruins of the Dowker house that can be seen today are what is left from the second fire. Some of the stones that were part of the barn and storage buildings can still be found, as well as parts of the walls of the square-shaped shed by the boat



dock on the east side. The brick chimney and its stone support wall, the largest remaining part of the house, lean dangerously inward.

The peaceful nature of the island was threatened in the late 1950s when it was proposed that the construction of the new Trans-Canada Highway should cross south at the Beaufort-Baie d'Urfé boundary, pass over Baie d'Urfé's eastern residential neighbourhoods, cross Lake St. Louis to Dowker's Island and to l'Île-Perrot, and then to the mainland at Les Cascades. The fight to preserve Dowker Island dragged on for months, with most of the surrounding municipalities favouring this route, contrary to the Baie d'Urfé town council, which argued for a route directly off the western end of the Island of Montreal. The latter course was adopted eventually, saving the tranquility of Dowker Island. Today the island is administratively part of the Town of l'Île-Perrot which is committed to preserving the natural environment of this little gem.

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OVER THE RIVER AND THROUGH THE WOODS TO THE MORGAN ARBORETUM WE GO!

by Heather Darch

Are you looking for some breathing space and to find time for a peaceful walk? For 75 years, the Morgan Arboretum has been an ecological jewel at the western end of the Island of Montreal in St. Anne de Bellevue. This 245-hectare forest reserve with its fragrant junipers, cedars and yews, but also exotic species such as ginkgo, cork and yellowwood, has been part of McGill University's Macdonald Campus since 1945 and is truly a wonderful place to get back to nature at any time of year.

Arboretums are defined as a living collection of trees and shrubs grown to illustrate a diversity of species. Varieties tend to be planted in groups, reflecting their botanical relationships or habitat preferences. The idea of creating forest reserves is centuries old. The first "arboreta," dating from the early civilizations of both the Fertile Crescent and China, were sacred groves of trees planted for the nobility. Throughout medieval Europe, trees were planted for medicinal and ornamental purposes by monks who introduced new species as they travelled from one country to another. One of the oldest arboretums established in the fifteenth century and still in existence today is in Trsteno, Croatia.

Trees such as chestnut and elm were introduced into Great Britain by the Romans to be cultivated in the gardens of governors and generals. Sir Thomas Cecil catalogued his trees growing at Wimbledon House in 1588, which included a great variety of fruit trees and shrubs and a "faire bay tree." Sir Walter Raleigh's estate in Dorset was "magnificently embellished" with woods including cherry trees which he introduced himself from America. When he wasn't dealing with Guy Fawkes and other Catholic dissidents, James I liked to graft fruit trees in his arboretum as a pastime. Canada saw its first arboretum established in Ottawa in 1889.

In 1945, Macdonald College was able to purchase land from the Stoneycroft Farm estate owned by the heirs of Henry Morgan and Company Department Stores. Frederick Cleveland Morgan (1881-1962), the founder's great nephew, helped to negotiate the purchase of the land for Macdonald College. F. C. Morgan is perhaps best remembered for his work in the Montreal Arts Society (later the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts), where he encouraged the expansion of the decorative arts collection. Under his direction, the collection grew significantly, with Morgan personally donating thousands of his own artefacts. He was also an amateur horticulturist and botanist who was motivated by a desire to

secure a permanent location for an arboretum for Macdonald College, which by then was considered Canada's pre-eminent agricultural college. He was assisted in the project by the interest and generosity of philanthropist J. W. McConnell and the Quebec government.

The woodlands on the Stoneycroft Farm estate, known as Morgan Woods, were set aside for the arboretum, and 63 acres were leased to the Department of Veterans Affairs for use as a hospital. The remainder of the property helped to expand the experimental farm property for the college.

The Morgan Arboretum was developed through the efforts of Professor A. R. C. Jones and Dr. W. H. Brittain (Dean of the Faculty of Agriculture, 1934-1955) at Macdonald College. Their interests led to a Canada-wide collection of paper birch seeds and the establishment of the Canada Centennial Birch Trail in 1967. To mark Canada's 150th Anniversary in 2017, the Morgan Arboretum celebrated the growth of the birches by re-dedicating the trail and opening a new one-kilometre trail loop.



Today the Morgan Arboretum is an exceptional urban ecological forest where the public can use the space for recreation, but also to learn about forests and conservation. With monarch butterfly launchings and birds of prey shows, visitors can also learn about the fauna found at the Arboretum. The Arboretum provides the opportunity to discuss climate change and conserving biodiversity and it is also a stop for wintering or migratory birds, making it a thrill for birdwatchers. Although a bit of a secret beyond St. Anne de Bellevue, the Morgan Arboretum really is the place to find peace and tranquility just off Highway 40.

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TINY ISLAND'S BIG HISTORY

by Heather Darch

How small is Dorval Island? It's so small that the local ferry once dragged it to shore by mistake.

Or so goes one of the many small jokes about the island. The island has an area of about 20 hectares (0.2 square kilometres) and sits as a small oasis from city life several hundred yards off the shore at the western end of Montreal in Lake St. Louis. With only five permanent residents, according to the 2011 census, the island's population fluctuates with the seasons. But as the ferry only runs for islanders and their invited guests, and only from May to October, the rest of the time it is unreachable and its cottages are mostly unoccupied. Dorval Island, or l'Île-Dorval, is considered the smallest municipality in Canada, although this distinction was threatened by the municipal reorganization in 2002 which merged the island with the borough of Dorval to become part of the city of Montreal. Like most of the West Island population, however, its residents voted to demerge in a 2004 referendum, allowing the island to become independent once again in 2006, although still part of the agglomeration of Montreal.

Dorval Island is actually comprised of three islands: Dorval, Bushy and Dixie. Only Dorval has residents. Together, they were known as the Courcelles Islands, named after Daniel de Remy de Courcelle, Governor General of New France. The islands were part of the mission of Gentilly established by Sulpician fathers from the Ville-Marie Seminary in 1667. Governor Frontenac gave the islands to Father François Fénélon, anticipating that a school could be established on the large island for Indigenous children. In 1674, Fénélon ceded the islands back to the Sulpicians before returning to France the same year. His departure contributed to the decline of the mission, which closed in 1685, although there were other factors: the animosity that had grown with the Iroquois and the fact that the natural resources available were insufficient to supply a permanent settlement.

The fief of Gentilly, now called La Présentation, along with the three islands, then came into the possession of Pierre Le Gardeur, Sieur de Repentigny, Director of the Communauté des Habitants and Admiral of the Fleet. He in turn sold the fief to Sieur Jean-Baptiste Bouchard dit Dorval in 1691. The largest island then took the name Dorval. At the time of the acquisition, Dorval had already visited the property several times for trade deals. The islands were located on the fur trade route. In fact, the entire western sector of the Island of Montreal played an important military and commercial role by this time.

Following Dorval's death, the fief was divided in two. One lot remained in the Dorval family while the other passed to Charles de Couagne, a wealthy fur trader and entrepreneur. After 1731, the parcelling out of the domain continued. In 1854, a Jean-Baptiste Meloche sold Dorval Island to Sir George Simpson, Governor of the Hudson Bay Company, for \$4,000. During his governorship, Simpson made many remarkable transcontinental journeys by canoe to oversee the management of the vast territory controlled by the company. His travels earned him the nickname of the "Birch Bark Emperor." In 1826, he transferred his headquarters to Lachine, which he saw as a financial and commercial

centre and the base for company canoes bound for the west and Montreal. During the years 1854-1860, Sir George lived in his magnificent country house on Dorval Island, which drew in Montreal society, especially leading figures of the Anglo-Scottish business community. In 1860, he hosted a famous lunch for the Prince of Wales, the future Edward VII, which was attended by many dignitaries, including Iroquois chiefs dressed in scarlet ceremonial dress. A few days later, Simpson lapsed into a coma and died.



The Simpson mansion was destroyed by fire around 1890 and its renovated version again in 1947. Simpson bequeathed the islands to his children, but the Meloche heirs felt that Sir George never had a legitimate ownership claim because of discrepancies in the deed of sale. The 1899, the Meloche v. Simpson legal case resulted in the island being returned to the Meloche family. By 1911, Dorval Island was divided into 57 lots for the construction of summer residences. Most were built from the 1920s to the 1940s. Today, the island's lucky inhabitants no doubt enjoy their sense of tranquility, as did Sir George Simpson, as they look toward the West Island shore line.

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ST. ANNE DE BELLEVUE'S CANAL

by Heather Darch

There is something remarkable about locks and canals. They offer safe passage around untamed rivers and are a fascinating feat of engineering that uses gravity, levers and gears, and the water itself to move boats up and down from one water level to another.

The design concept for canals and locks can be traced back to China's Beijing-Hangzhou Grand Canal. Constructed in sections from the fifth century BCE onwards, the nearly 1,800 kilometre-long canal with its 24 locks played an important role in ensuring the economic prosperity and stability of China. The canal's oldest lock is also the world's oldest, dating from 984 CE.

At the western end of the Island of Montreal, between St. Anne de Bellevue and Île Perrot, the St. Anne de Bellevue Canal connects Lake St. Louis and the Lake of Two Mountains. Bypassing the St. Anne's rapids that now flow beneath the Galipeault Bridge on Highway 20, the canal serves as a gateway to the Ottawa River and is part of an extensive network of canals used to circumvent rapids and shoals in the St. Lawrence, the Richelieu and Ottawa rivers.

Efforts to improve navigation between Lake Huron and Montreal began in the early years of the nineteenth century with the construction of a series of canals, including St. Anne's. The War of 1812-1814 had demonstrated how easily an American force might stop military supplies along the St. Lawrence between the Great Lakes and Montreal, and so military experts pushed for a navigable route away from the border using the Ottawa and Rideau Rivers and the chain of lakes down to Kingston as the best means of transportation.

Although built at about the same time after the War of 1812-1814 and grouped within a relatively close distance, these new wooden canals were constructed to serve different purposes. The locks at Vaudreuil and St. Anne were intended for commercial use. The Vaudreuil lock served the interests of the St. Andrew's Steam Forwarding Company, whereas the St. Anne lock was built to facilitate trade between the provinces of Upper and Lower Canada. The main section of the canal system, namely the Carillon, Chute-à-Blondeau and Grenville canals, was designed for the transport of military troops and supplies between Montreal and Kingston.

Petitions to the government in the 1830s from merchants and traders requesting a lock at the St. Anne's rapids indicate that the threat from America no longer existed, and the desire to push an economic agenda was clear and ultimately successful. The Board

of Works in Lower Canada called for tenders in the fall of 1839 and construction began in the spring of 1840. This new cut-stone masonry lock, with its timber and plank foundation, measured 58 metres long by 14 metres wide, and 2 metres deep at the sills. It could accommodate larger steamboats than the Vaudreuil lock and would shave 20 kilometres off a trip up the Ottawa River from Lachine, saving both time and fuel. This new contract with the St. Anne's lock was the beginning of the end for the owners of the Vaudreuil lock who, since 1826, held exclusive privilege for the use of the lock and the steamboat monopoly on the Ottawa-Rideau route. As one observer wrote, "The new construction of a lock at the Rapids of

St. Ann's by Government next summer, will open the communication to Kingston; the key to which is now held by monopolists."

The canal was completed in 1843 and was utilized so heavily by commercial traffic that a second lock was deemed essential. Following the recommendations of the Canals Commission in 1870, a second lock was built parallel to the east channel, with work completed in 1882. Becker's Dam below the lock was also constructed at the same time, permitting

vessels to cross through shallow waters.

The St. Anne de Bellevue Canal and the canals of the Ottawa River were mainly used to transport wood to Montreal. This commerce flourished until the 1920s. With the introduction of railways and the decline in the forestry industry, the once-busy canal that served to move people and goods slowly declined in importance. The original 1840s lock was only used occasionally, and was completely filled in by 1964.

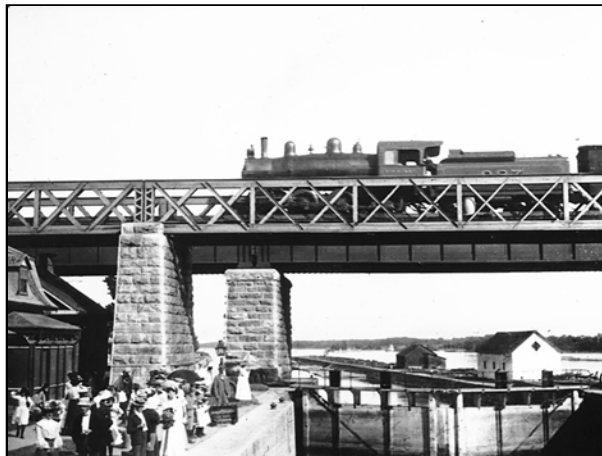
Following the opening of the St. Lawrence Seaway in 1959, the 1880s lock became a favourite destination for recreational boaters. Today it is a National Historic Site of Canada and a beautiful place to visit in St. Anne de Bellevue.

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J.C. WILSON

Five Generations on the North River

by Joseph Graham

The North River's name can be traced back to the time of the granting of the first seigneurie of Argenteuil in 1682. The focal area was at its mouth, where it joins the Ottawa River, and the early maps show the North River with the West River flowing into it. In his 1964 history of Lachute, G. R. Rigby notes that early surveyors marked La Chute (The Falls) on the North River just upstream of where the West River joins it.

The mouth of the river attracted settlers well before the source did, but each end of the river system held attractions for James Crockett Wilson and his descendants.

James Crockett Wilson was born in Ireland in 1841, the son of Samuel Wilson and Elizabeth Crockett. They arrived in Montreal in the spring of 1842, three years before the beginning of the Irish potato famine. While Samuel had no marketable skills upon their arrival, he taught himself the rudiments of carpentry and mechanics and eventually landed employment with the Grand Trunk Railway making their cars. He is credited with the design of the first railway snowplough.

J. C. Wilson initially followed his father in mechanics until an accident left him injured. Thanks to the kindness of a friend, he enrolled in a Model School, then in the McGill Normal School, a teacher's college. Subsequently, while working in Beauharnois, J. C. Wilson met his future wife, Jeannie Kilgour.

After working in an assortment of jobs in Toronto and New York, Wilson found himself a position in paper manufacturing back in Montreal. In 1870, he set up his own company manufacturing

paper bags, making the first flat-bottomed paper bag and supplying them to grocery stores in Canada. He also published some of Canada's earliest postcards, known to collectors today as "pioneer" or "patriotic postcards." In 1880, he built a large paper mill in Lachute.

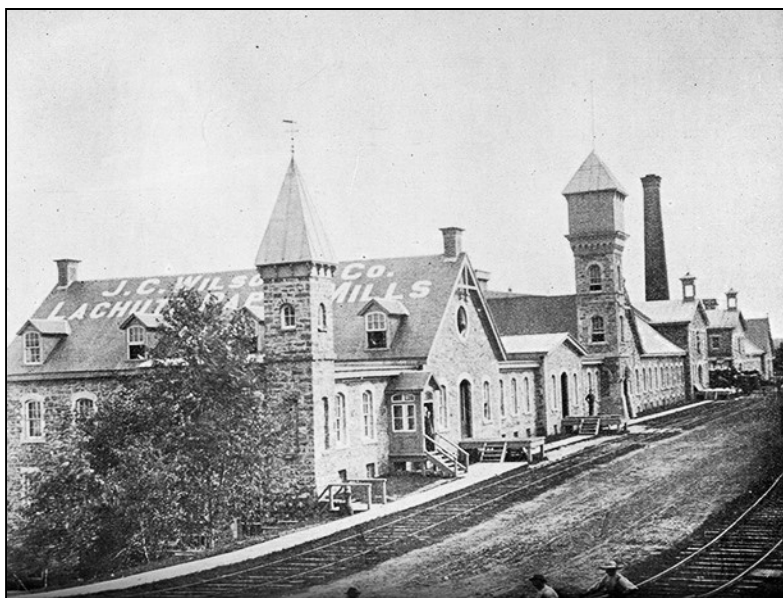
We generally accept that paper comes from trees. When James Crockett Wilson founded J. C. Wilson Paper, this was not the case. Paper came from rags,

process, along with Johan Matthäus Voith, a locksmith. Fenerty is remembered, but Voith created a company that still sells paper-making machinery around the world. A photo I discovered online during my research makes Keller, the German patent-holder, look like a madman, but Fenerty had an upright, stable and calm appearance. Fenerty was well-known for being so absent-minded that his family would sometimes have to take him back out to get his horse and buggy, tied at some location that he'd forgotten as he walked home dreaming.

J. C. Wilson determined to make paper from wood pulp and may well have used Voith's machine. In 1893, he purchased the Delisle pulp mill, which had been set up in 1880 in St. Jerome and subsequently moved to Saunderson Falls in Cordon, just to the north. The Delisles' mill turned wood pulp into cardboard boxes. Delisle and Wilson had not been competitors, nor was one the supplier to the other, but Wilson

saw the move as a way to expand his business.

Soon after the purchase, Saunderson Falls became Wilson Falls, or Les Chutes Wilson, which is now a park just to the east of the Autoroute at St. Jerome, where it turns from three lanes into two. Wilson was a pioneer, showing what else could be done with coniferous trees, such as balsam firs, aside from cutting them small and decorating them with Christmas lights. They grow thick and furiously, pioneers themselves, re-establishing forests on abandoned land, growing to a decent size and then falling over to contribute to the understorey bedding leading to older forests,



flax and linen. Cardboard came from trees. Charles Fenerty, a Canadian innovator from New Brunswick, first developed the process around 1840. In 1844, he sent a letter to the *Acadian Review* describing his progress in making paper from wood pulp. He included a sample, stating how he simply had to figure out how to compress the water out of the pulp. In 1845, the German Friedrich Gottlob Keller made the same discovery and immediately patented it, not waiting to figure how to compress the pulp. Having the patent turned out to be enough to bring Heinrich Voelter to Keller's door. Voelter took over the patent and returned home to pioneer the

pine, maple and other species. With Wilson and other pulp and paper companies jockeying for position, Canada “emerged as the world’s preeminent newsprint maker, one that was highly dependent on supplying the American market. The industry’s annual capacity exploded from approximately 60,000 tons at the turn of the twentieth century to roughly 65 times that total three decades later.” (Kuhlberg) Of course, we have all heard the names of the big, latter-day players -- Consolidated Bathurst, Canadian International Paper, Abitibi-Price, Domtar and others -- and many of us remember the overwhelming smell of pulp and paper towns, but J. C. Wilson Paper was among an early cohort of smaller players that showed the way in the nineteenth century.

After James Crockett Wilson died in 1899, Wilson Paper continued under the guidance of his son, William Walter C. Wilson, with the help of two more of his sons, Frank Howard and Edwin Howlett Wilson. E. H. Wilson guided the mill while his brothers ran the business from Montreal. It became one of the largest paper companies in Canada, with mills in Lachute and St. Jerome, together with a factory and warehouse at Montreal, and warehouses at Winnipeg and Vancouver. Although it became a publicly traded company, it stayed in the control of the family into the 1950s. Price Brothers, today Abitibi Paper, eventually absorbed it.

Frank Howard Wilson, the third president of J. C. Wilson Paper, explored the



source of the North River and found himself at Lac Brûlé in St. Agathe. His own son, also Frank Howard, the last Wilson president of the company, sold J. C. Wilson Paper and retired to a large series of farms that his wife’s family had acquired in St. Lucie, adjacent to St. Agathe. Over almost a century and a half, the Wilson family and its descendants have been in the Laurentians. They have migrated from the mouth of the North River in Lachute to its source in St. Agathe. Although few of them carry the Wilson name, several members of the fifth and sixth generation still live at both ends of the river today.

Joseph Graham, author of Naming the Laurentians, is writing a book that re-examines much of our early history, the elements that drove European society, and the extraordinary damage these ideas inflicted on North America.

Sources:

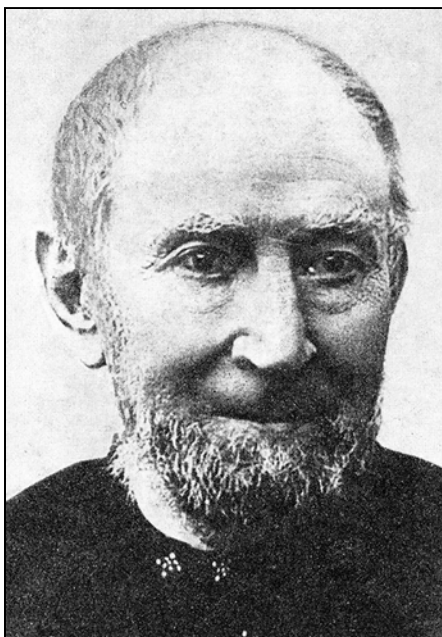
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Special thanks to Patty Brown, great-great-grand-daughter of J. C. Wilson.



Top: Charles Fenerty. Photo: <http://www.charlesfenerty.ca/biography.html>

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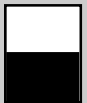
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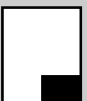
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Bottom: Friedrich Gottlob Keller, c.1880. Photo: wikipedia.




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HINDSIGHT

NOTHING LIKE THE SUN

by Rod MacLeod

There is indeed a special providence in the fall of a sparrow, I'm sure of it. And a divinity that shapes our ends, rough hew them how we will.

I was blustering ahead, back in June 1978 as a prospective CEGEP student, in the giddy anticipation that the whole of world literature lay at my disposal, only to find myself seriously checked by the endless queue to the academic advisor's table. By the time it was my turn all the great-sounding courses were full and I was obliged to take the ploddingly titled *Survey of English Literature to 1800*. But that act of fate proved eye-opening, and soul-confirming, in ways I could hardly have anticipated, and led me to an understanding of many great truths, such as the one I quote above. In another sense, it led me to a funeral home in Dorval on a snowy day last January.

My initial disappointment over the course selection was mitigated by great excitement as my first day at Marianapolis College dawned and I grabbed a seat in my first class: the English survey, as it turned out. I was taken aback when the teacher slouched in, a huge floppy volume under his arm, and stood peering intently at us through thick, black-framed glasses, a slight smile on his lips as though anticipating the punchline of a joke. The book seemed appropriate, but this was a teacher like none I'd known in high school: a wearer of baggy pants and checked shirts and an even louder red lumberjack jacket, a possessor of unkempt hair and a beard he would tug on when phrasing something particularly profound, and clearly a fellow of infinite jest and excellent fancy. There was confusion over his name, since he didn't say it: everyone pronounced it

Mah-KEND-ee until I cornered him in the hall one day and asked outright, learning it was actually MACK-en-dee. And that's how I would think of him for the next four decades: it is only very recently that I have been able to jettison "McKendy" and, in the company of those who knew him in other capacities, think of him as Tom.

The first lesson was to purchase a



copy of the text: the *Norton Anthology of English Literature*. McKendy told us that, while this was a fairly expensive book, we would have no problem selling it afterwards: the price of oil or gold might fluctuate, but there would always be a demand for the *Norton Anthology*. (He may have been right, but I wouldn't know. I kept mine.)

Nortons purchased, we dove in. McKendy would assign a reading, and next class would ask us what we thought. If silence ensued, he would prompt: "Did you like it?" It was OK not to like something, but you had to say why. It didn't take long for students to pipe up, many of us so unaccustomed to being asked our opinion in such an unthreatening way that we were eager to talk. Ideas arose, and McKendy would scribble key words from the discussion on the board so that he

could return to important concepts without interrupting the current train of thought. Any contribution was valid, and he would often refer back to individual students' comments as if each were a well-acknowledged interpretation. The only requirement was that contributions had to be shared and you had to be quiet when someone else was talking.

We gained insight into *The Canterbury Tales* – not from lectures on the evolution of language, but by identifying unfamiliar words and difficult constructions and working out their meaning from context and characterization. McKendy had a way of making lines of poetry seem like things real people would actually say: for instance, the "Wife of Bath's Tale" might at first glance have looked like a bizarre take on the English language, but by the end of the discussion we could see her with her gap-toothed smile,

sitting in the Canterbury pub recounting her love life in graphic detail. We also walked away feeling a sense of achievement at having grasped all this – something we wouldn't have done had a teacher just told us what was important.

Chaucer was a revelation to me. I struggled like everyone to understand what was going on, but the sound of the language eventually took over and the verses' iambic pentameter would pound in my ears with the rhythm of voodoo drums. My inner thoughts would come out in iambs, typically with fourteenth-century extra syllables: "The bus be latte I'll my dinner misse / And nowhere finde where to takke pisse" (I paraphrase). This mania grew more refined as we moved beyond Middle English, and the language felt more modern, though it also meant that the running narration of my life came

to scan better: the poems of Thomas Wyatt, Edmund Spenser, Michael Drayton, Chris Marlowe and, of course, Shakespeare were tightly wound constructions, often with tricky rhyme schemes and onomatopoeia – rigid in their way, although, as McKendy suggested, a true practitioner of an art form could break the rules to greater effect than someone who ham-fistedly jabbed words together for shock value. To this day I can quote sonnets in my sleep, but I cannot stand free verse.

I also learned to understand poems I had actually read before and dismissed as bizarre. The classic example was Shakespeare's Sonnet #130, "My mistress' eyes are nothing like the sun," which also claims that the lady's breasts are less white than snow, her hair is like black wires, and her speech isn't as nice as music. He thought her ugly, I'd always assumed. Yet, having moved through the increasingly whacky ways Elizabethan poets flattered their muses ("There is a Garden in her Face where Roses and White Lilies grow..."), it was clear that Shakespeare was not criticizing his mistress's eyes, breasts, hair or speech, but rather turning conventions on their heads. It was a much more profound compliment, McKendy suggested: You are great because you are a living breathing person, not a flatterable icon on a pedestal. (To be honest, my love life improved dramatically when I began to apply this outlook.)

I had trouble with John Donne, whose post-Elizabethan constructions I found sloppy – but boy, was that description of the sun waking the couple in bed delicious! ("Busy old fool, unruly sun, why dost thou thus, through windows and through curtains call on us?") Even more suggestive was Andrew Marvell's appeal "To His Coy Mistress" for lovers to become "amorous birds of prey" before "Death's winged chariot" caught up to them. But then we sobered up with Milton – and I found myself puzzling over my growing irritation with the ultra-Protestantism advocated in *Paradise Lost*. There was something repellent, if fascinating, in the idea that one could earn a place in heaven without having necessarily done good things, simply by being the recipient of Grace: "They also serve who only stand and wait." McKendy offered a parallel situation: a teacher who gives a

better grade to a student who meant well than to one with great talent who didn't need to work that hard. "But that's not fair!" he added, voicing the thoughts of most other students. True – and yet the idea of a universe where the disadvantaged are ultimately rewarded is more comforting than one where it is easier for certain people to earn the necessary Brownie points. I would learn later that the Catholic McKendy and his Protestant spouse often sparred good-naturedly over the implications of their respective religions.

Indeed, on this and other themes that troubled me, McKendy proved a patient listener, without ever pretending to have answers. One of the great features of CEGEP was being able to drop into teachers' offices and chew the fat – something we always assumed they were delighted to do, although with hindsight (and experience) I can only praise their tolerance. McKendy's ear always seemed willing, however, and for some years after graduation I would occasionally return to the college and get insight into my latest thoughts.

Needless to say, *Survey of English Literature* to 1800 proved such a hit that in the Winter term I strove to be first in line to sign up for McKendy's *English Literature* since 1800 – though it meant buying another Norton. Over the following months, I continued to be inspired by, and critical of, more modern writers. Romantic poets were fascinating, if quirky. Wordsworth's evocation of nature in "Tintern Abbey" is glorious, but he also wrote "We Are Seven," in which a small child includes two dead siblings among her family even though the clueless adult insists that if two are dead then they are only five. (The narrator's doggedness, McKendy suggested, recalls the determination of the John Cleese character in the infamous Parrot Sketch: "It's bleedin' dead! It has ceased to be!") Equally, Shelley's oeuvre includes the sobering and haunting desert desolation of the ruinous "Ozymandias," but also such drivel as "I fall upon the thorns of life! I bleed!" By contrast, Byron's *Don Juan* (pronounced "Dawn Joo-an") is brilliant, especially those intricate rhymes (eg. "new one" and "Juan" or "intellectual" and "hen-pecked you all").

Even better was the often maligned Tennyson, whose "Come Down, O Maid"

has a closing line I can never read without hearing McKendy's rubbery intonation and seeing the gleeful twinkle in his eye: "The murmuring of innumerable bees" – effectively conveying the summer heat of an overripe garden. But although Tennyson is a poet of striking grandeur and luscious verbiage, he "tells" rather than "shows," as McKendy put it. Robert Browning, by contrast, though hardly as quotable as Tennyson or so emotionally moving, *shows*. You are right inside the mind of the jealous "Andrea del Sarto" and of the psychopathic "Prophylia's Lover" and of the creepy tour guide in "My Last Duchess" (her likeness hangs eerily on the wall "as if she were alive...")

In my third CEGEP term, my schedule proved annoyingly limiting, but in the last term I made a bee-line for McKendy's Shakespeare class. Here, the methodology was familiar, but we had a couple of weeks' discussion to unpeel each play. Three were comedies, four tragedies – although one of our themes was the blurred edges of each genre. For instance, the nasty accusations in *Much Ado About Nothing* could easily have gone very wrong. Similarly, *Romeo and Juliet* is actually a very funny play, and should be performed that way – right up until the sudden, shocking death of Mercutio, which McKendy compared to the moment in the initially slapdash *Bonnie and Clyde* when the bank manager gets shot on the hood of the car and everyone's jaw drops. Even after Mercutio's death, there is humour and sensitive characterization, especially with Juliet's Nurse, whose efforts to mimic her masters' real grief over their daughter's (fake) death is hilarious: "O woe! O woeful, woeful, woeful day! O day! O day! O day! O hateful day!" In that scene we also spotted the way Shakespeare indicates class difference, more typically shown by plebeian characters speaking in prose while aristocrats carry on in iambic pentameter.

Still, there was nothing to equal the great tragic heroes, particularly when they saw their lives crumbling around them. Disaster ensues when the hero commits some act he cannot retract, such as killing a king or emperor or girlfriend's cousin – but he can even call down the heavens simply by being foolish and trusting of the wrong people. But what the heck is wrong with Hamlet? He doesn't do anything in

the face of clear injustice other than mope around, spar with courtiers and fondle skulls. Except, we reflected, what would any of us do if confronted with the news that we had to kill someone, especially when we weren't entirely sure about the messenger? A ghost, right? Hmm. Surely a situation that would drive anybody mad. And yet, we reflected again, we know Hamlet isn't mad because he tells Rosencrantz and Guildenstern he isn't: "I know a hawk from a handsaw." Or is that, in a way, a sign of madness?

When it came to Hamlet's professed sanity, McKendy cautioned us against taking what characters say at face value – advice that would inform much of the thinking I would later do regarding motivation in history. Imagine, McKendy said, going into the principal's office with your fingers in your shirt front, possibly wearing an odd hat, and saying: "I'm Napoleon!" The principal would probably tell you to stop being silly and send you away. Imagine, however, going up to the principal and saying in a conspiratorial tone: "I'm not *really* Napoleon. I just want people to think I am." At that, the principal would probably grin nervously and reach for the phone to call security. In

other words, it is quite possible that Hamlet is indeed going slightly mad – as, frankly, anyone in his situation would. Yet most of us take his "hawk/handsaw" claim as revealing the truth, rather than obscuring it – much as we read uncritically what people claim in historical records, even private diaries. If we imagine people as real historical players, we can get a different picture. When approaching sources, historians should do the equivalent of what Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are clearly doing in that scene: grinning nervously and thinking about calling security.

McKendy's pedagogy suited me to a T because I loved talking about things. Curiously, however, given how much I enjoyed writing, I never got the hang of literary essays – which is a big reason why I chose not to pursue English at university. I did well by taking advantage of the outside-the-box options McKendy offered (no doubt out of a sense of Grace) in lieu of essays, writing a Browningsque monologue by a gloomy Londoner who visits a brothel, and presenting a critique of *Romeo and Juliet* as a form of iambic pentameter pillow talk between Petruchio and Katherine, presumably just after they'd watched the BBC version on their

bedroom TV. When on occasion I tried to provide straightforward analysis in traditional essay form, the result was always so-so – and I value McKendy for frankly pointing this out. The clincher may have come during a class on *King Lear*, when I asked why the word "and" seemed consistently to stand in for "if" (believe me, it does) and McKendy wryly reflected that I had the makings of a PhD topic there. No, not for me – but the training in critical thinking and sympathetic imagining that I received in those three classes coloured all the work I would do afterwards.

It would also colour my enjoyment of all things creative, by instilling a love of discussion and analysis that would probably drive a lot of people crazy. Fortunately, my future spouse (whose eyes, of course, are nothing like the sun) shared this inclination, as would the children we would have. On one occasion, way back when we were still somewhat star-crossed (especially in the eyes of my Old World would-be in-laws), we found ourselves on a day trip to Stratford, Ontario, with every intention of seeing a play and returning that night to our respective hosts in Toronto – but we discovered to our horror that the last bus would leave before



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Coriolanus would end, and we would have to forgo the show or risk unsurmountable ignominy by sleeping over. Then, who should we see milling about near the Festival Hall ticket office but McKendy, in the company of his younger brother whom he'd been visiting in Toronto and had convinced to drive out to take in *Coriolanus*. Could we get a lift back after the show? No problem. And so, on top of everything else, I owe my reputation among my in-laws to McKendy – to say nothing of a great theatre experience and a hilarious two-hour late-night drive debating the nature of *Coriolanus*' tragic downfall and marvelling at the amount of spittle Len Cariou had emitted while delivering those bitter Roman epithets.

In one of my last conversations with him before I graduated, McKendy described a new course he was putting together called *Nineteenth Century Thinkers*, which aimed to get inside the minds of John Stuart Mill, William Morris, Dickens, Ruskin, Marx, etc. Had I been able to take that course I might have opted to become a nineteenth-century historian considerably earlier than I did. McKendy would mould *Nineteenth-Century Thinkers* into a key component of the college's Liberal and Creative Arts program, which he promoted in the firm belief that students needed a solid grounding in literature, philosophy and history, and the opportunity to develop the skills I had come to appreciate in his classes. Serving for some years as the chair of Liberal Arts, his guidance impacted thousands of students – and not just academically. He helped spearhead the college's Refugee Committee, which sponsored families from Southeast Asia, Africa and Latin America and facilitated their integration into Quebec society, and fought against rising fees (Marianopolis, alone among the English CEGEPS, is private) in order to keep the college accessible. In 2003, he left to become Associate Academic Dean at John Abbott College and served in that capacity for twelve years. He worked for the last two of those years even after being diagnosed with ALS.

In 2015, to honour his retirement, Marianopolis teachers invited him back for a small reception. I found him surrounded by well-wishers, looking very different from the way I remembered him: the wheelchair was an obvious change, but so was the grey hair and beard and the

much nattier clothing. But the twinkle in his eye was unmistakable, and he gave me that same impish smile of curious anticipation I'd seen the day he first walked into class. It might have been awkward had we been alone, as it's hard to tell people nice things to their face, but because there were others nearby who didn't quite know how I knew Tom, I was able to extol his virtues in a kind of running monologue. I took great pleasure in recounting the "I'm not really Napoleon" anecdote, and then launched into the other great Tom McKendy scenario that served to shed light on the thorny issue of what exactly tragedy is.

It goes like this. If someone walks down a street and is killed by a flowerpot falling on their head, that is unfortunate, but not tragedy. For it to be tragedy, a person has to understand the dangers of walking down a street where flowerpots are known to fall regularly, and yet because of some desperate necessity the person still opts to go down that street – and is killed by a falling flowerpot.

When he heard both these anecdotes recounted, Tom nodded in recognition, rolling his eyes modestly. When he heard me add that I quoted these and other sayings with some frequency, and had brought my children up on this sort of wisdom, he chuckled. When at length I had to go, he thanked me, adding: "You made my day."

Last spring, four years after this encounter, I learned that the Marianopolis staff had launched something called the Tom McKendy Liberal Arts Bursary, intended to encourage students to take up this discipline that meant so much to him but was struggling against the juggernaut of Science and Commerce. When I heard this news I was initially worried that it was to be a memorial scholarship – but no: Tom was still around, and even attended the ceremony at the college in November, by which time enough of us had contributed to make a substantial corpus for the bursary. By then, he had lost all ability to move from the neck down, but could still talk and even write by means of a device that detected eye movements. He knew me at once, and asked about my "lovely wife," whom he of course remembered from the previous event, from the Stratford encounter, and from the many times she (also a Marianopolis student) had joined in the discussions in his office. I pulled her over, and we brought him up

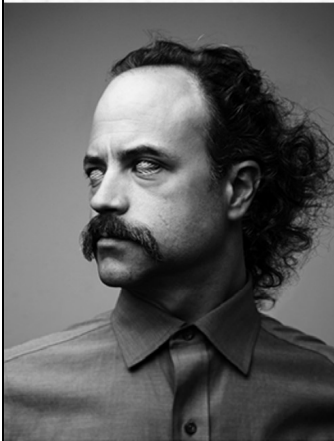
to date with recent achievements, including our daughter's now professional relationship with Shakespeare. In terms of the wheel coming full circle, that would have to do. I wanted to say something profound, but couldn't trust myself. Conscious of a great many people waiting to pay homage, I pulled away, grinning rather than saying good bye. But that was it. Tom died a few weeks later. The flowerpot had fallen.

I had a final insight while crammed at the back of the standing-room-only funeral home chapel listening to the heartfelt eulogies – particularly the one from Tom's daughter, who reflected how odd it had been to write something so important without her English-teacher father there to help. The priest, who had clearly gotten to know Tom in recent years, recalled asking him if he felt that "why me?" resentment expressed by so many who are struck by terrible disease. Tom's reply was impressive: "Why should it not be me?" I realized that Tom had reached the same conclusion Hamlet does when he has at long last emerged from madness: "If it be not now, 'tis to come; if it be not to come it will be now; if it be not now, yet it will come – the readiness is all." There is something tragically heroic in that conclusion – yet clearly it is not Tragedy. In the long run, flowerpots fall on all of us.

Oh, I almost forgot Robert Herrick. Somewhere in the middle of the seventeenth century, his world turned upside down, Herrick advised young women to "Gather ye rosebuds while ye may" – which is both another come-on line beloved of poets and a sincere reflection on the fleeting passage of time. The classical phrase for this is *carpe diem*, an idea Tom explained in my hearing four decades ago and, more poignantly, in 2015, when someone fortunately was filming:

"We look at tradition, and we look to the future, but we are also in the moment. All traditions have a sense of Living the Day. You can say 'carpe diem' – which doesn't mean 'seize the day' in Latin; it means 'pluck the day' or 'harvest the day.' Or in the Judeo-Christian tradition, they say: 'This is the day that the Lord has made, let us rejoice, let us be glad.' So, this is the day. This is the day we have, and it's a wonderful day. And there's a great day coming tomorrow."

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