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Quebec Heritage

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News



What Did You Do in the War, Mummy?

Mildred Allen of the DIL

Restoration: Sir John Johnson

A Loyalist Returns to His Vault

Long and Winding Trails

The Career of Laurentian Topographer Paul d'Allmen

Quebec Heritage News

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Cover photo: Magic Tom and friends on Surprise Party."

Photo: <http://www.messagerverdun.com>.

EDITOR'S DESK

Pomp and patrimony

by Rod MacLeod

I spent an inordinate amount of time this past June, on two separate occasions, watching ladies in gowns and very high heels parade in front of me across a stage. No, I haven't begun a career as a fashion designer, and nor was it high fashion on display. I was there for, let's say, academic reasons. All these ladies were my daughter's age. One of them was my daughter.

Twenty-eight were the 2014 graduates of Montreal's Trafalgar School for Girls, that venerable institution on the side of Mount Royal whose history the *QHN* outlined on the occasion of its 125th birthday ("Spem Successus Alit," Autumn 2012). This time, QAHN was honouring five prizewinners of its Heritage Photo contest (see later in this issue).

I was there to do the presenting: taking the hand of each recipient as she tottered up one side of the stage, steadying her for a moment (or so I imagined) while handing her a certificate and barking "Congratulations," and then releasing her to totter off the other side.

Geoff Dowd, Traf's effervescent headmaster, obligingly read out the winners' names, but he had also amiably allowed me (as I had put it) 55 seconds to explain the contest and give special praise to the teacher, Lori Litvack, whose dedication was, as is always the case, the key to motivating students to take up the cause of heritage.

Somewhat to my surprise, I found the two-hour traffic of Traf's stage quite entertaining, despite knowing none of the grads – although by the end of it many of them had become distinct characters, their interests identifiable by the prizes they won and the clubs they had

joined, their personalities reflected in the way they interacted with the presenters on stage and their varying levels of success navigating in those heels.

There was one moment of genuine suspense when one slender recipient had to carry down a massive engraved shield which entirely blocked her view of the stairs, but thankfully the great weight



countered the natural tendency of young girls in high heels to perpetually lean forward and her gazelle-like feet found each step. This award had been for the house with the highest number of points. Yes, I thought, in my muggle innocence, they have "houses" at Traf, just like Hogwarts. And, also like Hogwarts, they have a dynamic principal; Dowd's heartfelt opening address and general patter while emceeing contributed a great deal to my enjoyment. That, and a valedictorian who somehow got away with using the word "kegel" in her speech – something that would not, let's say, have happened at *my* school.

Above all, I enjoyed being in an institution with a prestigious history. At Traf, heritage is everywhere, but it doesn't overburden the spirits of these modern and eager young ladies.

All this was understandably

coloured by my attendance a week earlier at the Villa Maria graduation, where I knew one girl like the back of my hand, several more to talk to, and a great many by reputation.

During her five years at the school, my daughter has never stinted in her eloquent and often emotional descriptions of everybody's quirks, to the point where I could applaud the appropriateness of many of the awards, knowing how deserving they were – and in one case gasp in horror at the inappropriateness, knowing how deeply my daughter disagreed with the recipient on countless fundamental issues. That said, Papa Bear spent most of his time with bursting buttons, watching his youngest child collect some well-earned awards – none more so than the Drama prize, which specified achievements in acting, writing and directing.

Compared to the Traf ceremonies, however, the Villa event was slow-moving and matter-of-fact – though the valedictorian was bubbly and a past grad from a decade back had some thoughtful and pertinent advice to pass along. To be fair, a much larger number of gowns had to pass across the Villa stage: 130, no less – and this was just the "English side" of this much larger institution. For this reason, the event was held in Thérèse Casgrain Hall, a vast multi-purpose room appropriately named after one of Quebec's most beloved feminist icons.

"TCH" was built a few years back, part of the school's spanking new science-gym-library complex. Having been involved at the time in an unsuccessful campaign to convince the Villa administration to make their proposed



auditorium a state-of-the-art theatre (a story for another day), we felt some regret that our daughter had to graduate in this functional space that, though attractive enough, could have equally accommodated a trade show. We thought how nice it would have been for her to have received the Drama prize in the Grand Hall, a former ballroom within the school's original building, where she had performed on numerous occasions – to say nothing of where her mother had also appeared, as a student in the 1970s, and directed, a decade ago (see *QHN*, July 2005).

The Grand Hall is a dignified, old-world space, with huge mullioned windows opening to the sprawling grounds, quirky raised steps on three sides forming wrap-around tiers, and a highly-polished hardwood floor. Images from *Canadian Illustrated News* and *l'Opinion publique* from the 1870s show the governors-general and their consorts reviewing the Villa girls as they were presented in the Grand Hall. According to the 1872 *Journal of Education*, the Grand Hall was “hung with leafy festoons and wreaths of verdure” to counter the day's intense heat. The graduates, “standing as they do on the threshold of womanhood,” were twenty in number, two of whom were awarded prizes: one for “good conduct” and the other for “domestic economy.” The girls expected to exchange “the quiet joys and tasks of convent life for the graver cares and duties of woman's lot.” Obvious sea changes notwithstanding, much in that statement remains true today.

Without wishing to turn back any clocks, we felt there was something

lacking in having to say goodbye to five years at Villa Maria in the school's flashy modern wing. History was forgotten. Entering through glass doors and descending the stone-and-steel steps and sitting in pre-fab chairs, we had no sense that we were connected to one of Quebec's most distinguished historical properties. Indeed, while the Villa pays lip service to this history on its website, it makes little of the heritage it bestows on its students. There was no sense, for instance, that the Class of 2014 was part of some larger tradition, that the essence of generations of students stood silently behind them. By contrast, Traf, which has relatively little surviving architecture from its early days, lets you know it's a place with a pedigree. Traf's gym is basically just a gym, but the ceremony there was suffused with respect for ancient rite. All the pomp and Harry Pottery paraphernalia served to confirm it.

The irony is that Villa Maria oozes history. Much of it is dark and spooky, the way kids like it. Last year, my

daughter eagerly signed up to be a tour guide, so she could take the incoming students (“first years,” as they are known at Hogwarts) through all the creepy corners of the Villa's over-two-centuries-old “Centre” building and adjoining wings. She pointed out the ghost's footprint on one step. She showed them the place on a stairway where numerous teachers and caretakers over the years have heard distant sobbing when clearly no one was around. She paused in one narrow corridor where there is a glass case containing a small portrait of a student who had died a century earlier, a portrait which, if touched, reputedly brought instant death. In the grounds, she drew their attention to the pond, now covered up, where two little girls had once drowned, and to the lonely corner where the writer Hubert Aquin shot himself. The latter incident came not from the school's official lore but from her mother's own account of the buzz in 1977 when the body was found. Less sensationally, she also passed onto our daughter the tales of exploring the school after hours and discovering boxes in the attic (formerly the dormitories) which contained diaries written by nineteenth-century boarders. I'd like to know where that stuff is now.

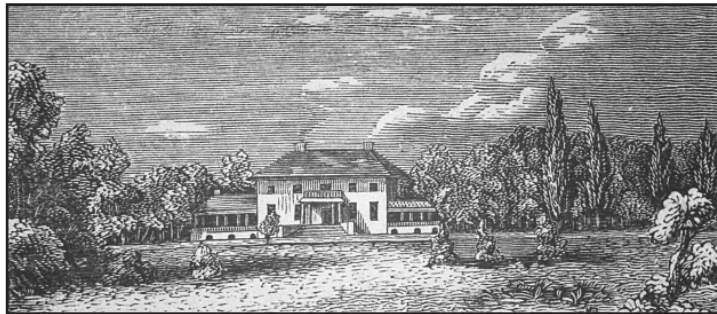
My daughter is also aware of the Villa's more public history as the home of James Monk, attorney-general and chief justice in Lower Canada, who built the mansion he called Monklands in 1803. When he died in 1826 he bequeathed the home to his niece Eliza, along with a great deal of property throughout British North America. As her uncle's constant companion in his waning years, Eliza was well-read, well-



Top: The Marquis of Lorne and Princess Louise in the Grand Hall, Villa Maria. *Canadian Illustrated News*, February 8, 1873.

Bottom: The Grand Hall, Villa Maria, 1895. Photo: McCord Museum, V1EW-2708.

traveled, and well-versed in all the social graces, but she apparently spurned the attentions of young men of rank in favour of a poor army officer, George William Aubrey. The couple lived in the Montreal mansion, at least during the late 1820s when George sent correspondence with “Monklands” on the letterhead, but after Eliza’s death in 1843 he began looking for a tenant. One immediately appeared in the form of the British government, which expanded the original house as a suitable residence for the governor-general when Montreal became the capital of the new Province of Canada in the spring of 1844. After brief tenures by the dying Charles Metcalfe and the surly Charles Cathcart, Monklands’ most glamorous resident arrived in January 1847: James Bruce, the 8th Earl of Elgin. Still in his mid-thirties, with a new young wife (Mary Louisa Lambton, daughter of Lord Durham, no less), Elgin made his mark in Canadian history by being an autocrat by training and disposition who nevertheless yielded to democracy when he knew it was right to do so. In April 1849 (according to Villa lore but unsubstantiated by any other source I can identify), an angry mob, furious at his decision to pass the Rebellion Losses Bill and fresh from burning down Parliament, stormed up the grounds of Monklands only to be calmed by a brave servant who announced that Lady Elgin was about to give birth and needed quiet. Victor Bruce, who would become the 9th Earl, was born a couple of weeks later but would spend his childhood in Toronto



and Quebec City, the capital having moved out of Montreal in disgrace following the riots. Monklands was leased for a few years to hotelier Joseph Compain, who turned the mansion into a 60-room hotel, restaurant, “Tea Gardens and Pleasure Ground.” Even though he provided an omnibus service from town, Monkland’s Hotel was far from the action and did not prosper during a particularly bleak economy. By 1854, Compain called it quits. The property was then purchased by the Congrégation de Notre-Dame, who were looking for a location for a girl’s school.

160 years later, my daughter climbed the stage of Villa Maria High School in her white gown and high heels, and came down it with a chapter of her life closed behind her. If the spot where she gained her diploma was not actually a part of the original historic Monklands (lying as it does some 200 feet to the north-east), it was probably where Eliza Monk and Louisa Lambton and Compain’s hotel guests took their afternoon tea in the shade. It may well have been a spot beloved by the diary-writing girls, or the two who drowned, or whoever made the footstep and the wail up the stairway. In any case, history stands behind my own child and propels

her forward, as it does all others who take this step into the future.

I wish them all the humility to let themselves be buoyed by what came before, even as they stare resolutely, blinkered by hope and confidence, at what is still ahead.

Letters

Enforced leisure a blessing for heritage

In your highly complimentary review of my book *A Mind at Sea*, you applauded the title’s *double-entendre*: Henry Fry possessed a masterful knowledge of ships and the sea; then his mercantile career was terminated by mental illness – a mind differently at sea.

Unmentioned in your review is the fact that by 1889 Henry had largely recovered his sanity. He entered into productive activity as an author. He wrote essays on free trade and protectionism, tariff reciprocity, and troubled Canada-U.S. relations – papers that a hundred years later would find their way into the University of Toronto’s Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library. He wrote an article for *Canadian Magazine* on Quebec shipbuilding. Once Lloyd’s agent for the St. Lawrence River, he wrote an authoritative history of the insurance market. He wrote *The History of North Atlantic Steam Navigation* (published in London in 1896), a resource still used by maritime historians. And he wrote *Reminiscences of a Retired Shipowner*, an account of his years as one of Quebec’s leading merchants, without which *A Mind at Sea* could not have been written.

The half-dozen final years of Henry’s life unleashed a torrent of writing that, paradoxically, might never have happened if his mental illness had not driven him to what he called “a period of enforced leisure.”

John Fry, Katonah, N.Y.



Jim Caputo's Mystery Objects Challenge #5



Last issue we ran a photo submitted by Jim Caputo of Heritage Gaspé with an object for readers to identify, with the following clue:

What does this item represent? Please be specific. It would have been found in Quebec homes post-1840.

The answers we received were not specific enough, unfortunately. "A cross" it may well have been, but it was the particular rationale behind the cross that we were looking for. And what was the post-1840 context?

The correct answer is: a **Temperance Cross**. The temperance movement took off in Quebec after society settled down in the wake of the 1837-38 Rebellion and the Union of Canada. It appealed to both Protestants and Catholics, although Protestants would not have tended to have crosses in their homes.

Here is another instalment in the Mystery Objects challenge, a photo of the mystery object and a clue from Jim:

Though this is an early form, you probably have seen this item in many antique shops - particularly in agricultural areas.

Send your answers to: editor@qahn.org.



GO TO JAIL

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GUIDED TOURS

Heritage news from around the province

by Jim Caputo

Readers of the Summer 2014 "Heritage News from around the province" by Jim Caputo will be interested in the following updates.

Gaspé

Gaspé: the Birthplace of Canada

My wife, sister and I attended the open house of this event.

I enjoyed reading about the early history of Gaspé and meeting the bilingual interpreters, some in costume. Jacques Cartier was my favourite. I was convinced that he had just come from France.

The English-speaking community (and I am one of this group) should be proud that the historic English Gaspé entrepreneurship is well represented (Bakers Hotel especially), thanks to the efforts of the organizing committee. We should also be pleased that the celebrations feature the English, French and Aboriginal language groups. Greeters are bilingual and signage is in both official languages. Bravo to Fabien Sinnett and his team! I enjoyed myself and am proud that my wife Carolyn and I have taken an active role in this venture.



Generation Sacrificed

Tom Eden's "Generation Sacrificed: The Gaspé Soldiers of the Great War, 1914-1918" focused on Gaspé soldiers who made the ultimate sacrifice during World War I. His presentation was well attended and Tom did an extraordinary job in outlining his exhibit to those in attendance. His mastery of the material was extraordinary, as he had no need for notes – he just spoke from the heart. After Tom's presentation, people had the opportunity to visit the Gaspé Legion's War Museum, which now will include all the information and pictures that Tom presented over the week and has now donated to be part of the Museum's permanent exhibit. Paul Almond was present for a signing of his latest book, *The Gunner*.



Pioneer Days

Gaspésians had the opportunity again this summer to meet and greet at Pioneer Days – Fort Haldimand Camp. Along with a wine and cheese evening, there were activities for both the old and young, handicrafts and exhibits. Weston White and his volunteers have once again made Pioneer Days the success that it was.

Homecomings are special events. The primary importance of these activities, as is the case with Pioneer Days, is to bring together people with a Gaspé connection. Even those who have never lived in Gaspé, but whose families lived here in generations past, are returning "home." They get to meet relatives they may have not had the opportunity to meet for many years, or perhaps have never known. These meetings and sharings are what make homecomings special. I always look forward to Pioneer Days and I hope they continue for many years to come.

Douglstown Irish Week

Once again, Douglstown Irish Week was a major success. Lots of good music and workshops galore. I presented a workshop on Felix O'Hara, an important early settler of Gaspé. It was so nice to be Irish for a week.

One particular highlight was a cod fish supper fol-



lowed by the musical group, The Mussels (Les Moules Marinières), who performed their special kind of folk music, their interpretation of songs of the sea in English and French, for a very enthusiastic audience.

All indications are that this is one Gaspé event that will endure for a long time. Thanks to Luc Chaput and his helpers for their efforts in keeping this activity alive.

The John Patterson Family Reunion

This summer in Gaspé, I had the opportunity to attend this group's Symposium at the Gaspé Museum, animated by John Patterson of New Brunswick. It was both interesting and informative, and it was a privilege for me to attend this event since, in genealogical terms, I am the fifth great-grandson of the original John. I was able to meet local descendants of this John residing in Gaspé, as well as others from afar.

During this particular activity, John (the current one), an accomplished genealogist, presented a captivating talk on his years of research and his attempts to find the origins of his elusive ancestor before his arrival in Gaspé in the mid-eighteenth century. Relating his tale of trial and error, John showed that such research can be an extremely complicated process with many twists and turns. Also very interesting was the talk on DNA testing as a tool of the genealogist.

The Magdalen Islands

Heritage Grosse Ile

This group continues its efforts to save their parish hall from demolition. The property is owned by the Anglican Diocese of Quebec and it is in their power to demolish this building or save it. To date, this heritage group has been very successful in their efforts to solicit money to fund their cause. One way that they are raising funds is to sell memberships to their group (\$5.00). If you believe that this building should be saved you can contact the diocese and make your concerns known. For further information, please contact Byron Clark at: bclark380@hotmail.com.

Western Quebec

Scotch Road Cemetery

There was concern that the road leading to the cemetery (Scotch Road) would be permanently closed by the municipality. My wife and I attended a council meeting to support the cemetery association on behalf of QAHN, where this issue was discussed. At present, the road is passable, but its future is certainly up in the air. Cecil McPhee and his association continue to do a fine job of preserving the Scottish heritage of this area.



The Grenville Canal

As last reported, the canal, in sections, was in great disrepair. On a visit to the canal on August 30, I saw that parts of the canal that were sinking into the water were in the same condition as they were earlier this year – perhaps in worse shape.

Montérégie

The Sir John Johnson Burial Vault

My wife and I had the privilege of being present for the dedication and re-consecration of the Johnson Burial Vault at Mount Saint-Grégoire (formerly Mount Johnson).

The burial vault, which contained the remains of Sir John Johnson, Lady Johnson and other family members, was vandalized some years ago and the bones of the family were scattered around the area; some parts were taken by vandals, including all the skulls.

Through the efforts of the United Empire Loyalists' Association of Canada, the Sir John Johnson Branch of the UELAC, the Société de restauration du patrimoine Johnson, and others, the vault was restored and the remains of the Johnson family were enclosed in the new vault.

The event was well attended, including people from as far away as British Columbia. The Quebec Anglophone Heritage Network was represented by JoAnn Oberg-Müller, Vice President of QAHN.



Remains restored

Sir John Johnson is returned to the vault

by Michel Racicot

On Saturday, August 23, 2014, at Mount Johnson (today Mont Saint-Grégoire), in a ceremony attended by more than 125 people, the remains of Sir John Johnson and members of his family were buried in the newly-restored vault. This vault, accidentally bulldozed 57 years ago, has now been restored.

The ceremony was opened by words of welcome by Michelle Durand, representing CIME Haut-Richelieu (Centre d'interprétation du milieu écologique), an organization dedicated to the preservation of Mont Saint-Grégoire. CIME is the owner of the site and without their support and their help the project of restoring the burial vault of the Johnson family could not have been done.

The remains of Sir John Johnson and Lady Johnson were brought to the vault by a funeral procession led by Josh Lord, a piper from the 78th Fraser Highlanders, followed by members of King's Royal Yorkers, the 84th Royal Highland Emigrants and members of the Masonic Grand Lodge of Quebec. The funeral urn was carried by Claude Neveu, President of the Société de restauration du patrimoine Johnson, Bonnie L. Schepers UE, President of The United Empire Loyalists' Association of Canada (UELAC) and two former UELAC Presidents, Frederick H. Hayward UE and Robert C. McBride UE. Closing the funeral procession was the Venerable Peter D. Hannen UE who conducted the Blessing Ceremony.

Two speakers were invited to talk about Sir John Johnson. First, UELAC President Bonnie L. Schepers UE spoke of the importance of Sir John as a Loyalist Leader during the American Revolution. Forced to leave his home in the Province of New York, Sir John came with his family to Montreal in 1776, whereupon he was commissioned to form the first battalion of the King's Royal Regiment of New York. At the end of the revolution, Sir John took under his guardianship hundreds of Loyalists in exile and helped them settle in what is now Eastern Ontario.

The second speaker was the Right Worshipful Brother Dr. Jacques G. Ruelland, Past District Deputy Grand Master and Past Grand Secretary of the Grand Lodge of Quebec. He gave a very informative talk about Sir John Johnson as a Freemason. For most of his adult life, Sir John was a Mason; towards the end of

his life, he was Provincial Grand Master of Quebec.

In November 2009, Sir John Johnson Centennial Branch UELAC proposed that the United Loyalists' Association of Canada adopt the vault restoration as a 2014 Legacy Project. On March 5, 2011, UELAC accepted the proposition and approved a major grant to support the project.

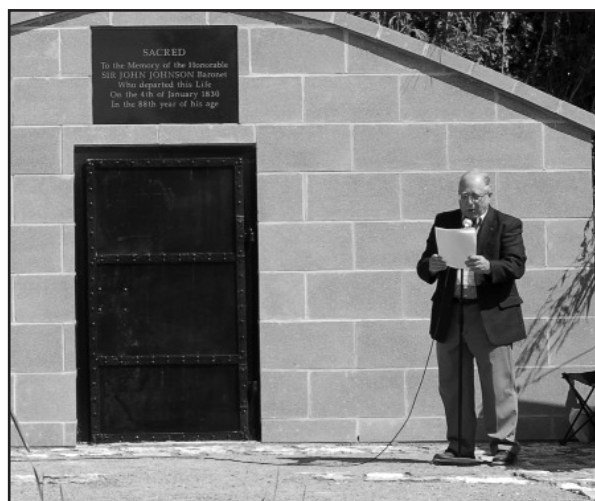
Frederick H. Hayward UE, 2014 UELAC Centennial Celebration Chair, addressed the audience about the importance of supporting the restoration of the vault. "One of the key directives in our mission statement is to preserve, promote and celebrate the history and traditions of the Loyalist epoch in Canadian history," he declared.

The restoration of the burial vault of Sir John Johnson and of members of his family has been the top priority project of la Société de restauration du patrimoine Johnson, of la Société d'histoire du Haut-Richelieu, and of Sir John Johnson Centennial Branch UELAC. The President of the Société de restauration du patrimoine Johnson, Claude Neveu, gave the highlights of the history of the restoration project and presented all the people who, through the years, contributed to the project. "The Société de restauration du patrimoine Johnson was created in September 1998, after two years of reflections, at the request of Jean-Paul Lasnier, past mayor of Sainte-Brigide. Lasnier assembled around him collaborators of great talent, Richard Eldridge, Brian Allen, Charles Harbec, Marie Deschênes, Nicole Poulin, Michel Daunes, Adelaide Lanktree, Raymond Ostiguy, Gerald Thomas and myself, Claude Neveu."

The speakers were followed by the Blessing Ceremony conducted by the Venerable Peter D. Hannen UE. As the two urns containing the remains of Sir John Johnson and members of his family were put inside the restored vault, a three-volley salute was fired by the members of

the King's Royal Yorkers and the 84th Royal Highland Emigrants. Finally, the door of the vault was closed and locked by Claude Neveu. The group retired a short distance down the road to the Érablière Charbonneau to enjoy a delicious buffet.

Michel Racicot is a member of the Sir John Johnson Centennial Branch UELAC.



Michel Racicot speaking at the August 23 ceremony before the restored vault. Photo: Jim Caputo.

The Wandering Minstrel revisited

by Rod MacLeod

He may not be terribly well known in southern Quebec – or in much of the world, for that matter – but Harry Norris has made a distinct mark on the pages of the *Quebec Heritage News*. In large part that is my fault, having decided that writing about the man was a way of both exploring a little-known but influential personality and indirectly advertising the activities of the Montreal West Operatic Society (MWOS).

My “Harry Norris: Montreal West’s Wandering Minstrel” (*QHN*, March-April 2009) is a biographical essay with an ad for the upcoming production of *Princess Ida* shamelessly plugged into it. But other writers, with no apparent ulterior motives, have made references to Norris within the pages of this magazine, namely Sandra Stock, Carol Martin and Janet Allingham. Clearly the man had an impact, and is deserving of a more careful study.

Such a study has finally emerged in the form of a short but well-crafted biography by New Zealand music historian Peter Downes: *A Gilbert and Sullivan Man: The musical life of Harry Norris*. Downes traces the career of Norris from his origins in New Zealand to his arrival in England in 1909 and subsequent employment as principal violinist and later music director for the D’Oyly Carte Opera Company, which had first produced the works of Gilbert and Sullivan and has pretty much continued to produce them ever since.

Downes emphasizes Norris’ critical involvement with the company, particularly as the baton behind most of the earliest recordings of these operas, while observing how often the director’s ef-

forts went unrecognized by his employers. Little wonder that Norris opted to



leave the company in 1929 and settle in Montreal, where he and his wife Doris Hemingway (herself a D’Oyly Carte alumna) forged second careers as music teachers (private and at McGill) and the artistic team at the helm of several fledgling local opera companies – including the one in Montreal West that I had written about.

Indeed, Downes had read my article, and contacted me for information on the cultural scene in 1930s Montreal – which resulted in a footnote reference to the *QHN*. He also consulted Margaret Quinlan, the MWOS archivist, and Janet Allingham, daughter of long-time MWOS performer Hector Chandler.

Having grown up with MWOS, Janet provided the kind of personal detail that enriches any biography – detail she outlined in the March-April 2010 *QHN*: “Music, Relationships and Community: A childhood with the Montreal West Operatic Society.” As a child, Janet knew, and was a little in awe of, Harry Norris, and took piano lessons from Doris.

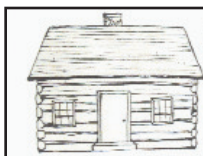
The March-April 2010 *QHN* also contained a letter from Peter Downes asking for information on Norris’ possible involvement in the Montreal Junior Symphony Orchestra. Appropriately, a former member of the MJSO, Carol Martin, responded and provided useful background on Norris’ involvement in the development of the music curriculum within Montreal’s Protestant school system and his influence on the MJSO’s director Lewis Elvin, who also immigrated to Montreal from England in the late 1920s. Norris figures in the article Carol subsequently wrote about Elvin in the Autumn 2012 *QHN*: “Montreal’s Music Man: Lewis V. Elvin and the Junior Symphony Orchestra.”

Norris influenced singers and musicians throughout Montreal from the 1930s to the 1960s when he and Doris retired back to England. His energies extended well beyond the city, however – notably to Dunham, Quebec, a 60-mile train journey which he took every week to teach at St. Helen’s School for Girls.

Sandra Stock, a St. Helen’s alumna, recalls particularly the Gilbert and Sullivan productions that Harry and Doris directed (he the music, she the staging, as they did for MWOS and the other operatic societies in the Montreal area), performed every year at the school’s closing ceremonies in June.

These memories feature in Sandra’s “Traditional Education, Changing Times: St Helen’s School, 1875-1972” (*QHN*, Summer 2013).

Harry Norris got around. *A Gilbert and Sullivan Man* indicates just how far.



SAUVER LA MAISON
PAUL HOLLAND KNOWLTON
SAVE THE HOUSE

One of the oldest log dwellings in the Eastern Townships, the 1815 Paul Holland Knowlton house requires your financial help to be successfully restored and moved to the

grounds of the Brome County Historical Society Museum (BCHS) for all to enjoy. The target amount is \$120,000 and moving day is October 17, 2014.

Please make your donation by cheque payable to the Townshippers’ Foundation, marking on the memo line “PH Knowlton House.” Please provide your name, address and email and indicate if the donation is to be anonymous. Mail to: Townshippers’ Foundation, 100-257 Queen, Sherbrooke, Qc, J1M 1K7.

WHY CRY WHEN AN OLD BUILDING DIES?

by Linda Buzzell



In an era when so much human and animal suffering calls out for our compassion and action, why should we care about a few dying historical buildings? Yet this is just what brought me to tears when I casually googled my childhood address in a small village in the Eastern Townships and was devastated to see the crimes that have been committed against a beautiful grey-stoned home and church erected in 1841. Appalled by the degradation, neglect and outright vandalism I saw in the photos and video, I was seized by the need to find out what tragedy had befallen Trinity Anglican Church and its rectory. (Video: <http://vimeo.com/37679859>.)

The painting by Canadian landscape artist Randolph Howe that graces my office in Santa Barbara, California, depicts these lovely old buildings in the Iberville section of Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu as I remember them: thick ancient stone walls, gabled roof and antique-paned windows -- all surrounded by lush grounds and a historic cemetery where many of the English-speaking Victorian inhabitants of the village found their rest.

Surely there are good reasons for not only saving the whales and our environment but also the jewels of our human cultural heritage around the world? So many historical buildings and monuments are at risk, like these poor orphans. They have important stories to tell to future generations that will be lost if they crumble away.

So what are the tales that Trinity Church and its rectory could share with fellow Quebecers, Canadians and others around the planet? These forlorn stone monuments speak to one era of the storied history of the Richelieu Valley as it transitioned from First Peoples to French sovereignty and then, after the 1759 English Conquest, to Great Britain. French explorer Samuel de Champlain had travelled down the nearby river to Lake Champlain. Not too long before these buildings were erected, in 1775 American revolutionaries had travelled up the river in efforts to conquer Quebec – and again in 1812. And these stout stone walls have seen more recent changes: Canada's eventual independence from Great Britain and the

Quiet Revolution of the 1960s that saw the renaissance of French culture and sovereignty in Quebec.

Will the stones that have seen it all soon tumble to earth or is it possible to find a way to preserve and perhaps repurpose their sturdy shelter? The previous owner, the Diocese of Montreal, sold the property to the city of Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu a decade ago. The province of Quebec has offered to fund half of the restoration costs as part of its efforts to preserve Quebec's patrimony but the city has still not found money in its coffers to save these ancient members of the community. A small group called Les Amis de l'Eglise Trinity (Friends of Trinity Church) is trying to motivate action. In the era of recycling everything, couldn't these sturdy survivors of countless Quebec winters and summers become home to twenty-first century residents or community organizations?

How will this story end? I don't know. But I do know that my dreams are now haunted by the spectre of my poor home, dark and decrepit with no one caring enough to heal its wounds. And I wonder how many other historical properties all over Quebec also suffer from such neglect, and how this affects the feelings of those who see them (of whatever ethnicity) in person or via the Internet. Those of us who once loved special homeplaces that are now abandoned are experiencing heartbreak.



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THE LOST TRAILS OF PAUL D'ALLMEN

by Joseph Graham

Jackrabbit Johannsen has been celebrated for his dedication to skiing, but he was far from the only person out in the woods developing trails. Another pioneer, too long unsung, cut, marked and documented many trails in the Laurentians, and started before the famous Maple Leaf Trail was conceived. His maps survive, but for the most part his trails have disappeared beneath the developing communities between Sainte-Anne-des-Lacs and Saint-Sauveur, or have lost their identity, having been absorbed into other trail systems. Nothing is named in Paul d'Allmen's memory, yet he was present, not just in skiing, but also when his generation was called upon to go to war. Most of us have stories of ancestors like d'Allmen, stories of people who arrived in Canada like unwanted plants pulled from a garden and thrown to the side but determined to survive in the new soil. Some had easier starts than others. Paul d'Allmen was one of the others.

Elizabeth Schurch von Allmen had to carefully examine her options in 1893 after the death of her husband Fritz. Living in Interlaken in the canton of Bern in Switzerland, a region that had not yet discovered its modern vocation as a premier tourist destination, she lacked the resources to properly provide for her 10 children. She took the drastic step of leaving

what had been home to the von Allmen family for over six centuries and moved her family to Geneva. Even there, she could not provide for her family but she discovered that she could emigrate and hopefully send enough resources home to sustain the children. Elizabeth accepted a position for herself with a wealthy family from England and soon departed, leaving her teenage daughter, Emma, in charge of the younger children.

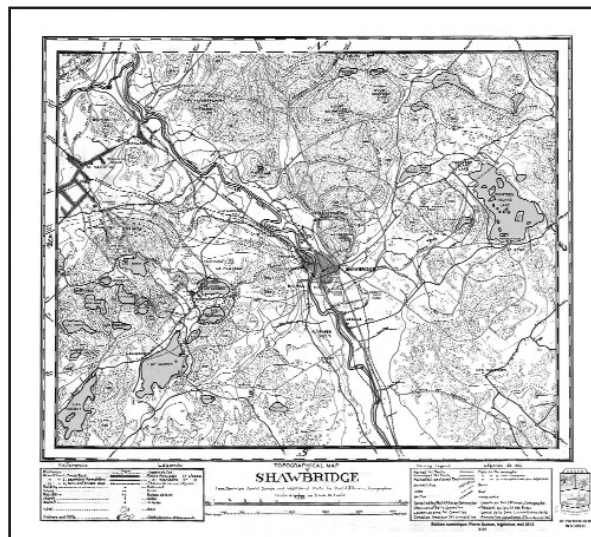
While some of the older kids adapted to their new life in Geneva, others, including Paul, followed their mother. The Swiss government had a policy of encouraging emigration as a means of reducing the human burden on the Swiss infrastructure. The local council offered the equivalent of six month's wages for anyone who emigrated, but if an emigrant returned, he would have to pay the money back with interest. It was a cold, hard policy aimed bluntly at reducing the numbers of society's most needy, effectively buying their citizenship. Six months' wages must have seemed like a considerable grubstake to someone who could not find any wages at all. Elizabeth,

their mother, had earned the respect of her British employer and could help her children find work, so she could boldly encourage them to leave. She found her daughter Martha a position as the nanny for the Holt family of Montreal. Paul went to work for his mother's employer, and within a year was hired by the Drummonds, also of Montreal.

Paul von Allmen arrived in Canada in 1910 and became the butler at the Drummond home on Sherbrooke Street in Montreal. Being only 16 years old, he was soon as much a part of the family as he was a servant. He must have idolized his employer's dashing son Guy, who volunteered for service when the Great War began in 1914. Guy enlisted in the 5th Royal Highlanders. Today, it is hard to understand the enthusiasm of the young volunteers for that war, but men went to war; they had done so in every generation. War had simply become industrialized like everything else—except the people.

When Paul turned twenty-one he married a co-worker in the Drummond household named Rhoda Clark and his life appeared to be taking a turn for the better. Perhaps the Von Allmen family would be able to establish itself in this new soil and to thrive, bringing that Swiss determination from Interlaken into this new, young society, the New World.

The Old World, though, still governed the New. When the Canadian armada set sail in October 1914, it was the largest military force that had ever crossed the Atlantic. A lot of the soldiers, Canadian volunteers, would participate in one of the most horrific battles in the history of war. By late April 1915, both German and Allied forces were locked in conflict in the two-dozen kilometres between Ypres and Passchendaele, digging themselves into defensive trenches, churning the ground into a sea of mud. To break the stalemate, the Germans introduced the use of poison gas to the battlefield. The first victims, soldiers of the French army, were overwhelmed, and, being unfamiliar with this new weapon, they retreated downwind—and therefore moved with the gas. They sustained heavy casualties, leaving the Canadians almost surrounded by numerically superior German forces. Incredibly, the concept of defeat or surrender did not occur to the isolated Canadians. Thanks to the quick thinking of the Canadian front-line doctor, A. C. Scrimger, the stubborn Canadians adapted to the gas attacks by holding urine-



filled kerchiefs over their faces. They rapidly replaced a series of fallen officers, advanced on the German positions, and regained the line. At one point, when a particularly popular leader was killed, a cry of anguish could be heard and the soldiers pushed on, the deaths making them more determined. As romantic as it might sound today, these men were trudging through thigh-deep mud and the abandoned corpses of soldiers in a garish nightmare world of barbed wire and exploding shells. Most were in a permanent state of shock and death dogged their every movement. Captain Guy Drummond was killed working to help the French re-establish their line. The worthy and the unworthy fell without distinction.

When the news of Guy's death got back to them, Lady Drummond closed down her home and Paul von Allmen presented himself for enlistment. To his surprise, Paul learned that his very name, von Allmen, centuries old and meaning 'public pastureland' in the mountains of Switzerland, was too German. He had to change it for his own safety. Dropping the prefix "von" and adding a "d'," on May 15, Paul d'Allmen enlisted in the 2nd University Company of McGill.

In November 1915, d'Allmen fell victim to influenza, the killer that took the most lives during that war, but he recovered. He was wounded a year later at the Battle of the Somme, but again returned to active duty. Another year later, he was wounded in the First Battle of Passchendaele on October 19, but again returned to the front lines. Finally, he was reported killed on the first day of the Second Battle of Passchendaele on October 30, one of the most vicious battles of the war, and notice was sent to his wife, Rhoda.

Back home in Montreal, Rhoda had endured her own hardships, losing their two-day-old daughter. It may have been receiving the news of the death of her husband that finally broke her resistance; she also contracted influenza. Cared for by d'Allmen's mother, both women suffered the burden of the loss, but soon it was followed with a message that Paul had survived. Initially, placed with other corpses, he was listed as dead, but on October 31 someone saw him twitch, and he was rescued and sent home.

A part of d'Allmen's skull had to be replaced with metal. When Lady Drummond later offered to pay his tuition at McGill University, he tried to concentrate, but in spite of a solid grounding in school in Switzerland, he was unable to. As he described it, he had forgotten all he had learned. That part of his brain had been irrevocably damaged. While he was recovering in the Ste. Anne Military Hospital, his wife Rhoda passed away.

After the war and his recovery, d'Allmen found a position with Montreal Light Heat and Power Consolidated, a firm in which the Holts, the employer of his sister Martha, were founding partners. It is a testimonial to the impression that the von Allmens made upon their various employers that he was offered a job at all. He had been discharged from the military as unfit, and had to learn to walk again. Rising to the challenge, he became involved in yoga and became an expert canoeist. His second wife, also named Rhoda, was eleven years younger than he was, and they eloped in 1926. He certainly wasn't a catch in the eyes of her family. She herself was raised by her aunt and uncle, and was rejected by her adoptive parents because of her decision to marry. But they must have had an influence on her as she got cold feet after the wedding and fled from

her husband. Three months after their marriage, Paul came to find her, having secured a place for them to live, and they reconciled. When their first child was born in 1927, her adoptive parents forgave her and became more involved in their lives.

Paul's mobility improved over the course of long walks with his children, although he still needed crutches. He also taught himself nutrition, discovering what he could and could not eat. He knew his survival was a miracle, and that he had to look after himself with great care. Those who knew him marvelled at his need to meditate, and knew better than to disturb him when he retreated into a trance-like state in order to preserve his health.

Many Montrealers first began to go to the country for the summer because it was cheaper than staying in Montreal. They would give up their city flats when the children got out of school and rent very inexpensive lodgings from a farmer. These summer homes boasted no plumbing, but because they were situated in farming country, food would be reasonably priced. The children could run wild, finding new friends or even making themselves useful, and being free of the city also meant cool, quiet nights and clean air. The d'Allmens came north that way, with Paul staying in the city in cheap, simple rooms in Verdun, and taking the train up north for the weekends.

Like many others, the d'Allmens became attached to the Laurentians. As they prospered, they found a home in Sainte-Anne-des-Lacs, and soon came up north in the winter also. Having grown up in the mountains of Switzerland, and given his difficulties, Paul cherished the stability of skis, and found peace cutting through maple stands or crossing a snow-covered farmer's field on the side of a hill. He soon began to map the trails he travelled.

In 1931, he produced his first map, calling it simply 'Laurentian Ski Map.' Carefully drawn in India ink on a sheet a bit shy of four square feet, representing about 300 square miles, it shows Sainte-Agathe in the top left corner (northwest limit), Mont-Rolland dead centre, and encompasses the area south of Lesage in the bottom right (southeast limit). It includes Sainte-Marguerite-du-Lac-Masson, Sainte-Adele, Saint-Sauveur, Morin Heights, Shawbridge, Val-Morin, Val-David, Sainte-Marguerite-Station and Saint-Hippolyte, complete with the roads, railways, contours, miles of ski trails with their names, and about ten resorts. The names on the map include Lover's Leap, Devil's Jump, Cote du Sac au Dos, and, intriguingly, Trail of the Fallen Women, a name that seems associated with nothing more than a couple of amusing spills. Skiers would recognize most of the resort names – Chalet Cochand, Laurentian Lodge Club, Bellevue and others. While there is a trail called Johansen (sic), and the trails interconnect right across the territory, there is not yet any trail called the Maple Leaf. It would come later, as Paul d'Allmen would eventually draw more than 40 such maps of the region. His son, Fred, still a resident of Sainte-Anne-des-Lacs, can account for 43, and there are likely others that were lost or destroyed. Some of the maps were hung in railroad stations to guide skiers, and one was copied and made into a place mat for The Pub in Saint-Sauveur. Many of the maps are signed *Paul d'Allmen, Chairman of the Trails Committee of the Laurentian Zone*.

D'Allmen used a compass and an altimeter, basing the maps on aerial and geodesy information. He walked and skied

the trails, marking and cutting, and in the process left us documents of a much different time, when people skied through pristine woodlands and open fields with a specific destination in mind. One of his maps shows Saint-Sauveur with every street and house along with the owners' names. His maps were not a business venture but a passion, and he did not encourage their commercialization. His son, having inherited a bit of his artistic flare, illustrated some with trains, buses and skiers, and today he and his wife are the custodians of this unique heritage collection.

Paul d'Allmen died on May 3, 1981, having spent decades mapping, marking and skiing trails. Some of his maps have been given to the Laurentian Ski Museum. There are many great names associated with skiing: Émile Cochand, Hermann 'Jackrabbit' Johannsen, the Wurtle sisters, Gault Gillespie – a familiar list. It is time we add Paul d'Allmen and acknowledge his contributions to our skiing history.

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

Sources:

Sir Max Aitken, M.P., *Canada in Flanders: The Official Story of the Canadian Expeditionary Force*, 1916.

Canadian Armed Forces war records information and personal and ski history generously contributed by Fred and Shirley d'Allmen.



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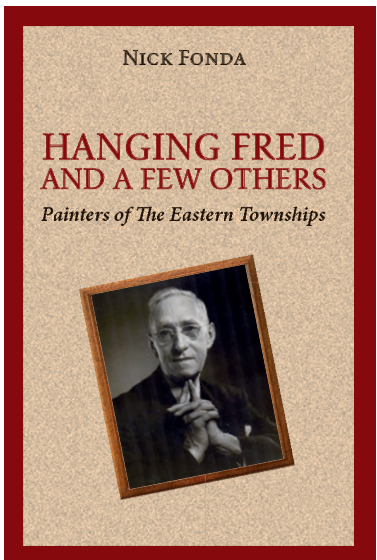


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2014 QAHN HERITAGE PHOTO CONTEST

1ST PRIZE

Atlantic Sportswear

by Katie Neudorf-Rotchin, Secondary 4-A

Trafalgar School for Girls, Montreal, Qc.

Teacher: Lori Litvack



A lot comes to mind when I think of my heritage. Although my parents and I were born and raised in Montreal, I still have a strong connection to my Polish roots. Shortly after the Second World War, my grandfather Peter Neudorf, fled from his home in Poland, and came here as an adolescent along with his mother and brother. During the war, he was kept in work camps, where he lost his father and sisters.

After arriving in Canada, my family struggled to make ends meet. My grandfather swept floors in textile factories to help his mother. There, he was inspired to strive high and create his own business. In 1951, my grandfather and great-uncle created Atlantic Sportswear, a ski/winter apparel manufacturing company.

Although the company started out small, it grew with time. After several years of hard work, Atlantic Sportswear became one of Quebec's largest outerwear manufacturers.

Until the 1980s, the clothing manufacturing industry was thriving immensely. Many immigrants were creating their own businesses. Like my grandfather, these companies began as clothing manufacturers. However, manufacturing became too expensive in Canada forcing many companies to close or turn to importing garments, as my grandfather did.

Although I have no interest in joining the textile industry, I still have a sentimental attachment to my grandfather's company. Not only does it inspire me to work hard, but it keeps our family closer

together as well. Presently, my aunt and several of my cousins have administrative posts at the company, working together every day to keep Atlantic running smoothly. Had they each taken separate career paths, our family's bond might not be as strong as it is now. Should my grandfather retire, I hope that he will be replaced by a family member, so that Atlantic could remain a family-run business.

2ND PRIZE

Editor's note: the 2nd Prize winner has been disqualified.

3RD PRIZE

The Ax

by Amanda Asbil, Secondary 3

Joliette High School, Joliette, Qc.

Teacher: Ms. Iachetta

This old, red ax is part of Quebec's cultural heritage. The wooden handle is smooth and worn. The red paint is chipping off the head of the ax and the steel has scars from its past. This ax has chopped so many pieces of wood and it is more reliable than a piece of machinery.

This ax is part of Quebec's cultural heritage because the timber industry played a major role back in the eighteenth century. When forests were cleared for farms and when railroads were built, axes were used. When log houses were in construction and boats were being built they used axes. The ax played a very important role in the way of life here in Quebec and in Canada.

It is also a symbol of our way of life here. When winter arrives, most of us heat our homes by burning wood in our wood stoves. Even with technology, we still heat our homes traditionally with a crackling fireplace.

The ax has contributed greatly to Quebec's heritage and continues to serve its purpose to this day.



HONOURABLE MENTION

The Necklace

by Gabriella Martucci, Secondary 2-A
Trafalgar School for Girls, Montreal, Qc.
Teacher: Lori Litvack



When I was born, I was extremely loud, had scarcely any hair and barely slept. My mother tells me that I was a difficult baby but my grandmother tells me I was well behaved and beautiful. Being my grandmother her opinion is immensely biased but flattering. The photo I have taken is a picture of a necklace that was passed down to me from my grandmother. This necklace was given to my grandmother by her mother (my great-grandmother) and survived the journey from Italy to Canada. The necklace gathered dust in the bottom of her jewelry box until she decided that I should have it. It is not one of my most versatile pieces nor my most worn but it is one of my favorites because of the fact that it has been passed down from my great-grandmother to my grandmother to me. It lets me feel connected to my great-grandmother as I imagine her saving up to buy the necklace and also my grandmother as I imagine her marrying my grandfather wearing it and keeping it safe for so many years. I feel very honoured to own such a beautiful piece with such a rich background that has survived so many years. When I was gifted this necklace I was much too young to appreciate it but when I see it hanging on my jewelry rack every day I feel proud to be its owner.

HONOURABLE MENTION

A Glimpse

by Andrea Fabris, Secondary 4
Trafalgar School for Girls, Montreal, Qc.
Teacher: Lori Litvack

This photograph was taken on a beautiful autumn day in the Lachine Rapids, Montreal. I have a clear memory of that moment, the air was chilly yet the sun shone brightly on the sparkling water. The constant hum of the river rushing with great power eventually became white noise, and I was able to pick out the songs of multiple birds that nested in the area.

This photograph portrays a simple yet beautiful view of the

rapids. The vegetation surrounding the water helps frame the image, yet still allows a faint glimpse of the buildings in the distance.



This photograph constitutes “heritage” because it is a wonderful example of how Quebec maintains a balance of urbanization and natural areas. This is a very important aspect of Quebec culture because many countries do not manage this difficult task.

Montreal’s devotion to protecting natural zones within the city is truly remarkable and should be acknowledged!

HONOURABLE MENTION

Let It Snow

by Shona Abtahi, Secondary 4
Trafalgar School for Girls, Montreal, Qc.
Teacher: Lori Litvack



This photograph represents the Canadian heritage in different ways. It was taken in Westmount on April 14, 2014. The model in the photograph is fully Canadian since her parents and herself were born in Canada. The ski goggles on the model’s head represent the sport of skiing. Skiing is the most popular sport during winter. The gloves that the model is wearing are the Olympic gloves that most people of Canada have. The winter Olympics is a very important event to Canadians since it consists of winter sports, which are the sports that many Canadians play especially hockey. The clothing the model is wearing is the winter fashion and how most Quebecois adolescents dress during winter. It represents winter since winter is the main season of Canada. This is how the photograph represents the Canadian heritage.

HONOURABLE MENTION

A Small Package

by Yoad Vered, Secondary 2
 West Island College, Dollard-des-Ormaux, Qc.
 Teacher: Philippe Marsolais



As well as natural resources, Quebec offers a variety of wildlife, found down on the ground and up in the sky. This photo, taken in the gardens of the Biodome, is a Monarch caterpillar feeding on milkweed. Soon, it will grow into a Monarch butterfly, one of the several local butterflies found in the region.

This crawler is also aware of changes that are coming, since every year the only plant it eats is being cut down or removed by humans. If all milkweed plants are removed, watching these crawlers hatch and majestically flap their bright wings for the very first time will be a thing of the past.

This butterfly indirectly symbolises how many things in the history of Quebec started off small and ended up as big successes. From its raging orange wings to its polka-dotted outline, this butterfly is one of the several natural gifts our province is lucky to have. Good things come in small packages.

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ISLAND OF STORIES CONTEST WINNERS, 2014

This year, QAHN partnered with the Quebec Federation of Home and School Associations (QFHSA) to invite Primary Cycle 3 and Secondary I-V students to participate in "An Island of Stories," an essay competition launched at the November 2013 QPAT Teachers Convention in Montreal. "An Island of Stories" gave students the opportunity to participate in an inter-generational activity that explored their family's history through the research of a special place/building/site on the island of Montreal and surrounding area. Essays submitted to this competition have all been entered on QAHN's website *Mapping the Mosaic*.

Mapping the Mosaic (<http://mapping.montrealmosaic.com>) is an innovative and easy-to-use mapping website that charts the collected memories of the English-speaking communities in the Greater Montreal area. It is a participatory website where users of all interests can share experiences and expertise of where their history happened, by pinning favourite stories to an interactive map of neighbourhoods throughout Montreal, Laval and off-island suburbs. We are pleased to reprint the two winning essays here.

1ST PRIZE

Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church

by Tommy Kokkinos, Grade 5
Selwyn House School, Westmount, Qc.

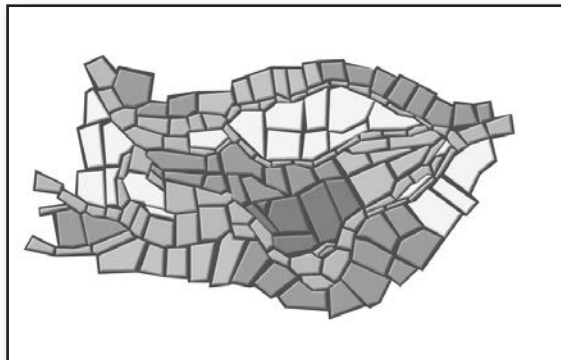
My dad was born in 1969 in Montreal. His parents were born in Greece. We follow the Greek Orthodox religion. My dad's favorite worship place was the Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox church. It was located at the corner of Sherbrooke and Clarke Street, downtown Montreal. The church was built in 1865, more than 100 years ago!

My dad was baptized there in 1970. He loved hanging out at the church. He used to go to church every Sunday. It was only ten minutes away from his home. His aunts and uncles were married there and his cousins were baptized there too. My dad would spend Easter and Christmas there with his family.

Did you know that the church had two floors? The second floor was the basement. That's where my dad played with his friends. The church had pictures of saints and lots of candles. There was a lot of gold!

Unfortunately the church burned down on January 1986. When my dad heard of the news, he was shocked, devastated and angry. He felt like a part of their home was gone. In 1997, the church got demolished. The Greek community did not have enough funds to rebuild the church.

Today there is a hotel called Hotel 10 at that same corner. It is very popular and a lot of tourists stay there. When my dad drives by, it makes him feel like there is something missing and it still feels very holy. The church was historical because it was an old church. It had a lot of history and it was important to my dad and many others.



2ND PRIZE

Rockland Shopping Centre

by Demetrios Adamakakis, Grade 5
Selwyn House School, Westmount, Qc.

Anna Derossis was born in Canada but her parents migrated from Greece. She is a mother of two children. My mom's favorite place is Rockland. She first went to Rockland when she was about 2-3 years. She still remembers going to Woolworths, Steinberg's Supermarket, and Brown's shoes. My mom lives in a different neighborhood today than when she grew up. Back then she used to walk to Rockland and it took about 30 min from her house, and 10 min from her grandparent's house. Today it takes about a 7 min walk or a 2-3 min drive from her house.

Presently Rockland is a large indoor shopping mall in TMR. It was originally built in 1959 as an open-air shopping mall. It is now in the same location but has been rebuilt and renovated over the years.

Today, Rockland is much larger and has a large food court. There are few original stores that are still there, most of the stores are different. One of the original brick walls which used to belong to The Bay can be seen from the parking lot. Not too many people know that. My mom's favorite stores used to be Brown's shoe store because there was a large slide that used to go from the first level to the basement of the store. She would run in the store and go on the slide even when we weren't buying shoes. She also loved to go to Woolworths, it was a five and dime store and we always used to find little trinkets. There was a dining counter and sometimes my mom would buy a soda or ice cream.

When my mom was growing up she went there about once a week as it was the only shopping mall in the area. So she went there to shop for house hold items, clothes, shoes and food. Rockland is very special to my mom because she remembers going as a little girl and now she goes with her children.

In the past, my mom had special moments at Rockland like: she had her ears pierced when she was 10 years old at The Bay. She could still remember it today. It was in the jewelry and accessories department. Actually one piercing was a little lower than the other but she never got it redone.

Now she also had special moments at Rockland like: she loved bringing her babies to Rockland. She still has fond memories of them in their strollers eating ice cream. She also loved bringing them to Chapters book store that now has closed and moved. One of the most special memories was when we bought our Yorkshire puppy at Safari pet store, about 18 months ago. This was the same pet store we would always have to visit with every trip to Rockland when the children were younger.

QAHN HERITAGE ESSAY CONTEST WINNERS, 2014



1ST PRIZE

Ogilvy's Christmas Display Window

by Elisa Vitovszki, Grade 5
Gardenvue Elementary School, Saint-Laurent, Qc
Teacher: Ms. Wong

Ogilvy's department store was opened in 1866 and is located at the corner of St. Catherine and de la Montagne Street in downtown Montreal since 1896.

In 1947, the owner asked a German toymaker to create two animated holiday scenes. The display is put up every year in the department store corner window from mid-November to mid-January. It takes one full week to put up the scene. The scenes include hundreds of animated stuffed animals doing a lot of different activities. Every year, the scene is switched from "Mill in the Forest" to the "Enchanted Village."

In the "Mill in the Forest" scene, there are plenty of animals such as frogs fishing, a porcupine playing the accordion, a rabbit on a swing, and many more. My favourite animal is the monkey shoeing the donkey.

The best part of the display is the feeling I get when I see it because I know that Christmas is coming and lots of Montrealers

feel the same way. If you walk by Ogilvy's during the Holiday season, you will see a lot of people, of all ages, staring at the display. Even now, with all the fast technology and Internet, everyone takes a few minutes out of their busy holiday shopping to stop and admire the display.

My mom remembers seeing the display when she was younger and now she has shared this Montreal tradition with me and one day I will bring my children to see it – a Montreal holiday landmark!

2ND PRIZE

A Life Changing Machine

by Amanda Lisi, Grade 5
Gardenvue Elementary School, Saint-Laurent, Qc
Teacher: Ms. Wong

Have you ever seen the roads covered in snow up to five metres high? Probably not. Well that is because we have our trusty friend the snow blower. The snow blower is an amazing machine. Without this genius machine winter would be a big mess especially in Quebec.

The inventor of the snow blower is Arthur Sicard. Arthur was born in Saint-Leonard-de-Port-Maurice, Quebec, on December 17, 1876. Arthur's father was a dairy farmer and Arthur would deliver the dairy products. In the winter it would be harder to drive in the roads full of snow. So Arthur thought about a machine that would clear the roads. Arthur saw the machine his neighbour used to cultivate the wheat in the fields. He was fascinated by the fast blades spinning on the machine that was used to cultivate the wheat. He thought he could make a machine very similar to clear the snow off the roads.

It took Arthur about three decades to make this machine he called the "Sicard snow remover snow blower." This machine was made in 1925. The machine was also modified by Canadian citizens. From then on it was a joy all through Quebec for the roads were no longer covered in snow.

Sadly, after inventing such a machine he died on September 13, 1946. Every winter we are reminded of him by his life changing machine.

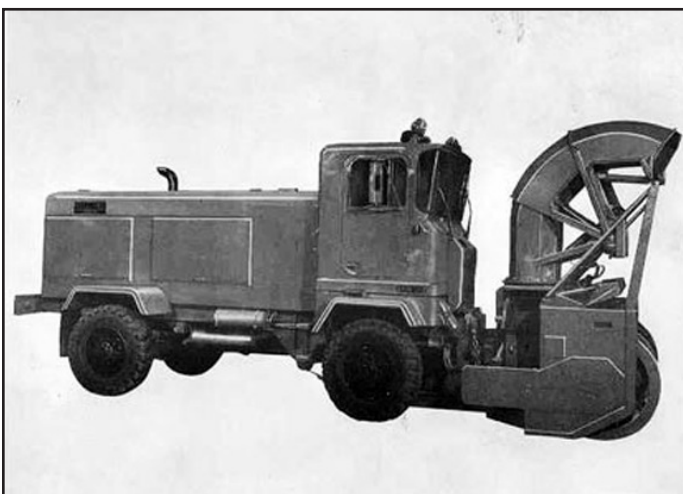
3RD PRIZE

CP Holiday Train

by Grant Anderson, Grade 6
Beacon Hill School, Kirkland, Qc.
Teacher: Chad Dixon

One tradition in my community that my family enjoys is the annual CP Holiday Train that rolls into Beaconsfield train station every November.

My family and I have been going for a few years. The train has 14 train cars beautifully lit up with Christmas lights. It travels across Canada collecting donations of non-perishable food and money for the needy.





In 2012, they collected almost \$5 million and 2.3 million pounds of food. The donations collected by CP are given to local food banks, so the donations are helping people in their own communities.

Along with the festive train cars, another reason to enjoy the Holiday Train is the snow. Last year, Santa arrived with the band The Odds. As the band played holiday songs, Santa walked around the huge crowd handing out candy canes. The radio station 92.5 The Beat was also there handing out "Beat Bags".

As my family and I made our way through the crowd last year to find a place to watch the show, we realized we were standing right behind my grade 5 teacher, Mme. Lafrance, and her family.

Even though the temperature was very cold, it didn't stop hundreds of people from my community from supporting a good cause and having a good time!

HONOURABLE MENTION

My Great Grandfather: George Flewelling Leighton

by Aiden Gallagher, Grade 6
Beacon Hill School, Kirkland, Qc.
Teacher: Chad Dixon

I am writing to tell you about my great grandfather named George Flewelling Leighton. He was born in Moncton, New Brunswick, on March 4, 1920. My grandfather was a great athlete; he still holds the national junior record in front crawl division.

George Leighton moved to Montreal in 1940 to work as a laborer with the company Canadian Vicker. He took classes at night to become a mechanist, which allowed him to transfer to their other company called Canadair. My great grandfather made specialized parts for the planes. During war time he specialized on bombers.

George married Eva Carr and they lived in greater Montreal in a 4 bedroom house with 8 kids. They had 5 girls and 3 boys.

After a long good life, George Flewelling Leighton passed in June of 2009 from pneumonia. He left behind 7 children, 11 grandchildren and 9 great grandchildren. He went to heaven to meet his loving wife and son, Wayne, who died in a car crash at the age of 19.

HONOURABLE MENTION

Philippe Couillard

by Aydan Guzevicius, Grade 5
Gardenvue Elementary School, Saint-Laurent, Qc.
Teacher: Ms. Wong

I have chosen Philippe Couillard because I watched as he became the Premier of Quebec the night of the elections on April 7, 2014, while having dinner. He is a man who promises to help build a better economy, community and future for Quebec. He was born June 26, 1957, in Montreal. He graduated in Neurosurgery at the University of Montreal and became a brain doctor at 21. He had many different jobs. He was chief surgeon at Saint-Luc Hospital. He was co-founder of neurosurgery in Saudi Arabia. He was a member of the Security Intelligence Review Committee. And he was appointed Minister of Health and Social Services during the Jean Charest Government.

Philippe Couillard is a likeable, calm and good-natured person. He gets his nickname "Bear" because of his size and the way he takes strolls in the park.

I find him to be a very interesting person. Here are some other facts about Philippe Couillard. First, when he was young he enjoyed playing hockey outdoors without gloves in very cold weather, and his hands never got cold! This liberal leader still will not wear gloves while making speeches outdoors. He says he only gets cold ears and feet. He is into music, and has a playlist of opera and classical to rock and reggae on his iPad. He says he is not into 'light' reading. He refused to read the morning newspapers especially during his campaign. He is a red wine lover, but only drank orange juice and water during his campaign. Lastly, Mr. Couillard is proud of his beard, he has trimmed his beard for the campaign, but he wears his beard proudly.

HONOURABLE MENTION

Thérèse Casgrain

by Dahlia Capparelli
Grade 6
Beacon Hill School, Kirkland, Qc.
Teacher: Chad Dixon

Thérèse Casgrain was born July 10, 1896, in Montreal but sadly died in 1981. Thérèse Casgrain was important to our community, because she spoke out for the women to get the right to vote in provincial elections. She was also noticeable for world peace and an end to the nuclear weapons.

In 1961, she founded an organization called the Voice of Women, and was elected president for this organization. After hearing about this organization, women from all over the county started joining this organization, after all the women came together, there was an accumulation of 6,000 members.

At the age of 19, Thérèse Casgrain married Pierre Casgrain, who was campaigning for the Charlevoix seat. In the winter, he got very ill so she took his place. Thérèse's father had been a conservative member of Parliament for 13 years, but decided not to run for the elections of December 1917.

For almost 20 years, Mrs. Casgrain campaigned for women to have the right to vote, this made the Federation of Quebec believe that women should have the right to vote in the provincial elections.

All the women in Quebec should be grateful for what she did for them, and she will always be remembered in our community.

Thank you Thérèse Casgrain!

GONE IN A PUFF OF SMOKE

Magic Tom Auburn
by Rohinton Gandhi

"In all my years, I've never once pulled a rabbit out of my hat."

– *Magic Tom Auburn*

If You Believe in Magic

The health inspector trodded his way up to a home on Ethel Street in Verdun, as a twelve-year old boy watched curiously from his bedroom window, awaiting a knock. Yet, none came. Instead, the man attached a bright red sign to their front door and walked away. The youngster then raced to the door only to read the words "Quarantined: Scarlet Fever – Do Not Enter." He was old enough to know that in 1929 Scarlet Fever was a possibly fatal illness, affecting children and adults alike. He had the symptoms: a strawberry-red tongue, a sandpaper-like rash and a very high fever. He was under doctor's orders to remain in bed. The posted warning confirmed that he might never recover.

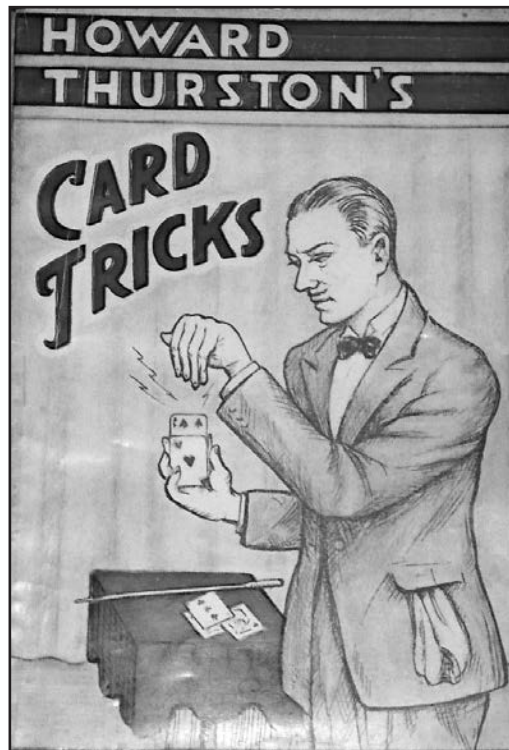
The boy's sadness soon faded when a cousin presented him with a 25-cent magic book called *Howard Thurston's Card Tricks* as a get-well gift. He was later given another called *Dunninger's Popular Magic*. Thomas Auburn then made a choice. Instead of believing in a tragic end, he chose to believe in himself and to use his convalescence to practice literally every trick in the book.

In a puff of smoke, the career was launched of a man who would one day be known as "Canada's finest magician," Montreal's very own, Magic Tom.

The Luck of Sevens

Thomas Rochford Auburn was born on the seventh hour, of the seventh day, of the seventh month in the year 1917, a tri-fecta event in numerology. It was in the midst of World War I; only a few months

earlier, Canadian troops had taken Vimy Ridge, John F. Kennedy was born, and Russia would depose its last Czar, Nicholas II. Although the records at St. Clement's Church state his place of birth as Verdun, other documents connect his origins to the now submerged village of Aultsville, Ontario, one of the many towns flooded during the 1950s' expansion of the St. Lawrence Seaway.



Auburn always believed that seven was a mystical number and that his "luck of sevens" would follow him throughout his life. It was a life with dire beginnings, for at two-months old he lost his father, a machinist, to the flu epidemic, and by age three, he was sent to live with his "Aunt B" (Beatrice) and his uncle at 994 Ethel Street in Verdun, Quebec. While attending St. Willibrord's School, he contracted the fever that forced him into quarantine. With only two books for company, he studied them from cover to cover and practiced his skills in "the art of conjuring" – or "mag-

ic," as we know it. After months of seclusion, his "lucky sevens" allowed him to take short walks outside, as his health improved. For many, 1929 was a devastating year, but for Tom Auburn it was a year of personal triumph, for now he was ready to take on a live audience!

An Appearance of Greatness

At thirteen, Auburn began to showcase his talents at school events, parties, and the many social clubs of those times. The crowds were awed by his tricks, but fell in love with his charm. He knew the value of promotion, using printed brochures to advertise his act.

At fifteen, he performed his first paid show for Shell Oil in Montreal's East end. An hour of magic cost him an extra quarter in tramway fare to carry his equipment with him, and made him his first five dollars. This one event anchored him as a favorite on Montreal's corporate entertainment circuit. At first he played in a mask, performing tricks with cards, billiard balls, silks and cigarettes, using front and back palm manipulations with props. As his confidence grew, he dropped the mask and became the "Great Auburn," accepting every booking offered. His unique up-close style and slow hand movements, not to mention his respectful dress in tux and tails, set him apart from the rest.

A Time of Mystics

The early 1930s were the times of the "great ones," as a new blend of illusionists and mystics entertained crowds that were struggling for an escape from the Depression years. In August 1932, Auburn attended his first magic show at the Loews Theatre, witnessing the exquisite slight-of-hand illusions of the great Cardini himself. While sitting in the dark with all eyes focused on the performer in the spotlight, Tom realized that a great magician must play to an audience's intelligence as well as

their curiosity. From that night on, he rarely missed another performance of his personal heroes: Dante, Blackstone Sr., Howard Thurston, and of course Cardini. These magicians inspired him to take on their larger-than-life personas, not knowing that Auburn would stand amongst them in later years.

Tales of Floating Lamps and Green Indian Needles

In 1935, Tom moved back in with his mother in N.D.G. and attended Grade 10 at Montreal High School. During this time he began mastering the tricks of his idols, and adding them into his act. Local headlines raved: "Thomas Auburn teen-aged magic man of 2212 Old Orchard Avenue has purchased the famous Floating Lamp trick, one of the best conjuring tricks in the world. Only the Great Blackstone had ever performed this trick before in our city." The trick involved showing the audience a lamp and globe which together would light up, and by unscrewing the globe the light would go out. Tom would then unscrew the globe again and the light would stay on, swinging across the stage and through hoops at his command. With the audience still in awe, Tom would move into the "Needle-Swallowing Trick," swallowing several packages of green Indian sewing needles and yards of thread. After eating an apple and drinking a glass of water to show an empty mouth, he would then pull out a string of needles neatly looped on the thread! This trick once gained him the compliments of Mayor Camillien Houde after his act at the Viger Hotel. That night, a critic had left his notes behind with "very good" scrawled on the playbill under Auburn's name. A note which forever remained in Tom's personal archives, marking a time when he was unstoppable.

Off-stage Magic

Tom's Aunt B passed away in 1936, never to see him graduate from Montreal High and go on to study communications at Sprott's Commercial College. "When I was eighteen an aunt whom I lived with died and left me \$5,000," he later quoted. "The Pontiac I wanted cost \$1,850. Gosh, after buying the

car I wouldn't have much left, so I took the money to Sun Life and it's been there ever since."

His investment didn't end there, for it was at Sun Life's Montreal Office where he was smitten by a young librarian named Dolores Arlene Edwards. He then practiced his most convincing magic on her, the magic of courtship. Their romance extended into the war years; they married on Valentine's Day, February 14, 1942. On their wedding night, they stayed at the Mount Royal Hotel, not knowing its future importance to their success. Magician and librarian performed their own off-stage tricks, and soon welcomed the arrival of their daughter Darlene and their son Byron.

Tricks for the Troops

In 1940, with Canadians fully entrenched in WWII, Auburn joined other performers in the YMCA-TNT Review, entertaining over 100,000 servicemen over 85 shows. During this time, he worked as a correspondent for Dominion Oxygen to fund his voluntary military shows. He was honoured by Canada's Defence Minister James Ralston for his patriotic service.

Tom then got his first big break, filling in for another magician for a run of shows at the Tic Toc Club on 1258 Stanley Street. He was now billed as "Magic Tom Auburn." The audiences were so impressed that they referred to him as "an American act" – quite the compliment in those days.

After his club run, he dedicated himself to Canada's war effort, and in November of 1941 he joined the Royal Canadian Army Medical Corps. No. 4, the Military Caravan Show.



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Throughout his years of service he went beyond the call of duty, fulfilling his military obligations during the day and performing his shows at night, without any rest. He often travelled long distances between camps and gave over 1,500 perform-



ances to our troops. In his final year, he rose to sergeant, forming his own "Army Show" with the Recruiting Department, before getting medically discharged with honours in March 1945.

A Bite of the Apple

Returning to civilian life, Auburn risked it all to become a performing master magician. Leaving his lucrative job at Dominion Oxygen, he collected his savings and went off to the Big Apple. There, he met talent agent May Johnson of the Music Corporation of America, and made her his exclusive manager. Under Johnson, he screen-tested for romantic roles for major Hollywood studios and built a professional magician's portfolio, often modelling for magazines as the dashing man of magic. He declined the movie offers, however, and decided to return to his home town, where his Dolores awaited. May Johnson accompanied him back to Montreal, along with talent scout Jimmy Nichols and Nichols' wife, singer Norma Hutton, and set up the May Johnson and Associates (Talent) offices in the Mount Royal Hotel. Auburn would share an office on the mezzanine level with Nichols for almost forty years, until the hotel finally closed in November 1984.

As a talent agent, Auburn helped an unknown pianist Walter Liberace (Liberasay, in those days) become the famous Liberace and fitted him with his first tuxedo for his Montreal debut. As a booking agent, Auburn brought top North American enter-



tainers to Montreal clubs and worked his act alongside them when playing at the Normandie Roof Club on the ninth floor of the hotel. "The Roof" was once the social centre of Montreal, where affluent politicians, presidents and celebrities rubbed elbows with the latest "American" performers of the 1940s, and where the city's biggest deals were made. Both Mayor Houde and Premier Duplessis held tables there. Many stars, including Duke Ellington, Xavier Cugat, Guy Lombardo, Jerry Lewis, and Frank Sinatra, played in the ballroom-styled club.

I Married a Magician

In 1946, Dolores wrote an article for magazine called "I Married a Magician," detailing her love for her young performer and his trust in her as his most honest critic. They were as close as any couple could get. Tom would try every trick with her first before taking it to the stage. At



home, there was a skull in every cupboard, keeping Dolores always on guard for a glowing skeleton or a floating ghost to pop out of nowhere, as Tom's way of saying he

loved her. She would rarely attend his shows, stating that the "actor" on stage was not the man she married. In public, she was regularly asked: "Aren't you afraid that he will see you in two or make you disappear?" She always replied: "We are extremely happy, but you can't trust a magician, they're always up to tricks." She was proudest of his non-drinking, non-smoking, and specifically his non-gambling ways, only playing with cards as part of his act.

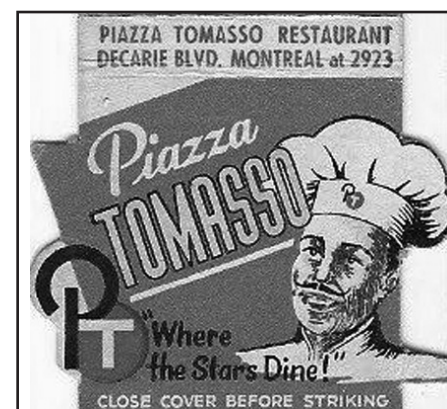
A Tale of Two Toms

In 1951, Tom Auburn met Tommy Tomasso and learned that they both shared a passion for entertaining children. Tomasso was an accomplished musician himself, playing with many bands in New York and London. He had hung up his trumpet in 1934 to join his mother in opening Montreal's famous "Piazza Tomasso" restaurant on Decarie Boulevard. Thursday nights in 1951 were known as "the maid's night off," an evening when families dined out together. With that in mind, the two Toms launched the "Kiddies Cabaret" shows at Tomasso's by offering kid-friendly meals, while Magic Tom played at every table without repeating a trick. Pulling a quarter from an ear here, making a spoon disappear there, he roamed through the excited room, turning common items into magical objects. The weekly shows were an instant success, making Tomasso's the city's top spot for family dining and Magic Tom a household name. By 1959, over 25,000 kids would proudly be carrying their "Kiddies Cabaret" membership cards awaiting their next visit with

their hero. Auburn did not let them down; he performed weekly at the restaurant for over 26 years, with only his summers off. His shows ended in 1977, and the landmark eatery finally disappeared in the mid-1980s along with the true magic it once held.

Magic on the Airwaves

On January 20, 1961, CFCE-12 premiered as Montreal's first commercial television station, covering JFK's inauguration that evening and soon adding "Surprise Party" with Magic Tom to their weekday 4:30-5:30 p.m. schedule. Thousands of kids tuned in to watch their hero introduce one new boy and girl on every show to present their talents by singing, dancing, or by simply sharing their good-deed stories. They loved his many magic tricks, including his favorites like the Magic Candy Tube trick spewing candy from an empty cylinder, the Cut-and-Rejoin rope trick, and the old Disappearing Milk trick.



But Magic Tom really only used tricks to get the children's attention, as he felt the real magic was in teaching them how to be safe, to be respectful of others, and to become good citizens. Auburn's show was unique in this way, as it was more of a conversation with children rather than a show directed at them, welcoming their pets, their collections, and their words to his unrehearsed tapings. It was his sincere respect for children that made him a Montreal icon, gathering crowds of loving fans across the city. Tom was also well aware that parents watched the show. Once, after a puppy had "tinkled," he looked into the camera and said: "Now you know why we call it Surprise Party!"

In July 1963, the "Magic Tom Road Show" taped segments were added, with

Top and bottom left: Sun Life Review, article by Dolores Auburn, April 1946. Photos: courtesy of Sun Life Archives, Waterloo, Ontario.

Middle: Piazza Tomasso matchbook.



Auburn visiting local family attractions such as Granby Zoo, Frontier Town (N.Y.), Belmont Park, the Verdun Natatorium, and the Brome and Ormstown fairs. By 1965, Surprise Party's popularity had sky-rocketed, reaching 70,000 viewers and receiving over 1,200 fan letters per month, and now airing six days a week, Sunday to Friday.

In November 1966, the show was finally renamed "Magic Tom" and moved to 11:30 a.m. to capture the pre-school and school-lunchtime audience. It was followed by Cliffhanger Theatre with Johnny Jellybean (aka Ted Zeigler) of "squawk box" fame at noon. In this timeslot, the "Magic Tom" show became the Montreal lunchtime phenomenon that many still count among their dearest childhood memories, often speaking of Magic Tom as if he had been a member of the family. By the summer of Expo 67, his show had replaced the Jellybean shows at noon. He now received as many as 30,000 fan letters a year, as his loyal audience continued to grow.

"Magic Tom" would be the number one kids' program on CFCF-12 for another eight years, until his last show aired on September 6, 1975. One day before, a *Montreal Star* headline read: "After 15 years, the magic leaves Channel 12." In the story, Tom revealed: "I'm quite hurt by the cancellation of the Magic Tom show as this was a ready-made rapport between the children and me. They identified with me." As the final show had been taped months ago, Auburn was completely unaware that it would be his last, having heard of the cancellation only hours before. The studio was silent as "Magic Tom" was gone, leaving a legacy for the longest running show on Montreal television, a record still held

to this day.

Catch a Falling Star

The Quebec Safety League reported a 10% jump in children's traffic accidents after Magic Tom's "Do's and Don'ts" on street safety went off the air, along with his beloved show. Auburn covered his sadness well, determined to set an example for his young followers by showing them how Magic Tom would prove courage in the worst of times. He gathered his strength from the thousands of letters which continued to arrive from his loving fans who missed their lunchtime buddy.

Perhaps because of his own childhood illness, Tom had always supported local charities and volunteer groups helping sick children. Throughout his career, he had formed close ties with the Montreal Children's and the Shriner's hospitals by regularly visiting their wards and by honouring a child's last wish to meet Magic Tom. He always felt that it was the most gratifying work he could ever do. Years before, he had set up the Tom Auburn Non-Profit Organization to donate all net proceeds from his live performances to children's charities.

As a founding member of the Montreal Chapter of the Society of American Magicians and an honorary member of the International Brotherhood of Magicians, he still held his title as "Canada's finest magician." With this in mind, Tom Auburn once again chose to believe in himself and with his "luck of sevens" was soon performing to sold-out crowds in many of Montreal's finest hotels and restaurants. He expanded his shows in the Toronto, Quebec City, Ottawa and Upper-state New York areas. Magic Tom was back, yet for many he had never left!

Stardust in Your Eyes

The 1980s arrived with Auburn working non-stop between his stage shows and special guest appearances across Montreal. In 1982, he reunited for with his old pal Ted Zeigler for "International Jellybean Week" at The Keg restaurant, performing "jellybean magic" from table to table. By that time, he knew the business of magic had changed. Dozens of amateurs bought pre-made magic kits to become overnight professionals. "The cloak is not passed on today as it was. First, we had Hermann the

Great, then Harry Kellar, then Thurston and Blackstone Sr., each passing the mantle on to the next. Today, there are too many magicians," he said. The tux and tails were gone, along with the grand scale illusions which cost hundreds to build, and even more to move.

He regretted the passing of old traditions, yet went with the times by downsizing all of his tricks to fit into four suitcases and by often working out of the sixteen pockets sewn into his dinner jacket. His delivery remained impeccable, never revealing his weakening back while performing delicate and intricate slight-of-hand tricks only inches away from his audience.

The audience was also becoming much thinner. In 1977, with the passing of Quebec's language law (Bill 101), Montreal's corporate banquet circuits started to dry up as companies fled the province. The exodus was slow but steady, as the lights of over 150 Montreal nightclubs gradually went dark, and with them Magic Tom's playgrounds.

Aloha-cadabra

From his first two magic books, Tom's personal library had grown into one of the largest collections of magic memorabilia in the country, valued at almost \$25,000. He was also a serious Egyptologist, owning a



collection of over 200 artifacts, including a cherished basalt monkey dating to between 4,000 and 3,000 BC.

In 1980, he began selling off his collections, preparing for a fresh start in Hawaii where his daughter, Darlene, was now settled. From November 1982 to April 1983, he performed over 45 shows on the island of Maui, whose citizens proclaimed March 3 to be Magic Tom Auburn Day. Hawaii's governor proclaimed: "You exemplify the Aloha spirit, that feeling of care and concern for friends and strangers alike. The people of Maui hope that we will always have a special place in your heart because you have a special place in ours." Auburn continued to play there each winter, yet always returned to his own island city in the spring, knowing that Montreal was his home.

The Disappearing Act

On November 17, 1984, *The Gazette* published a photo of the last group of tenants standing in the grand lobby of the Mount Royal Hotel, hours before it would finally close at midnight. At the rear stood Tom Auburn gazing into the camera, as his office at the May Johnson Talent Associates closed and as the hotel's items, from its doorknobs to the famous canoe from the Kon Tiki restaurant, were being liquidated around him. His world again became smaller, overnight. Always the optimist, Auburn relocated his business office to his home in N.D.G., a property that he boasted measured exactly 777 sq. feet.

A few years earlier, his fellow Montreal magicians had dedicated the city's first annual magic convention to Magic Tom Auburn. It was the highest honour he could receive, inspiring him to create The Tom Auburn Award to be presented to rising magicians at all future ceremonies.

In the late 1980s, Tom was still bringing in the crowds at his weekly events and special appearances throughout the Montreal region. Although his dark hair and blue eyes had softened, his delivery still held the quick-draw of a gunfighter, baffling audiences with his own unique style.

The crowds attending his 1990 New

Year's Day show at the Montreal Sheraton Centre were not aware that they would be witnessing the final disappearing act of Magic Tom Auburn. On January 3, in a



puff of smoke, his magic left us all.

A Broken Wand

Television and radio stations interrupted their programming to announce the news across the island and across the country, "Magic Tom Auburn, beloved Montreal magician, has died at the age of 72." The days prior to the funeral felt as if the whole city was in mourning with newspapers, radio call-in shows and television specials all paying tribute to Magic Tom.

On January 6, they honoured him further with coverage of his official public funeral from St. Thomas Anglican Church in NDG. A day earlier, his family, close friends, and a group of long-time magicians had gathered around his casket for a private moment to perform the "broken wand" ceremony on his behalf. Two of his dearest friends, magicians themselves, read a sacred magician's eulogy then cracked a representative wand and placed it in his coffin, signifying that the magician's powers were now gone. A sentiment echoed by thousands of his loving fans who voiced their condolences from across the country. They spoke of his greatness, his dignity, and they defined him as a true entertainer, one that will always have his own place in Canada's collective memory.

Tom must have been smiling that day, as his belief in himself and in his message of universal respect had influenced so many, making him a legend well beyond the sparkling dust he left behind.

A Final Trick from Above

In the following months, Dolores auctioned off his library of magic books and objects, including his Egyptian collection, and donated his props to his closest friends. Over the years, she continued to support Tom's charities, until on September 2, 2000, she went on to meet him herself.

Tom Rochford Auburn now rests with his wife at the St. Lawrence Valley Cemetery in Ingleside, Ontario, in the Long Sault region near the now submerged town of Aultsville from which he traced his family's origins. The 1958 expansion of the St. Lawrence Seaway had flooded many towns, including his own, out of existence. For over 50 years, the towns had remained hidden under the murky waters of the St. Lawrence until a recent invasion of zebra mussels filtered the waters clear. While flying overhead, an aerial photographer stared in awe as the outlines of the town of Aultsville began to reappear beneath the waterline.

Perhaps this was Magic Tom's final trick, reminding us of the magic we will always hold within ourselves...

This article is dedicated to Magic Tom Auburn and the many young Montrealers who were raised in his grace.

Rohinton Gandhi lives in Crawford Park, Verdun, and regularly performs his own kind of magic in publications across the province and on-line world-wide. His particular interest is the history of the Crawford Park community. He has been digitally chronicling the Verdun Guardian for the last 5 years, from 1931 to currently 1941, as a personal preservation interest, before the pages turn to dust... or is it smoke?

Sources & Contributors:

- Phil and Evelyn Matlin, Perfect Magic Shop, Montreal.
- Bonnie Ross, St. Lawrence Valley Cemetery, Long Sault, Ontario.
- Tom Ewing, National Historian, Society of American Magicians Archives.
- Krystal Rycroft, Archivist, Sun Life Archives, Waterloo, Ontario.

Auburn family gravestone. Photo: courtesy of St. Lawrence Valley Cemetery, near Cornwall, Ontario.

Louis Helbig, Aerial Photographer and Ontario Historian, Ottawa.
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 Gary Schroder, President, Quebec Family History Society, Montreal.
 Guy Camirand, Local Magician, Montreal.
 Jean F. Lymburner, Emanone Jazz Society, Montreal.
 Kristian Gravenor, Independent writer, Montreal.
 Matthew Farfan, Writer and QAHN Executive Director, Stanstead, Qc.
 Michael Fish, Architect, Montreal.
 Michele Palett, Montreal.
 Noel Thomas, Emanone Jazz Society, Nova Scotia.
 Ron Patterson, Educator, Montreal.
 Peggy Curran, Writer, Montreal.
 Sean Duffin, Auburn family friend (house-painter), Montreal.
 Sultana Jessa, Writer, *Cornwall Free News* (retired), Montreal.

To Learn More:

Perfect Magic Shop: <http://www.perfectmagic.com/default.aspx>.

Society of American Magicians, Tom Auburn's Assembly #58, Montreal: <http://www.oocities.org/mapleleaf58/tom.htm> and <http://magicsam.com>.

CFCF-12 Magic Tom: <http://montreal.ctvnews.ca/magic-tom-1.594876>.

Blair Marshall, Montreal magician's, site: <http://www.montrealmagician.ca>.

Canadian Association of Magic, <http://cammagic.org>.

Fun Facts:

- JFK (born in the same year as Tom Auburn) also had Scarlet Fever at a young age.
- Auburn used to get his playing cards for free from people at the MacDonald's Tobacco Company to save on costs. They were made of cardboard and not the smooth plastic coated cards of today, making them much harder to manipulate.
- Howdy Doody had left the air in 1960 (1952-1960), only months before Magic Tom's Surprise Party started on CFCF-12.
- Auburn had a photo of Harry Houdini signed by Bess Houdini herself in his personal archives.
- Tom Auburn was baptized in St. Clement's Church in Verdun, which, in April 1942, held the largest Sunday school on the island.
- The Mount Royal Hotel opened on December 20, 1922, as the largest hotel in the British Empire with 1,046 rooms.
- Kon Tiki owner Stephen Crane was married and had a child with actress Lana Turner.
- Many of the viewers watching Tom's first show in 1961 were the parents of the kids who watched his show in 1975.
- Retailers throughout the garment industry in the 1930s, 40s and 50s used what they called the 10-number Blackstone Code to easily remember their cost price for their products. It was named for Blackstone (Sr. & Jr.), the magicians. Example: trousers marked with a B-T tag originally cost the seller \$17 (B=1, T=7). In this way the seller would know how low he could go in bartering with his customers at the time of sale.
- Auburn's fellow magicians and dear friends Phil and Evelyn Matlin still run the Perfect Magic shop on Van Home Avenue in Montreal.
- In the 1990s, Montreal historian Bruno Stenson purchased *Lessons in Conjuring* by David Devant (1922) from Russell Books on St. Antoine Street. Penciled on the first inside page in a five-year-old's writing was "Tom Auburn."

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THE ORIGINAL “BOMB GIRL”

Hudson’s Mildred Allen

by Bill Young and Ralph Simpson

Although failing eyesight now limits her mobility, Mildred Allen (Millie to her friends) manages quite nicely to get out and about most days. Born and raised in Verdun, until very recently Mildred spent most of her life in Hudson, active in the community and a regular in the congregation of Hudson’s Wyman Memorial United Church. In June 2014, circumstances compelled Mildred to move to a senior’s facility in Vaudreuil-Dorion, where she now calls the Résidence Le Languedoc home.

If you were to meet this modest, unassuming nonagenarian today, you would hardly guess that in her youth, during the stormy years of World War II when she was still known as Mildred Moore, she was one among thousands of young women who took jobs in the burgeoning defense industry, stepping in for men who had joined up and gone to battle.

The challenge was clear and unequivocal, and beyond daunting. War had broken out in Europe and with the Japanese rattling their sabres across the Pacific, nations of the western world had little option but to commit vast resources – human and material – toward ending the conflict as quickly as possible. They increased both the size of their armed forces to a scale unheard of scant years before and directed large sums of money to the arms industry, to the production of every imaginable article of war, from airplanes and battleships to bombs and bullets.

But there was a problem. For whenever the ranks of the military expanded, civilian work forces suffered. Men who in other times might have been available to do the jobs were in uniform and pre-occupied with tasks of a very different nature. Industry needed to come up with a Plan B – and it did. To maintain, and even more critically, to expand the workforce, it began replacing the men with women workers, training them ap-

propriately and then turning the production faucets back on, full blast. Almost overnight, a whole new category of worker was monitoring the nation’s assembly lines. Rosie the Riveter had come into her own.



Mildred of the DIL

Mildred Moore was part of that mix. Her first job after high school was with Canada’s principal munitions manufacturer Defense Industries Limited (DIL) at their sprawling Verdun Works, close to her home.

DIL was a subsidiary of Canadian Industries Limited (CIL), the name given to chemical giant DuPont’s operations in Canada. DIL was established at the beginning of the war specifically to build, manage and operate Canadian government war plants. According to one source (www2.dupont.com), at the height of hostilities, “this subsidiary had about six times as many employees as did CIL.”

The Verdun Works specialized in

the manufacture of .303 caliber cartridges, which they pumped out by the thousands. Mildred was stationed in the Quality Control Department as an inspector on the assembly line, studying cartridges speeding down the conveyor belt and pulling aside any that appeared defective. She continued in that role right through until the war ended and the men began to return home.

In the beginning Mildred and her fellow inspectors worked 11-hour shifts on the unforgiving assembly lines. The arduous work schedule was later modified to three eight-hour shifts, thus affording a more reasonable workday for the women without any lessening of production.

Because of this hectic schedule, and given the nature of the workplace, the women tended to turn to one another for friendship, often coming together informally, both at the plant and off-site when they would frequently share leisure time together.

“We would usually eat our meals in the DIL cafeteria,” said Mildred recently, reminiscing about times long past. “It was convenient, gave us a chance to get the latest news and even more, the food was great. We always seemed to have a good time, joking and laughing, and even though the work was hard and the days long, nobody complained.”

Increasingly, that spirit of merriment and camaraderie extended to the non-working hours when groups of women would get together and plan any number of activities. Among the most popular was a simple excursion to the movies, a huge pleasure for many, especially the younger women. Movie-going was a relatively new experience for them. Back then, admission to cinemas in Quebec was restricted to those 16-years of age or over. Many of the women were still in their teens, or just barely out of them, and for them the cinema was still a delicious novelty. Dancing was also a popular past-time with

Millie at 17. Photo: courtesy of Mildred Allen.

any number of social clubs and public halls looking to draw in participants, most often supplying a live orchestra to provide the music. Groups of young women, unescorted and off on an outing away from the noise and dust of the munitions factory, were not an uncommon sight in Montreal during the war. Of course, if one had a boyfriend to go dancing with the adventure became even more exciting.

The merriment Mildred describes has to be viewed in the context of the times. Canada was at war. Young Canadians serving overseas, fathers, brothers, husbands, friends, were dying every day. For the most part it was left to the women, young and old, to wait at home for news, and worry. Thus the opportunity to work, no matter the job, especially within the War Industries, created opportunities for them to meet and draw strength from each other and make a contribution to the war effort at the same time. It is no surprise that friendships were highly prized and nurtured – or that every opportunity to get together for a few laughs was welcomed as respite from the shadows falling on the darker side.

Mildred still remembers her first supervisor, Reg Tormey. “He was a nice man,” she says. She was less pleased when a few years later the plant replaced him with a woman boss. “I found her tough to please,” Mildred recalled.

But always there was the work – a perpetual challenge of processing as many bullets as possible, and keeping the assembly lines moving smoothly. It would be an almost impossible task to calculate the number of .303 cartridges produced by the Verdun plant during the war, the total was so huge. By way of illustration, a year or so after Mildred started working at DIL, the factory registered its one billionth cartridge manufactured on the premises since the start of operations. To commemorate the auspicious moment, the DIL gave each employee a small plaque on which was affixed a sample .303 cartridge and the following dedication: *With the help of... (M. Moore)..... Verdun Works made its Billionth .303 Mk VII s. Cartridge on November 26th, 1943.* The citation is signed by a representative of the plant, signature unclear.

In the accompanying photograph, the present-day Mildred displays her commemorative plaque, holding it close to her heart.

Mildred’s other souvenir from her DIL days is the butt-end of a cartridge jacket on which she once scratched the letter “J.” She meant it as a nod to her boyfriend of the day, Jimmy Enfield.



She was fond of him then: she remembers him fondly still.

When the war ended and hostilities ceased, life for these young women returned to normal – whatever that normal might have been. Their work opportunities in the defense industries, along with the accompanying stress, joy and rewards, all vanished as men returning from overseas were now preparing to step in and do the work. There was little room for the women who, for the most part, seemed quite ready in the post-war era to return to traditional patterns.

Friendships formed in the workplace were frequently deep and sincere, but tended not to survive much beyond the war. As the women turned toward the new lives awaiting them and away from their wartime experiences, their interests and preoccupations shifted to the more immediate. “We all had lots of friends at the DIL,” Mildred recalls. “But not so much afterward. Many were like me and moved out of Verdun and

too far away.”

They courted and married and raised families, and their years in the munitions installations faded into distant memory, their contribution to the war effort pretty well forgotten.

Life after Verdun

Throughout the DIL years Mildred lived at home, something she continued to do even after the war when she found other employment. Her first job in civilian life was as office clerk with the Morgan’s Department Store (now the Hudson’s Bay Company) on St. Catherine Street. It was there she met her future husband, Victor Allen, a master electrician who worked at the same store. Predictably, sparks flew, and after a short courtship they were married in August 1946.

One of Victor’s friends was a Mr. Todd, a Morgan’s employee who was assigned to the store laundry. When the newly-weds were exploring possible communities where they might put down roots, Todd encouraged them to consider Hudson. Although the town was a fair distance from Montreal and the roads still quite primitive, it did have the good fortune to be sitting astride the Canadian Pacific Railway’s main line to Ottawa and the west. Consequently, Hudson benefitted from excellent train service, with frequent and regular trips into and out of the city built into the schedule. The number of senior CPR executives living in Hudson and working in Montreal made sure of that.

The newly-minted Mr. and Mrs. Victor Allen took Mr. Todd up on his suggestion – and by 1947 they were installed in a cabin on Sandy Beach, a privately-run summer recreation area owned by the Blenkinship family. Because these cabins were intended for seasonal use and not fully winterized, the young couple would return to the comforts of more traditional dwellings once the bitter winds of winter settled in. They continued on with the same pattern of summers on Sandy Beach, winters in more comfy quarters, for five years, only moving inland in 1952, when they acquired what would become their permanent home on Cedar Avenue.

As the Allens had no children, Mildred continued working in retail for

much of her married life, eventually shifting over to the now-defunct Simpson's store on St. Catherine Street, where the chain of Simon's clothing stores now has its Montreal base.

In 1994, following Victor's death, Mildred moved into Hudson's Manoir Cavagnal, an apartment complex for seniors, which remained her home for twenty years. In June 2014 she relocated to Le Languedoc, taking a lifetime of memories with her.

Bomb Girls Revisited

For years, Rosie the Riveter, the Bomb Girls and employees of the munitions factories across Canada faded from memory, taking their experiences and their stories with them.

But recently that distant world of armament industries where women held jobs traditionally assigned to men, and did them well and proudly managed to capture the spotlight again.

Give credit to the Global Television Network for getting the ball rolling. Their 2012 mini-series *Bomb Girls* introduced us to four women employed in the ordnance industry in 1941 and structured the drama to follow the arc of their lives. The programme succeeded in introducing younger generations to a very specific reality of life long-forgotten as well as tapping into a flood of memories for those who lived the experience. The mini-series was extended over a two-year span and re-broadcast in the United States, the United Kingdom and Ireland. And in late March 2014, a feature film entitled *Bomb Girls – The Movie* was broadcast on Global.

That same month at the Centaur Theatre in Montreal, local playwright David Fennario launched his most recent original work, *Motherhouse*, a drama set in the Verdun DIL and based somewhat on the experiences of his mother who was employed there during World War II.

Both the play and the history upon which it was based caught the fancy of Pat Donnelly, drama critic for the *Montreal Gazette*, and she set out to learn

more about the Verdun operation on her own. Searching through family memorabilia she came across a 1944 group photo of DIL's Quality Control Department and ran it in the newspaper, asking readers to help her identify the women in the picture.

One of them is indeed Mildred Moore Allen. She sits in the second row,



third person from the right, one of the women whose distinctive company-issued pale blue uniforms, quite different from the much darker overalls worn by the others, identify them as assembly-line inspectors. The odd-looking mesh caps perched on every head were company-issued hairnets, required garb for all employees.

Despite the seventy years that have passed since this photograph was taken, and despite her failing eyesight and how

fuzzy the image appears in the newspaper, Mildred is quite certain, as are friends who have seen the photo, that she is the young lady seated in the second row from the bottom, the third one (second inspector) in from the right.

The photograph is a precious souvenir, a stark reminder of a world so completely different from what we know today – and in a small way it stands as a salute to the many men and women who in that period (1939-1945) put their lives on hold to do their part in offering service to God and country.

The debt of gratitude we owe each one of them can never be repaid. Like all wars, World War II brought massive upheaval into the lives of our parents and grandparents, and even ourselves. It was a time of sorrow, a time of opportunity; it was a time of sudden endings; a time for fresh beginnings.

And most of all, it was proof positive of just how far civilizations can tumble when responsible men and women stop paying attention. And a testimony to the great heights that can be reached when they do.



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