

QAHN HERITAGE ESSAY CONTEST WINNERS, 2011

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Quebec Heritage

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News



Winning Medals for Hemp

Charles Frederick Grece Grows Quebec Cannabis

More Boys of Summer

Manny McIntyre and Others Help Integrate Baseball in Quebec

Worry and Grief in a Family Archive

The Sad Passing of Cleveland Smith

Quebec Heritage News

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Cover image: Medal awarded to Charles Frederick Grece, 1809, by the Society for the Encouragement of the Arts, Manufactures and Commerce. Photo: Brian Merrett

EDITOR'S DESK

A long way from Kilmaluag

by Rod MacLeod

Although not a native of Canada, my great-grandfather came to this land at the age of one.

OK, so I'm paraphrasing the old joke about the town that was so insular they considered you foreign if you weren't born there no matter how many decades you'd called it home. But it happens to be true about my great-grandfather – or so I learned this summer; I'd known he'd been born in Scotland, just not that he'd left so young. In anticipation of a trip to the Auld Country, my genealogically-astute spouse plugged into the Internet for an update on the family's history, something we hadn't thought much about in the last couple of decades.

The MacLeods come from the Isle of Skye, their ancestral castle being Dunvegan. My great-grandfather was born in Kilmaluag, a place on the island's northernmost point so undistinguished it doesn't even warrant a dot on a fairly detailed map – but naturally what we like to talk about is the ancestral castle at Dunvegan. Clan loyalty is extremely important to modern-day Scots, albeit for rather peculiar reasons (see below), and I grew up with a sense of pride in clan lore and a reverence for the family seat. At that time, the clan chief (or "laird") was, unusually, a woman: Flora by name – or, more properly, as she was also a Commander of the British Empire, Dame Flora. Famously, when my uncle and his family visited Scotland they had tea with Dame Flora at Dunvegan Castle, and reported that she was a charming and engaging lady. Of course, anyone could visit the castle (Flora herself had opened it to the public upon taking up the lairdship in 1933), but to my young ears this was like going to Disneyland and having tea with Walt himself.

When my parents and I made our great pilgrimage to Scotland when I was

eleven, I had some expectation of being similarly fêted, but it was certainly not my father's style to present himself as a potential fêtee. We visited the castle along with a few other tourists, admiring the legendary bagpipes, the drinking horn and the Fairy Flag that will save the clan from disaster one more time having used its magic twice already over the last thousand years. It was a pleasant visit, but only a stop on our camping tour of the Highlands.

Years later, my spouse and I travelled to Skye by a series of local buses, most of



which also delivered school children and the post. We stayed at an inn in town – "town" being a kindly word for the string of buildings along the road. When I'd booked the room by phone and given my name as "MacLeod" the owner hmned knowingly and replied: "Yes, it would be, wouldn't it." Perhaps we weren't the first of that name to visit the place? When we arrived, he called out eagerly to his wife: "The MacLeods have arrived!" It may not have been tea with Dame Flora, but our hosts showered us with genealogical information which we sat perusing in one corner of the bar, nursing our McEwan's Ales. This research led to subsequent fruitful encounters with clan societies back home, but in the short term it coloured our visit to the castle agreeably; for the only time in her life, my spouse consented to sign

"MacLeod" in the guest book, which was reserved for those of that name. Otherwise, the castle was more of a tourist site than I'd remembered, complete with car park and small gift shop. Dame Flora was long dead, of course, but when we hiked up to the ancient walled cemetery above the village we noticed a blazingly white cat gambolling among the weathered tombs and figured that was her.

A quarter century later, we were back with children and a car. I tried to book us into the same hotel, but they were full; in fact, most of Skye was full, and we had to scramble to stay in several different B&Bs all over the map. With a car, we could travel up to the top of the Trotternish Peninsula and locate Kilmaluag, which is essentially a small valley traversed (like much of Skye) by a single-track road. A much smaller track leads to a layby where you can park and follow a path at the base of a crag down which the sheep stare carefully – a kind of ovine neighbourhood watch. The path leads to a walled churchyard with

a mere stubble of tombs, the church itself gone save for a single pentagonal wall. We spotted only two "MacLeods" listed, although there may have been others on the lichen-encrusted stones we could not decipher – and no doubt a great many deep down, their graves unmarked and certainly uncared for by descendants who have lived elsewhere for 170 years.

It was from this spot that my great-great-grandparents were evicted in the course of the clearances by landowners who had decided that a sheep population was more lucrative than a human one. Somehow, this couple and their six children made their way to a port, crossed to the New World, and set up a new home on considerably more fertile land near Hartsville, Prince Edward Island, where they grew potatoes. This was around 1840,

a year after their youngest, Norman, was born. Norman grew up, married and had three sons who were all raised speaking Gaelic. They were devout Presbyterians, and theological debate was a regular feature of the dinner table—again, in Gaelic, reputedly the language God prefers when in need of expressing some of the finer points. The middle son, John, was bookish, and it was decided to send him to McGill University to study theology – in English, of course, which John spoke well, albeit with a thick Highland accent. He won a scholarship to study in Glasgow, although whether he managed to visit Skye in the process I have no idea. He returned to Montreal an ordained Presbyterian minister in 1902, and within two years had married the eldest daughter of a prosperous apple and melon farmer in NDG. (Those of you who have been paying attention over the years while reading these columns will recall that they were given a piano as a wedding present...)

It was a long way from Kilmaluag. The MacLeods did well in the New World, like most of their compatriots; even for fierce Highlanders, success was often

mainly a question of learning English and putting on a pair of pants. The old ways were abandoned, replaced by an enthusiastic adoption of Scottishness, from tossing the caber to Robbie Burns to the bizarre use of words like “laird” and “lass” and even “Sassenach”—with which we dismiss those hated overlords who drove out Bonnie Prince Charlie and with whom we must not be confused by Francophones. It has been said that the Scots invented Canada and even the modern world; I don’t know about that, but it is definitely true that the Scots were, and are, masters of Scottishness. There is surely no other cultural group that has lost nearly all vestiges of ethnic distinction and then reinvented itself quite so effectively or as unthreateningly. And hey—it’s fun.

Meanwhile, the Highlands are booming—at least with tourism. The small car park we’d seen in front of Dunvegan in 1987 is now a Loblaws-like acre of pavement crammed with tour buses from every corner of the globe, and there is a separate building housing the gift shop and cafeteria. Every inch of Skye is crawling with Spaniards and Russians and Japanese, all

of whom sign the castle guest book regardless of their clan status. In order to glimpse the Fairy Flag, I had to push my way through a crowd of Italians straining to hear their guide lecturing about the artefacts on display. Restaurants serve solidly from late afternoon till eleven at night. The roads are jammed. If Dame Flora were alive, what would she do?

Probably serve tea.

Letter

Memphremagog memories

I enjoyed Matthew Farfan’s tour boat article (“Tour Boat Tradition Continues on Memphremagog,” Summer 2011). Our neighbour at Vale Perkins used to take the *Anthemis* on a Saturday night to Newport, Vermont, to attend the movie. When the captain stood up, they knew it was time to get to the boat. They were good times.

*Adaire Chown Schlatter
St. Lambert, QC*

Attention Writers!

Quebec Heritage News is looking for articles dealing with local heritage conservation projects, both successes and failures – we can learn from both! Recently *QHN* has covered such topics as the Fairbairn house in Wakefield, the Redpath mansion on Mount Royal, and the Empress Theatre in NDG. In this issue you will read about the Mansur school in Stanstead East. There are hundreds more!

Look around your communities and see what old buildings are thriving and what is at risk. Send us the saga of the heritage project nearest you! We hope to publish your submissions in the next issue of *QHN*.

If you have a “Mystery Photo” you think would be challenging to identify (see the one on this page), send it to us – or, if you are near the Lennoxville QAHN office, bring it in to show us. We plan to make this a regular feature of *Quebec Heritage News*.



Mystery Photo!

Can you identify this photo?

It was sent to us by Bev & Milt Loomis of Waterville, QC, in the hopes that some reader will pinpoint where it was taken and what the building in the background is. Hint: scrawled on the back is: “Stanley Flats.” The photographer is Rhodes and Boon. Send your answers to: editor@qahn.org.

TIMELINES

Greenfield Park

100 Years of Memories

by Kevin Erskine-Henry

Often when we talk of Montreal's English-speaking community, our image is of the western side of the island of Montreal. However, just beyond those now-crumbling bridges leading to the South Shore, you will find the officially bilingual community of Greenfield Park. This summer marked Greenfield Park's 100th anniversary, the official centennial celebrations running through the first week of July. As former residents returning for the centennial events discovered, there has been much transformation in "the Park" over those years.

The community was founded in 1911 as a collection of makeshift cottages settled by mostly British residents who wanted to escape the grimy factory districts along the Lachine Canal where they worked. The best of both worlds had opened up for these early suburban pioneers in 1909, when the Southern County Railway Trolley Line began to take people across the Victoria Bridge into the pristine countryside – pristine enough for the town to warrant the name Greenfield Park. Within a few years a small town grew among the dirt roads and country streams that defined the Park. By the end of the Second World War, returning veterans looking for the dream life prompted a construction boom. Developers began to fill the green fields of the Park with rows of new homes, and shopping malls replaced tiny corner stores.

Yet, despite the growth, the Park remained a close-knit community where life was focused on its churches, its sports fields and hanging out with friends. For those growing up during these wonder years, there was no better place than the Park.

It was while Greenfield Park was struggling with the aftermath of the Anglo exodus in the 1980s that I took up residence. As I cycled through its neighbourhoods, what first attracted me to the Park were its mature tree-lined streets and mix-and-match housing. I eventually bought a house on Murray Avenue. Because so many Anglos had left the province, there was a call for new people, and I became involved with nearby St. Paul's Anglican Church's annual summer day camp program. This led me to get to know people who were still trying to keep the Park a special place — people like Bob Gentleman and Marty Richardson. They made

sure being from the Park meant caring for the people who lived in the Park. Sadly, as these local heroes passed away themselves, there were fewer and fewer to replace them.

In 1994, I was elected to the town council at a time when tough decisions had to be made. We sensed time might be running out for Greenfield Park. The close call of the 1995 Quebec referendum on sovereignty brought a new outcrop of For Sale signs on people's lawns, and the once English-speaking majority slipped to below 40 per cent of the population.

In 2001, the forced municipal mergers put an end to Greenfield Park's independent municipal status and

brought it under the Longueuil banner. While there was some protest from residents, the demerger vote in 2005 wasn't high enough in terms of overall voter turnout for the Park to regain its municipal status. Since then, most people appear to have accepted that the old town is gone. But on long holiday weekends, the high number of out-

of-province licence plates shows that the spirit of the Park lives on.

As we celebrate our centennial, I wonder what the early settlers would think if they could see what their town has become over the past century. The green fields that characterized the Park now are mostly confined to sports fields. Renovated, or replaced, are the small wooden cottages that lined the streets. When a house resold for over half a million dollars this spring, longtime Parkers joked how once you could have bought the whole town for that price. As current and former residents celebrate the anniversary, they can take pleasure knowing the families that call Greenfield Park home today do so because they like the relaxed environment and good neighbours. As I walk my dog in the evening, folks on the streets offer a "hello-bonjour." Volunteers still prepare church luncheons, deliver Meals on Wheels, and throw fundraising teas. Down at Pierre Laporte Park, another generation of young football players takes to the field, led by dedicated coaches, as old-timers recount past glories from the sidelines

True, Greenfield Park has changed a lot over the years. However, its friendly neighbourhood spirit remains.



Changing the guard in Stanstead East

New custodians of a 191-year-old schoolhouse

by Matthew Farfan

One of Quebec's oldest surviving one-room schoolhouses changed hands this past summer. The Mansur School, a quaint, one-room pioneer schoolhouse built entirely of red brick, and located in Stanstead East, in the Eastern Townships, has been transferred from the Hatley-Stanstead Women's Institute, which has overseen the maintenance of the school for nearly a century, to the Stanstead Historical Society.

The transfer, which took place in July in a special ceremony at the school, had a certain symmetry to it. Back in 1929, the Stanstead Historical Society held its very first meeting at the schoolhouse, which, even at that time, was considered a relic.

The schoolhouse is still technically the property of the Eastern Townships School Board, although records are sketchy, to say the least. Indeed, the school board has had little, if anything, to do with the building for years.

In 1928 (and again in 2004), the school board granted the Women's Institute the "use of the school building, District No. 26, known as the Brick or Mansur School House, until such time as this may be required by the school board for school purposes," along with "the right to make such repairs or changes as they see fit for their own use to the said school building or grounds." The Women's Institute has lovingly looked after the schoolhouse ever since, carrying out the occasional minor (and sometimes major) repair, including changing the roof back in 1987.

Although the tradition has lapsed recently, for a number of years the WI opened up the schoolhouse to children from local elementary schools. The children would dress up in old-time clothing and spend a good



part of a day at the school, pretending they were attending school in the old days. Women's Institute member Elane Wilson, who always had a special attachment to the school, said at the time of the transfer: "The kids love to visit the school. I hope the historical society is able to bring back that tradition."

In 2003-2004, the WI held a series of fundraisers so that it could renovate the building. The group raised over \$10,000 and was able to carry out quite a bit of work, including removing a wooden shack that had been built onto one side of the school, redoing the electrical wiring, and various other repairs.

Aside from those repairs, nothing much else seems to have changed at the school over the past century or so. The primitive, hand-planed, well-worn wooden desks are where they have always been, as is the old teacher's lectern. The wide pine floorboards still bulge up in places, and hand-wrought square nails are visible everywhere. There's also a definite slope to the floor, the result of shifting that can only take place over a period of generations.

There's a tiny woodstove at the back of the schoolroom, which once provided the pupils with much-needed heat on colder days. On the walls, there are pictures of various monarchs, including a splendid portrait of Queen Victoria (who died in 1901!). At the front of the schoolroom there's a large Union Jack, its lower edge well chewed by some hungry mouse.

The day of the ceremony, Elane Wilson said that the reason the Women's Institute was transferring responsibility for the school was "simple: we're all getting too old and feeble" to keep it up. "We're down to less than a dozen members and the average age of our members is about 80. Believe me, I really hate to give it up, but we have to."

Stanstead Historical Society and Women's



Left: WI members presented a ceremonial key to SHS President Ann Montgomery (left) and SHS Curator Pierre Rastoul (back). Photo: Matthew Farfan.

Right: The founding of the Stanstead Historical Society at the Mansur School, 1929. Photo: Matthew Farfan Collection.

Institute members were present at the ceremony. WI Branch President Phyllis Dustin welcomed visitors, saying, "This school is 191 years old, and it has been our baby for 83 years... Now the mother needs a rest."

Dustin provided a bit of the history connected with the school. "Our greatest joy was when the schools brought their children back into the school for a day of learning." On those occasions, she said, "the school would come alive again, serving the purpose it was

built for. One of the highlights of the school visits was always the trip to the outhouse. There was usually a line-up to go in there."

Dustin extended a special thank you to Elane Wilson "for her dedication to keeping the school alive." Wilson, she said, had been "totally responsible for the restoration of the foundation, walls, roof, addition – and also kept a great scrapbook." Also receiving praise were WI Treasurer Gertrude Ketcham, the ladies of the WI "for all of their work over the years cleaning, fundraising, and giving open house tours," the board and staff of the historical society, and Dustin's own husband Mel "for being caretaker and mowing the lawn for the past ten years." In recognition of their efforts, WI members were each presented certificates from the historical society.

Dustin then presented Stanstead Historical Society President (and QAHN board member) Ann Montgomery with the key to the building, along with a cheque for \$2,500, which is to be used specifically to restore the windows on the school. Montgomery thanked the Women's Institute for all that it had done to maintain the school over the years. "You have preserved this building as a heritage building; you have cared for it and loved it for 83 years. The Stanstead Historical Society is honoured to take it over and we promise to love it as you have done."



Trinity Church and cemetery celebrate 150 years

by Sandra Stock

In Morin Heights on Sunday, July 31, Bishop Barry Clarke of the Anglican Diocese of Montreal led the celebration of Trinity Church's 150th anniversary. He also presided at the dedication of a new sandstone wall on one street side of the cemetery. This quite lengthy and substantial wall was built by funds donated by families and friends of Trinity, who raised over \$20,000 for its construction. A large walnut plaque, to be mounted inside the church, was also presented with the names of those people to whom the wall is dedicated.

Trinity Church was built in 1861 as a squared log structure about the size of the typical pioneer cabin of the time. The logs are now enclosed by dressed lumber siding. The cemetery also dates from this period and has always been a community cemetery, open to all, not just Anglicans. Many of the gravestones date from the earliest settlement, and, considering the harsh Laurentian weather, are in very good condition.

This church has always been maintained and remains

a fully operating parish (along with St. Francis of the Birds, in St. Sauveur) with an active congregation. Trinity's location, on the main street in the middle of Morin Heights village, safely surrounded by full-time residents, has protected it from the tragic incidents of vandalism and theft that have plagued so many other rural churches and cemeteries. Another factor for Trinity's good state of preservation as a functioning parish is that it never expanded its structure much from its original size, other than with a small area of the choir and altar many years ago, and more recently, with the creation of a small meeting room with the excavation of the basement. So many churches went on building expansion sprees in the 1950s and 60s and now are left with cavernous spaces for dwindling congregations.

The service and wall dedication was followed by an outstanding picnic buffet enjoyed by approximately 200 people. Chairs and sun umbrellas were set up among the huge fir trees of the cemetery and everyone enjoyed themselves thoroughly.



THE WOMEN'S INSTITUTES

Who are they and what do they do?

by Jean Cogswell and Jane Patrick

Some fancy the Women's Institute (WI) is a group of elderly women who meet for tea and conversation about local issues. Others think they are a bunch of wacky women who created a fundraiser calendar using their nude portraits. Still others believe they are farmers' wives, who take the occasional day off from their chores to meet with neighbours and work on handicrafts, baking, preserves, and agriculture.

There is much, much more to it.

The first Women's Institute in the world was formed in Stoney Creek, Ontario, on February 19, 1897, by Adelaide Hoodless, whose infant son had died from drinking contaminated milk. The purpose of the Women's Institute was to educate isolated, rural women to cope with the problems of caring for home, family and community. The movement spread across Canada, becoming the Federated Women's Institutes of Canada, and then crossed the ocean to England and other countries. In 1933, the international organization, Associated Country Women of the World, was formed. The ACWW is the largest women's organization in the world, and has consultative status with the United Nations.

In Quebec, the first meeting was organized by Elizabeth Ann Beach and held on January 27, 1911, at Dunham. A cairn has been erected in Dunham to commemorate the beginnings of the Women's Institute in the province. This year, 2011, marks the one hundredth anniversary of this organization. A special celebration was held during the Annual Convention at Macdonald College, in Ste-Anne-de-Bellevue, to which dignitaries, former members and guests were invited.

Every WI member belongs to a branch. There are now about 24 branches across Quebec, in rural and suburban areas, and there are about 1,000 branches across Canada. These branches under-

take a myriad of varied projects: supporting local schools and hospitals, offering scholarships and awards for excellence in a number of skills (essay writing, baking, art, handicrafts), knitting socks and mittens for children in



Northern communities, contributing to libraries, and sending school supplies where they are needed. They advocate change in numerous areas, including health, nutrition, literacy, education, women's issues, and road and farm safety. Members are dedicated women of all stripes who are devoted to their communities and country.

Each branch belongs to a County

WI, which meets twice a year to plan larger activities, raise funds, and advocate change at the municipal, provincial and federal levels of government.

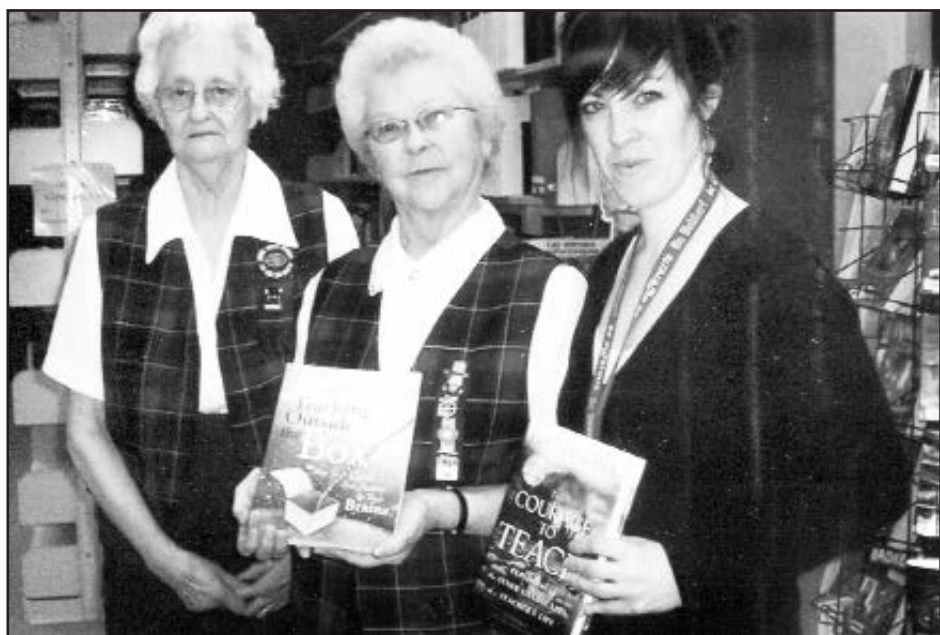
Each county group belongs to a Provincial organization. Quebec Women's Institute meets each spring at Macdonald College, where they also maintain a small office.

The provincial WIs belong to the Federated Women's Institutes of Canada (FWIC).

One of the many pleasures of being a member of the Women's Institute is to travel around Canada to attend conventions. The next coast-to-coast FWIC convention will be June 12-16, 2012, at the Mary Winspear Centre, Sidney, British Columbia.

Many issues, from agriculture to health, education, literacy and violence against women, are studied at the Federated level. FWIC's current project is Women's Heart Health.

The FWIC is affiliated with the Associated Country Women of the World (ACWW), comprised of nine million women in 365 member societies in over 70 countries. So you can see the



Left to right: Richmond County WI members Doris Stevens and Joyce Morrison present material to the St. Francis Elementary School librarian Sheila Quinn.

members in the small branches across Canada are all part of the largest women's organization in the world. They can choose to remain in their branches and do local projects, but many of them also opt to participate in a very large movement which is responsible for making the world a better place for women everywhere.

Sheila Needham, from the South Bolton branch, is the past-president of FWIC, and has travelled over the world in her capacity as president, including Africa, Tasmania, and Finland.

Sheila says: "I have found that my travels on behalf of my WI branch, province or country, attending different conferences in various parts of Canada and the world, have led to profound learning experiences and personal challenges that I would not have encountered otherwise. Whether I have found myself discussing community concerns with a WI branch in a small town in Prince Edward Island or visiting with a new-found friend in Turku, Finland, about the welfare of her village in India, it is these many friendships and experiences that have broadened the scope of what it




means to be a Women's Institute member. There is a need for new members in the Women's Institutes to help meet the concerns and challenges that will be facing women and their families in the years to come and I encourage women

of all ages to join a branch or become an associate member."

The members of ACWW believe that peace and progress can best be advanced by friendship and understanding through communication, and by working together to improve the quality of life for all people. Its goals are: (a) the relief of poverty, (b) the relief of sickness and the protection and preservation of health, and (c) the advancement of education.

Women's Institute groups, whether branch, county, country or world, are run by strong, creative, energetic women – who are growing older, and have a great need for their work to continue. Find out where there is a group near you, and pay them a visit. The QWI offers you the opportunity to interact with others and make decisions that will improve the quality of life for yourself, your community and the world.

And yes – Calendar Girls is a very funny film starring Helen Mirren and based on a true story about a Women's Institute group in Rylstone in Northern England.



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HOMETOWN HERITAGE ESSAY CONTEST

Elementary grades 4, 5 & 6



Sugaring Off: A Quebec Tradition

by Carley Grinfeld
Grade 4
Royal Vale Elementary
School, Montreal Qc

Did you know that maple syrup is the oldest agricultural product in Quebec? It all began with the native Indians who called it “Sweet Water.” When spring returned and the maple sap was running the Indians offered the boiled thickened syrup as a sacrifice to the Great Spirit. “Sugaring off” was largely a woman’s function in Iroquois communities. The men cut notches into tree trunks and small wooden troughs were stuck into the

We were just delighted here at QAHN to receive 153 entries from across the province for our annual heritage writing contest. This is the most, by far, of samples of students’ writing that we have ever had submitted for this competition.

Our first prize winner is Carley Grinfeld, Grade 4, Royal Vale Academy in Montreal for “Sugaring Off.” Second place goes to Mathilde Bernard, Grade 6, Riverside Regional Elementary, Jonquière, for “Little White House.” Third is James Logan Young, Grade 6, St. Vincent School, Ste-Foy, for “La Bolduc.” These three fine examples of student writing on heritage themes are reproduced here in this issue.

However, as we had so many good entries from which to choose, we’d like to make two Honorable Mentions: Karl Szabo, Grade 6, St. Vincent Elementary, Ste Foy, for “The Quebec Bridge,” and Guillaume Mercier-Lacombe, Grade 4, Cedar Street School, Beloeil, for “Camping Laliberté.”

We would like to thank all the teachers who encouraged their students to participate in this contest. We appreciate the kind letters that they enclosed with the class submissions. It is always very rewarding for us here at QAHN to know that there is so much interest in our projects.

- from Sandra Stock, Ann Montgomery, Kathy Teasdale

bark. In the early stages of European colonization the natives showed the arriving colonists how to tap the trunks of maple trees during the early spring. By 1680, European settlers were involved in harvesting maple products. During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, processed maple sap was a major source of sweetener. Maple “sugaring off” parties began to operate near sugar bushes and houses. In 1800 it was still widely used. The produce of maple syrup had an added benefit of getting extra income.

The vast majority of maple syrup comes from Quebec. The province is the world’s largest producer with about 75% of the world production totalling 24,660,000 litres. Production in Quebec is controlled by the government. Nowadays the production is very different from the days of gathering the sap on a horse-drawn sleigh and boiling the sap in pans over a wood fire. “Sugaring-off” time is that brief space between winter and spring when the snow starts to melt and sap begins to flow in the maple groves. Despite the technological advances in farming techniques production of the maple syrup remains largely a “family operation” essentially unchanged from its traditional past.

Today a Quebec tradition is for families or groups to go to a “sugar shack” -- more commonly known as a “cabane à sucre” -- where you can taste the delicious syrup on clean snow. It is a wonderful and traditional activity. There are numerous sugar shacks located all over Quebec.



The Little White House

by Mathilde Bernard

Grade 6

Riverside Regional Elementary School, Jonquiere Qc

The city of Saguenay, district of Chicoutimi, and more particularly the Bassin neighbourhood, was heavily hit by a series of flash floods on July 19 and 20, 1996. In the end, 488 homes were destroyed and 1,230 damaged. But one stands firm in the midst of Chicoutimi River's furious flow: "The Little White House."

The Little White House, located at 441 Gédéon Street, was built in 1890 by Elzéard Gagnon in one of the first neighbourhoods of Chicoutimi. The house was built with big wood-ed beams and it is two stories high.

The house had several owners but when the 1996 flood happened it was owned by Jeanne d'Arc Lavoie Genest, who was living there since 1938. In 1949, the house was flooded for the first time and was heavily damaged. Miss Genest's husband decided to solidify the foundation of his house by raising the building on a higher concrete foundation. When the second flood happened in 1996, this small centennial home was able to resist the force of the water. Images of The Little White House standing in the furious waters were showed around the world by the media.

This home became a symbol of resistance, courage and determination for Saguenay's population. Sometime after the flood, the city laid out a park in the Bassin neighbourhood with the house standing in its centre. In 2005, The Little White House became a museum telling its story and the catastrophe that happened in Saguenay. Over the years, it has become a major tourist attraction in Saguenay and thousands of people come here to see this symbol of strength. The Little White House is here to stay.

La Bolduc

by James Logan

Grade 6

St. Vincent School,

Ste-Foy Qc

One rainy day, a young boy named Derrick and his grandma were listening to old records. After

many slow country songs, he asked his grandma if she had anything more lively. She dug out an old dusty record and told him that she was her favourite singer years ago, and that his grandma knew all about La Bolduc's life story. She then went on to tell him about her.

Though everyone knew her as La Bolduc, her real name was Mary Rose Anna Travers. She was born on June 4, 1894, in Newport, near Gaspé, in Quebec. She came from a very poor family but her Irish father taught her to play fiddle, accordion, harmonica, spoons and the Jew's harp. She learned jigs and folk songs by memory.

She moved to Montreal at the age of thirteen. Then, she got married to Édouard Bolduc in 1914. In 1927, her career took off when one of her friends asked her to replace a singer in a show. The audience loved her and she was soon known as La Bolduc. She composed her own style of songs which were humorous and lively. Her songs brought hope to the people in the years of the Depression. Her career only lasted eleven years but she recorded about one hundred songs. Some of her records were big hits. Many people called her "The Queen of Canadian Folksingers." Sadly, she died at the age of forty-six.

Now, Derrick really wanted to hear La Bolduc sing.



Thank you to the following schools and teachers (in no particular order) for participating. This is a great cross section of English schools from all areas of Quebec.

- Riverside Regional Elementary, Jonquière (Ted Andrews)
- Royal Vale Academy, Montreal (Sophie Christopoulos)
- Boucherville Elementary, Boucherville (Mr. A. Zuccaro)
- Sunnyside Elementary, Stanstead (Tammy Mosher and Daniel Aucoin)
- Greater Gatineau Elementary, Gatineau (Miss Strang)
- Royal Charles, St. Hubert (Ms. Green)
- Cookshire Elementary, Cookshire (Cora MacLeod)
- Arundel Elementary, Arundel (Marion Hodge)
- St. Vincent School, Ste. Foy (Vivianne Gélinas and Leigh-Anne Fischer-Fiset)
- Cedar Street School, Beloeil (M. Caissy)
- St. Dorothy School, Montreal (Anna Maria Loggia and Sherron Anglin)
- Mauricie English Elementary School, Trois Rivières (Philippe Canon)
- St. Patrick Elementary, Thetford Mines (Jessica Simonds)

RECLAIMING CENTRE STAGE

The theatre community of English Quebec

by Marianne Ackerman

As part of its *Recognizing Artists: Enfin Visible!* project, the English Language Arts Network (ELAN) commissioned short histories of English-language Arts and Culture in Quebec from the dawn of the 20th century up to the present day. Excerpts from these histories will be published in future issues of Quebec Heritage News. The full essays are available on-line at www.quebec-elan.org/histories.

On December 7, 1985, a headline in the Montreal daily *La Presse* declared: "Le théâtre Anglophone à Montréal: pratiquement mort." ("Anglo theatre in Montreal: practically dead.") Nine years after the election of the Parti Québécois and after an intense referendum campaign on independence, the province's historically strong English-speaking population was experiencing a flight of people and capital that would see its numbers decrease by some 350,000, and professional prospects for those who stayed substantially diminished. Little wonder an intrepid Francophone journalist discovered a minority theatre scene on its deathbed.

The flourishing amateur theatre scene of earlier decades was little known in the Francophone milieu, and not all Anglophones were aware that back in the '50s renowned actors like William Shatner and Christopher Plummer had begun their careers as child actors in Montreal theatre before working in television and film. The lead-up to Expo 67 created a climate of optimism and creativity. The origins of today's English-language theatre scene began with people like Carol Libman, Walter Massey, Victor Knight, Norma Springford and four other playwrights who incorporated Playwrights Workshop Montreal in 1966 as Canada's first play development centre. Also in 1966, Mary Morter founded Instant Theatre which became Centaur Theatre Company in 1969 with Maurice Podbrey. Marion André was the first

One key to self-respect

Black theatre finds its legs in Montreal

By JACK KAPICA
of *The Gazette*

Errol Sitahal is a West Indian. He's also an East Indian and a European. All rolled into one.

It causes problems to self-identify. Sitahal is not the only one with ancestry as mixed as his. He figures most Caribbean blacks are like him. Including Derek Walcott, the Saint Lucia poet and playwright who is considered to be the most important writer in the West Indies today.

The connection between the two is that Sitahal is the artistic director of the Black Theatre Workshop of Montreal, and the one responsible for staging Walcott's powerful drama of black assimilation, *Dream on Monkey Mountain* in its Canadian premiere, engagement at the CEGEP Vanier Theatre.

"The problem Caribbean blacks face is a tough one," said Sitahal. "They are blacks, but they also have East Indian ancestry which is a stronger factor in their upbringing. And most Caribbeans go to European schools."

"The three things tend to fight for control, and it makes a hell of a problem getting them sorted out. Yet they are all integral parts of the personality. That's the way Derek Walcott is."

"In Walcott's work, the Indian, black and European traits fight, but there is never any solution to the question of assimilation, because Walcott himself doesn't know the answer."

EXPLAIN

But if Walcott can't answer the problems he poses, he can explain the situation in beautiful ways. *Dream on Monkey Mountain* is a story of an ugly old man, whose frustrations lead him into a dream world where the blacks reign supreme. But once there, he discovers that power — black power — is no answer.

The real answer is love. But it's hard to love if you don't know who you are.

Walcott is taking the most painful way to discover his ancestry. One of the few successful Caribbean writers who have stayed home, he has reversed the trend of most of his countrymen who left for the richer markets in England and the U.S.

Now, he's writing through the Caribbean's first semi-professional black theatre, the Trinidad Theatre Workshop. The only other theatre around is the professional — but European oriented — playhouse in Jamaica.

REPUTATION

Walcott's reputation, of course, has had trouble getting beyond the Caribbean. Still, he's known in the U.K., because Saint Lucia belongs to the Commonwealth, and he broke the New York theatre barrier two years ago when the Negro Theatre Ensemble produced his "Dream" off-Broadway.

"Here, there's the difficulty of fragmentation of various black groups. They're oppressed people. I mean that in every way. If I say 'theatre' to them, they think immediately of the Saidye Bronfman Centre or the Centaur."

"We have to bring a theatre to them that would bring a personal stability, a spiritual strength and self-respect. However intangible those qualities are, they are critically necessary."

"But just doing a black play, the mere fact that this show is coming off, will give us a self-respect."

UNIVERSAL

Dream on Monkey Mountain, said Sitahal, is a universal play. Its point is assimilation — anyone's assimilation into a

Workings has struggled in Montreal, under several names, with wide armies of people coming and going. Sitahal himself joined the group two and a half years ago as artistic director, gave it its present name, and set out to make an impact on this city's 40,000 blacks.

NO STRANGER

Sitahal himself is no stranger to theatre in Montreal. A trained actor, he has appeared twice at the Centaur, in Peter Dehner's "The Great White Computer" in 1969, and later in Arrabal's *The Architect and the Emperor of Assyria*.

He is presenting "Dream" (through Monday night) as the final production of a Canada Council grant of \$1,000.

"I chose this play because it involves more than acting," said Sitahal. "There is also music and choreography. Yet one of the problems we face is the tendency for many black people to create a dance even less for rehearsal. 'Dream's' cast moved to four or five different rehearsal halls before getting the Vanier stage."

PROFESSIONAL

But Sitahal did manage to get Actor's Equity permission for Errol Sitah, a professional, to perform. And he also consulted with the talented choreographer Jeff Henry, who has choreographed for Las Grands Ballets Canadiens and the Stratford Festival.

Despite the work Sitahal has put in, though, he's finding it hard to continue. His opening night audience was far less than he would have liked, and he's not sure he can stage another play in the spring.

"Hopefully, if we have the money, we'll get to do a black American play, *Guernica* in Dark Old Men, by Leonie Edler," he said.

"We've booked the Sir George Williams Theatre in Ancil for that — just this summer."



Errol Sitahal (right) with choreographer Ken Pilgrim.

artistic director of the newly opened Saidye Bronfman Centre in 1968 and three years later Montreal was home to another Canadian first when Clarence Bayne founded Black Theatre Workshop.

Actors and directors in the '50s and '60s had followed professional opportunities in Toronto, New York and London. During the '70s and '80s, actors and directors joined the exodus to escape lack of opportunity in Quebec. The optimism of the Expo years had evaporated.

As a transplanted Ontarian, and theatre critic at the *Montreal Gazette*, I was immediately struck by the enormous gap between the vibrant, edgy world of Francophone theatre of the 1980s and the disappearing Anglo scene. Inspired by the *La Presse* story, I set out to analyze the situation for the *Canadian Theatre Review*, in an essay called 'A Crisis of Vision':

Despite the newly-elected Liberal government's conciliatory tone, Anglo Quebecers are still humming a dirge. In the last decade, Francophone nationalism, high unemployment and the multifaceted acceleration of a westward shift in power have dealt Anglo cultural institutions a hard blow. Individual artists have suffered as well. Centaur Theatre has felt the change: most productions at Montreal's only subsidized English-language theatre are completely cast in Toronto. [Note, approximately 30% of roles were still cast in Montreal.] The once-thriving amateur theatre scene has registered a noticeable decline in both talent and numbers of volunteers. And while a handful of small ventures have struggled to get established, neither the commercial dinner theatres nor semi-professional dramatic ventures have yet defined a profile or built resources upon which a stable future could be predicted with any certainty.

By comparison, Edmonton, with a population similar to Anglo Montreal's, supported a dozen theatres including one French-language subscription season and North America's largest fringe festival. In Montreal, the most important annual event on the English-language scene was the Quebec Drama Festival, a one-act play competition, a vestige of the legendary Dominion Drama Festival launched out of Ottawa in 1932 to foster amateur theatre across the country in English and French. Elsewhere in Canada, the DDF had been largely displaced by the lively alternate theatre movement and the establishment of regional subscription houses, but its spirit was alive and well in Montreal. Everybody from theatre school professors to aspiring playwrights and entrepreneurial actors used the annual QD Festival to showcase their talent. But it was a diving board without a pool: the only alternatives were to find work at the Centaur or start your own company. In the years that followed, the story of English-language theatre in Quebec would be one of struggle, adaptation, tenacity and growth.

New challenges require new solutions. Given that the audience for English-language theatre was drastically diminished, and that most of the English-speaking actors and directors wanted to be in Quebec because they were inspired by the energy and innovation of Francophone theatre, it seemed inevitable that the barriers between English and French had to be called into question.

Theatre 1774 was founded in 1989 with the mandate to create a forum where Anglophone and Francophone artists could work together, a goal radical enough to be questioned by leading Francophone theatre critics. Theatre 1774's first production was *Echo*, performed in English and directed by newcomer Robert Lepage. *Echo* was followed by *L'Affaire Tartuffe, or the Garrison Officers Rehearse Moliere*, incorporating English, French and a little Irish Gaelic. It was an uphill struggle to find audiences for edgy, often bilingual, work. Two decades later, theatre crosses cultures more easily. In 2010-2011, no less than four Anglo productions and playwrights presented their work on Francophone stages.

Along the way, an interesting trend

has emerged on the alternative theatre front: Anglo companies are working much harder to attract French-speaking audiences in Quebec than they are at getting their work out to the Rest of Canada (ROC). Why is that? Clare Schapiro says she thinks it's partly a reaction to the non-interest ROC has shown in all things Anglo-Montreal. "Unless you have personal contacts, it's hard to break in," she says. "Plus I think, artistically, we've naturally been more interested in what's happening here, in being influenced by and working with the French side." Anglo-Franco collaboration as a winning business strategy? How times have changed. Now Canadians from across the country are moving here instead of leaving.

Each of the three artistic directors at Centaur, Montreal's "flagship" Anglo theatre company, has shown a strong desire for recognition outside Quebec. Among Maurice Podbrey's achievements were the discovery of writer David Fennario, whose bilingual *Balconville* (1979) put Montreal's regional subscription playhouse on the national map, and Vittorio Rossi, whose plays have given voice to Montreal's huge Italian immigrant population. Podbrey's successor, Gordon McCaul, showed an interest in being the conduit for several of Michel Tremblay plays. Centaur's production of Tremblay's *For the Pleasure of Seeing Her Again* played at the Canadian Stage in Toronto and the Abbey Theatre in Dublin. McCaul also discovered comedic writer Steve Galluccio whose *Mambo Italiano* broke box

office records.

Anglo theatre has been a precarious activity for decades. The real wonder is how resilient its ventures have proven to be. A quick survey reveals several independent companies approaching important milestones: Youtheatre, founded in 1968 and now run by Michel Lefebvre; Geordie, founded by Elsa Bolam in 1981 and now led by Dean Patrick Flemming; Black Theatre Workshop, Canada's oldest black theatre, which celebrated its 40th anniversary in 2011 under the direction of actor/director Tyrone Benskin*; Teesri Duniya, a multicultural company founded in 1981 by Rahul Varma; and Repercussion, founded in 1988 to produce Shakespeare in the park. Outside the city, the intrepid theatergoer will find Theatre Lac Brome in the Eastern Townships, a summer theatre founded in 1988 that now keeps its doors open all winter with musical events. The Hudson Village Theatre has been offering quality theatre since 1993. A new regional theatre event is the Piggyback Fringe Festival in Wakefield, across the river from Ottawa.

* Note that in May 2011 Mr. Benskin was elected Member of Parliament for the Jeanne-Le Ber riding.

Author of a dozen plays and co-founder of THEATRE 1774, Marianne Ackerman has published three novels. She is founder and publisher of *The Rover*, an on-line review of Montreal arts found at www.roverarts.com



FROM STATION STOP TO POT AU FEU

The Wakefield railway station adapts

by Norma Geggie

A tourist steam train runs between the city of Gatineau and the village of Wakefield for about eight months of the year, bringing visitors through the wooded hills and along the scenic Gatineau River. As there is no longer a turning point on the restored rail track, a hand-operated turntable rotates the engine and then shunts it to the end of the coaches in preparation for the return trip to the city. This spectacle has become of great interest for passengers, as well as for tourists and other visitors to the village.

When the rail line first reached Wakefield in 1892, a station was built on the site where this turntable is presently situated. In 1929, the station was relocated, and the site then became a busy yard for the unloading and sorting of logs from upriver for transport by train to mills in the Hull area.

The train stop in Wakefield was known as La Pêche, acknowledging its location at the mouth of the La Pêche River where it empties into the Gatineau. When the decision was made to relocate, the station building was by no means old, but there is no record of it having been moved. Photos from a 1929 album show the “new” station nearing completion, although it is possible that this was the original building, relocated, with additions.

Train service through the valley was a remarkable boost to small industry, local stores, and of course, to the commuters, who had otherwise no easy access to the city, 25 miles to the south. Numerous commuters gathered at the station each morning, en route to school

or work in Ottawa. A turning point was constructed a short distance north of the village in a hamlet called Alcove, allowing the shorter-route commuter trains to avoid the long run up to Maniwaki and back.

A second train passed through Wakefield each morning at about 10

above the Shouldice farm, which was later the site of the Vorlage ski resort. This convenient service remained for almost 30 years.

When the CPR ceased its service in 1963, the railway station in Wakefield was purchased by three friends: Roman Braglewicz, Alan Hopkins, and Neils Larssen. As all three were architects interested in early building styles, they were determined to retain the station’s distinctive look, and so made only minimal structural changes. We have these three architects to thank for preserving what had been a vital service to the community for so long.

They did choose to paint the building an attractive blue, marking it clearly as “not a CPR station.” This choice of colour was intended as a protest, as the partners felt that the CPR had treated them unfairly over the course of the business deal.

The station served new purposes. The area at one end, which had served as the waiting room, was secured for a restaurant

named Café Pot au Feu, run by Irene Braglewicz. What had been both the telegraph office and ticket area became a kitchen. The opposite end, which had served as the baggage shed, was converted into a sporting goods store run by Roman to satisfy his interest in guns and the outdoors. For ten years, Melanie Hopkins ran a store called The Pot Shop in a small room in the middle of the building which had a deep central window where she could display her hand-made pottery. Some years later, Roman bought out his partners and eventually converted the space upstairs to a small apartment.



a.m., taking shoppers to Ottawa, where it was possible to walk from the well-placed central station (now the Conference Centre opposite the Chateau Laurier hotel), shop on the busy Sparks Street at places like the Murphy Gamble department store, and request that one’s purchases be delivered to the station for pickup later. What convenience we enjoyed!

At weekends, the train also provided a popular conveyance for skiers. These visitors usually left the train at the Rockhurst stop in the south end of Wakefield, and then skied along the main street on their way to the hills



It was not until recently that I learned that during the Cold War a bomb shelter was built in the basement, as had been done in other stations throughout the country. It was a cinderblock en-

sure which accommodated not much more than a telegraphist and his morse-code apparatus to maintain contact with the necessary agencies in a case of an absolute emergency. This unique part of our history was dismantled when storage was required from a side door to the restaurant.

Cafe Pot au Feu is possibly the earliest of all the many restaurants in the village of Wakefield, and it is still run by Nina Braglewicz, daughter of Roman and Irene. The railway station ambiance remains and the station platform overlooking the Gatineau River is now a verandah for outdoor dining with a view that is second to none – and the same might be said of the food and the service.

Norma Geggie has written many books and articles on the history of the Gatineau Valley, and is a life member of the Gatineau Valley Historical Society. She is the 2005 recipient of QAHN's Marion Phelps Award for lifetime contribution to heritage.



Top: The Hull-Chelsea-Wakefield Steam Train. Photo: Matthew Farfan.

Bottom: Clair "Bun" Earle at the Wakefield station during its construction. Photo courtesy of the Gatineau Valley Historical Society.

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JITTERBUG NATION

The Clash of '39
by Rohinton Gandhi

*Hey Boy? Oh, boy!
Panama, Shanama, Swanee shore,
Let me dig that jive some more.*

*The jim-jam-jump with the solid jive
Makes you nine foot tall when you're four foot five.
Hep! hep!*

It was the spring of '39, a time when the world around us was talking of another great war. Just as in pre-war 1914, the threat of war was changing the way we lived, the way we dressed, and the way we danced. Once known as a “product of mad times,” the Jitterbug was on its way, bringing us a wild new way of free-style dancing. Here in Verdun, we were already in the midst of another conflict, as Verdun’s Anti-Jitterbug Society was taking actions to literally stomp-out the menace that was already swinging its way north.

The “bugs” had arrived, flailing their arms and legs, and throwing their bodies across the dance floor, and brushing the “naturally-flowing” dancers off to the side. It was only the beginning of what was to come, as the small corners of our world began to converge into a Jitterbug nation.

*The jim-jam-jump with the jumpin' jive
Makes you get your kicks on the mellow side.
Hep! Hep!*

“Bug” news came from around the world with stories of young girls dying instantly of heart attacks and of people collapsing of exhaustion after uncontrollably “jitterbugging.” Many school dance committees, dance halls and music clubs dealt with this new craze by imposing outright bans on jitterbug dancing.

In that year, a pair of Jitterbug shoes sold for an expensive \$3.95, with rubber soles and every inch covered with “swing-lingo inscriptions” for the coolest cats. It seemed that our local world had also gone C-U-R-AAA-ZY, as the jitterbugs took over all the “jam-joints” in town. The Seville Theatre announced: “Jitterbugs Attention – the Greatest Jam Session Ever! – See and hear from our screen – 2 solid hours of swing! – Admission 20 cents – Everything goes including Dancing in the Aisles!” Everyone was getting bitten by the bug, and they just couldn’t get enough of it.

The early jitterbug was believed to be a mix of various swing dances, including the Lindy hop and the East Coast Swing. Using fast six-count steps, the man would lead on his left foot as a left-right-left-right-right-left, with his partner copying on the opposite foot. With multiple turns, lifts and spins, jitterbug partners often danced side

by side, instead of face-to-face. After the basic steps, the “bugs” could then add complicated manoeuvres, like through-the-leg swings! The more moves you knew, the more hep you were!

Bandleader Cab Calloway and his Cotton Club Orchestra were the first “name band” to play at our Verdun Auditorium.



Admission was 75 cents to a dollar. On the night of May 28, 1940, he introduced a new dance called the “Boog-it” to an enthusiastic crowd of 3,000 Verdun jitterbuggers, performing his ever-popular “Minnie the Moocher” and his latest hit the “Jumpin’ Jive.” Calloway, known as the chief of Hi-de-ho, was the first to use the term “jitterbug,” in his 1934 recording “Call of the Jitter Bug,” adding that the dancers looked as if they had the “jitters” – a prohibition term describing the hangover effects of alcohol or moonshine, then frequently referred to as “jitter sauce.”

*The jim-jam-jump with the jumpin' jive
Makes you like your eggs on the Jersey side.
Hep! hep!*

“The Jitterbug” was also a number written for 1939’s The Wizard of Oz. Although not in the final cut, an early script had the Wicked Witch of the West releasing flying jitter “bugs” to compel the heroes into doing a jitterbug-style dance, saying to the flying monkey leader: “I’ve sent a little insect on ahead to take the fight out of them.” The song sung by Judy Garland, and some of the dialogue, made it to B-side of the “Over the Rainbow.”

By August, the young “Hep-cats” were dropping their numbered practice dance steps onto the floor. Meanwhile,

Verdun Mayor Hervé Ferland laid the cornerstone of the great Verdun Bandstand being erected near the corner of Woodland and LaSalle. Even as the stone was being lowered, the daily headlines were ablaze with Jitterbug news, drawing fire from traditionalists, outright disgust from the clergy and severe health warnings from the establishment.

*Don't be that ickeroo,
Get hep and follow through;
And make the joint jump like the gators do.*

Rex Billings Jr., president of Verdun's Anti-Jitterbug Society, was quoted in the local Verdun Guardian saying that a majority of folks had been forced from the floors through embarrassment or for the fear of being permanently disabled by the maniacal antics of the thoughtless "bugs" who threw themselves in all directions. He blamed the guys more than the gals, as most girls assumed their



popularity depended on their "jitterability," and so they "jittered." He added that he had seen "healthy girls pass out after just one number," and that jitterbugging was more like a marathon six-day bicycle race (held at the Montreal Forum) than a dance. For this reason, the Anti-Jitterbug Society organized its own "Dance-and-Frolic" evenings at Wood Hall for persons who believed in "natural" dancing, strictly outlawing the jitterbug. Their ads said: "For those who like to Dance not Prance" – admission 40 cents. Bandleader Jimmy Laing, known for his "disappearing" fingers on the piano, would lead his orchestra as a local favourite.

As '39 progressed, Verdun, still known as the third largest city in Quebec, was changing its slang as the new hepcat lingo hit the streets. A "Hepcat" was "solid," one who knew the latest jive words and who could really "cut a rug," while an "Ickeroo" was the opposite. People were urged to shag on down to "slide in their jib" (dance) and get Hep. Hepcats spoke fluidly, as if rhyming their words to music and creating new ones in the process. Swing styles also had their own hep names, like the "Peckin' Neckin'," "Swing the Wing," the "Rusty-Dusty," the "Shorty-George," and "Whip the Hip." Even with this smooth new language, those times remained simple.



Until, on September 10, Canada finally declared war on Germany. Suddenly we would all be dancing for a different reason. As the reality of another World War crept in, we were comforted by the enjoyment of the few remaining moments of peace we had left, before being sent off to war.

The Jitterbug craze would go on throughout the War and continue into the late fifties. As the wave finally crested, it was slowly replaced in our dance halls with the new sounds and steps of the early sixties. Just as our own elegant Verdun Dance Pavillion bandshell began to erode, we could feel the times of the Jitterbug slipping away, and with them our fondest memories.

The Verdun Bandstand was demolished in the late 1960s and, not so long after, the Verdun Dance Pavillion was also torn down. Those ever-smiling dancers swaying, bopping, and twisting into the twilight of the night skies, are but just a memory now. Yet, whenever we hear that fast swing music, we are reminded of our once beautiful dance halls, with their flickering lights and their polished floors, awaiting our return. Giving us a reason to smile, knowing that we were all once part of a Jitterbug Nation...which had danced its way through our Southwest Corners.

Hep! hep!

Rohinton Gandhi is a Verdun historian and writer; his column "The Southwest Corner" appears frequently in The Suburban.



Bottom right: The Verdun Bandstand. Photo: BAN-Q, Conrad Poirier Collection.

HEMP IS ON THE ROAD AGAIN...

A history of a curious crop

by Susan McGuire

No, not that kind of hemp! What is starting to make a comeback in Canada is industrial hemp (*Cannabis sativa* L), part of a diverse plant species of more than 500 varieties, including hops used in beer. Industrial hemp is a distant cousin of the marijuana plant that is illegal in Canada, except when grown for medicinal purposes.

Hemp has been cultivated for some 10,000 years, likely first in Mesopotamia (Iraq) and in the Yellow River valley of China, and used for food, fuels, clothing and paper. By the mid-eighteenth century, the Spanish, French, and English navies and merchant marines required large quantities for sails and ropes, and for oakum that was used for caulking the timbers of the wooden ships.

In the 1930s in the United States, nylon was introduced, a concerted effort was made to use wood pulp for paper instead of hemp, and marijuana became a worry in the public conscience. The result was that the growing of all hemp was outlawed in the United States in 1937 and in Canada a year later, though it continued to be grown in many parts of the world.

It became again legal to grow industrial hemp in Canada in 1998. By 2010, more than 26,800 acres of industrial hemp were under cultivation in Canada, with about 800 acres in Quebec and the rest mostly in the Prairie provinces. Relatively easy to grow on dry land, it needs no herbicides or pesticides. Although it reaches heights of up to fifteen feet, some new equipment has been developed that makes it easier to harvest.

Today, industrial hemp is or could be used in building materials such as concrete and shingles, for automobile panels, paints, paper and inks, and even

bio-fuels. It is being marketed in Canada for light-weight travel clothing and for such items as hemp seed for salads, hemp flour, hemp oil for body care products, and hulled hemp hearts as an ingredient in breakfast cereals.

A long history in Canada

The history of hemp in Canada goes back 350 years. Concerted efforts in New France to encourage farmers to



grow hemp were made by Intendant Jean Talon in the 1660s and 1670s. He gave hemp seed free to colonists with the understanding that they were to plant it immediately and replace the gift with seed from their next year's crop. So important was hemp that he confiscated all the thread in the colony and would give it back only in return for hemp: women needed thread, so they put pressure on their husbands to grow hemp. However, production collapsed when Jean Talon went back to France.

By the late eighteenth century, significant efforts were being made to promote the growing of hemp in Canada, by both the British government and local governments in Nova Scotia, Upper Canada and Lower Canada. In *How the*

Scots Created Canada, Paul Cowan notes that the Philadelphia Company sent six families, two of them Scottish, to Pictou, Nova Scotia, in 1767. One of the conditions of settlement was that they cultivate hemp, which was to be made into rope for the Royal Navy.

In Lower Canada, the government judged that the most effective way to reach farmers was through local parish curés. A notice in French from the Quebec Board of the Agricultural Society in Canada in March 1790 asked for the cooperation of the clergy in encouraging hemp culture. The following year, the Quebec Board had printed, by Samuel Neilson, 100 circular letters in French, advertising that free hemp seed was available, at John Lee's in Quebec, to farmers recommended by the curés, and requesting that the curés submit a list of those who wanted to grow hemp and in what quantities.

In the Hull area, Philomen Wright experimented with hemp around 1801, but could find no major local market for his crop. According to Michael Martin (*Working Class Culture and the Development of Hull, Quebec 1800-1929*), the price of labour was too high: a dollar per day for unskilled labour when skilled labour also earned a dollar a day. Wright decided to grow enough hemp for his own purposes only, and for that he built a mill.

In 1802, the *Journal of the House of Assembly of Lower Canada* recorded an amount of £110.15.8 for seed under "cash expended in the purchase of hemp and hemp seed together with other expenses incurred for the encouragement of the culture of hemp in the District of Montreal."

Nothing much was working. Hemp was not a popular crop among the farmers; though it was relatively easy to

grow if the seed was good, harvesting and processing were another matter. It was hard to find workers willing to work as hard as was necessary. Prisoners were conscripted for the job in Quebec City.

The British government must have been getting a bit desperate. With embargos on trade with the United States and wars in Europe looming, the huge supplies of hemp needed for sails and rope to supply the English navy were in danger.

Perhaps, some thought, the North American colonies could become sources of supply, or at least not import hemp and thereby lessen the overall demand for the product. In his 1806 account *Travels Through Canada*, John Lambert concluded that hemp could be stable source of income for colonists and a steady source of supply for England: "The advantage of Great Britain deriving her supplies of hemp, as well as every other description of naval stores from Canada, cannot for a moment be doubted."

Two men were sent over from England by the British government to promote the growth of hemp in Lower Canada: Charles Frederick Grece and James Campbell.

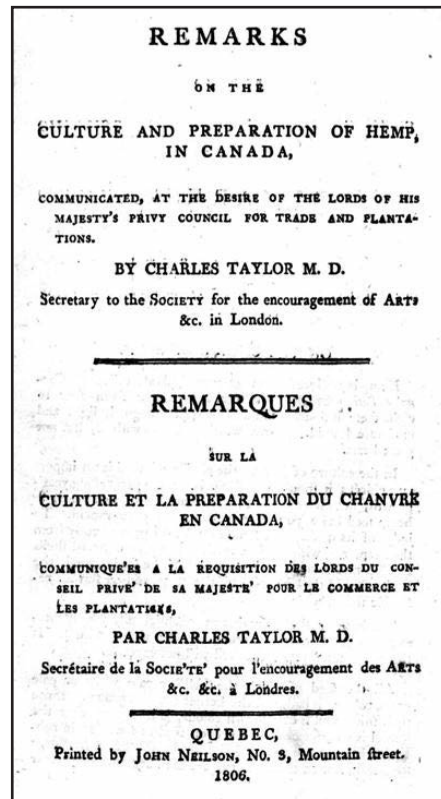
Campbell arrived in 1806 at Quebec with members of his family and skilled workers including farmers, millwrights, carpenters and blacksmiths, and with an understanding that he would have land, seed and a salary. But there was no cleared land for him, or seed to plant. There were continuous problems between him and the government over the next few years. The last reference to him was when some of his land was put up for sheriff's sale in Trois-Rivières in 1813.

A year or two earlier, Charles Frederick Grece, by then about 40 years old and experienced in hemp production in England, had arrived in Montreal with his wife Susanna Feniah Strong and a growing family. They bought a farm in Longue Pointe in 1806, according to the *Montreal Standard* of November 27, 1915. He had been awarded an advance of £400 and promised 150 acres of cleared land to develop the growing of hemp in the Montreal area. He was to receive £200 a year as well as 75 bushels of seed.

In 1806, he was supplied with 100

copies of Dr. Charles Taylor's bilingual brochure entitled "Remarks on the Culture and Preparation of Hemp in Canada," printed by John Neilson in Quebec City.

Like James Campbell, Grece seemed to be in continual disputes with the authorities over cleared land, finan-



cial compensation and poor-quality seed. His brother William John Greece,* who had property on the Ottawa River near Grenville but lived in England at least some of the time, intervened with the British government on more than one occasion. Even with all his difficulties with government, in 1809 Charles Grece was awarded a silver medal by the London-based Society for the Encouragement of the Arts, Manufactures and Commerce, for the culture and preparation of hemp in Canada.

One of the people encouraged by Campbell or Grece may have been Jesse Pennoyer, a surveyor, farmer, militia officer and father of 12 who lived in Waterville near Sherbrooke. In 1809, the government granted him a salary of £200 plus £100 to defray the cost of promoting and growing hemp for five years. The War of 1812 brought about the end of his experiment, which had proved ruinous financially.

Ultimately, the efforts by the British government to promote hemp in Lower Canada failed, despite the injection of some £40,000 between 1806 and 1809.

Charles Grece continued to farm his property after 1812. In 1817 he wrote a detailed brochure entitled "Essays on practical husbandry, addressed to the Canadian farmers," in which he gives suggestions on how to grow many agricultural products including grains, vegetables and fruits. He included a section on hemp:

Some years ago, a trial was made, under the protection of the Government, to introduce hemp as a staple commodity for this and the sister province [Upper Canada]. Unfortunately, political events obstructed that effort; the American embargo gave so great a scope to mercantile enterprise, particularly the Lumber Trade, that there was scarcely any bounds to the price given for labour. Soon after, the war [of 1812] ensued, which ... gave a deathblow to agricultural pursuits. The present offers fairer prospects, by the general peace now taken place.

In 1824, Charles Frederick Grece and his heirs were awarded letters patent, from King George IV and signed by Governor Lord Dalhousie, for property in Longue Pointe, containing "two arpents and three perches and the half of a perch in front by fifty Arpents in depth," bounded in part by the St. Lawrence River and in part by the lands of Louis LaPointe, Francois Trutault and Jacques Beaudry the Younger.

C. F. Grece was a member of the Montreal and Quebec agricultural societies. In July 1829, he joined the Montreal Mechanics' Institution as a corresponding member from St. Therese. In his latter years he was appointed justice of the peace in 1831, 1833, 1837 and 1838. He died in St. Therese in 1844.

* *William John Greece seemed to spell his name with two 'e's.*

Susan McGuire credits her interest in history to teachers Glendon Brown at Knowlton High School and Prof. D. C. Masters at Bishop's University.

THE LITTLE HOUSE THAT SURVIVED

Grece Allen House, Longue Pointe, Montreal

by Susan McGuire



In the early 1730s, a man named Pierre-Joseph Picard acquired forest-covered land around Molson Creek, an inlet from the St. Lawrence River towards the eastern end of Montreal Island. Picard cleared some of the land and by the early 1740s had built a two-storey stone house in the area later known as Longue Pointe.

The house was moved in 1970. In the intervening years, it has had a storied career.

The area surrounding it was the scene of a significant event in Montreal history. In 1775, during the American Revolution, Ethan Allen and his Green Mountain Boys came north to Longueuil and crossed the St. Lawrence to Longue Pointe. Having already captured Fort Ticonderoga, they planned to wrest Montreal from British hands, and in so doing Ethan Allen hoped to solidify his status as a hero of the Revolution.

The British governor Sir Guy Carleton had other ideas. As soon as he got wind of Ethan Allen's approach, he mobilized what troops he could: 30 regular soldiers, more than 200 British and Canadian volunteers, and 6 or 8 Indians. They moved eastward to Montreal's walled fortifications, passed through the Quebec Gate, and upon arriving at the Longue Pointe area, saw that Allen's little band was well positioned behind trees and buildings.

However, according to Edgar Andrew Collard (*Montreal Gazette*,

January 17, 1970), Allen was let down by Major John Brown, who was supposed to attack from the west, coming from Laprairie. Allen was captured near the Picard house, imprisoned, sent to England, and later exchanged for a British officer. Collard points out how different Montreal's history might have been if Ethan Allen had succeeded in his venture.

A mysterious skeleton

A sadder story occurred in 1794, when three small English ships apparently sailed up the St. Lawrence and anchored in the Molson Creek inlet. What was called "Black Plague" broke out on the ships and men died, with burial taking place on the slopes of the inlet.

More than a century later, when city workmen were laying gullies alongside Notre Dame Street near the river bank, a cedar coffin was unearthed in the vicinity of the Picard property, some fourteen feet below the road (which had been raised in the interval). The coffin contained a well-preserved skeleton encircled by a leather belt in a good state of preservation; shoes that were falling apart were on the feet. The tombstone covering the coffin had been broken by the workmen's picks when they were digging, so the skeleton could not be identified. Rumours of a long-ago murder were circulating. According to the *Montreal Standard* (November 27, 1915), a police investigation concluded that no crime had been committed, and that the body was that of a sailor who had died 121 years before. The remains were removed to Mount Royal Cemetery.

Grece home for a century

Meanwhile, in 1802, Louis Picard had sold the property to P. Leprohon. He in turn sold it in 1806 to Charles Frederick Grece who had been sent by the British government to promote the growing of hemp in Lower Canada. Grece settled there with his wife Susanna Feniah Strong and their growing family, who were to own the property for more than 100 years, at which time it was sold off bit by bit between 1905 and 1915 as industrialization crept into the area.

The major green space left in the immediate area now is the property of the Grace Dart Hospital, formerly the Montreal Protestant House of Industry and Refuge; the Grece property was just to the east.

In 1970, the City of Montreal, which had purchased the house, moved all 600 tons of it some four kilometres east. Now restored, it is set in attractive parkland alongside the St. Lawrence River in the area formerly known as Tetreaultville, now part of the Mercier-Hochelaga-Maisonneuve borough. Adjacent to a larger park, the parcel of land is called "Parc de la capture-d'Ethan-Allen."

The author acknowledges the help of C. F. Grece descendants in the research for this article.



THE LOSS OF A CHILD

An archive of grief
by Daniel Parkinson

This tribute has been prepared from original letters and other material preserved by Evelyn Smith Banfill and entrusted to the author in June 2011 by her daughter, Doris Banfill of Waterville. It is dedicated to all who have suffered the loss of a beloved child.

Richard Smith and his wife Ella Cleveland already had a daughter, Evelyn (born 1899), when their first son was born, on November 30, 1901.

They lived on a farm near Waterville, Quebec, now the property of Ross Powell, on what is called the Chemin Carrier. The boy was baptized at the Lennoxville Methodist Church on October 2, 1902, by his uncle, the Reverend Robert Smith, and named Cecil Cleveland Smith. He was known as Cleveland, his mother's family name; she was from the same stock as the former American president.¹ Richard and Ella had two more children: Robert Edmund (born 1905) and Mary Kathleen (born 1908).

Cleveland was a bright, happy child and had stood third in his class at Waterville Academy in 1910, with an average of 84%. His teacher that year was Miss Alice McFadden, B.A. He had over 90% in English Dictation and Geography but his highest marks were in Scripture, befitting his family's strong Methodist heritage. His father's health had prevented his entering the ministry and so he had returned to farming. In Cleveland's report for the month of March 1912, from Miss B. S. Cordy, his average was 82.8%, with high marks in Scripture. He had missed one half day of school that month.

His devoted sister Evelyn, older by two years, recorded the tragedy that developed after attending church on March 23, 1913. Cleveland "took sick" and on Monday night the doctor "announced" appendicitis.

He was taken to Montreal on March 25, with surgery on the 26th, with the stitches removed on March 31. He was to come home on April 2 but developed tonsillitis and could not. Meningitis was diagnosed on April 4; blood poisoning ensued, which lasted 21 days.

Cleveland died at 8:15 a.m. on April 25.

Letters Home

Letter, March 28, 1912 [sic; 1913], on Royal Victoria Hospital stationery.

Dear Mamma

I am writing because Mr. Mould said to and my writing is poor as I am lying [sic] in bed. I am feeling fine and never know I had an operation. I have had a good time and my best friend here is my male nurse Mr. Edward I. Mould who has given me a book and signet ring like Kathleen's with my initial on it. Mrs. McIntosh² of Waterville called this afternoon with a friend.

The trees are covered with frost like glass and look beautiful. Last night I dreamt [sic] that I was at home in the

sugar woods gathering and it seemed real right on till [I] felt the nurse poke me and say "Put this in your mouth Smith" and then took my pulse, I hope you are all well. All for now.

Your loving son
Cleveland

Letter, March 30, 1912 [sic; 1913], on Royal Victoria Hospital stationery.

Dear Mamma

I wish I could tell you how well I feel. Yesterday I got up and dressed and wheeled myself around in the wheelchair. Mr. Mould said is [sic it] was the quickest he remembered as it was only three days after the operation. This morning I dressed [sic] and went out to the kitchen to see Maggy Brownlee³ the cook and had



breakfast with her. There is a gallery at the end of the ward and from it one can have a fine view of the city from the St. Lawrence to the side of the mountain. Willie Boyce and Mary Butcher⁴ came to see me the afternoon and I did not know them but they found me and we had quite a visit.

I went to the children's ward H yesterday and seen an Indian baby boy from Cognawagga. I guess it ain't spelt wright is it?⁵

A few minutes ago Edward said to Miss Mackay "I will give you five cents to kiss Smith." She said to me "Will you do it" so I said "Yes" and here she comes now so I guess I will have to do it. If I am not coming home on Wednesday will let you know later.

All for now
Your loving son
C. Cleveland Smith Esq. Waterville, Que.
P.S. I didn't have to kiss her.

Letter, April 1, 1913, on Royal Victoria Hospital stationery.

Dear Evelyn

I suppose you have started back to school and are getting on well. Will you please tell Papa to meet the 9 o'clock train Wednesday night as the Dr. told me I could go home alone then. I am feeling fine as I now can walk around and go where I like. I had the stitches taken out Monday and it did not hurt at all.

There is another boy here 11 years old who is subject to fits, Friday night he was walking along the street when he took a fit and fell on the sidewalk hurting his head badly. Uncle Robert⁶ wrote to me and I have just finished a letter to him.

Goodbye for now. I will see you soon
Cleveland

Royal Victoria Hospital postcard, undated, addressed to Mrs. RH Smith, Waterville, Que. Not mailed. It was perhaps written after his first surgery, or later in his illness.

This card is given by a friend to send to Robert E. [brother] Papa is doing the writing. I am doing as well as can be expected will soon be home. Loving yours
Cleveland.

A Letter from School

A letter from his teachers and classmates at Waterville Academy was mailed to Cleveland Smith, Victoria Hospital, Montreal, Que., Ward no. G, on April 4, 1913.

4 one cent stamps postage

Waterville

Dear Cleveland

We were all very sorry to hear of your illness because we miss you so much in school, however we hope you will soon recover and come back to us well and strong and ready for work.

We learned through your father that you had gone

through the operation wonderfully well and that you were on the rapid road to recovery for which we were all glad.

Today we have heard about the change for the worse but hope that it won't be serious and that you will soon return in perfect health.

You are not missing any fun for the weather is so dull that there isn't anything to do.

We haven't even had any sugaring offs to go to on account of the poor sugaring weather.

This is Friday and we have all brought pussy willows to school to draw.

Some of the boys were going to bring nearly whole trees into the Schoolhouse but were not allowed to do so.

When the nice Spring days come we are going to observe the birds, trees & flowers and learn all we can about them.

We are deciding whether we want to take up this work on Mondays during our Composition Class or not. If we do each member of the class will discuss what he has learned during the previous week, from books or better from nature.

We have been told that you are doing some reading so perhaps you will be able to tell us some of the stories when you get back.

Again, with our best wishes for your recovery we close

From your Teachers and School Mates, II Model

Laura Robert	Mabel Ward
Alice W. McFadden	Doris Wilson
Etta Munroe	Vera Piper
Marion Trenholm	Nancy Long
Dorothy J. Sewright	Ruth Parsons
	Pearl Burton
	Willie Lowe
	Olive (absent)

Postscripts from II Model [students]

Dear Cleveland

As no one will start this I must so I hope that [you] will soon be home to look after these girls as I can't do it alone

Good Bye
Willie

Dear Cleveland

R.V. & I went up to Langevin's Woods yesterday and I was told they washed their hands in sap which stood on a stove. I believed it. I know a lot about it don't I? Hope you'll soon be better.

Doris

Dear Cleveland

Went up to the woods yesterday and had a drink of sap and saw the men gathering up the sap in a large tank which I never saw before. I hope you will soon

be better and be able to join us.
Vera.

Dear Cleveland

I went out to try and get some pussy willows Monday afternoon and as I was going to cross a brook my foot slipped and I got my feet soaking wet. I am in hopes you are improving every day and will soon be able to come back to school.

Nancy

Dear Cleveland

I hope this note will find you well. We have just finished drawing a pussy willow and you ought to see mine as you no [sic] how good I draw.

Mabel

Dear Cleveland

I was sorry to hear that you had to go to the Hospital, but I hope you will soon be better as we are not having much fun since we came back to school. I hope you will soon be come [sic] back to school,

Pearl Burton

Dear Cleveland

Hope this note will find you better. As Willie has know [sic] one to talk to so he has to turn around to Mable and I. We have not been to any (sugaring offs yet). I guess you will be back in time to go with us. Hope you will join us soon.

Your schoolmate

Ruth Parsons

A Sad Funeral

Despite the loving wishes of all concerned Cleveland was not to recover. He was buried in the Greenwood Cemetery, Waterville. The funeral was in the Waterville Congregational Church, conducted by Mr. Pierce, the minister, and the register witnessed by his father and uncle R. H. and Robert Smith. His sister recorded that his age was 11 years, 4 mons [sic], 25 days. She also noted the Flowers using ditto marks. (I have copied in full.)

Mrs. F. G. Gale a spray of Flowers [Sunday School teacher, Congregational Church]

Sunday S. Class a cross of Flowers

Academy a wreath of Flowers

Mrs. Parkinson and family a pillow of Flowers
[his aunt and cousins]

Mrs. Mitchel a boque [sic] of Flowers

Miss B. S. Cordy a boque [sic] of Flowers

Mrs. Butcher a boque [sic] of Flowers [cousin]

Invoice of William Wray, Undertaker, 113 University Street, paid on April 25, 1913

Casket	\$40.00
Plate	3.00
Shell	6.00
Removing to Ry, Station	5.00
	<hr/>
	\$54.00



A Memorial Card in black and white was printed:

“In Loving Memory of Cecil Cleveland Smith who died on Friday, April 25th, 1913 Aged 12 [sic] years”

and on the facing page this sentiment:

One precious to our hearts has gone,
A voice we loved is stilled;
The place made vacant in our home
Can never more be filled.
Our Father in his wisdom called
The boon His love had given;
And, though in earth the body lies
The soul is safe in Heaven.

Letters of Condolence

Loch Gael

My dear Mr. and Mrs. Smith and family

You have my deepest sympathy in your great, bereavement, and my prayers that you may be given strength to bear the terrible blow. Time alone will only help to soften it. I have missed Cleveland very much the past few Sundays; he always seemed such a quiet thoughtful boy and always knew his lessons. Truly your loss is very great. –

In our own [illegible] we found some comfort in the quotations taken from Tennyson’s “In Memoriam”

“Tis better to have loved and lost than never to have loved at all”

“God’s finger touched him and he slept”

Very sincerely yours
Olivia I. Gale⁷
April 26, 1913

May 7, 1913

Dear Ella

Your letter came this a.m. Sad indeed was the contents I had built such hopes on that boy. He was all one could wish for and I had looked forward to sending him to Stansted [sic College]. You no doubt remember I promised it to him when I was home that summer. It pleased me so much that his name was Cleveland. It is all over with. How it sends me back to the time years ago when I remember dear mother tending over the coffins of her dear Charles and little Alice. I was but a child but that memory is still fresh. Yes I knew Robert Smith would do all that love and good sense could prompt. You will excuse me Ella but I cannot write my heart is full. Dear little Evelyn how she will miss him. When Elsie died which was years before I came into the world your father had to go school alone have heard him say he could never feel so badly again no matter who should die. Give the watch to Robert am so glad Cleveland enjoyed it.⁸Tell Robert always to keep it.

Lovingly
Agnes⁹

Have sent your letter to Alma.

This archive of material included this letter from Thomas Ward, 1844–1924, a Waterville farmer now buried in Greenwood Cemetery. His second wife, whom he refers to, was named Rachel (1911 census). The letter was written prior to Cleveland's death. It is included here, not so much for its relevance to Cleveland's story, but as a contrast to the other letters, and as an account of Mr. Ward's unhappy life and an illustration of what brought working-class immigrants to Canada.

It strikes me as a cruel letter, in the extent of its lack of understanding of the Smith family's anxiety awaiting the outcome of their son's illness, and because it seems to dismiss their experience as trivial compared to his own suffering. Perhaps it is only illustrative of his religious faith, which seems alien to me in the twenty-first century.

Mabel Ward, one of the class mates who wrote to Cleveland, was a granddaughter of Thomas Ward and his first wife, Sarah Watson.

Waterville, Que

Dear Mr and Mrs Smith, Grandma¹⁰and Family.

Mrs Ward and I wish to express our sympathy with you in your deep sorrow on account of the prolonged suffering of your Dear Boy. Having no team and the road very bad it is about impossible to travel on foot or we would have paid a little visit, but we remember you at the throne of Grace, and we are sure the Great Physician of Galilee will be near by night and day. He who wept at the Grave of his friend Lazarus [sic], we are told is the same yesterday, today, and forever and he says, Lo I am with you always



even unto the end of the world. I may say to you I have been no stranger to sorrow and suffering to begin with I have no recollection of a Mother; at 7, I recollect living in one of the slums of Leeds sleeping with rough labourers, being crowded out of bed at midnight sitting on a chair until forced to scream by the presence of a rat at 11 being flogged at midnight Saturday because I fell asleep instead of keeping at work: horse-whipped at 13 for taking Master's pony to same Blacksmith shop as I took work horses [to], at 14 cold skim milk and dry bread and not enough of that all the winter to breakfast. At 21 crushed on the railway and taken to Hospital expecting less than an hour from death. At 24 injured by people April fooling and dropped a Bale of wool unto my back as I was stooping at my work, out of second story door that I did not fully recover from for 15 years, bitten in the leg by a donkey at 28 that took nine months to heal first month wiout [sic] crutches. Wife at birth of 4th child two milk legs, in bed 10 weeks and never fully recovered. About 3 years after wife knocked down and run over by a runaway team and left uncountious [sic] with head cut which had to be sown up by doctor and print of horseshoe on her leg, I have buried one wife 3 children, had first wife at Boston Hospital present wife at Sherbrooke Hospital and breast removed each time. Once at Montreal Hospital and a tumour removed. with a fair share of ordinary sickness and farm losses, but I remember once going with a friend to his rich landlady to ask for a little reduction in his rent, and at the conclusion of a fruitless visit, as we were treated to haughty indifference I came away and said thank God for suffering and loss it is much to be preferred to a heart like that

Cleveland, aged 6, with Robert, 1 year and 10 months, with the watch from Agnes Cleveland.

woman's, and I can thank God Just now as I think of the comfort in troubles so far, so dear friend look up and remember Paul's words these [sic] light afflictions which are but for a moment work out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of Glory etc read 2 Corinthians 4 17

Yours sincerely
T & R Ward

Daniel Parkinson was raised on a farm in Waterville, attended Lennoxville High School and earned a B.A. from Concordia (SGW) University in 1969. A resident of Toronto since 1972, and now retired, he is racing to complete Up To Rawdon, the story of the early settlers of Rawdon Township.

Notes

1. Ella's parents were Chester Cleveland and Mary Ann Harran, who married in the Compton Methodist Church in 1863. Agnes and Alma were the younger sisters of Ella's father Chester Cleveland; their parents were William Cleveland and Sarah Baldwin. Ella's aunts were listed as students aged 13 and 18 in the 1861 Census, at Barnston.

Alma married Thomas Bryan, at Barnston Methodist Church in 1868 and emigrated to the U.S. In 1910, they lived in Rochester Ward 2, Olmsted County, Minnesota, and were said to have immigrated in 1866. (This is an error, or perhaps they returned to Barnston to be married, or only Thomas had gone in 1866.)

The Clevelands had settled in Massachusetts early in the seventeenth century, moving north to Vermont and finally to Barnston, Quebec, which is a few miles north of the International line, around 1805. They could claim a direct link to Grover Cleveland.

2. In 1911, Harriet McIntosh was a widow of 63, living on income in the village of Waterville. The McIntosh family were early settlers at Waterville and had owned a farm about a half mile from the Smiths. This farm was later owned by Cleveland's brother, Robert E. Smith, and is the now centre of the dairy complex owned by the Bessette family who had arrived at Waterville about 1908 and also purchased a McIntosh farm.

3. Possibly, this was Maggie Brownley, a woman employed as a maid, in a private home, St-Antoine Ward, Montreal Census 1911. She was born in Scotland in 1884.

4. These were first cousins of Cleveland's father and lived in Montreal and Rawdon. They were the niece and nephew of Grandmother Ann Boyce Smith who lived with Cleveland's family – the children of her sister, Sarah Boyce Parkinson and her brother, William Boyce.

5. He makes fun of his mistake by adding bad grammar and another misspelled word. Caughnawaga was an Iroquois Reservation on the south shore, west of Montreal, now

known as Kahnawake.

6. His father's brother, Robert Smith, was a Methodist minister and stationed at Lennoxville when he had baptized Cleveland. His church was at Huntingdon, Quebec, in 1911.

7. Olivia I. Laberee was the wife of F. G. Gale. He was a Waterville manufacturer of patented spring beds, with brass frames that sold internationally. He was also the town's leading citizen and the largest employer in the village. That Mrs. Gale may have been Cleveland's Sunday School teacher is suggested in the wording of her note and the flowers at his funeral.

8. Elaine Smith Ross, of Ottawa, Robert's daughter, has this studio portrait of the two Smith boys with the watch and another one of Robert holding the watch. Elaine does not know what became of the watch.

9. Agnes Cleveland was a witness to Alma's marriage and Thomas and Alma had a daughter named Agnes. I was unable to locate anything further about Agnes Cleveland and do not know her marital status or place of residence in 1913.

10. Ann Boyce (1839-1937) was the wife of William Smith (1835-1872); their children were all born at Rawdon, Quebec. She is pictured with Richard and Ella.



QUEBEC AND THE INTEGRATION OF BASEBALL

Part Two: Manny McIntyre and the Great Experiment's other forgotten men

by Bill Young

Perhaps nothing better represents the prodigious change that enveloped Organized Baseball in 1946 than the image of an as-tounded Jackie Robinson balanced on the shoulders of triumphant fans at De-lormier Stadium minutes after he led the Montreal Royals to the Little World Series championship. For, fleeting as that moment was, it confirmed with absolute certainty that the racial integration of baseball had come to stay. Robinson's explosive style, his passion and dignity in the face of harsh adversity, and his unmatched courage had ignited a fresh spirit within the game. Everything was now possible.

However, we sometimes forget that Robinson was not the only black man to play professional baseball in 1946. Another five took similar steps into the unknown. Four were signed by Branch Rickey, the man who recruited Robinson. The fifth was Manny McIntyre, a Canadian. Collectively, they integrated four professional leagues. While Robinson unquestionably was the beacon, the others also played their parts. And for three of them, their stage was the province of Quebec.

John Wright and Roy Partlow

First Wright and then Partlow, both veteran Negro Leagues All-Stars, were added to the Royals' 1946 roster to accompany Jackie Robinson, although they were also expected to play. Unfortunately, the pounding pressure that came with being a highly exposed sidekick to the glaringly spotlighted Robinson did them in. Both underperformed in Montreal and finished the season with Class C Trois-Rivières, a Dodgers affiliate in the post-war Canadian-American (Can-Am) League.

When Royals president Hector Racine signed John Wright on January 30, 1946, he told the *Montreal Gazette*:

"We're giving the boys [Robinson and Wright] a tryout regardless of race." Wright added: "There'll be more and more coloured boys getting ahead in professional sports. I got this far by plugging, and I expect to keep on punching. That's all it takes."

Possessing a "blazing fastball, an assortment of sharp-breaking curves and



good control,"¹ Wright had been a key member of the Homestead Grays, black baseball's most dominant club. Sam Lacy, an African-American sportswriter who knew the 27 year-old hurler, added: "Wright doesn't boast the college background that is Jackie's, but he possesses something equally valuable, a level head and the knack of seeing things objectively."² On that historic opening day (April 18, 1946) when the Montreal Royals faced the home town Giants at Jersey City's Roosevelt Stadium to launch the International League's new season, Wright was there, proud to stand as one of the first two black men in Organized Baseball.

That was then. Today, as Journalist Benjamin Hill notes, Wright is barely a footnote, even to his own narrative. In

this story, there was room for only one ground-breaker, and, as with the others who followed Robinson, Wright stood so deep in Jackie's shadow he became invisible. But he also pitched poorly. After only six weeks with Montreal, during which he made few mound appearances and fewer good tosses, Wright was dispatched to Trois-Rivières. He responded with disinterest, even though the town, and indeed the league, accepted his presence with grace and tolerance. Sam Lacy wrote: "Wright did not have the chance [of getting into games] many of us had hoped he would have, nor did he prove any ball of fire when the opportunity presented itself." Jackie Robinson later opined that Wright could not "stand the pressure of...being one of the first."³

Wright had barely landed in Trois-Rivières when Roy Partlow, a "hard-throwing left-hander with excellent control, ...a whistling fastball, a great curve and a good drop,"⁴ arrived in Montreal as the "third Negro player to crash organized baseball with the Brooklyn Dodgers class AAA farm."⁵ Now in his mid-30s, he too was expected to contribute, both on the field and as a travelling companion for Robinson.

Sometimes called the "strikeout king of the Negro League,"⁶ Partlow had starred with both the Homestead Grays and Philadelphia Stars before joining the Royals. Although well respected as an all-round ballplayer, Partlow was plagued with alcohol-related problems and tended to be moody. He and Robinson never became close, on or off the diamond, and even though he established a 2-0 record with the Royals, his uneven performance, outstanding at times but otherwise desultory and unfocused, resulted in his being sent to Trois-Rivières in July. Partlow had been used sparingly by the Royals; as manager Clay Hopper told journalist Sam Lacy, "I've got seven starting pitchers and not enough work for them. I'm winning ballgames...I

don't feel like complicating matters by experimenting with Partlow."⁷

Much like Wright before him, Partlow reacted bitterly to his demotion, and for a time simply vanished. When he finally reappeared in Trois-Rivières, he did seem to be sporting, if not a new attitude, then certainly greater attention to the task at hand. He was brilliant on the mound, winning his first nine games before ending the season 10-1. Bat boy Kip Bordagaray, the nine-year old son of Trois-Rivières' manager Frenchy Bordagaray, remembers the night Roy came in to relieve: "He threw a pitch I had never seen thrown before. My Dad told me it was an 'epheus' or 'blooper ball.' I can compare it to the slow pitch in softball. It probably crossed the plate at 40 miles an hour. I never saw anyone hit it during that entire 1946 season."⁸

When not pitching, Partlow, an outstanding hitter, often played the outfield. At season's end, he led the league in batting with a remarkable .404 average. Partlow's overall performance clearly inspired Wright who also ended strong, winning his last five decisions to wrap up the year with a 10-8 record.

In dramatic fashion, Trois-Rivières managed to slip into the playoffs on the last day of the season. With Partlow winning three matches, they took the semi-finals, and then wrapped up the year by capturing the league title in five games. According to *The Sporting News* (October 2, 1946), Partlow, the playoff MVP, had sparked that championship run. "He pitched for one victory; in the 4th game as an 11th inning pinch hitter drove in two runs with a triple to win the game (Wright earned the win); and scored the winning run in the final game." It was a 9-6 come-from-behind victory. Fittingly, once again Wright was the winning pitcher.

The late season transformation of the two moundsmen was a revelation



and probably a result of the faith their manager had shown in them. "Wright and Partlow were nice boys," Bordagaray told the *Montreal Gazette* in 1995. "They were just perfect. They had to be. Otherwise, I was a dead duck, and so were they. Sure, it was a sensitive job. We were breaking down the color barrier."⁹

According to Jules Tygiel in *Baseball's Great Experiment*, which chronicles the travails of Robinson and his fellow travelers, life in Trois-Rivières was most agreeable. Within the clubhouse, "in almost all instances, Wright and Partlow received the same treatment as their teammates," while away from the field, they were equally popular. Tygiel delicately notes (p.156) that in a town of very few black women "the two black athletes...could be frequently seen with French-Canadian women. Neither the townspeople nor the ball club raised any objections.

Even though both Partlow and Wright had produced heroically at season's end and during the playoffs, they would never again figure in Rickey's

plans. A discouraged Wright lamented: "Pitched most of the year at Three Rivers, Quebec, and had a swell time. ...I would like to get another chance at Montreal. I don't know just what I'll be doing next season, however." (Tygiel, 158) In fact he returned to the Homestead Grays for two years, and then drifted through the semi-pro ranks and into Puerto Rico, where he was still throwing in 1954. Pitcher Don Newcombe, also an original black ball player, observed: "I don't know if [Wright] had that kind of ability that would warrant his being a major league pitcher...he didn't have a major league fastball... he worked hard and he tried, but he was tense." (Tygiel, 126)

Roy Partlow's post-season prospects were more encouraging. Manager Bordagaray told Tygiel that Partlow "had all the talent in the world. He was good enough to play on the Montreal ball club. In fact he was superior to most of those ball players." (Tygiel, 157-8) Newcombe concurred: "There's no man I can think have who had better stuff than Roy Partlow when he wanted to pitch." (Tygiel, 127) Partlow was invited to spring training with Montreal in 1947, but then released. He returned to the Negro Leagues, remaining there until 1950 when, nearing the age of 40, he came back to Quebec and Organized Baseball to play with the Provincial League Granby Red Sox. He enjoyed two fine seasons there and then retired from the game.



Today, some 55 years later, Wright and Partlow's place in the story of baseball's integration has pretty well faded from view. This is regrettable, writes Benjamin Hill, as "both men played the game admirably well under very trying circumstances and for this alone they deserve to be recognized as true Minor League pioneers."¹⁰

When the young Bordagaray asked his father long afterward why they never made the majors, Frenchy replied simply: "Neither of them were a Jackie Robinson." Neither could have handled what he had to in 1947.¹¹

Roy Campanella and Don Newcombe

When Branch Rickey introduced Negro leaguers catcher Roy Campanella and pitcher Don Newcombe into the Dodger organization in April 1946 and assigned them to Nashua, New Hampshire, of the Class-B New England League, he did so determined to crystallize his commitment to baseball's integration. Observers called the move 'Rickey's second front.' And though Campanella and Newcombe were not on the Quebec scene in 1946, they too are integral to this history. Before going on to the Brooklyn Dodgers team immortalized in Roger Kahn's classic book *Boys of Summer*, both made their mark in Montreal with the Royals.

Campanella was 25 years old when he went to Nashua; Newcombe was barely 20.¹² In announcing their signing, *The Sporting News* (April 11, 1946) trumpeted them as "the only Negro bat-

tery in organized baseball." Both met expectations held for them, and Nashua won the New England League championship. It is curious and perhaps revealing that in the year of Rickey's great experiment, the three clubs on which he had placed black players – Montreal, Trois-Rivières and Nashua – all emerged at the head of the class.

Manny McIntyre

And then there was Manny McIntyre. Born and raised in Fredericton New Brunswick, McIntyre secured his spot in Canadian baseball history on June 1, 1946, when he joined the Sherbrooke Canadiens of the Class C Border League and became the first Canadian of African descent and sixth black man overall to enter the ranks of Organized Baseball. Sadly, his achievement is so deeply buried in the sands of time that it too is now all but forgotten. Even scholarly treatments of the challenges faced by Robinson and his counterparts either seem to ignore or be unaware of him. Unlike the others, McIntyre was not affiliated with Rickey and the Brooklyn organization. Rather, he was selected directly by the local Sherbrooke ownership because they knew him for who he was. He was never connected to



any major league organization.¹³ (Because Sherbrooke had established a loose working agreement with the National League's Cincinnati Reds, one might argue that this made McIntyre the first black player in that club's system. Not so; McIntyre's contract was solely with Sherbrooke. Some claim that the club's affiliation was actually with the St. Louis Cardinals, but the evidence is just not there.)

Old time sports fans might remember Manny as a hockey player and teammate of the Carnegie brothers, Herb and Ossie, also black. The three usually played on a line together, often giving themselves colourful names such as Dark Destroyers or Black Aces or Les Noirs to underscore their African roots. Exciting to watch, they packed arenas wherever they went.

McIntyre encountered the Carnegie brothers in Timmins, Ontario, where they all worked the local goldmines and played hockey for the Buffalo Ankerite Bisons. Summoned for military duty in 1942, McIntyre returned to the Maritimes where he played baseball and hockey for both army and town teams. He was named an All-Star on the Halifax club that won the 1944 Halifax



Defence Baseball League championship.

In 1944 the Black Aces reunited in Shawinigan as members of the Quebec Provincial Hockey League's (QPHL) Cataracts. Still exotic, still outstanding, their stylish approach kept fans pouring in to their games. McIntyre's role in the mix, according to Herbie Carnegie, was as "the mucker who battled for the puck in the corners and then placed a perfect pass onto one of our sticks."¹⁴

The following summer McIntyre remained behind to play baseball with the Trois-Rivières Commodores of the Independent Quebec Provincial League. Operating outside the structures of Organized Baseball, the league was not bound by any dicta on race or other matters, and consequently McIntyre's presence on local playing fields was never challenged, especially as he was already known and well liked. In 1945-1946 the hockey-playing trio moved on to the QPHL's Sherbrooke Randers, named for that city's Ingersoll Rand Company. With the "Black Aces" leading the charge, the team finished first in regular season play but lost to Victoriaville in the league final.

That spring, Organized Baseball moved into the region in the form of the Class "C" Border League. It included teams from northern New York State and Ontario, plus Granby and Sherbrooke. The Sherbrooke club, called the Canadians, immediately sought out McIntyre, offering him \$350 a month. But having learned his way around contract negotiations with the Black Aces, McIntyre held out for other considerations. When discussions stalled, he returned to Nova Scotia and signed instead with the semi-pro Middleton Cardinals.¹⁵

The season started badly for the Canadians; by the end of May the club was mired in the league basement looking up at arch-rival Granby in second place. Someone suggested the club reconnect with McIntyre. And this time he accepted their offer. He was in the lineup the next day.

Little fuss was made of his signing or of its significance to Organized Baseball. The weekly *Sporting News*, considered baseball's bible, limited its enthusi-

asm to a terse notice (June 12, 1946) stating that Sherbrooke "signed Manny McIntyre, 26-year-year old Negro from Fredericton, N.B., and purchased First Baseman Dick Washburn from Auburn." The *Sherbrooke Record* was delighted (June 3, 1946), although colour had nothing to do with it. Under the headline "McIntyre Has Been Secured by Ball Club" the paper applauded the Canadians' "first big step in its necessary re-organization" and expressed hope that the "popular coloured athlete who was one of the sparkplugs of the Sherbrooke Randers hockey team" would become the catalyst for change.



Of course McIntyre was no stranger to Sherbrooke baseball fans; they had seen and admired him with Trois-Rivières' Provincial League club. And so, on Saturday afternoon, June 1, 1946, when McIntyre joined his new teammates on the field at Park Avenue Stadium, the local faithful indeed gave him a rousing welcome. But they were celebrating the promise he represented; baseball history was furthest from their minds.

McIntyre did not let them down, providing "a week-end hitting display that gladdened the hearts of the paying customers," as the *Sherbrooke Record* reported on June 20, 1946. In days ahead, his play kept pace with expectations. The *Record* lauded the "peppery Sherbrooke shortstop" for having "made five putouts, five assists and figured in a smart double-play." He also went 2-3 and scored a run. Two days later against Kingston, McIntyre "lashed out a home run over the 310-mark of the left-field

barrier in the first inning and came right back in the second chukker to drive home three of Sherbrooke's tallies." (June 20, 1946)

Of course, tension and the potential for trouble were always in the offing. There was one unpleasant situation at Granby "when Manny McIntyre bumped into first baseman [Harry] Lockwood, running out a ground ball. [Hank] Washburn, Granby pitcher, came off the bench and ran across the infield to get at McIntyre." Fortunately cooler heads prevailed, much to "Washburn's great good luck," for as the *Record* observed, "Manny... doesn't need any help in the self-defense department." (June 20, 1946). Years later, McIntyre only vaguely remembered the incident. "It happened sometimes," he said, "you would run into somebody. Nobody really made much of it."¹⁶

Generally, Manny was warmly received throughout the league. His room-mate, Sherbrooke centre-fielder and local hockey and baseball stalwart Normand Dussault, recalled: "Manny was a good fellow. We had fun. I remember he could hit, but he seemed to have trouble throwing. It seemed there was something wrong with his arm"¹⁷

Indeed, his arm was not right. As *La Tribune's* sports editor Jean-Paul Lainé soon discovered, "every time Manny puts his hands on the ball the spectators wonder if he will get it to first base. If one could cure his sore arm, there would be an immediate improvement in the performance of the infield." (June 13, 1946) Manny himself acknowledged the problem. "My arm was sore then," he confided several years ago, "and it's still sore. I twisted it playing hockey one time when I was checked into the boards, and it was never fixed properly. It was too bad, because before that I had a strong arm. But there was nothing they could do"¹⁸

As June drew to a close, McIntyre realized that the Border League, with its heavier schedule and wearisome travel, was taking its toll. Fearing that he was jeopardizing his hockey career, Manny decided to give his notice and leave the team. On July 2, 1946, the *Sherbrooke*

Record reported that McIntyre had “asked for his release and will be returning to the Maritimes. Well-liked by the local team, Manny apparently wants to go back to the east. He is reported to find everyday ball too strenuous, and feels it will endanger his hockey career.”

An encomium by the *Record's* sports editor Allan Bryce the next day (July 3, 1946) concluded with this observation: “McIntyre is very popular with his team-mates...All over the Border League he has been well received by newspapers and fans.” Employing the jargon of the era, Bryce saluted Manny as, “a credit to his race.”

And with that, Manny McIntyre's foray into Organized Baseball came to an end. In all, he played in 30 games, batting a respectable .310, with 5 stolen bases and 17 runs batted in. His complete record, evidence of the uncharted territory he traversed, can be found on the pages of the 1947 *Sporting News Official Guide*, etched there for all posterity.¹⁹

Manny McIntyre looked back on those days with fondness. When asked not long ago if he found it tough to be the only black player in the league, he answered firmly. “Not at all. I get asked that question all the time. Did I find it hard? And I always say no. We all got on with each other, the boys and the fans everywhere. They were very good to me.”²⁰

By early July, McIntyre had returned to the Middleton Cardinals, playing at a more moderate level. However, when winter came around, he was back in Sherbrooke where again the Black Aces led their team -- now called the Saint-François, or Saints --to the QSHL finals. He then stayed on to play baseball, this time with the city's reconstituted Provincial League team. It had taken over after Sherbrooke (and Granby) quit the Border League for the more familiar comforts of the Townships. Early in the season Manny was traded to the Drummondville Cubs. There, he reconnected with Jérôme Cotnoir, a former teammate in both hockey and baseball. Because of his bad arm, McIntyre was moved to first base, and for a time his counterpart at third was Maurice “the Rocket” Richard, fresh off a 45-goal campaign with the Montreal Canadiens.

After one final hockey season, the Black Aces split up. McIntyre left to

play baseball with the Fredericton Capitals – and then remained in the Maritimes for several years. He returned to Quebec in 1951-52, spending the hockey season with the Port Alfred Élans and part of the following summer with Lévis in the Quebec Senior Baseball League. His last hurrah occurred on a hockey rink in Rimouski, in 1953. McIntyre ultimately settled in the Montreal region and took a job at Dorval Airport. And for many years his remarkable accomplishments sadly disappeared from view.

Until 1995, when folks in the Maritimes began to acknowledge his worth. First, his name was added to the Fredericton Sports Wall of Fame. Then, in 1997, he was inducted into the New Brunswick Sports Hall of Fame, and months later into the Baseball New Brunswick Hall of Fame. His citation reads in part: “Despite the impact he had in leading Negroes to be more accepted into professional sports [McIntyre] wanted to be best known and remembered for his skill, strength and performance as a player.”

It is fair to say that in all of this he succeeded admirably, especially in the world of baseball. There, because of him, and a handful of men like him, nothing in the game was ever the same again.

Vincent Churchill (Manny) McIntyre passed away on June 11, 2011 at age 92 in Candiac, Quebec.

Bill Young, a former school teacher and principal, is a founding director of the Greenwood Centre for Living History in Hudson; he is also a historian of baseball and a columnist for the West Island Gazette.

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Calvin Oshida, *Memories of Lake Ontario, 1954*. Collection of the artist. © Calvin Oshida, 2010

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