

MICHAEL FISH AND BRIAN MERRETT ON KEY BUILDINGS AT RISK

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Quebec Heritage News

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Centaur of the World

An Interview with Anglo Theatre Manager Charles Childs

The Closing of a Historic Summer Camp

Pripstein's Laurentians Mishmar

Autumn Leaves and Honoured Ancestors

QAHN's Heritage Photo and Heritage Essay Contests



Quebec Heritage News

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Cover photo: Overdale Avenue, Montreal, showing the side of the LaFontaine house.
Photo: Rod MacLeod.

EDITOR'S DESK

Losing the accent

by Rod MacLeod

Many immigrants strive to lose their accents as a way of fitting more seamlessly into their host society. Quebec Anglophones, by contrast, are starting to achieve this end by adopting accents. And not only accents, but hyphens as well.

Quelle horreur! (As we say in English.)

I spent a chunk of the summer editing the English translation of a very long French book about Quebec history, and I went through a lot of pencils. Sure, most of what I marked up had to do with English grammar and sentence structure (or the lack of it), but what really blunted my lead was the repeated use of official French instead of what one ought to find in an English text – namely, English. And this from translators (there were several) for whom English was their native language.

I'm sorry, it's not "Rue Peel." It's not "Mont-Royal." And no, Montreal doesn't have an accent. Not in English.

I've been meaning for some time to write about some of the policy decisions that affect the editing of the *Quebec Heritage News*, largely because many of them hinge on the interesting cultural quirks involved in being part of a linguistic minority. Now, in the midst of late-summer heat and the longest election in living memory, it seems as good a time as any to get into the subject.

Attentive readers may well have noticed a certain consistency in the use of terms in this magazine. To a large extent, this comes out of my own experience with other publishers' rules. I've gotten used to putting the period inside the quotation mark (They called me "crazy.") rather than outside (They called me "crazy.") and so I change the latter to the former when I encounter it in articles. Similarly, I replace "20th century" with "twentieth century." (This I do often, given how regularly the phrase occurs in historical writing, as you can imagine.) These are essentially

arbitrary decisions, applied consistently; you could certainly make arguments for alternatives. Where I am adamant, however, is in removing the apostrophe from, say, "the 1970's" when referring to the decade. One should only insert the apostrophe when speaking about an aspect of that particular year: "1970's greatest hits" for instance. And under my watch, you will never see the nineteenth century referred to as "the 1800s" in the pages of the *QHN*. The 1800s are the years between 1800 and 1809, just like the 1960s are the years between 1960 and 1969. So there.



OK, sometimes I go a little far. It has long been a dream of mine to eliminate the period after most common contractions in English ("Dr." or "Mrs.") on the grounds that we don't need it. Is "Mr MacLeod" at all confusing? (I mean the usage, of course, not the individual, who admittedly is often confusing.) Here, I take my cue from George Bernard Shaw, who stopped using apostrophes and instead wrote "dont" and "wont" – unless there was obvious confusion ("he'll" would have a different meaning without the apostrophe). When I started as *QHN* editor, I set out to remove periods from titles ("Dr Smith has a PhD") but was overruled by the board. And rightly so; we needed periods for the saints.

One of the sharper points of con-

tention between Canada's two official languages is that saints have periods in English and hyphens in French. I won't speculate on the theological implications of this difference, but keeping it consistent has its cultural advantages.

Saint-Paul and St. Paul each had the same interesting experience on the road to Damascus (being the same person, of course) but we recognize one or the other depending on our own linguistic background. The same is true for Jules César / Julius Caesar, Michel-Ange / Michelangelo, and countless other famous figures whose names can be unintelligible if you hear them uttered in another language. As a species, we like to put things on our own terms.

But given that we're in a bilingual country, what do we do about place names? A lot of towns in Quebec are named after saints – Saint-Eustache, Saint-Denis, Saint-Louis-du-Ha! Ha! (I'd definitely pray to that guy, were I so disposed) – but those hyphens seem awfully fiddly in English. More to the point, a French spelling suggests a French pronunciation – which can be unproblematic (e.g. Saint-Eustache), somewhat questionable (Saint-Denis, especially for older Anglos who still say "Saint Denny"), or clearly odd (Saint-Paul, Saint-Charles, or Saint-Vincent, all of which involve readily recognizable English names). Younger Anglophones are perhaps more inclined to use the French pronunciation than older types who remember when Rue Saint-Jacques was St. James Street and when Boulevard Saint-Laurent was St. Lawrence Main. "Saint-Laurent" and "Saint-Jacques" are nearly universal pronunciations nowadays, as are "Saint-Louis" (you never hear "Saint Lewis" in Quebec, though some people do opt for "Saint Looie") and "Saint-Hubert" (even the BBQ restaurant is no longer "hy-ooburt"). One does hear Saint-Henri rendered as "Henry," but the spelling never changes. And Anglos can pronounce Saint-Hyacinthe "Santyasant" but it's

hard to keep a straight face when they do.

So when we spell places “St. Paul” and “St. Charles” we are acknowledging that they have an English pronunciation that comes naturally to English speakers. But does that mean we want to see sentences with both English and French usages, as in “Let’s meet on the corner of Saint-Laurent and St. Paul”? That is the way I’d say it, but it looks daft. *QHN* policy is to write all saints with “St.” – for consistency, even though it means giving that abbreviation to more French-sounding place names (“St. Jacques” or “St. Henri”). As often as not, of course, we don’t even say “saint” in English but rather a more linguistically ambiguous “sun” or even “say” (try it with “Saint-Laurent”). By this argument, the abbreviation “St.” isn’t so far removed from what we actually say. Besides, it’s good English, which any saint’s name with a hyphen isn’t.

The argument for good English also applies when the saint is female. In the *QHN*, it’s St. Agathe, St. Anne, and St. Catherine. No, this isn’t sexist: we make “St.” gender-neutral, like “server.” Here, we’re perhaps in a minority, given that many people use “Ste.” when writing the name of their town. (I broke my own rule a couple of years ago in an article on Sainte-Sophie, whose former Jewish residents tend to write it with a “Ste.” and I wanted it to look right to them.) The *Montreal Gazette* has gone with an essentially French contraction: “Ste-Catherine” etc. Neither form actually exists in English. Yes, you will find it on the official spelling of that Anglo-Canadian hub Sault Ste. Marie, but locals also pronounce the first word “soo,” so what can you do?

There is an argument that one should respect the official nomenclature. Let’s leave aside the question of whether using “Ste.” or “Ste-” is actually doing that (it was originally Sault Sainte-Marie, just as it’s officially “Sainte-Agathe-des-Monts”) and think about what’s at stake here. Lots of Anglophones use French spellings and pronunciations as a matter of course, most of them because they live in a largely French environment, or else are too young to have heard anything different. But others insist on using the official versions for political reasons – Anglo

guilt, one could call it. To fit in with the host society, the argument goes, we should adopt official spellings and pronunciations even when we’re speaking English. I don’t buy this. My impression is that people who are concerned about the amount of English spoken in Quebec aren’t greatly relieved to hear Anglos say “Henri” instead of “Henry” or to know that we’re spelling Montreal with an accent. Mind you, these little bits of sentence furniture can become major items of dispute: many locals feel strongly that it is Point Claire and not Pointe-Claire, Point St. Charles (or just “The Point”) and not Pointe-Saint-Charles, and the Town of Mount Royal (or “The Town” or, more recently, “TMR”) and not Ville-Mont-Royal – let alone just “Mont-Royal,” which could easily be confused with the area in the Plateau. And to me, Montreal West is only Montréal-Ouest when I’m communicating with the provincial government (or talking in French, of course). In any case, whether unconscious or deliberate, the use of French spellings and pronunciations in English represents an erosion of Anglophone heritage.

What about an argument for consistency (and you know I like to be consistent)? When one is in France, after all, one does as the French do. We don’t stroll the Elysian Fields or St. Michael’s Boulevard, we don’t visit Our Lady’s Church, and we don’t take refreshment at a sidewalk coffee shop. No, of course we refer to these institutions in French. So why not do so here at home? Well, up to a point, we do: Montreal has its own Notre Dame church, and no one says Calliere Point or Ramezay’s Castle – and of course there is a whole battery of French terms that Anglos use, like *dépanneur* and *terrasse*. But in other areas, we tend to retain English usage. Anglophones walk down Rue Saint-Antoine in Paris, but they know that Montreal’s version is “St. Antoine Street.” To say or write “Rue Saint-Antoine” in English seems weird – though nothing like as weird as “Rue Peel.” Official publications and even some English guidebooks will refer to streets this way, probably because that’s how most street signs are written. But it’s hearing Anglos actually say “Rue Peel” or even “Rue Guy” (pronounced like “ghee”) that really brings out my inner Lewis Black. At a recent

gathering of Quebec Anglophones, I even heard one participant pronounce the city of Sherbrooke “share-bwuque” – although since that person was British, I decided to give them a break.

I will also point out that there are French place names that aren’t pronounced the Francophone way in English: above all, Paris. Doesn’t Montreal fit into this category of place name, namely one with an established English variation? To write Montreal with an accent implies that one wishes it be pronounced “mon-ray-ahl” even in English – which is akin to pronouncing Paris “Paree.” To do either of these things sounds affected, recalling the way fancy people say “homage” (with the emphasis on the last syllable and a slurred “g”) or “restaurant” (without the final “t” but a nasal “n”). True, English speakers have occasionally opted for “Paree” (often putting “Gay” in front of it) when making specific reference to the city’s more scandalous reputation. Cole Porter, for instance, stated that you may think you know Paris, but you don’t know Paree. Perhaps the same argument could be made for Montreal and Montréal, but that would be a bit coy. Writing Montréal, let alone pronouncing it “Montréal,” is as odd as writing and saying Wien, Firenze, or Praha instead of what everybody calls these places in English: Vienna, Florence, and Prague.

And yet, to Quebec Anglophones, towns and streets in Quebec are not foreign; they are home. Whatever the etymology of these place names, Anglophones have made them (most of them, at any rate) their own. Like it or not, Anglicization of Quebec place names is grounded in Anglo-Quebec culture: people have been saying “Montreal” and “St. Paul Street” for 250 years. Besides, adding the odd accent or hyphen isn’t going to obscure or make up for (depending on your political view) that significant Anglophone presence. Perhaps the most useful parallel would be what the Gringos did to Spanish names in the American South West. To expect Quebec Anglos to say and write “Montréal” makes as much sense as to ask Americans to say “Loce Anhehlace” for Los Angeles, or to restore the accent to Santa Barbara, or to spell Texas with a “j.” Sure, Americans could stand to be more knowledgeable about their Hispanic

roots, but hispanifying familiar place names (which to my knowledge no one in the United States is advocating at the moment) would hardly address the problems resulting from colonialism. The situation in Quebec is much less incendiary, thanks to decades of productive cultural negotiation in the wake of the Quiet Revolution. Still, I wonder if the tendency of Anglophones to adopt French nomenclature isn't, in fact, making it harder to have important conversations about culture and heritage.

At the end of the day, accents and hyphens aren't all that important. They are, quite literally, symbols, and, as such, often mask the real issues. What we need to do is understand our history, and appreciate that the way we got to where we are isn't always as pretty as we'd like it to be. Let's also agree that we all have our corners of influence, our sense of identity, our cultural distinction. Sometimes this distinction is expressed with an accent.

And sometimes it isn't.

Letter

Photo finishers

Dear Editor,

Thank you for selecting me as one of the winners for the 2015 high school photo/essay contest. I was wondering if there was any way to get a hard copy of the issue that it was put in or if there is a place that sells them in my area. This was my first award for photography and I was beside myself when they called my name in front on my whole graduating class and teachers.

Thank you again!

Jerry Stepman, Secondary 5,
Beaconsfield High School

Dear Editor,

I would like to thank QAHN for choosing me as this year's first and third place winner for the High School Heritage Photo Contest. My family and I appreciate it. I received my certificates and cheques today, and it made me realize that all of the hard work paid off.

Thank you very much again, and if it still continues, I would be definitely

participating in next year's contest!

Have a nice weekend,

Yoad Vered, Secondary 3,
West Island College

Editor's note: All winners of the QAHN photo and essay contests receive a copy of Quebec Heritage News. Yoad Vared won both 1st and 3rd prizes in QAHN's 2015 Heritage Photo Contest. His and Jerry Stepman's submissions appear later in this issue.

Free range summers

Dear Editor,

This summer, I read an article in the *Montreal Gazette* about a program hosted in various parks in the Notre Dame de Grace district of Montreal. The aim of the program was for team monitors to organize games and events in local parks to encourage kids to get away from their computer screens and move outdoors to play. I wrote a reply in which I described what it was like growing up in NDG during the Wonder years of the 1960s and 70s. I thought my own memories might be of interest to readers of *QHN*.

How times have changed. We were unknowingly free-range kids before the term became popular. We didn't have day camps or even a park monitor to keep us amused. Our moms would just open the door and out we would pour onto the neighbourhood streets, playing ball, or just hanging out at the shack in

the park.

We would only return home when various moms would appear on their balconies to call us in for lunch. Then it was back outdoors to head over to the local the swimming pool opening at noon. There we would stay until the supper yell was heard. Come evening, dodge ball, baseball or such games as Red Rover or Hide and Seek were always on the agenda.

It was only when our moms would start the process of rounding us up for baths and evening television that we called it a day. We would then drift off to bed with images of restarting the same type of day all over in our heads.

There was no major entertainment planned for us except for a trip to Belmont Park – once we'd saved enough coupons from our Humpty Dumpty potato chip bags. This was the high point of our summer adventures. We would travel up to Cartierville by city bus, just a small groups of friends and never a parent in tow.

By all accounts, these same scenes played out in parks across the city and into the suburbs.

Yes, times and neighbourhoods have changed and parents seem to be more protective. Even so, we need to do all we can to bring kids out from under the glaze of their hand-held devices and experience real play and personal interaction. We need to develop free-range kids again.

Kevin Erskine-Henry
Greenfield Park, Qc



Conrad Poirier, "The Caricole at Belmont Park," 1941.
Photo: Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec: P48, S1, P6201.

QAHN NEWS

by Matthew Farfan

2015 Marion Phelps Award



This award is presented annually by QAHN in recognition of outstanding long-term contributions by an individual to the preservation and promotion of Anglophone heritage in the province of Quebec. The 2015 winner was Elaine Fuller, who has been a heritage activist in her local community for many years. Fuller received her award during a ceremony at St. Mungo’s United Church in Cushing.

According to one of Fuller’s nominators, Cecil McPhee, “Elaine Fuller’s interest in heritage preservation developed over many years. She was born in Thomas’s Gore (near Lachute) and moved to Chatham when she married Donald Fuller. In 1962, she watched as the rising waters submerged and obliterated much of the early nineteenth-century settlement along the Lower North Shore of the Ottawa River from Carillon to Grenville above the newly completed Carillon dam.” In 1989, “Elaine assumed a more active role in heritage preservation,” Cecil McPhee said. “She had joined the Historical Society of Argenteuil County (HSAC) in 1988 and enrolled in a three-year course in museum studies at Algonquin College in Ottawa in 1994. The course dealt with all aspects of museum operations – accessioning, describing, classifying, cleaning, conserving, mounting and displaying artefacts in all types of material in a wide range of fields... Elaine graduated in 2000 with a Diploma in Applied Museum Studies.” Over the years, Fuller has volunteered tirelessly at the Historical Society of Argenteuil County, the Argenteuil Museum in Carillon, and St. Mungo’s United Church. She has served as Secretary of the Argenteuil County Historical Society, and as Chair and later Secretary of the historical society’s Accessions Committee – all the while working in close conjunction with the Argenteuil Museum. At the HSAC and Museum, she has helped to inventory the collections, accession archival materials and mount numerous historical exhibitions. She has also assisted with publicity, given presentations and conducted genealogical and historical research. Since 1991, Fuller has been a leading light at historic St. Mungo’s Church (built in 1836) in Cushing. She has been spearheading restora-

tion work at St. Mungo’s since 1995. The latest phase of these restorations is currently under way.

In 2012, Fuller was honoured with the Order of Argenteuil from the MRC of Argenteuil, in recognition of services rendered to the conservation and promotion of the heritage of the MRC, in particular her outstanding work at St Mungo’s, the Argenteuil Museum and the Historical Society of Argenteuil. According to Louise Johnston of the Historical Society of Argenteuil County, Fuller “has been a longstanding, dedicated member of the HSAC board and has been active with the Argenteuil Regional Museum and with other organizations in preserving the heritage of Argenteuil and surrounding area. Of note are the many exhibits she has mounted and her work on accessioning artefacts and archival material for the society and the museum. Her work has been integral to the success of the Argenteuil Regional Museum.” Sandra Goorbarry, a volunteer with St. Mungo’s, praised Fuller for her leadership. She emphasized Fuller’s years of hard work raising funds to restore the splendid stone church, getting various architectural and engineering studies completed, submitting grant applications (such as to the Conseil du patrimoine religieux du Québec), and lobbying the Montreal Presbytery and different levels of government to help fund the restoration. “All of this,” Goorbarry said, Fuller accomplished “while dealing with a shrinking congregation and less than robust health.” And while the work at St. Mungo’s is not quite finished, she added that “we are hopeful that the restoration will be completed in time for the 180th anniversary of the church building in 2016. Whatever the outcome of this final stage, we can rest assured that St. Mungo’s has been preserved for many years to come, thanks to the determined and far-sighted leadership of Elaine Fuller.”

The 2015 Richard Evans Award

This award is presented annually by QAHN to an organization or group of volunteers who, collectively, have contributed to preserving or promoting their community history, including some aspect of Quebec’s Anglophone heritage. The 2015 winner was the Scotch Road Cemetery Association, a not-for-profit profit organization dedicated to the maintenance, preservation and remembrance of the Scotch Road Cemetery, a heritage graveyard in Grenville Township, in the MRC of Argenteuil.

Established by a group of concerned citizens who first met at the Goodland Farm north of Grenville, Quebec, in 1975, the organization’s objectives are to preserve the Scotch Road Cemetery, to develop a greater appreciation of the part played by the early settlers who are buried in the cemetery, and to share the association’s knowledge and resources regarding the cemetery.

Scotch Road, in the Township of Grenville, was originally settled by Highland Scots in 1802. These first Europeans to settle northeast of the Ottawa River came from the Isle of Mull and Lochaber and were Presbyterian and Gaelic-speaking. By 1820, the farming village of Scotch Road (situated on one of the oldest roads in the region) was established and soon there was a

school and a post office. As the years passed, however, the families left the rocky farms for better employment and education. Eventually, all that remained was the cemetery. Scotch Road's last surviving building, the Presbyterian church, was moved to Kilmar in 1931, and later to the Val Carroll Resort.

In the 1970s, descendants of some of the original Scotch Road settlers came to visit the cemetery and to record data from the stones. The cemetery, they discovered, contained some of the oldest surviving tombstones in the Laurentians (the earliest, that of Archibald McPhee, dated to 1818). The visitors found the cemetery suffering from years of neglect and vandalism. The most recent burial, at that time, had been in 1948.

Over the past 40 years, members of the Scotch Road Cemetery Association have worked diligently to maintain and preserve this early community burial ground, which is now completely surrounded by second- or third-growth forest. Stones have been re-erected and repaired, a gate and fence installed, and a monument to the history of Scotch Road put in place. Members of the Association have organized clean-ups, and remain vigilant about access and conditions at the cemetery.

In 2014, members of the cemetery association, led by Pres-



ident Cecil McPhee, successfully confronted the town council of Grenville-sur-la-Rouge regarding proposals about the road and possible development in the area.



In the words of Sandra Stock, a member of the QAHN board of directors, the Scotch Road Cemetery Association is "competently run, alert and active about any arising issues, and has an excellent web site."

QAHN Vice-president Jim Caputo agrees. "I have visited the site," he said, "and can attest to its condition and the efforts this group has taken to preserve this area."

The Richard Evans Award was presented to the Scotch Road Cemetery Association during QAHN's 15th annual convention, held in June in St. André-d'Argenteuil and Brownsburg-Chatham. The awards ceremony took place at historic St. Mungo's Church in Cushing.

Accepting the award on behalf of the association were Cecil McPhee, together with a contingent of cemetery volunteers.

On hand for the awards presentation was special guest Yves St-Denis, the MNA for Argenteuil. The deputy, who was one of the sponsors of QAHN's 2015 convention, praised the efforts of the Scotch Road Cemetery Association, as well as the work

"FOREVER"

We are pleased to announce that QAHN's exciting new project, Fostering Organizational Renewal through Enriching Volunteer Experience and Recognition (FOREVER) is now under way. Funded by the Department of Canadian Heritage, this project will take place over a period of 15 months.

The heritage sector has traditionally depended heavily on seniors for its volunteer needs. In the absence of paid staff and other resources, many essential tasks are performed by older members of society. Quebec's English-speaking community is

Volunteering Matters

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- Finding and keeping the right people
- Training and managing volunteers
- Connecting with youth interests
- Honouring the efforts of supporters

Please visit www.qahn.org for dates, venue and registration details, beginning December, 2015

Fostering Organizational Renewal through Enriching Volunteer Experience and Recognition (FOREVER) is sponsored by the Quebec Anglophone Heritage Network, with financial support from the Department of Canadian Heritage.

QUEBEC ANGLOPHONE HERITAGE NETWORK QAHN



RÉSEAU DU PATRIMOINE ANGLOPHONE DU QUÉBEC RPAQ





Patrimoine canadien

Canadian Heritage

Top: Scotch Road Cemetery. Photo: courtesy of the Scotch Road Cemetery Association.

Bottom: Members of the Scotch Road Cemetery Association with Simon Jacobs. Photo: Matthew Farfan.

particularly vulnerable to demographic changes. This is especially true in outlying regions, where the community is aging, and where youth out-migration is endemic. FOREVER aims to provide the heritage sector of English-speaking Quebec with the capacity to increase both the number of volunteers working in the sector, and the quality of their contributions. Local museums, historical societies and other heritage and cultural institutions will be strengthened as a result of this initiative, while the communities they serve will benefit from the services and opportunities for personal enrichment that they provide.

FOREVER will focus on developing programming designed to foster interest in the heritage sector among potential volunteers from all parts of the population, including youth. Working with experts from different fields, QAHN and its partners will explore innovative ways to attract new volunteers, and offer guidance to organizations experiencing volunteer fatigue, thus helping to ensure the long-term viability of these institutions and the communities they serve.

Project activities will take place across Quebec, and will include a needs-assessment survey of workers and volunteers, a series of one-day conferences, community outreach, and the production of field guides for heritage-sector volunteers. Leading this initiative are veteran QAHN project managers Dwane Wilkin and Heather Darch.

“Housewife Heroines”

Another QAHN project, “Housewife Heroines: Anglophone Women at Home during World War II,” has just received the green light. This project, funded through the Department of Canadian Heritage’s World War Commemorations Community Fund, will tell a chapter of a little-known but fascinating World War II story: the contribution of Canadian women to the war effort through their unpaid work at home.

The focus of “Housewife Heroines” will be English-speaking housewives of Montreal, who shared a language but who represented a rich ethno-cultural diversity. These unsung women mobilized their efforts on both the economic front (through recycling, salvaging, planting victory gardens, making do with rations and contributing to wartime savings programs), and the military front (by preparing care packages for overseas troops and POWs, practicing civil defense procedures, organizing canteens for troops and setting up blood-banks).



The project will include the production of three community heritage workshops, a travelling exhibit, articles for publication, the publication of images, texts, and/or interviews online, and a celebratory event on Women’s Day 2016. It will bring together seniors and other community

members including the cultural communities.

Historians Lorraine O’Donnell and Patrick Donovan will head up the research team, with administrative support and coordination from the QAHN office.

Summer intern

This summer, QAHN has enjoyed the services of Flora Juma, a third-year honours student in history and political science at Concordia University. Flora has been busy researching and conducting inter-



views of movers and shakers associated with some of Montreal’s most iconic Anglophone institutions. We are pleased to publish Flora’s first feature interview – with Charles Childs, general manager at Centaur Theatre – in this issue of *Quebec Heritage News*.

Special award for Rod MacLeod

In honour of its 15th anniversary, QAHN’s very own Rod MacLeod was presented with a special recognition award at this year’s annual convention in June.

Not only has Rod served as editor of *Quebec Heritage News* since 2009, but he has also been deeply involved with QAHN since its inception back in 2000.



Among the many hats he has worn are that of president of this organization (for 5 years), chair of the Montreal Committee (currently), member of the Communications Committee (currently), member of the organizing committee for the annual Arts Culture and Heritage Working Group summit in Montreal (currently), lead researcher and writer on QAHN’s successful “100 Objects” project (2012-2013), and goodwill QAHN ambassador at countless outreach events, student graduations, government consultations and other activities around Quebec.

In all of these roles, and others, Rod has served with distinction, panache and generosity. QAHN salutes him for his 15 years of steadfast service.

Top: Centaur Theatre. Photo: centaurtheatre.com. Bottom left: “Housewife pouring waste fats for ammunition.” Photo: Library and Archives Canada: PA-001111.

Bottom right: Award winner Rod MacLeod. Photo: Matthew Farfan.

CURATOR'S HANDBOOK

Be Prepared!

Emergency planning in your museum

by Heather Darch

Iliterally had freezing cold water up to my knees. Some time during the night, the air conditioning system in the nineteenth century school house museum where I worked malfunctioned and poured water back into the building.

Did I panic? You bet I did!

An "Emergency Response Plan" is something even the smallest archives and museums must have in place. Your ability to avert a disaster will depend on how your organization is able to handle an emergency. The school house museum had no plan and I had no clue.

The idea of an emergency plan is to help you manage any issue in your museum effectively. It can help you prepare for crises before they occur and lessen the risk of losing priceless artefacts, photographs and documentary heritage.

A well-constructed plan removes confusion and an endless running around of many people all trying to do the same thing. It establishes a chain of command and a list of tasks and supplies that will offer that oh-so-important sense of control.

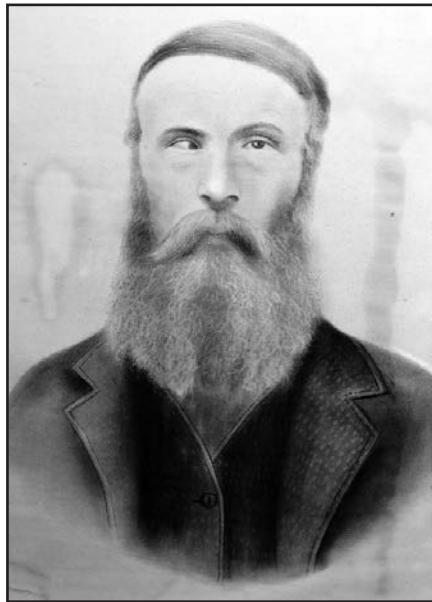
Emergency management requires teamwork, though. You will need to bring together from your community and organization people willing to help you plan, respond and recover should an emergency occur. Identifying who will be talking to fire response services, or who will be looking after the welfare of the staff, and who will be making the decisions about collections, can all be outlined in an emergency plan.

Knowing who these people are in advance, what their particular skills are, and how to contact them will greatly improve your ability to coordinate their efforts – thereby minimizing loss and damage to your site and collections.

You can't begin to reduce risks without first acknowledging they exist. Knowing the current hazards that jeopardize the security of your museum,

archives or heritage site will be good predictors of future threats.

"Emergency services are very aware of the issues facing heritage buildings and museums and they are willing to become involved in your emergency plans," said Sûreté du Québec officer Hugo Lizotte. Speaking at QAHN's Security for Heritage workshop held at the



In many cases, emergencies in museum collections begin as small and unobserved incidents. Only "Mr. Montagne" kept his eye on the ice build up and subsequent spring melt which left his canvas stained.

Missisquoi Museum, Lizotte explained that small heritage organizations can assist their local emergency teams and cut response times if they would only provide keys, floor plans and emergency contact numbers ahead of time. "You will make our job easier if we are called to your site; it will save us time and just might save your building and your objects as a result."

Floor plans are a great thing to have in place. A good one will contain infor-

mation about gas and electricity shut-off, emergency exits, cubbyholes and closets and routes through the building. A very effective one will identify where your most valuable objects and documents are located. Statistics tell us that 90% of all businesses affected by fire for example, never reopen. If you have saved the core of your collection, there is hope that something can begin again.

Remember, you should not make your emergency plan too complicated. In a high-stress situation on your site, no one is going to find the information needed if they are presented a tome of instructions. Write your plan in a clear and to-the-point language and present it in a readable font and in a format that is easily accessible.

The actual plan must be "live" and "current." It might be tempting to set the plan aside once it has been written, put it on a shelf and not consider it again as other projects pile up on your desk. But you need to make sure that the contact data is kept up-to-date, that floor plans are kept current, that changes in exhibit spaces are noted, and that the most recent placement of your key heritage objects are indicated. If an emergency happens, your plan must be accurate and useful to all who will be consulting it.

So, whether you have nineteenth-century school books floating past you in your basement or a build-up of ice on your roof or leaking overhead pipes in your storage area, it's an emergency. And an emergency left unattended will become a disaster if you are not prepared to handle it.

Heather Darch is curator of the Missisquoi Museum, a past director of the Quebec Anglophone Heritage Network, and a heritage consultant whose recent assignments have included co-managing QAHN's Security for Heritage Initiative (SHOWI), and now the FOREVER project.

OPINION

The LaFontaine House

The best we can do?

by Michael Fish

Thirty years ago, Montrealers of every persuasion, led by media editorialists, overwhelmingly called for Overdale Avenue's LaFontaine house to be declared a Federal Historic Monument.

Its speculator-owners then ruined the building and its surroundings.

Years went by, activists died, urgency was lost. A recent city administration rewarded this misbehavior by increasing the permitted size of buildings on the block to almost the maximum permitted anywhere. Though the house was denied demolition, it is now allowed to be rehabilitated as condos for sale.

Montreal (or Quebec) authorities should act quickly. If not, a last chance to acquire this house for public use will be lost. This article urges activists, new and former, to organize a last effort to persuade the city, its mayor and council to do their duty.

Since the mid-1980s, many of us hoped the building would become a museum or a monument commemorating at least two of our most important political



leaders and at least two crucial events during the years between the Rebellions of 1837-38 and Confederation in 1867.

Canada's character can be traced primarily from two exceptional men: Louis-Hippolyte LaFontaine and Robert Baldwin. Their long close friendship enabled extraordinary reciprocal generosity and support. We owe them our successful, prosperous democracy and the fact that our sharing and caring nation is the envy of the world.

In 1848, some fifty states in the world overthrew despotic or colonial regimes. Canada, as happened with almost all the others, could have had its first self-government reversed by force. Two crucial events prevented this reversal.

One: In 1848, after a dramatic sustained campaign led and personalized by LaFontaine, Britain amended the Act of Union so that, once again, French, the mother-tongue of the majority in Lower Canada, would be an official language in Canada. The election of 1848 was significant. Governor General Lord Elgin accepted both that the LaFontaine/ Baldwin partnership won a majority in the

Assembly, and that LaFontaine would be the Prime Minister of the Province of Canada. Like his predecessors did, Elgin could have refused both.

Two: The Rebellion Losses Bill of 1849 was adopted. This law settled ten years of argument over blame for damage to private property in Lower Canada during the rebellions. A bill compensating all holders of damaged property in Upper Canada had already been passed, but its beneficiaries were all English. Failure to do the same for Lower Canadians would have re-started civil unrest and a return to colonial military control. Anglo-Protestant businessmen of Montreal opposed this bill, insisting, even after ten years when most rebellion aims had become law, that no disloyal person (almost all of them French speakers) deserved payment for property damage. They rioted, burning Parliament on April 25, 1849, the day that Lord Elgin signed the bill into law. Over the following days, armed mobs twice attacked both LaFontaine's home and the person of Elgin.

With this legislation, Canada did what few other states ever tried to do,



Top: The LaFontaine house on Overdale Avenue, Montreal. Photo: Rod MacLeod.

Bottom: Louis-Hippolyte LaFontaine. Photo: McCord Museum: I-15335.0.1.

that most fail to do even today. LaFontaine, Baldwin and the reformers conceived of a democracy that was not based on a folk, a language, a religion, or a class, or in fact, on any central idea. Our democracy is based (paraphrasing John Ralston Saul) on numerous economic, social, political and administrative programs, all conceived to reduce the space between races, classes, religions and language groups. In short, respect for diversity. LaFontaine's house tells this unique story.

The preservation of peace and responsible government in Canada sometimes hung by a thread. Our evolution could have been reversed on several occasions. One was the afternoon of Monday, April 30, 1849, only a few days after Parliament was burned. This was when Elgin neared the Château de Ramezay to receive a parliamentary petition of thanks for his assent to the recent legislation. He had run through an English mob that was held back by a small group of soldiers stationed at the entrance to Jacques Cartier Square. Dirtied by mud and vegetables, Elgin was unharmed. Watching from the garden of the Château stood the two friends, Baldwin and LaFontaine. Should they order the soldiers to fire at the mob to disperse it? On their decision, would hang all our futures. The minutes passed, then a half-hour. They held fast. By not attacking this mob, they avoided a terrible defining moment: killed citizens, or worse, a killed governor general.

Anything might have happened. Because nothing did, the country avoided an incident that would have adversely changed our history.

The house carries all the memories of the legendary life Lafontaine lived apart from when he was prime minister. It also speaks of the six colonial figures who governed the country during the time that Lafontaine lived there. No other site in the country witnessed these people, these events, and these times. The mansion will be hard pressed



to contain the material that people would profit by seeing.

Any part of this history would justify the purchase and the use of this house for the public, but LaFontaine's association with the return of the rights of the French language in Canada has worldwide importance. This is especially so for the Francophonie, but it also speaks for the rights of minority languages everywhere. A museum on the French language would complement any monument attached to the mansion, or nearby. This museum function could be situated in an adjacent space, in one of the new buildings on the block, or in one of several old buildings nearby that are threatened with demolition but that beg for conservation for many reasons.

The property, being in a ruined state, cannot reasonably command the price that would apply to its proportional share of the total area of the city block



on which it is situated. Its real logical value is more fairly calculated on the basis of the ratio of the new floor area that will be created in the house to the total floor area that is being built on the whole site. It would be a substantial sum, but easily affordable. The house need not be on its own numbered lot.

The ultimate shape of the reconstructed house cannot be decided either by the city, the present developers, or their architects. At the moment, the developers' architects are supposedly planning to remove the top story to restore the building to the form they assume it had when LaFontaine lived there. A decision to alter any monumental building, by International Convention (there are many ICOMOS Conventions which apply) has to be a group decision made by the widest possible circle of experts in many disciplines, from all over the country. Parks Canada are the logical people to hold public consultations on such matters, having managed many such consultations over the years. Because of this, the developers of the site would be best advised (are humbly asked) not to carry out work on the building until its ultimate use by the public is finally decided. The entire historical importance of this building, from the day of its construction to the present day, places it at the top of potential monuments of world interest in our country.

The permanent homes of all Canada's prime ministers who held office for any length of time have been purchased and restored by the nation, and are used as house museums. The same applies to Fathers of Confederation. It is inconceivable that this mansion would not make a superb public house museum celebrating the period of which it is the principal witness.

Apparently, the federal government cannot constitutionally buy private property to create monuments. However, all of the federal governments during the last thirty years have promised that, if a local authority or a provincial

Demolition by neglect?

North Hatley's Old Grist Mill

by Brian Merrett

government is a proprietor of such a building, they can and would buy such a property. At least, this is their written position.

The unique problems of a recent city administration certainly affected their ability (or their will) to consider the purchase of the mansion. The present administration, however, can easily and should seriously consider the matter.

The conservation community of the city has not had the will or the means to carry this cause, except intermittently. The cause needs a fresh group to press for these goals. Such a vehicle is the newly-formed Association Baldwin La-Fontaine (OSBL: ass.ba.la@bell.net), a non-profit corporation whose aim is to promote the purchase of the house and its transfer to the federal government. Donors of \$10 join a list of honorary directors of the corporation. A dollar or more will buy a single membership in the name of the donor. Names of both donors and honorary directors will be published, unless requested to be published as anonymous. There will also be an internet petition.

It is the hope of this writer and others that a movement by conservationists and opinion leaders will adopt this program and persuade the mayor and the council to act. There is still time.

The author thanks Joseph Graham and John Fretz for their contributions to the writing of this article. He also thanks Daphné Beaudoin-Pilon and Gisèle Hamelin for translation.

Sources:

John Saul, *Louis-Hippolyte Lafontaine and Robert Baldwin*, Toronto, 2011.

Joseph Graham, *Parliament in Flames in Canada's History Magazine*, February-March, 2011.

Michael Fish (hamelinfish@sympatico.ca) retired from a thirty-five year private practice as an architect in 1994. He was a conservation activist and a member of ICOMOS Canada (Section Francophone) for fifteen years and its vice-president for ten. He has been recognized by several awards for conservation activities in Canada.

It's astounding that some municipal administrations still feel the way about heritage buildings that Jean Drapeau did. The former mayor of Montreal would be asked by a journalist about a questionable demolition—and such demolitions were legion in the 60s and 70s. His Honour would pull a pencil from his pocket saying how it was his pencil: he bought it, it was his to do with as he pleased. Then he would break the pencil in two and that was the end of the interview.

It doesn't work that way with our ar-

moved his grist business from Reedville up on the Massawippi river to the village of North Hatley in 1904. He built a new mill near the railroad track where he and son, Ronald, operated it for thirty-five years. Then Ronald took over and carried on the business from 1942 to 1968. Standing on Mill Street, the architectural style of the mill is American Vernacular Gable."

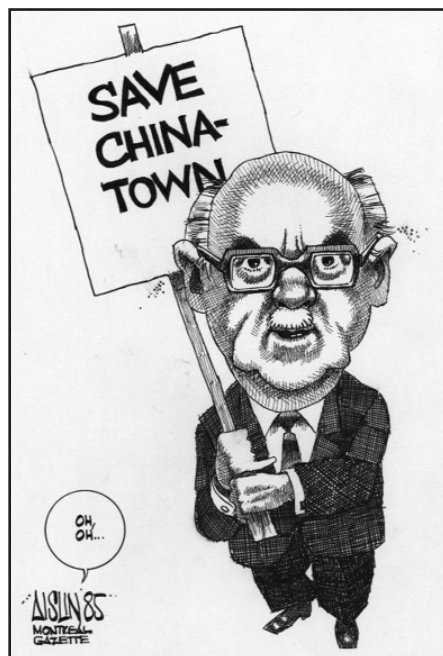
"With electricity, the old grist mills became obsolete," QAHN's *Townships Heritage Webmagazine* states. "Today very few remain in the Townships." (<http://townshipsheritage.com/article/firs-t-mills>)

North Hatley's mayor and council were recently asked for assurance that the Old Grist Mill would be restored and preserved into the future as one of the few landmark buildings in North Hatley. An independent assessment of the mill's condition and potential would be welcome but no action regarding its preservation seems to have been taken. Apparently without a principal tenant, it is rumoured that the Old Grist Mill is slated to be condemned – but following what criteria and on whose decision?

The easiest way to get rid of an unwanted building is to leave it to the ways of nature. It becomes a classic example of "demolition by neglect." Search for that term on the web and one finds numerous entries, such as:

"'Demolition by neglect' is the term used to describe a situation in which a property owner intentionally allows a historic property to suffer severe deterioration, potentially beyond the point of repair. Property owners may use this kind of long-term neglect to circumvent historic preservation regulations." (<http://www.preservationnation.org/information-center/law-and-policy/legal-resources/preservation-law-101/resources/Demolition-By-Neglect.pdf>)

"The exact opposite of preservation by maintenance; any building or site that is not taken care of on a regular basis is a potential candidate for the eventual disuse, disrepair, and ultimate need for dem-



chitectural heritage. It's taken a few decades but we've learned how to integrate the old with the new. There is no reason to knock down a building just because it's old.

As a founding director of Heritage Montreal in the mid-70s and a contributor to the Colby Curtis Museum's recent exhibition on North Hatley architecture, one of my main interests is the old buildings and the architectural fabric of this beautiful village. In the heart of North Hatley stands J. B. Reed's Old Grist Mill, the history of which states, "With the coming of electricity, J. B. Reed

olition.” (<http://encyclopedia2.thefreedictionary.com/Demolition+by+neglect>)

“Demolition by neglect is a loophole that exists in many local jurisdictions that allows property owners to use nature to accomplish what they weren’t able to do through the court system. When someone purchases a property with the intention of tearing down the existing structure to make room for a new home or commercial building they must apply for a demolition permit from the local building department. This is the point when the new property owners often discover that they might have a roadblock to their plans. If the structure is considered of historical significance to the area, local citizens and preservationists often work to prevent the demolition.” (<http://www.oldhouseweb.com/blog/demolition-by-neglect/>)

“There are also environmental and psychological impacts of preserving old buildings, since human beings are positively affected by their surroundings when they feel a ‘sense of place.’ When buildings in a historic district fall prey to ‘demolition by neglect,’ meaning that the owners allow their property to reach a state of deterioration, the entire sense of community can be lost.” (http://scholarship.law.georgetown.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1016&context=hpps_papers)

There are many uses for old industrial buildings. While coordinating the exhibits on industrial heritage and Mon-

tréal’s Old Port for Heritage Montreal in the early 80s, I toured post-industrial sites in southern Ontario and a number of eastern U.S. cities and towns, photographing grain silos, mills, factories and warehouses that had found new vocations as hotels, churches, and in housing, light manufacturing and the burgeoning tech industry.

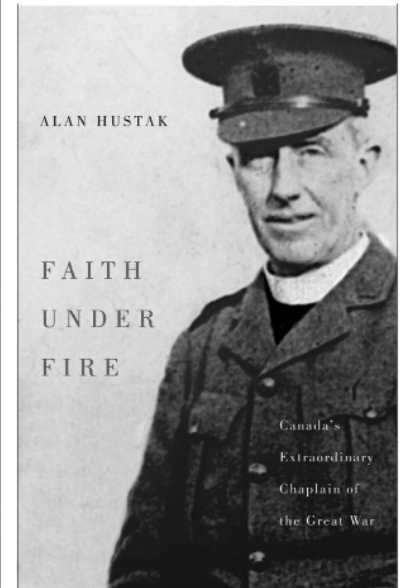
A perfect building for a small high-tech company, a community centre, a tourist centre, an arts centre or a local history museum, the Old Grist Mill deserves better than this. In this day and age, to allow a unique, historic post-and-beam industrial building in the heart of one of Quebec’s most beautiful villages to moulder into the ground is an unacceptable throwback to the dark days of Jean Drapeau.

Let’s not let the Old Grist Mill become the sad legacy of the current North Hatley administration, its own broken pencil. Strong, visionary civic leadership is the only solution.

Brian Merrett is an architectural photographer resident in North Hatley. In the early 1970s his photographic documentation of Montreal’s Windsor Station and Shaughnessy House (now the Canadian Centre for Architecture) helped lead to their classification and preservation. He is currently working on his third book on Montreal architecture. Merrett is an administrator of the Friends Amis North Hatley forum, fanhca.org



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THE PLACE TO BE

St. Hubert Airport in the summer of 1930

by Kevin Erskine-Henry

There are moments that become etched in one's memory forever. For residents of Montreal's South Shore, the arrival of the British Airship R-100 in August 1930 was such a moment.

The New Titanic of the air, as it was known, departed from Cardington, England, on July 29, and reached Montreal in 78.48 hours. It had traveled 3,300 mi (5,300 km) at an average speed of 42 mph (68 km/h) with 48 passengers on board. The R-100's main Canadian mooring station was at Montreal's airport in St. Hubert, built in 1928 by Canadian Vickers, where it would stay for twelve days, hovering over what was then mostly farm fields. Measuring 220 metres in length (about two football fields) and 40 metres in diameter, the R-100

was an amazing sight to behold. For a country and city now looking towards the economic winter that was to be the Great Depression, the arrival of the great airship was a symbol of hope. It is estimated that over 100,000 people visited the airship over the course of its stay. When one considers that Montreal's population was less than half a million in 1930, the arrival of the R-100 was the combined Expo 67 and Montreal 1976 Olympics of its day.

For residents of then rural St. Hubert, this major event was taking place in their backyards. To accommodate such a massive amount of visitors, the Montreal and Southern Counties Railway added additional cars and extra runs from its Youville Square Station in Old Montreal. Families, even whole church groups, would pack picnic lunches and join the crowds at the airfield. Almost unheard-of

traffic jams backlogged the mostly unpaved roads.

For some enterprising South Shore residents, this event would prove a financial boon, as they could rent out rooms or places on their land for campers to pitch tents. For the Stratton family, owners of a general store, it was an opportunity not to be missed. Jesse Stratton-Armstrong, whose grandparents owned the store, recalls her father loading up the old pickup truck each morning with cases of soft drinks and ice-cream, packed in lots of ice, to sell to the day trippers. He'd return for more supplies by mid-afternoon. "My older brother George and Uncle Tom would rummage around the field for discarded drink bottles to be returned for the deposit," says Jesse. "I recall them bragging that they made a fortune that summer."

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The great airship's visit to St. Hubert eventually came to an end and it moved on to Toronto before returning to Britain. The event would continue to be a great source of local pride. St. Hubert area children returning to high school in St. Lambert were able to boast that a piece of international aviation history had been made in their community over the summer.

The R-100's visit had long-term spin-offs for the St. Hubert airport. Because of the large number of travelers to the site, the Canadian National Railway, which owned the rail lines, provided a much needed up-grade to the system. The provincial government improved access to St. Hubert through newly-paved roads. Located only nine miles from downtown Montreal, the airport soon proved easily accessible, and would serve as Montreal's prime airfield until the construction of Dorval airport (now Pierre Elliott Trudeau International) in the 1940s. Even so, St. Hubert remained a hub for would-be travelers to Montreal from both Europe and the United States for the next forty years.

The new, easy access to St. Hubert would also prove useful during Montreal's Sin City days. Legendary mob boss Harry Ship would welcome high rollers from New York by sending cars to meet them at St. Hubert Airport and bring them to various downtown Montreal night clubs via the Victoria Bridge. Some Greenfield Park residents remember as kids running alongside the cars, especially when the out-of-town visitors were on their way back to the airport and would empty their pockets of Canadian coins.

During the Second World War, the St. Hubert airfields were the training centre for the Royal Canadian Air Force and a major defense base. Up to a hundred flights a day

would take off to help supply England and our overseas troops. Military housing was built around the airport for the families of those working there. After the war much of the same housing was given over to returning veterans, some of whom came with British and Dutch War brides. The population of the South Shore soon increased threefold.

Once thought of as mostly remote farm country, the South Shore began to see new development as Montrealers looked for affordable land to build homes and escape from the crowded neighbourhoods of Griffintown and Point St. Charles. Major aviation companies such as Pratt & Whitney set up shop on the South Shore, bringing hundreds of mostly English-speaking workers with them.

Today, the military base, the former RCAF Station St. Hubert, has ceased operations, but the armed forces still use the site as a garrison, comprising the tactical helicopter unit 438 Squadron and the 34th Service Battalion. While no longer Montreal's main airport, Saint Hubert remains the ninth busiest airport in Canada.

A small road named R-100 near the airport marks the event. There is also a large display model of the R-100, and of the airfield at St. Hubert in 1930, at the Canadian Aviation Heritage Centre at Macdonald College in St. Anne-de-Bellevue.

The visit of the great airship 85 years ago marked the beginning of Montreal's first airport and of the growth of its off-island South Shore suburbs.

Kevin Erskine-Henry is the chair of the South Shore Community Partners Network (SSCPN) a local community organization that promotes English-Language services.




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2015 QAHN HERITAGE PHOTO CONTEST



FIRST PRIZE

Yoad Vered
 Grade 9, West Island College, Dollard-des-Ormeaux, Qc.
 Title: "Where Will Your Story Take You?"
 Date of photo: September 28, 2014
 Category: family heritage

A family's heritage consists of many parts, each one working together to compose a larger picture. Each piece has its own story, and my family's begins in the streets of Tel-Aviv, Israel, in 1967. Each morning, my father walked long distances to get to school. Over the course of every morning's journey, he had time to speak with his friends and breathe in the fresh outdoor air.

Thirty years later, my family had immigrated to Canada, and my father wanted me to walk to school every morning, just like he did when he was a little boy. He thought that by driving me to school, he would encourage laziness and discourage my connection to the environment. That is why, today, I walk to school every morning. The path I've been walking for the past eleven years is pictured above. For that reason, it has an extremely strong sentimental value to me.

One day, as I was walking back from school, I greeted a couple walking along this same path. They surprised me, as I very rarely see other people taking this bumpy and curvy walkway. The couple was very friendly, and told me that they have also been walking this same path every Friday since they'd first met. They explained to me how important this path was for them, because it was where their story had begun.

Following the exchange of a few stories and a brief goodbye, I continued walking. After thinking for a while after the encounter with this couple, I realized that everybody has their own stories. What struck me, though, is that the small winding path underneath the tall trees that I once thought was only mine, is also a part of the setting of other people's stories. I then realized that every single person has their own tale, and that maybe, every single tale has its own path.

SECOND PRIZE

Jerry Stepman
 Grade 11, Beaconsfield High School, Beaconsfield, Qc.
 Title: "Our Heroes"
 Date of photo: April 28, 2015
 Category: family heritage

I went for a bike ride at lunch in a beautiful April afternoon. I wanted to capture our "thanks" to those brave men and women who lost their lives so that we can live in peace. This photo represents the heritage of our community and of my family.

This cenotaph was erected in October of 2014, to mark the 100th anniversary of the First World War, to pay tribute and honour to our fallen soldiers, as well as police, firefighters and medical personnel. Governor General David Johnston was present at the opening ceremony to cut the ribbon and give a speech; he also gave a speech at my high school about giving back to the community and being an outstanding citizen. It is an all around beautiful addition to our community, which will always

be a reminder of how we never back down in the time of need: no matter where we need to go. This can be applied to the streets of Beaconsfield, or to the battlefields of Afghanistan.

This is to say "Thank You" to those who gave their lives to



serve and protect the good people of this world who couldn't protect themselves when they were in need. This constitutes "heritage" (even though it may be new) because of what it represents and not because of its age. We remember the ones who fought for us at home and abroad. It's not the physical cenotaph itself, but instead, it's what the cenotaph is; to remember those who have fallen in the line of duty. My grandfather on my father's side served in the Canadian Army as a Drill Sergeant in the 50s through the 70s, and my grandfather on my mother's side served in the U.S. Army during the 50s. It does not just relate to me, but to all of us who have had family serve those who are in need.

THIRD PRIZE

Yoad Vered

Grade 9, West Island College, Dollard-des-Ormeaux, Qc.

Title: "An Old Camera Tells Old Stories"

Date of photo: January 16, 2015

Category: cultural heritage

Stories come in many shapes and sizes; they come in books, in songs, and even in pictures. Pictures can tell stories, because each one is worth a thousand words. When looking through an album full of photographs, one can see and imagine a variation of stories, from different



times, places, and points of view. Pictures are a real snapshot of time, and every single one has its very own story to tell.

With pictures, the youth can see how the past once was. With pictures, historians can observe and learn about important events. In fact, the most significant historical events from the last few centuries were all captured on camera. For example, today we have pictures of Neil Armstrong landing on the moon. We have pictures

of the Holocaust. These pictures let us observe our past and learn more about it.

A picture is a snapshot of time that travels through the years. Each one, carrying an old story to teach about the past's heritage and maybe even keep a memory. "When I look at my old pictures, all I can see is what I used to be but am no longer. I think: What I can see is what I am not," once said Aleksandar Hemon.

We all have pictures, because we take them daily. And yet, every picture is different. Every single one tells a story that is different from another, and this is why I strongly recommend that you photograph what most matters to you. This way, you can keep it as a memory forever, and help the people of the future learn about today.

HONOURABLE MENTION

Andrea Rizk Flores

Grade 7, West Island College, Dollard-des-Ormeaux, Qc.

Title: "Notre Dame Basilica"

Date of photo: July 21, 2014

Category: architectural, cultural and landmark heritage



Notre Dame Basilica, in the historic district of Old Montreal, is an example of architectural, cultural and landmark heritage of Quebec. It represents the outstanding historical design of the old churches. The church's Gothic Revival

architecture is one of the most dramatic in the world. The interior is big and colourful, its ceiling coloured deep blue and decorated with golden stars, and the rest of the sanctuary is a mixture of blues, azures, reds, purples, silver, and gold. It is

filled with many wooden carvings and religious statues. Yet the interior is absolutely breathtaking, the exterior is just as fascinating. Unusual for a church, the stained glass windows along the walls of the basilica do not show biblical scenes, but rather scenes from the religious history of Montreal. The picture also includes a very old building which shows interesting architectural designs from a different century than the age of the basilica.

HONOURABLE MENTION

Andrea Luyu Wang
 Grade 9, Marymount Academy International, Montreal, Qc.
 Title: "Qikou"
 Date of photo: July 27, 2014
 Category: cultural heritage

The old town of Qikou, which lies in Lvliang Mountain (a famous mountain in China) and the Yellow River (Chinese people call it "the mother river"), is a Chinese famous town rich in culture and history, the Xi-



wan village in this town is among the first "China's famous town of culture and history." It has been the most important place in military since ancient times. Until Ming Dynasty, Qing Dynasty and then the period of

the republic of China, thanks to the convenience of the river, it became the most important town of trade which was the joint place of economy and culture to connect east and west. It is also known as "the No.1 town of Jiuqu Yellow River." I shout this photo with the heart wishing to remind the people of new generation not to forget this ancient town which had a great meaning once in history. I hope the new generation can observe, feel and experience the glory of this town.

2015 QAHN HERITAGE ESSAY CONTEST



Editor's note: This year the top three essay contest winners all came from the same class: Ms. Nina Wong's Cycle 3. It was my privilege and pleasure to attend the class's end-of-term party at which I was able to present cheques and certificates to three very creative young writers: Noa Goldberg, Lacey Baillargé, and Pauline Kollias. I expressed my appreciation for the students' fine work, but I also pointed out how the success of a contest such as QAHN's depends so much on the enthusiasm of dedicated teachers – and Ms. Wong is clearly one. Quite apart from the welcome coffee and baked goods with which I was plied, I could see in the time I was there how Ms. Wong kept her class attentive and respectful, while eager to take part in discussion. We can only hope that there will be more intriguing essays from Gardenview's Cycle 3 in 2016.

FIRST PRIZE

Bessie Goldberg
 by Noa Goldberg, Grade 6
 Gardenview Elementary School, St. Laurent, Qc.

The Quebec woman from history that was important to her community was my Great Grandmother Bessie Goldberg-Rajavsky.

Bessie spent her entire life helping others. When she was seven years old, she would get up at three in the morning to help her father deliver milk. She helped hitch the horse to the buggy and would run up the spiralling staircases in her neighbourhood, carrying the heavy milk so her father wouldn't have to.

When Bessie was in her early thirties, she was actively involved in the organizing to bring Jewish families to Canada. Before the outbreak of World War II, Bessie helped smuggle Jewish families from Russia, Germany and later Poland into Canada. This was difficult because the Canadian government at the time were not letting many Jewish families into the country. She would take the train to Halifax and with others pretended to be family, welcoming the new immigrants. This was dangerous because if the authorities found out, Bessie could have gone to jail. She and her friends saved many lives.

Bessie was involved in all sorts of fundraising in her community. As a teenager, Bessie organized a dance to help a neighbour have enough money to fix her roof.

Again fighting racism, Bessie helped sell bricks to raise money to build the Jewish General Hospital so local Jewish people wouldn't have to be put on long waiting lists and so Jewish doctors would have a hospital in Montreal to work at. She also fundraised to create Maimonides Geriatric Centre, the

Jewish Hospital of Hope and the Jewish Convalescent Hospital.



SECOND PRIZE

Charles Baillairgé

by Lacey Baillairgé, Grade 6
Gardenvue Elementary School, St. Laurent, Qc.

I have ancestors just like everyone else. One of mine is especially well known for his architecture and is part of our national heritage. I would like to share the story of Charles Baillairgé, my ancestor on my father's side. He was born September 29, 1826, in Quebec City. He was an important part of architecture in Quebec and Ottawa.

From a young age, Baillairgé considered architecture as a profession. All his ancestors preferred working as artisan-architects. But Charles' idea came to him from the architecture library that was full of books from Europe. These books were about the responsibility of being an architect. Baillairgé knew what he wanted to do and he went out and did it!

Baillairgé was from a long line of sculptors, painters and architects. He was involved in designing many projects. Three of his works have been designated as National Historic Sites of Canada due to their remarkable architecture. Charles Baillairgé was a fascinating man whose curiosity and talent had an impact on those around him. The creations he left behind such as the Library of Parliament on Parliament Hill, the House of Parliament in Ottawa, Pavillon Charles-Baillairgé in the Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec, and many more are still serving Canadians today.

Charles-Philippe-Ferdinand died May 10, 1906, at the age of 79 years old. His creations live on and continue to be admired today. Next time you visit Quebec City, look for the Charles Baillairgé Staircase which connects the basse-ville and the haute-ville. I look for it and run up and down it every time I am in Quebec City.



THIRD PRIZE

Panagitsa

by Pauline Kollias, Grade 6
Gardenvue Elementary School, Saint-Laurent, Qc.



In 1968, the Greek community purchased a Pentecostal church and transformed it into a Greek Orthodox Church in the area of Park Extension. They named it "Koimisis tis Theotokou" (Dormition of the Virgin Mary), but it was affectionately known as "Panagitsa." In 1980, my grandparents moved in that area and attended liturgy there every Sunday. Two years later, my grandfather was approached by the priest, Father Nicholas Papageorgiou, to help and volunteer at the church. He gladly accepted and worked as a commissioner for 33 years. My mom attended Sunday school and my uncle was an altar boy for many years. My family has been attending services at Panagitsa church for decades.

My parents, my uncle and my aunt were married in that beautiful church. My brother, cousins and I were all baptized there as well. This church means a lot to my family. Especially given the fact that we all said our last goodbye to my grandfather there this year.

Panagitsa is a church where you find serenity. It is filled with so many pieces of religious art and icons. A place where you can pray and find peace during tough times in your life. You can always pass by and light a candle at any time of the day.

On April 13, 2015, the church caught on fire and was destroyed. The entire Greek community was in mourning. It felt like death for all of us. My family broke down in tears. This tragic event will forever remain a scar in our memory and in our hearts. This church held the community together and I hope we will rebuild!

HONOURABLE MENTION

The Chinese Lion Dance

by Justin Lin, Grade 6
Beacon Hill School, Beaconsfield, Qc.

The Chinese lion dance is a tradition that has been around for over a thousand years. It usually takes place around Chinese New Year. Legends say that on the night of New Year's Eve, an evil demon would come and attack the villagers of a small village. Every year, the villagers suffered because they didn't know how to defend themselves against this terrible beast. But then one year, a young man had a plan to fight off this demon. The plan was that the villagers would make an item that the demon would be afraid of when it faces a monster that looks similar to it. So they got together and made a demon look-alike known as the "Lion." On the night of New Year's Eve, the villagers faced the evil demon with the "Lion" and made loud

noises with firecrackers and instruments. The demon was then chased off and the villagers lived in peace. Ever since, the “Lion Dance” became part of the New Year’s celebration. So in Chinatown, the lions would go around bringing good luck to everyone. The lions would dance and the “Laughing Man” would play with the lion using lettuce which is called “Chiang.” Then, the lion tries to catch the Laughing Man so he can eat the Chiang, which represents good luck. The Lion Dance comes from China and was brought to Canada so we can celebrate here, with everyone together, as a community.

HONOURABLE MENTION

The Old Stone House of Fisher North

by Maya Jadah, Grade 5

Hemmingford Elementary School, Hemmingford, Qc.

In the War of 1812, a bullet landed in the wall of the second floor of my Uncle Peter’s house on a road called Fisher North in St. Bernard de Lacolle. Later, my father told me some stories about this old stone house. A battle in the War of 1812 was

fought only one mile from this house. The Americans who invaded were the ones who shot the bullet.

The house was built in the early 1800s by Scottish settlers with stone walls two feet thick and this made the window sills deep. People were shorter one-hundred years ago, so the doors are not high enough for people of today to walk through without bending. The floor boards are eighteen inches wide and bent from so many people walking on them for many years.

The farm is covered with high straight stone fences, built by generations of children clearing the fields in the spring. Near the house my dad and uncle found Indian arrow heads.

In the 1930s, alcohol was not allowed in America, so many Americans took the dirt road to this house where the owners of the house knocked out an opening in the wall by the front door to take money from thirsty Americans and give them tickets for homemade alcohol.

Until the 1960s the only house water came from a hand pump in the kitchen which brought water up from the cistern in the basement where the rain water collected. The cistern was full of creepy things. When my grandparents bought the house in 1960 it still had no plumbing or running water.

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WALKING BLACK MONTREAL

NELSON MANDELA PARK

by Ashlie Bienvenu



At this point in our journey through Montreal's Black history, follow me to a lovely part of the Cote-des-Neiges district: Nelson Mandela Park. Although Mandela was not a Montrealer, he definitely plays an important role in the Black community's history. In turn, Montreal's Black community also played an important role in Mandela's life and in his fight against Apartheid in South Africa.

During the many years in which Apartheid ruled and Mandela was confined to prison, the Montreal Black community was quite a force in the struggle against the South African government. Community members strongly agitated for the city of Montreal to take a stand and support the boycott put forward by the African National Congress. The community rallied: they prayed, marched, convened meetings, and challenged politicians and major institutions to support Mandela's efforts. Their persistence worked. Montreal convinced both the Quebec and Canadian governments to refuse to do business with companies that had interests in South Africa. The City of Montreal was even given the authority to refuse to employ these companies, even if they were the lowest bidders.

The community's efforts did not go unnoticed. During Mandela's 1990 trip to Montreal, he declared: "Even while we were in prison, we came to know this city as a home of the struggle against Apartheid, a friend of our people, an enemy of racist tyranny, and a source of strength to us, because the position you took served as assurance to all our people that nobody could deny us freedom." Montreal was not on his original plans for his Canadian tour, but he took the time to stop in this beautiful city that had aided him so much in his struggles.

He delivered his speech in Champ-de-Mars to 15,000 eager listeners. Even though he didn't have much time in Montreal he felt that he needed to attend a service in the Union United Church, which had been key in the community's fight against apartheid. The Church was filled to overflowing. The crowd even spilled out into the street. Everyone hung on his words

that day with great anticipation. Everyone wanted to hear, to see and to touch the man they had grown to admire and champion. The community could not contain their pride in their achievements.

Twenty-four years later, Mandela is still an important part of the community memory. In December 2014, a pavilion was erected in Mandela's name in Cote-des-Neiges on Victoria Avenue. This pavilion will offer community services for teens, as well as families and seniors. A fitting tribute, some believe, for a man who adopted the City and called Montreal his second home! There are many who still look back with pride and joy to Mandela's visit, as it was "a moment where people were able to vindicate themselves for what they did or what they didn't do and things like that...It was a great moment for us and I suppose for society as a whole."

Ashlie Bienvenu, a student in public history and anthropology at Concordia University, interned for QAHN in 2014-2015, in collaboration with Montreal's Black Community Resource Centre.

Sources:

"Nelson Mandela's Last-Minute Montreal Visit Still Inspires," *CBC News*, December 6, 2013.

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CLASSIC MONTREAL: REVISITING ANGLO INSTITUTIONS

CENTAUR THEATRE

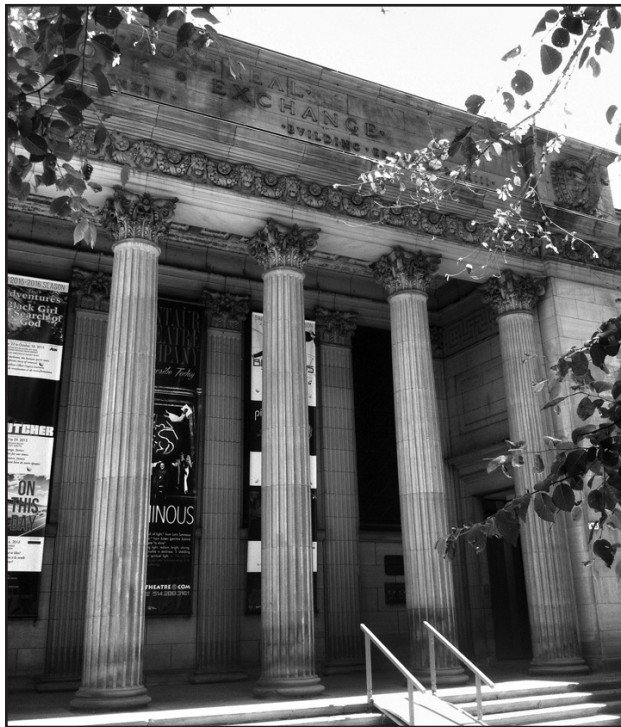
by Flora Juma

The city of Montreal provides many excellent examples of dynamic and engaging institutions born of Anglophone and Francophone cooperation, consideration and community. This interview series will examine some of Montreal's traditional Anglophone institutions and their ability to engage with the city's Francophone community, as well as their success in adapting to the city's changing demographics and modern community needs.

Centaur Theatre is English-speaking Montreal's premier theatre company. Founded in 1969 by Maurice Podbrey, a South African-Canadian director and actor, the company began production in the renovated Old Stock Exchange building. *On the Job*, a play by Montreal's David Fenario, was the theatre's breakthrough production, and Fenario's *Balconville* later brought the company national and international acclaim. Throughout the 80s and 90s, the theatre went through a number of transitions, including Podbrey's retirement in 1997. The theatre also launched two initiatives, the Wildlife Festival and the Brave New Works program to "showcase new and emerging theatre companies." In 1998, under the guidance of Podbrey's successor Gordon McCall, the company staged Michael Tremblay's *For the Pleasure of Seeing Her Again*, a production noted especially for spearheading "theatrical collaboration between the Anglophone and Francophone communities in Montreal." McCall was followed by current artistic director Roy Surette in 2007. Centaur Theatre is also known for its international collaborations, in particular with Irish, American and Australian theatre companies. These, in turn, accent the Centaur's international and cross-linguistic appeal as many of the productions examine cultural issues relevant to cultural, ethnic and linguistic groups within and without Montreal.

Charles (Chuck) Childs is the Centaur's general manager, and a former board member of the Professional Association of Canadian Theatres, the Quebec Drama Federation, and the Quebec Community Groups Network. He co-chaired the IPOLC

negotiating committee in 2001, which resulted in the Department of Canadian Heritage providing \$1.8 million for the English Arts community of Quebec. He helped establish the English Language Arts Network and was the inaugural recipient of the QDF's "Chuck Childs Award" in 2009. Flora Juma spoke to him in July 2015.



Could you give us some insight into your experience as general manager?

It's been great. Before being general manager, I was production manager for thirteen years, so I've been general manager now for I guess twenty-four years. I've had the pleasure of working with three different artistic and executive directors. I started with the founding artistic director, Maurice Podbrey, then worked with Gordon McCall for ten years, and now with Roy Surette for almost ten years.

During your time as general manager have you noticed particular productions resonating with Anglophone audiences?

I think that, in terms of Anglophone audiences, it's very definitely Montreal stories that have had a strong resonance. Within that, the strongest has been the Italian community's response to our Italian family comedies. So it's sort of within-within... But shows that do well historically have been Montreal-based stories, with Montreal characters. Our first big hit was *Balconville* in the 70s, which was set in The Point. We just had a big success with *Triples Nervosa*, set in Mile End and had all the Mile End characters that you'd expect to be there. People tend to respond very well to that.

Do you find you're able to play around with these ideas of different communities or do people prefer it to remain historically consistent?

Well, what's important to realize is that, first and foremost, Centaur Theatre is an arts organization. So the main reason for choosing the plays that we do is the work itself. It can be a

question of a work's intrinsic artistic value. It could be an opportunity to give a new director, a young director, an opportunity that would suit their talents very well or help them expand. It might be a new playwright, or an actor or actress that the artistic director feels very strongly needs to be presented, so we may look for a vehicle to do that. That's how the list gets narrowed down to 20 plays. Then the artistic director selects six plays – but not just six single plays, but a season of six plays, so that the subscribers will have an artistic journey that includes some comedy, some drama, some new work, some stories that are personal, and some that have a bigger focus to them. Hopefully, there's something with some music – not necessarily a musical; for example, if you pick a play like *Billy Bishop Goes to War*, you have music, but also a play dealing with war and loss, so you're not going to choose another work within the season that has those same themes.

Once that's put together, then there's an element of looking and saying: where is the audience for each one of these plays, and how do we reach that audience, and how do we frame the production, how do we describe it, and are there potential artists that we want to reach out to? For example, are there artists in the black community that we should be trying to get on board for the project? So that's a factor, in terms of communities. We did *Victoria*, which was about a woman with dementia in a home, and we really focused on reaching out to nurses and the nursing profession. So it's not necessarily ethnic.

We are an English-language theatre institution, so our work is in English, and we hope and encourage both sides of the linguistic divide to take part in it. The English-language community is 80 percent bilingual, so it's not like they can only come to Centaur. There are Francophone theatres that our English audience go to. I think a bilingual Anglophone will go to see a work by a French playwright like Michel Tremblay – in French – because that's the language it's written in. Similarly, a Francophone who is fully bilingual may want to see a Tennessee Williams play in his language. We do a lot of new work, in English. Therefore if Francophones want to see that work then they'll have to see it in English – because it will be two or three years before (and if) there's a translation done, and a production done in French.

What does the process of translating works entail? How do you weather the possible emotions or concepts being lost in translation?

This comes up all the time. And that's the difficulty of translation – that it is a translation. Some people are very good at that, at choosing what to focus on. The work of Michel Tremblay is a very good example. Michel Tremblay writes in French using *joual*, which has a musicality to it: the rhythms and the speech patterns of the characters are true to the characters and true to the language, but the way he puts it together it's almost music. Like a composer, a lyricist will put together voices to indicate and to enhance the emotion and the characters. Michel's work inherently does that. You can't translate that. Up until 1976, until the PQ came in, Michel refused to let his work be performed in English in Quebec, because he was a strong *independentiste*. But a lot of it was translated in Toronto for the Tarragon Theatre, and they very much focused on that musicality. A lot of



the text is quite florid in order to achieve that poetic quality, and for that reason the shows were quite successful in the rest of Canada. But they're really not acceptable translations for Quebec. Here, audiences know the characters. They work with them; they work for them. They buy their groceries from them. They're their cousins' husband. We know them because we live amongst them. And when you have a character that has a Grade 3 education, and works serving French fries in a patates frites stand, and is talking about the glow of the sunset with this florid and very strong vocabulary, we don't believe them. So you decide to make it sound like what they would say. But in doing that, you lose the musicality. So, you have to make different choices for two different audiences. Outside audiences, who don't intimately know these people, are prepared to accept that they would talk like that, or imagine that they were talking like that, but we would just find it unacceptable.

Maurice Podbrey did very little French theatre in translation. He believed that we were one of the few theatres that produce in English, and we can only produce six plays, and there are thousands and thousands of fabulous English plays, and there are twenty-five or thirty theatres in Quebec producing work in French, and that you should really go and see French plays in French. And so to make one of those six plays that we have an opportunity to present be a play that's already been done, and to do it not in the original language, seemed to him like not the most effective use of our opportunities. Gordon McCall had virtually the reverse opinion. He felt: who better to produce the first English language production of a French play than Centaur? Who knows the culture, the community, the people that have access to the artists, who understands the circumstances. Who better to realize a production that gets as close to the French original, than us? He felt we had an obligation to try to bring French plays to the rest of Canada.

Centaur Theatre is celebrated for its artistic collaboration between the Anglophone and Francophone communities. In a climate of heightened language politics and constantly changing demographics, how does the Centaur maintain this balance between communities without alienating the audience or losing artistic credibility?

That question comes back to the notion that our first obligation is to put on the best possible art, the best possible theatre that

we can. If you're putting on theatre that has value both artistically and to the community that it serves, it is by extension taking into consideration those things. It's kind of a funny thing, you don't start by saying "Oh, I want to find a play that speaks to our values." What you do is you read a lot of plays – and the artistic director reads a lot of plays. His art and alchemy is his reading plays and going: "Yeah, I think we should do this play." There are some obvious reasons maybe that we would want to do it, and there may be not-obvious reasons to do it, but it's always interesting. Then, during the course of producing the play, it usually becomes apparent what its value is, even though the artistic director may not have been able to articulate why he wanted to do this play.

So it starts with Roy choosing the play. Now he may have asked 10 people to read the play, and got their opinions, but ultimately he's the one who says we're going to do this play. Once he says that, then the next thing to do is to add a director, designers, actors, the marketing people, the fundraising people. So it becomes a bigger and bigger circle and then it continues (hopefully) out into the community with the play. You have more expectations for some than others but you never really know.

How does a play make it to the table? What's the process?

Just about any way you can imagine. Somebody can simply mail a script in and it will be one of the plays that Roy will flip through and it will catch his eye and he'll find time to read it and it will get into a pile of maybes and that pile will become smaller and smaller. It may be that we commission a play, that the artistic director approaches a playwright and says: "I want to do a play about this topic, will you write the play?" A playwright can come and say: "I have an idea about this play, can you give me some money so I can write it, and if you like it then you can put it on?" A playwright can say: "I'm working on my new play," and Roy can say, "when you have a draft, send it to me; I'd be interested in reading it." Or Roy might read reviews of a play in Vancouver and he may ask the theatre to send him the script, or he might fly out to see a production. We don't limit ourselves to Montreal plays, or Canadian plays, although our focus is on new work; our second focus is on Montreal work, and our third focus is Canadian work, then international work. Very often in a season we'll put on a show that was a big hit on Broadway three years ago or something like that.

So when does that process of putting together a season begin?

Roy is probably thinking about Season 2016/2017 already, and

he probably already has some thoughts on Season 2017/2018. It could be that none of the plays he's thinking of now are ever going to be done. He sees about three or four plays a week.

Roy Surette has stated that "Montrealers love Montreal stories." As the city's demographics are in a constant state of flux, is it a priority to evolve these stories beyond Montreal or to keep the city's narrative(s) at the center?

Again, the demographics drive the artist, and it's also the other way around. Because we know that Montreal stories have such a strong resonance, we hope that we can turn a Montreal story into a more universal story so it isn't ghettoized to Montreal. But telling your own stories, that's sort of where you have to

start. If a playwright can take a Montreal story and evolve it enough to give it a resonance beyond Montreal, that's great, but it's a tricky balance. The playwright sort of makes those choices as to what feeds the need of the story more.

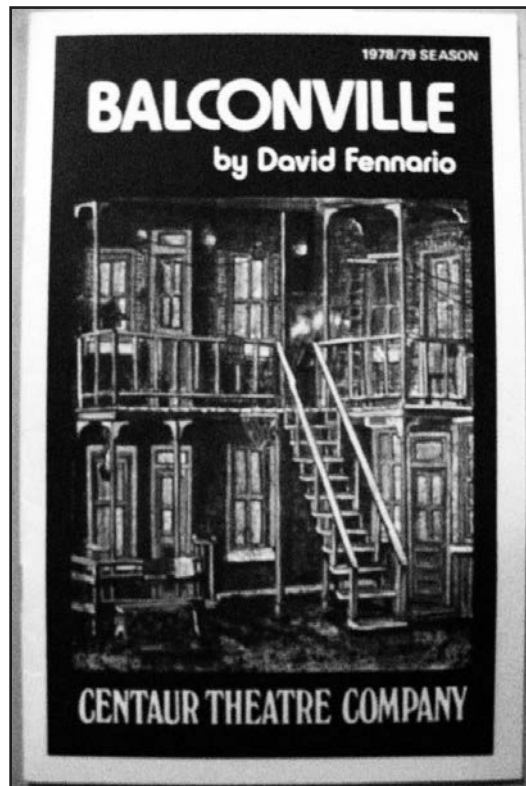
The Centaur is, and I know artistic directors across the country are, struggling to find ways to touch other communities that are part of our demographics, that are part of our communities, but that aren't seen on stage. Generally, it's a pretty white, male happening on stage. Sometimes you go for a "good" play, but it's one that had good elements but excludes people of color, or of different descents. It's a struggle. I think we're very fortunate and excited to be doing *The Adventures of a Black Girl in Search of God*. It's a completely crazy thing to be doing, not because it's a story about Negro Creek, but because it's a cast of 22, which is the largest cast we've had here in forty-seven years. The show is so big we have to remove the first two

rows of seats to make room for the production on stage. We're fortunate because we're a partner with the National Arts Centre, which was very much interested in doing the production, and were able to form a partnership with Black Theatre Workshop Montreal. It's all worked out, and I'm thrilled that we're doing it, but it's pretty wild and crazy.

What would you consider to be the Centaur's most successful play? Artistically? Financially?

Balconville was a very successful play; we ran it several times. Then we took it to England, to Belfast, Winnipeg, and Toronto – twice. That was a good example of a play that went beyond a Montreal story, that went beyond Montreal.

Another production was Michel Tremblay's *For the Pleasure of Seeing Her Again*, which was a story about his mother. It was very successful for us. The show was scheduled to go on at Rideau Vert, but the agent contacted Gordon McCall and he



Poster for Balconville, 1979. Photo: www.centaurtheatre.com.

said, "I'll do it." It was very successful; we took it to Vancouver, Calgary, Winnipeg, and Toronto. We also took it to Washington, D.C., to the Arena Stage, and Gordon directed a production of it in Dublin, Ireland.

Our most recent very successful play was the *St. Leonard Chronicles*, which is an Italian family comedy set in Ville-Émard about the crises of a young couple that are just getting married and have decided they're going to move to Beaconsfield. It was very funny – and did very well.

We had a lot of success with our musical *Schwartz's*, about Schwartz's delicatessen; it's the only show we've only done a summer run with.

For many other reasons, one of my favourites was a play called *K2*, which is about two guys who climb to the top of the second highest mountain in the world; they do this sprint to the top of the mountain and then come right back down, but on their way back there's an avalanche. The play starts with them waking up the next morning on a ledge. Maurice was interested in doing this production; it had been a very big hit at the Arena Stage in Washington, D.C. So he asked me to go down to see it because it was a very heavy technical show. The set was designed by world-famous set designer Ming Cho Lee, who went on to win a Tony Award for it. During our run, we invited the playwright to come up and talk about it. Somebody asked him why he wrote the play, and he said: "I read about this guy in the New York subway who was walking along the platform following this woman and she tripped and fell in front of the oncoming subway, but he was close enough to her that he reached out and grabbed her and pulled her back up on to the platform, but in the process he lost his balance and he fell in front of the train. So I wanted to write about that moment where you try to decide whether to save the life of a person you don't know and give up your own life, or do you let that person go and save your life. I wanted to write about that dynamic."

What advice would you lend to future theatre companies hoping to make Montreal their home?

Find some great artists to work with, and work with them. There isn't anything special about Montreal. If you're going to be in-



involved in theatre, then you should be involved in theatre. It's not English theatre versus French theatre; the theatre should extend over all the boundaries, into circus, into music. Which is one of the things that's great about Montreal, there's huge cultural and artistic expression going on in the city all the time.

Where do you see the Centaur in 10 years?

I hope to get a significant capital renovation done, which would greatly enhance our ability to stage productions in the large theatre. We're not fully wheelchair accessible. Once you get into the building you're good, but getting into the building needs to be taken care of. No work has been done on the front of the building for 50 years. It's a historic building; it's the first stock exchange building built in Canada, so it needs to be maintained and refreshed. We also plan to add a third floor, which would allow us to have our rehearsals here in the building and also open possibilities for receptions – which hopefully would enhance the audience experience and provide more opportunities for sponsorship and corporate support. So that's the practical side to it.

We also need to weather the negative financial impact of personal devices. I hope that someday everybody's going to wake up and realize that their lives are not complete with Facebook, that their lives are only complete when they go out and engage with other people. I think that's going to be our biggest challenge: people feel they don't have any time because they spend every minute on the phone.

Would you agree that the theatre experience is not just about the play itself, but about everything leading up to the play, and following it?

Somebody once said that the customer's experience coming through the door, the drinks, it's all business, it's all business. Their seats in the theatre, how comfortable they are, where they hear everything. It isn't until they're in the car on the way home, or on the bus on the way home, and they start talking about the play: now it's culture. Up until then, it's all business.

What is very hard to describe is the fact that, as an audience member, you're part of the play. I mean, we put on each play a minimum of thirty times; sometimes we put on forty or fifty performances of one play. But every performance is different. The actors are the same, the dialogue is the same, the lighting's the same, but there's a different audience. How the audience reacts to the play impacts on how the play is performed. It's not intentional, but you can't have a conversation without being affected by the person you're having the conversation with. You get up and give a lecture, it's not a conversation. A play is a conversation. When the actor says the line and the audience gasps, then you know they're with you. It's instinctive. It's not even so much that you're waiting for them to react; it's the fact that you're saying something that's shocking and the people around you are shocked. That's a wonderful experience.

Flora Juma, a third-year honours student in history and political science at Concordia University, interned for QAHN in 2015.

PRIPSTEIN'S

The Evolution of a Laurentian Summer Camp, 1939-2014

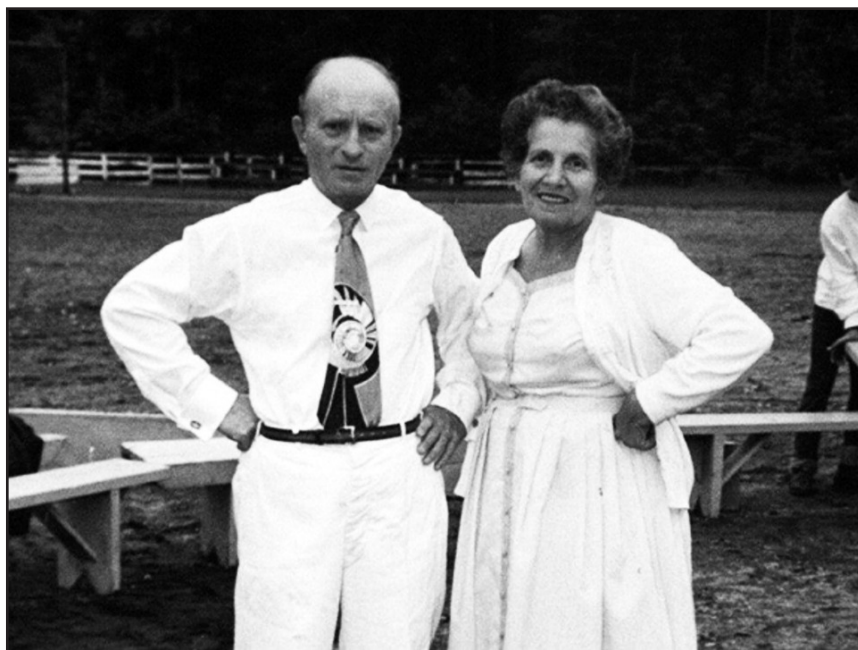
by Joseph Graham

When Chaim and Pearl Pripstein arrived in Montreal from Poland in 1930, Chaim was a teacher of Hebrew. He soon found a position at the Talmud Torah school. The only problem with the school was that, because it would not refuse a student for financial reasons, there was not much money to pay the teachers. They soon discovered that his salary would not be adequate to cover the costs of their lives in Montreal. Undaunted, Chaim looked for other opportunities.

What could a Hebrew teacher, who spoke no French, do for a living in the days of the Great Depression? Many hardier people were also looking for work, and some who could speak French could at least approach suppliers and offer to peddle their wares from town to town, making what they could in the process. It was a hard and unpredictable life that separated them from their families for long periods. It was at least a possibility, providing he could learn French quickly.

Being a teacher of Hebrew, he knew the Torah, and he knew it was almost the same as the Christian Old Testament. The solution was easy; he would acquire a French bible and, based on his knowledge, he would read it and thereby learn French. What could be more logical? Shouldn't a man build on his strength, and wasn't his strength a knowledge of the Hebrew Bible? He kept teaching and became a peddler on the weekends to augment his meagre income.

Chaim Pripstein was a biblical scholar. His knowledge of the bible was so great that his idea actually worked. He was not, however, an expert on Quebec culture, and the French he taught himself could not be disguised. When he spoke his self-taught French to his cus-



tomers, these religious villagers and farmers heard the resonance of the Bible they knew, of the Church and of ecclesiastical authority, not the words of a poor peddler who did not speak their language; they paid attention and Chaim did modestly well.

It was in 1933 that Chaim met Omer Filion, one of his customers. The Filions were a large clan who owned contiguous farms, and when CN Rail acquired the line that ran from St. Jerome to Weir, they also acquired a whistle-stop on the Filion property called, naturally enough, Filion, complete with a black and white sign. It consisted of a bucolic series of exquisitely peaceful rolling farms on the North River, one belonging to Omer and one to his brother.

The site was identified as being not that far from the Buchanan's farm, pronounced by the Filions as Côte à Boucan, or smoky hillside. Eventually, the whole area would be absorbed by Bellefeuille, and then by St. Jerome.

Omer offered Chaim a cabin at a good rate so that the Pripsteins could get themselves away from the heat and noise of the city for a while during the summer holidays, and perhaps so that Chaim could be closer to his customers. The small family – they had one daughter – soon learned the pleasure of a vacation in the Laurentians, but the holiday aspect was short-lived. Over the course of the summer they discovered that they always had houseguests: friends, urban refugees who also needed a break. While they enjoyed the company, they could not underwrite the costs, and soon came to realize they would have to charge their guests. Pearl was not the business head, but then nor was Chaim. Setting up, they engaged Mr. Hammerman, a very large and capable man, a jack-of-all-trades, to transport a few mattresses and the small family to the farm. He charged extra for the passengers, 50¢ for the adults and 25¢ for their daughter, Shirley, providing she sat on her mother's knee. A couple of days before leaving, Pearl learned about the poor poet Noah Isaac Gottlieb, a small man, all of five feet tall, who had been ill with tuberculosis but was recovering and needed the fresh air of the country. Pearl invited him to come and stay with them, but the poet had no mon-

Chaim and Pearl Pripstein. Photo: courtesy of Ronnie Braverman.

ey to pay Hammerman. They conspired, without telling Chaim, to hide him under a mattress for the two hour drive. What could go wrong? When they arrived, she would make a point of getting to the back of the van first and seeing that he got out safely.

Imagine the sinking feeling she had a little later when Hammerman stopped the van and told them he had a flat tire. It wouldn't take a minute, he said, as he proceeded to the back to get his jack and spare. Pearl quickly confided to Chaim, telling him what Mr. Hammerman was about to discover. Chaim was a very honourable man and would have had no part in this caper. Moreover, he scolded loudly, she could have killed the poor, sick man, stuffing him under a mattress. He stormed to the back of the truck as Hammerman discovered that the boot sticking out from under the mattresses was not his jack and in any case would not come when he pulled. Perhaps the other, identical one was. He pulled at it with a little more conviction than he had shown the first time, and it slid out, followed by a leg, and then a little man. "Who, may I ask are you?" he asked reasonably. Gottlieb stood as tall as he could manage and said proudly "I am Gottlieb, the poet, and I am on my way to a *dacha*!" "Well, I am Hammerman the chauffeur and how did you come to be travelling to your *dacha* in my van?"

Chaim arrived at that moment, still scolding Pearl, and explained what his wife and Gottlieb had done. Hammerman, a reasonable man, listened and thought. Gottlieb, a poet, was after all a member of the Jewish intelligentsia, and as such deserved respect. On top of that, everyone knew that poets had no money. He finally allowed that Gottlieb could travel with them, but he could not do so under the mattresses. He would have to sit on top of them.

That was how Gottlieb came to spend a wonderful holiday at the Pripsteins' *dacha*. His hosts were happy to see his health improve rapidly and managed to send him back after just two weeks. After all, he was not a paying guest. He promised them he would do a write-up about their wonderful place and it would be printed in *Der Keneder Adler* (*The Canadian Eagle*), the Yiddish daily newspaper. And he made good on his promise, sending them the pub-

lished article along with a letter saying his wife would now be coming to spend two weeks with them, of course, for free.

Seeing that Chaim's first concern was for Gottlieb's well-being and that Pearl tried to smuggle in a non-paying guest, it is safe to assume that their patrons would rarely pay full fare. However, one family did. Mrs. Freedman was allowed to leave the Douglas (mental health) Hospital for the occasion. They fussed over her for the full week, even consulting her about the Shabbat meal. She chose the chicken with the grey neck feathers, as long as the preparation was completely kosher. Chaim took the



train to Montreal carrying the live chicken to see the *shochet*, the ritual slaughterer. The perfectly prepared bird elicited praise from Mrs. Freedman that Shabbat evening, but she refused to eat any of it because she decided she would have preferred the one with the white neck feathers.

The train trip from Montreal to St. Jerome took almost two hours, starting at the Park Avenue station. When guests got off at Filion, standing by the departing steam engine, they would wave goodbye to the only mechanical noise they were likely to hear over their holiday.

At first, they dubbed their rented premises Pripstein's Hotel, all in good fun, but, as the saying goes, the wind changed: it soon became a real business. They realized that they were missing out

on some of the better guests because they had no indoor plumbing. When they presented this problem to Omer, the owner of the cabin, Chaim offered to install indoor plumbing at his own expense. Shocked by the whole idea of bringing the outhouse indoors for the convenience of the guests, Omer adamantly refused. Never! What were they thinking of? Once the Pripsteins understood what he was imagining, they did their best to explain their modern project and Omer accepted that it would be okay, provided they took the toilet out again at the end of the summer. Over that first summer, though, many of Omer's neighbours came by and marvelled at the plumbing and were soon installing it in their own homes. Omer gave in and let them leave it in place. He even allowed them to build whatever they wanted, on the understanding that the rent they paid was for the ground; the cabins would remain the property of the Pripsteins.

As the business grew, they became more expert in caring for their guests. Noting the number of cancellations they received if the weather changed, they set up a childcare service. With their children in a camp with young friends, the parents would have less reason to cancel because of rain. With Omer's help, they added buildings and camp houses, and soon had a full-blown children's camp named Mishmar, a Hebrew word Chaim chose to impart that he was standing on guard to watch over the children. They taught children to swim and boat in the river while the parents took a break. In time, the children would become the sole vocation of their rented country retreat.

On one particular sunny summer afternoon in 1941, 12-year-old Shirley found herself in the bunkhouse when the whole building began to shake. Feeling responsible for the younger children, she told everyone to get under the beds, but the next thing she remembered was climbing out of the rubble, seeing the building gone, and watching as people rushed excitedly around bringing the children to the dining-room. A tornado had swept through the camp, destroying trees, closing down the roads and smacking into the bunkhouse, knocking it over. Thankfully, Dr. Etzioni had just arrived for a holiday and he was soon performing surgery on the dining-room

table.

At the end of the war, Immanuel Braverman thought himself the last surviving member of his family. In Brussels, he learned that most of his family was lost in the German prison camps and was resigned to his fate as he signed up for university. Then he heard that his father had survived and was in Montreal. He left immediately for Canada and soon joined up with him. Encouraged to attend McGill engineering, he next had to learn English, and someone suggested he spend the summer at Pripstein's in Filion. Little did he know that he would meet Shirley, his future wife, by then an attractive young woman.

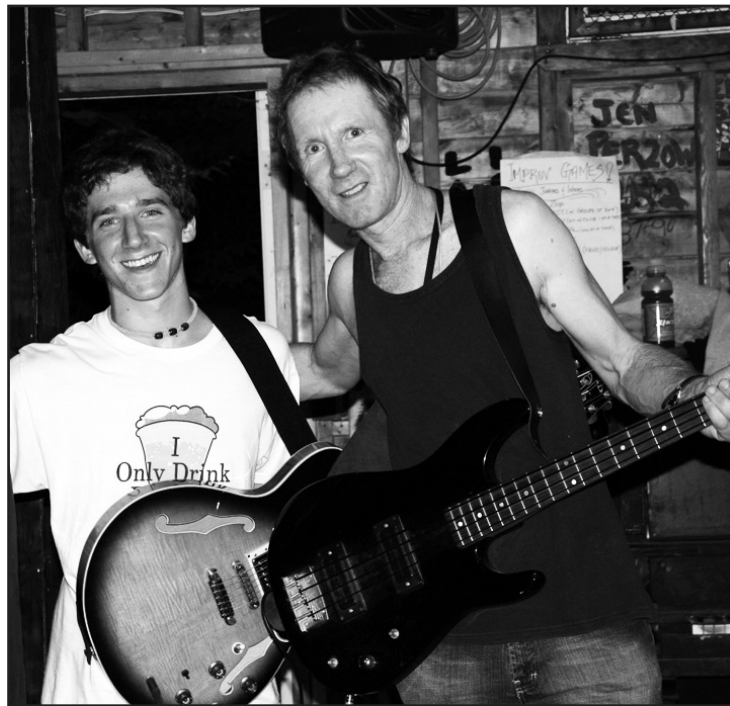
It was on a summer afternoon in 1951 that Chaim Pripstein received a visit from the Officer of Public Health. During the course of a friendly conversation, he told Pripstein that, while he could not officially tell him, off the record he should know that the river might be too dirty for the children to swim in. This would sound the death-knell for the first location of Pripstein's but it was also the birth of Pripstein's Camp Mishmar in its present location on Lac des Trois Frères in St. Adolphe.

Chaim had the good fortune to find an ideal site for his camp in St. Adolphe, and undertook to have the bunk houses cut in half so they could be trucked up to the new location. Willing to try anything, he had no knowledge of road-size restrictions and other rules concerning oversized loads. Thankfully none of the underpasses was too low, but lots of other traffic was somewhat inconvenienced and the police were not amused – at least not until they began to talk with the dignified man of the bible who stepped down to explain himself.

Chaim's unique French accent could not help him as easily through the rush to open the camp the next spring in time for the arrival of their campers. One hour before the grand opening, the water was still not working. Chaim no doubt

learned a new vocation solving all of his problems, but he was no longer a young man with boundless energy. Still, the camp thrived and grew in size and reputation over the years, although, of course, with help. Aside from counselors, they needed a Camp Mother to look out for the kids as well as maintenance help for the buildings and the grounds.

In one of the early years, the camp mother's ailing husband came with her, hoping no doubt to rest. One night early in the season Pearl heard someone coughing and gasping. She ran to check and found the camp mother in near hysterics as her husband gasped for air. She



took control of the situation, holding the poor man's head in her lap as though he were a child, while Chaim contacted the doctor in St. Agathe. But the sick husband died before the doctor could arrive. Consoling the newly widowed camp mother, the Pripsteins had to arrange for the removal of the body before the campers awoke, and by the time dawn broke and the kids began rubbing their eyes, it was another normal, peaceful day at camp.

As the camp grew, the Pripsteins depended upon reliable employees and the support of the town of St. Adolphe. Their daughter and son-in-law, Shirley and Immanuel Braverman, although happy to be there, did not see their own future at the camp. Immanuel graduated from McGill as an engineer and had a

very successful career, so they participated in other ways. Their children were there every summer and Immanuel was an expert in water sports.

Pearl passed away suddenly in her sixties and Chaim soldiered on, discovering to his delight that his grandson Ronnie Braverman was soon marching beside him. Without planning to take over, Ronnie worked at the camp from his early teens, but the summer he was sixteen, he chose Tyler Hill Camp in the Pocono Mountains of Pennsylvania, only a dozen miles away from Bethel, New York. He wanted to have the camp experience without family. Ronnie worked at

Tyler Hill Camp as a short-order cook in the staff and camper's lounge. One day, when many of the counselors disappeared down the road towards Bethel and Max Yasgur's farm where Woodstock was taking place, Ronnie refused to go. He knew camps from the inside, from the perspective of an owner, and he knew his first responsibilities rested with Tyler Hill so he stuck it out working while the stories of Woodstock filled the ears of everyone in the neighbourhood. There were the young people stripping nude in the laundromats while their clothes washed and dried and there were pictures and stories of the crowds, the music and the phenomenal

size of the event. Even though Ronnie came to the huge Tyler Hill Camp to experience the summer without family around, he couldn't help bringing his family values with him and, not surprisingly, after the hot weekend, returning counsellors were unceremoniously fired.

Ronnie was Chaim's ever-reliable assistant through the seventies. Even while finishing his degree at McGill, he found time to visit the families of potential campers in Montreal. When Chaim fell ill in the early 1980s, Ronnie courteously continued to take over the reins, always showing the greatest respect for his grandfather. By the time Chaim passed away in 1988, Ronnie was in full control and the camp grew seamlessly.

Ronnie stretched the camp's reach, accepting campers from different parts



of the world. One year, these included three children from Columbia, a boy of 15 and two younger girls, relatives of the president of their country. They were there during a Canadian election year and the boy asked many questions, expressing his amazement that there was no military involvement in the selection of a new government.

Shirley Braverman expressed her surprise when an eight-and-a-half and a six-and-a-half-year-old pair of brothers flew over from Japan as unaccompanied minors, staying in the care of the travel agency overnight in Vancouver. It was important for them to learn English, and the older boy stunned the older campers when he showed what he could do on the soccer field.

Although it caused great consternation among some of their clientele and acquaintances, there were even three young campers from Saudi Arabia and the camp received warnings about the dangers involved in hosting them. Ronnie Braverman was not about to back down, believing that the concerns raised of bomb threats and other disasters were hysterical and unfounded. The stay went without a hitch. They were ideal campers, adapting to the diet, it being so similar to what they knew, and the 15-year-old girl had no problem with two-piece bathing suits either. The only extra they needed was a place to say their prayers.

Among the more famous campers was Leonard Cohen, who was a counsellor. His musical ability was enjoyed by the other counsellors and it was his time

at Pripstein's that inspired some of the characters and scenes in *The Favourite Game*, his first book. Although less well-known than his other writings and his music, at least one critic thought it "one of the 10 best Canadian novels of the 20th century." Other counsellors recognized only too well some of the characters he described.

Over the years, the Pripsteins gradually lost contact with the Filions, but warm memories survived. Long after the senior generation had gone, Shirley and her husband Immanuel Braverman returned to Filion. Everything had changed except the hospitable spirit that still remained among the Filion descendants. For the occasion, a Napoleon Cake was produced, a cake that jogged a memory for Shirley and will also jog the memory of campers and any of their parents from those days. Shirley's mother Pearl had kept her recipes a secret, not just from her guests, but even from her daughter. The only exception was Mrs. Filion, and she had no such foibles, sharing the recipe for the cake with her own daughter. For Shirley, the visit resulted in her getting a copy of her mother's recipe almost 40 years after her mother had died.

Pripstein's was one of many summer camps that dotted the Laurentians, camps that cooperated in inter-camp rivalries and contributed profoundly to the cultural life of the Laurentians. To many campers, the Laurentians would always be a special place. As adults, they often sent their kids to the camps they themselves had attended. They also built their

own chalets on the lakes, their own little camps that they could escape to on weekends and holidays. These homes grew until the second-residence community rivalled the numbers of the permanent residents, contributing to the economic life-blood of small towns and much more than life-blood to the few local communities that figured out what was happening and how to encourage it.

The camp closed this year, the same year that Immanuel Braverman passed away, having kayaked white waters into his nineties. Pripstein's ended its 64-year presence as an active camp in St. Adolphe, plus another 10 years if you count its earlier incarnation at Filion's farm.

Joseph Graham (joseph@ballyhoo.ca) is the author of Naming the Laurentians: A History of Place Names Up North and a forthcoming book on the history of the Laurentians.

A special thanks to Shirley Pripstein Braverman, the late Immanuel Braverman and Ronnie Braverman for their patient help and support in writing this story.

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REVIEW

Atlantic salmon: a cycle of life

Sea Winter Salmon, Chronicles of the St. John River

by Mari Hill Harpur with Eileen Regan McCormick

Linda Leith Publishing, Westmount, Qc, 2015

An unusual and most beautiful book has recently been published by Linda Leith Publishing of Westmount. It is *Sea Winter Salmon, Chronicles of the St. John River*, by Mari Hill Harpur with Eileen Regan McCormick. The book emphasizes an important aspect of evolution – evolution in the sense that only by adapting to changing conditions can both nature, and man-in-nature, survive and even prosper.

Mari Hill Harpur and her husband, Doug Harpur, are presently the managers of an important fish tagging and catch-and-release program, as well as of a comprehensive scientific study location for *Salmo salar*, the Atlantic salmon.

The Atlantic salmon, unlike its Pacific cousin, does not die after spawning once – it can make up to three or even four round trips to spawn between the Atlantic Ocean and the specific fresh water river where it was born. These are long-lived, hardy fish. Some have been recorded (mainly before fish stocks began to decline after World War II) at up to thirty-five plus pounds. For a buoyant water creature, that is a monstrous four feet plus in length! Young salmon, called smelts, spend about three to five years in their birth pool of their river. They then make their way (in this case) to the Gulf of St. Lawrence, past the Strait of Belle Isle, and into the North Atlantic, where they feed avidly and grow considerably. After a few years, in the spring time, they respond to fishy romantic urges and make a return journey up to the river pool of their origin. Each period at sea is referred to as a “sea winter.”

These particular salmon claim the Rivière Saint-Jean (the St. John River) near the Innu lands at Mingan on the north shore of the Gulf. This is the vast coastal land just under the border with Labrador, opposite Anticosti Island. It is long settled, yet still isolated and wild today. The closest large town is Sept-Iles, quite a bit to the west. The origin of the European residents is English and French, and their traditional culture is based on primary resources, mainly fishing, much like that of the Gaspé and the Maritime provinces. There is a strong aboriginal presence – Innu and Montagnais, groups that, however changed by contact, have managed to retain their identities.

Mari Hill Harpur took over management of Hill Camp on the St. John River in 1987. It was originally leased by her great-grandfather, American railway magnate James J. Hill (1838-1916). The story of the Hill family and their complex and changing relations

with their property and the local residents is at the core of this book. Harpur starts her saga with, “My family has owned the lower part of this river for over a hundred years. Included in the river’s narrative is an account of its most important visitor, faithful companion and partner: the Atlantic salmon...” From the period of the great fishing camps of the late nineteenth-century millionaires to the present day, when Hill Camp has survived by adapting to new ecological and social realities, Harpur clearly and objectively relates her family’s story. As a social history, the book is outstanding.

However, the strongest impact of *Sea Winter Salmon* is visual. Mari Hill Harpur is a gifted photographer. She could have produced a coffee table book of her photos alone. She chose to combine both text and pictures, including many wonderful old photos taken by Hill family members over the generations, outstanding art work by various artists, charts, maps, time lines, and in-depth background information about the region, the people, salmon fishing and conservation methods.

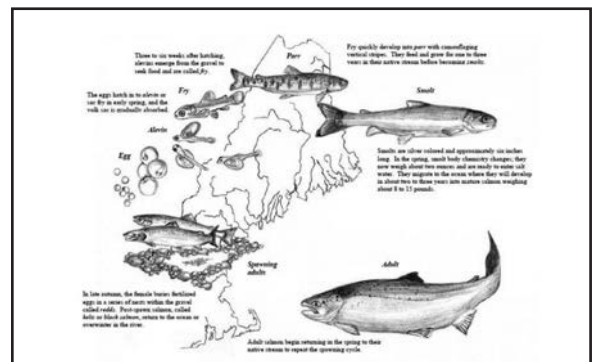
The look of this book is absolutely beautiful. The colours, the page layouts, the reproduction of art and photos are all of the highest quality. The wonderful, peculiar, changeable light of the Gulf of St. Lawrence, the granite shores, the flowing waters, and the generations of people who have lived on this land – all are shown by the skill of an excellent photographer who found the right publisher.

–Reviewed by Sandra Stock


For more information:

Atlantic Salmon Federation, www.asf.ca, live release programs.

Marine ecosystems, www.acadiau.ca, scientific paper about program at Hill Camp Inc., and region.




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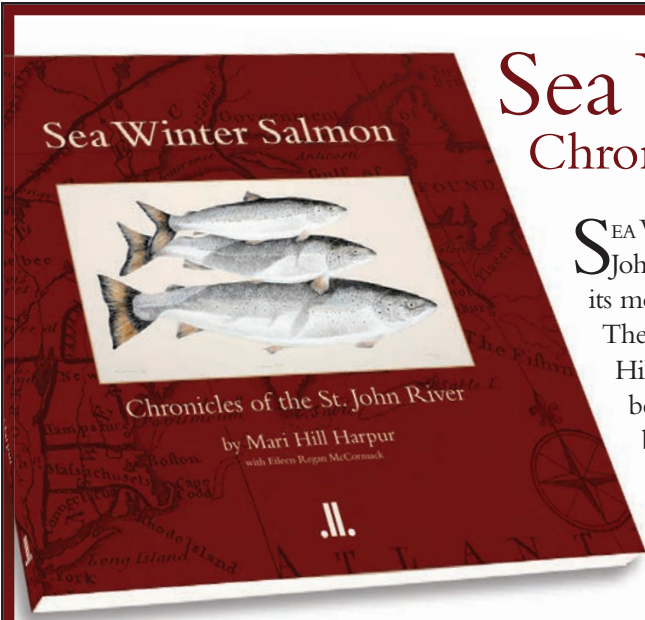
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Sea Winter Salmon

Chronicles of the St. John River

SEA WINTER SALMON is about a great salmon river, the St. John River on the Lower North Shore of Quebec, and its most important visitor, the illustrious Atlantic salmon. The Canadian and American railroad magnate James J. Hill travelled the Gulf of St. Lawrence in late 1800's before establishing his own log camp that has now been in the family for five generations. A family memoir and a guide to a river's ecology and the life cycle of *Salmo salar*, the book is also about what it takes to be a good conservationist in a remote and delicate region.

Author and photographer Mari Hill Harpur tracks the special relationship between the salmon and the people of the river through diaries, legal documents, scientific data, rare archival photographs and her own photographic collection. Dramatic, tragic, amusing, and authoritative, *Sea Winter Salmon* addresses itself to readers of history, biography, and conservation biology—and to fisher women and men everywhere.



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