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News



Frontier Mothers

Women's lives of hardship and courage in three colonial families

An Electric History of the Townships

Memories of Southern Canada Power

Obelisk Encore

The man who fixed Canada's oldest national monument

Quebec Heritage News

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Cover Image: *Habernaria orbiculata* and *Habernaria bracteata*, sent to Glasgow by Robert Cleghorn in the mid-1820s. The *Habernaria bracteata* flowered in June 1825. Volumes 2 and 3 respectively of William Jackson Hooker's "Exotic Flora." Images courtesy of the Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh.

Wildflowers of Lac B

by Rod MacLeod

There are two series of volumes on the shelf that people always browse through when they visit the family cottage by the lake in the Gatineau. One is the official cottage album, now running to at least eight fat three-ringed binders. The other series consists of only two volumes, the second only partly filled, containing photos of wildflowers found around the lake that my cousin Peter had been carefully taking and assembling over the last few years. The only time I didn't browse through these volumes was on a grey afternoon this past November when we did not go into the cottage, but just looked at the lake. A group of us—my own family, my cousin Joan from Vancouver, and my cousin Alison from near Boston—made the pilgrimage from Ottawa in the free hours we had after Peter's funeral and before the commemorative dinner.

The albums are fun. They go back to the early sixties when my uncle Wendell, the oldest of four brothers, bought the cottage at Lac B when he moved back to Ottawa after a stint out west. Photos that span almost half a century dominate the albums, but there is lots more: artwork, both by children passing time on a rainy day and by visitors with real talent, as well as wine labels, plans for construction projects, grocery lists for memorable meals, copies of local regulations, magazine clippings, instructions on how to fix the septic tank, and poetry. But it is the photographs that always bring a laugh or a tear—the latter when you contemplate what has happened since to the people who posed for them long ago, even if it is just growing old, or growing up. People almost always seem happy in photographs, and there is a special quality to the ones taken at Lac B, which so often has been a place where life sorts

itself out.

From the beginning, Wendell was the “Laird” (in a parlance typical of thoroughly Canadianized Scots)—chief of what was clearly to be a clan hangout. At that time, his son Peter, a resident at the Royal Victoria Hospital in Montreal, would leave town after early Saturday rounds, new wife Margaret in tow, and arrive at the lake in time for a sail. Peter had grown up sailing on prairie lakes, it was an activity he would continue in the Gatineau and elsewhere until almost the



end of his life. The boat at Lac B was—save for this past summer, when it stayed out of the water—a quintessential element in all lakefront photographs. Peter's sister Wendy, who spent a couple of years in Ottawa before setting down roots in Edmonton, took full advantage of Lac B during that time. She, her husband and baby daughter Joan slept in the one-room annex cabin which Joan christened the Duck House after the inflatable duck that someone had left there and, to her, clearly owned the place.

Despite this activity, Wendell's branch of the family left little record in the early albums, only a couple of blurry shots of the Laird installing the dock, which of course must be done every spring. It was the third brother Ken and

his wife Kay (“K2”, as they were known) who filled the early album pages with clever items: sketches of, and verses describing, the sunset off the water, the antics of loons, and the inevitable sailboat. A childless couple, they went up to the cottage every year for their two weeks holiday and lived by the lake an extension of the routine back home, minus work: relaxing days sipping rather large quantities of rye, dabbling occasionally in painting and writing, and regular swims. They ate elaborate meals

every night, entertaining the Laird plus any family members in residence; during this period, the albums are heavy with the labels off the wine consumed. On one occasion the second brother Robbie and wife Bea came up from Ithaca, and the resulting photos show a merry and relaxed group—even though Robbie's health was already in decline. We often project melancholy onto photos when we know something of the background to events, though that may also be an effect of the black & white. Most of the early album photos are

small rectangular prints with large white borders; this format slowly gave way to the square 126mm, also with white borders usually sporting a tiny “Kodak” on one side.

My first visit to Lac B was when I was nine. Peter gave directions by telephone which my mother repeated as we drove: up the log-choked Gatineau River to Wakefield and beyond all the way to the turnoff at the garage at Alcove, and after a few more turns this became a dirt road rolling past ramshackle farms. My father entertained us by taking the hills at top speed so our stomachs lurched—another tradition that has been carefully passed on. Eventually the road dipped into the forest and became a track leading to several cottages; ours

was at the top of a steep hill in the midst of trees. We parked in the clearing, and it was only a quick, joyful run, as it always is, down the meandering path, past the two cabins, the woodpile and the old stone barbeque, onto the dock, where the first deep lungful of lake and loon and pine clears the head at once of all the other nonsense of life.

On this occasion, Wendy and her family were also visiting, from out west. Joan and I became great pals and Sheila, two years younger, did her best to fit in. Two-year-old Ruth did not join in the games, but amused everyone by treating the lake like a giant bathtub, immersing herself from the beach without bathing suit and armed with a large bar of soap. (The resulting photo has a counterpart, several albums later, when we posed my own daughter in the same position. Perhaps not surprisingly, when she met Ruth for the first time a couple of years ago, they became very good friends despite the age difference—although they are the same generation, thanks to the varying productivity rate of different branches of the family.) That summer, after many reassurances to the other parents, Peter took us kids sailing; he then did another jaunt with his sister Wendy and promptly disgraced himself by tipping the boat.

I visited the lake more often after that, once with my father, Wendell, and my grandmother in residence. We cut an odd figure in various photos, three aging faces (53, 67 and 93 respectively) framing my youthful one. Eventually colour predominates in the albums, and the format is 110mm with occasional masterpieces in 35mm from Peter who, though a doctor by profession, was also an inveterate tinkerer and craftsman, and had taken to photography in a serious way—although the obsession with wildflowers would only come several mellowing years later.

In the summer of 1977 there was another reunion at the lake, the only time with all four branches of the family represented, though not my grandmother, who had died two years before. There was barely room for everyone; my parents and I camped on the lawn, as we often did. My aunt Bea came with her daughter Alison, then in her mid thirties and recovering from a difficult period in her life: a messy divorce on top of the

recent deaths of her father and brother Ian; clearly reconnecting with the extended family was much-needed therapy. Indeed, there was much to distract: Wendy's two younger children and Peter's two got on with riotous enjoyment, building forts in the forest, mastering countless board games, and tossing each other off the end of the dock while the rest of us awarded prizes for the biggest splash.

The cottage had an old Victrola, and one night Peter cranked it up and played half a dozen wartime 78s while most of us danced. My uncle Ken did not—the consumption of rye was beginning to take its toll—and neither did I or Joan. In our mid-teens, Joan and I were curiously distant after our previously great rapport. We kept to ourselves, reading moodily or contemplating the lake from different outcroppings of rock; in the group photos you can see we are the ones who are self-conscious. A rare photo shows the Four First Cousins, a 23-year spread in ages, sitting on a fallen log: Wendy, Peter, Alison, me. Ian, Peter's contemporary and good pal when they were kids, had been the first of us to go; Peter would be the second, almost three decades later.

1977 also saw Peter and his family join the ranks of ex-pat Montrealers in Ottawa, which was much closer to the lake. Imperceptibly, he and Marg took over the business of running the cottage, the Laird becoming more of an honorary president.

Wendell would always pull his weight—mowing grass, chopping wood, sweeping and planting; there are photos of all these activities as proof—but just as often could be seen sitting, wrapped Mahatma-like in a towel, reading or scribbling earnestly into his perpetual notebook.

When Wendell moved from Ottawa to Montreal in his 80s, the cottage was formally ceded to Peter, though the tradition of clan rights persisted, and still does.

When I was 20 and looking for a summer job, Peter invited me up to paint the cottage and help build a new deck, for what I would now call an honorarium. It was a wonderful summer: I slept in the Duck House (it was still called that, though the duck had long since deflated), pulled long hours outdoors, and

got to know Peter's children who were much shyer than Wendy's. Little Ken came out of his shell to play Dungeons and Dragons with me and talk about Tolkien; Karen came out of hers by declaring her low opinion of both. For two sensational days my girlfriend came to the cottage, shocking her parents by spending the night (not in the Duck House) and winning my family's hearts by donning a pair of Wendell's overalls and hammering away at the half-built deck.

Three decades later, the photo of that historic moment continues to delight her, dominated as the later albums are by shots of the two of us posed at the end of the dock, of her pregnant, and of our children's lakeside antics.

After that first cottage experience together, she and I did not get back to the lake for nearly a decade, by which time Peter and Marg had replaced the Duck House with a two-room winterized cabin.

This proved most useful at a time when we were dealing with a significant loss in our lives; a visit to the lake in winter brought much comfort. The sight of the frozen lake, its profound silence replacing the summer's lapping waves and the laughter and the call of loons, was startling in its stark beauty—and those who have not been there in winter marvel at the photos.

We moved on, and came back with children, who learned to swim and paddle a canoe and sail (as crew, at least) like many before them. Eventually Karen started a family and her two sons became pals with ours—though our son, being slightly older, had to tone it down a little as I had once done with Karen and her contemporaries. Until that time, Peter and Marg happily practised grandparenting on our kids; it was Peter's view that it was the grandparents' job to teach children to "smell the flowers." He and Marg were often in residence during our visits, and despite the difference in our ages we would socialize as two couples over dinner, either at "our" cottage or at the winterized cabin where they hung out. Photography, and the travels depicted, became a regular feature of these visits; with digital cameras and computers there were great slide shows—but fewer images in the cottage albums from Peter. He compensated by

starting the wildflower albums, searching further and further afield, by canoe or on foot, for subjects.

My family all but took over the cottage albums—not only with photos but with art and verse in the style of K2. After my uncle Ken died in 1990 Kay made regular visits with friends, and there are photos of clumps of elderly ladies arrayed about the pines, but eventually her health, too, declined. Wendell died a decade later, but not before a rift had arisen between his children, one that caused considerable tension within the family and kept many members away from the cottage for some years. My father came to the lake for the last time during one of our longer stays, and earned his keep by drawing crazy pictures with my daughter—which of course occupy several album pages. My aunt Bea died in 2005 and that summer her daughter Alison made her second and equally therapeutic trip to the lake and scattered some of her mother's ashes there. By that time, Peter had replaced the makeshift lawn behind the main cottage with a vast patch of wildflowers, which grew in enviable abundance—a ready source of subject matter for his ever-inquisitive lens. He and Marg began to make plans to rebuild the main cottage so they could live there year-round after his retirement. Hearing of this, we took care to document our lives at the lake in even more photographic detail than before, allowing no corner of the cabin to escape commemoration. Again, with digital cameras such documentation is ridiculously easy.

When we saw Peter the summer before last we expected him to show the effects of several months of chemotherapy, but no: there were no signs, and although he talked about his illness openly, even clinically, he did not seem to despair or give any indication that the end was coming. He continued to work doggedly on the cottage and its grounds as his father had done before him; he swam, rowed every day in the boat he built himself in his Ottawa garage, and took photos of wildflowers. Wendy and her husband came east for a week's visit at the lake, and much was resolved. Peter's health improved dramatically over the winter and spring, and the chemotherapy was reduced. When we visited the following summer, he still

looked fine—but complained of a pain in his side that eventually made the daily rows unbearable. He and Marg sold the house in Ottawa where they'd lived for over three decades, and bought a condo that would be available in October. And so they stayed longer than ever at the lake, finally closing the main cottage down, as they did every autumn, and



pulling up the dock over the Thanksgiving weekend.

The end was sudden. Wendy came from the west coast and was with his family when he died. Her husband and three daughters came soon after. Joan, a concert violinist, played the "Meditation from Thais" at the funeral, and Karen and her sons did tearful readings. Then, a bunch of us climbed in our car and went to the only place that made sense.

It was as he'd left it, three weeks earlier. Except for the wildflowers, of course.

Letter

Reconnecting

I reluctantly left Quebec in 1978, but realized pretty quickly that I had left my heart behind. Fortunately, subsequent moves have been in an eastward direction, and my current location in Eastern Ontario allows for day trips "home" and longer visits as well.

You can imagine my delighted surprise, then, in February 2009, when I spotted a publication entitled *Quebec*

Heritage News in a bookstore in Newport, Vermont! I purchased the single copy, and read it cover to cover while staying with friends in Vale Perkins, in the Eastern Townships. It was a most comfortable read because it was written from the perspective that is my heritage. Through it I discovered the Quebec Anglophone Heritage Network (QAHN), and eventually attended the annual meeting atop Mount Royal in Montreal last June. What a pleasure to meet Matthew Farfan and acquire his beautiful books. Another attendee, Mark Boundy, forwarded a personal history written by a mutual friend. Dwane Wilkin has fostered my interest in the disappearing Township dialect, and also the potential for my old school's membership in QAHN. The frequent references to the Montreal West Operatic resonate with my own childhood memories of the practices and productions at West Hill High School — a highlight of my family's year. Finally, despite my location, I have discovered a "reference group" who shares my cultural and historical interests.

Professor Steven High, who holds the Canada Research Chair in Public History at Concordia challenges us to think of community as more than a geographical location, to include social relationships and experiences. This way of thinking enables me to feel part of my community of origin again, and I have been able to solidify this by joining QAHN. I wonder how many other people, born and raised in Quebec anglophone communities and now living somewhere else, would welcome this means of belonging.

People often say that they learn about themselves through travel. Who would have thought that the means for reclaiming my cultural heritage was waiting just south of the border!

*Janet Chandler Allingham
Morrisburg, Ontario.*

Please take a look at a new blog featuring material from the Montreal Mechanics Institute, edited by Susan McGuire of the Atwater Library and Computer Centre: Montrealhistory.org

OBELISK ENCORE

The man who fixed Canada's oldest national monument

by John Fry

Every tourist season in Quebec City a million or more people visit the Monument to Wolfe and Montcalm next to the Chateau Frontenac. If your Latin arithmetic is functional, you know that MDCCCXXVII on the monument is 1827, the year when its cornerstone was laid. What the bronze plaque does not say is that the monument was also taken down and re-erected in 1869, forty-two years later.

And therein, as they say, lies a story: the tale of a wealthy British merchant's gift to his adopted country.

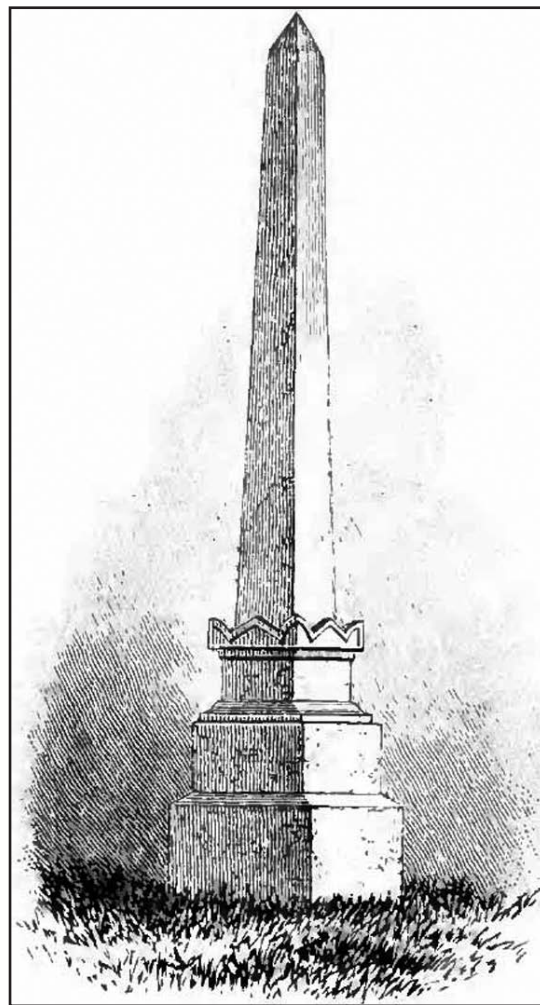
Compared to the violent rapacity that typically follows military conquest, the monument is a symbol of relative tranquility and reasonableness following the British occupation of Quebec after the 1759 Battle on the Plains of Abraham. True, 68 years later, political fires blazed, which would culminate in the Papineau Rebellion. Nevertheless in 1827 sufficient amity existed so that, less than three generations after the Battle, the Earl of Dalhousie, Governor-in-chief of the Canadian provinces, could propose the idea of monumentalizing the two generals, Wolfe and Montcalm, who had died leading their troops.

To build the monument, the first of its kind in the city, required a strenuous fund-raising effort. Top-tier Quebec City merchants, the Roman Catholic Church, and even a donor from as far away as New York coughed up enough money to get the building underway. In November the cornerstone was laid at a formal ceremony, attended by Dalhousie, by the port city's leading citizens, including the 95-year-old last living veteran of the Plains of Abraham battle, and by the Grand Master of the Masonic Lodge in full costume.

As with a good part of historic Quebec built before the middle of the nineteenth century, the limestone came from a quarry west of the city in Portneuf

County. On the 13-foot-high stone sub-base was placed a seven-foot-high sarcophagus, from which rose a column or obelisk 42-1/2 feet high, capped with a stone piece. It is the design we see today.

It was simple in concept, but by springtime of the following year the



funds – £700 sterling – for its construction were exhausted. Dalhousie had to dig into his own pockets to finance its completion. Then he promptly left for India.

By the summer of 1828 the monument was finished, although not exactly open to view. The Governor's Garden was still private, as it had been for a cen-

tury and more. In 1838, however, the reform-minded Governor General Durham opened it to the public.

Bad news came 20 years later. A vertical crack in the obelisk appeared and began to widen. It could have been due to the presence of stylolites in the limestone. The base or cenotaph supporting the enormous weight of the obelisk may also have been subject to cracking for the same reason. Or the cement used may have been of inferior quality.

As in the beginning, money was lacking to perform the repair work. In a letter to the editor of the Quebec Morning Chronicle dated September 12, 1864, a reader said it had been "unfortunately premature" for the newspaper to have expressed its earlier pleasure in the St. George's Society having undertaken to repair the monument. The workmen, it turns out, were making only "such small repairs as will prevent the threatened fall of the large marble tablet.

"Surely it is not creditable to abandon so popular an undertaking," complained the reader who signed himself "Quebec." Rather than the St. George's Society, why should there not be a public or private subscription to raise the money? "A few individuals must undertake to save this monument to Quebec," proposed the writer, who let it be known that he would be willing to make a contribution.

But no money was forthcoming. Meanwhile the crack was widening. The daily sight of the deterioration offended Quebec merchant Henry Fry as he walked or was driven to work in Lower Town. In 1861, with his wife Mary Dawson Fry (sister of Samuel Dawson, future Queen's Printer of Canada) and their newly born daughter, he had moved into a house on Des Carrières Street, only about 150 metres west of the monument. (The house endures today, in an enlarged form as the four-

storey, 22-room Hotel de la Terrasse, next door to the U.S. Consulate.)

Fry, born 43 years earlier in Bristol, England, was known in the great port of Quebec as a bold sort of fellow, ready to risk building or buying a new ship, and financing cargoes. Physically, he was a commanding-looking man. His face was chiseled, handsome, with comprehending eyes and firm, compressed lips. Bronze hair receded from a broad forehead, thinning on top, thick and curled at sides of his head over the ears. A beard formed a collar around his neck in a style fashionable among sea captains at the time, leaving the chin and mouth clean shaven. He was of medium height, marked by a long torso and shortish legs. A portrait made a few years earlier by the celebrated Montreal photographer William Notman, shows a determined, defiant character.

Business was good for Henry Fry in 1869. He had just been elected President of Quebec's Board of Trade. He was Lloyd's Agent for the St. Lawrence River. He owned, or mostly owned, seven sailing ships. His high-masted square riggers were profitably transporting huge loads of wood and other cargoes to England, the Mediterranean and South America. He exuded prosperity.



Fry was frustrated by the absence of action in repairing the monument near his home. As the head of the port city's most important association of businessmen, he might have led a fundraising drive, as Dalhousie had. An experience two years earlier, though, discouraged him. The winter of 1867-68 had been a bad time economically in Quebec. Fry recalled it in his handwritten, illustrated book, *Reminiscences of a Retired Shipowner*:

"There was much distress among the ships carpenters of St. Roche," he wrote. "So much so that a meeting was called at the Board of Trade meeting room to promote soup kitchens." Fry disagreed. "What they want is work, not soup, and there are men in this room who can provide it." He proposed to the assembled merchants and bankers that they finance the building of a half-dozen ships, which he would sell free of commission.

"In this way you will get all your money back, and provide for 4

or 5000 souls. I will undertake to build one myself." The Board-of-Traders voted in favor of the proposal, and Henry, as he'd promised, immediately commissioned the building of an 800-ton sailing ship in the McKay and Warner yard.

"But none of the others did anything," he wrote. That no one followed his example came to define his attitude toward public works.

Out of modesty or forgetfulness, or because it was not a maritime venture, Fry did not mention his next action in his *Reminiscences*. It was to rebuild the Wolfe-Montcalm monument himself. He drew up a contract with Quebec master builders Thomas and Henry Hatch to dismantle, repair and re-erect what Dalhousie and other benefactors had created 41 years earlier.

The agreement, drawn up in stages between July and September, 1869 by the notary Henri-Charles Austin, called for the Hatches "to take down and rebuild the Wolfe and Montcalm Monument in the Governor's Garden in the upper Town of the City of Quebec... The contractor is to provide all the necessary scaffolding, tackling, tools, labour, materials, etc., etc. necessary for the carefully taking down and rebuilding of the monument." Fry was obliged to pay, in installments, "one thousand dollars of current money of this Province to the said T. and H. Hatch." (The sum, adjusted for inflation, is roughly \$100,000 today.) As security,



WH Coverdale, *Monument in Honour of Wolfe and Montcalm*, 1850. Library and Archives Canada - 1970-188-174. Below: Portrait of Henry Fry, 1862. Photograph by William Notman. McCord Museum - I-4236.1.

“two persons of respectability” were paid \$100 to ensure that the work was properly done.

“The monument is to be carefully taken down and stones cleaned; all the face stones assembled and laid aside after cleaning so that they may be placed in the same position they now occupy in the re-erection.”

Inferior mortar may have been a source of problems with the original monument, because more than a third of the Specifications Contract between Fry and Hatch concerned the quality of the cementing to be done.

“Portland cement and clean fresh water sand only are to be used in the rebuilding of the monument. . .The proper mixing and tempering of the cement and sand being of the greatest importance to the permanent stability of the monument. . .The Superintendent to have the power at any time of testing the cement.”

The initiation of the complex work was celebrated in a modest cornerstone-laying ceremony on September 8, 1869, reported in the daily Quebec Chronicle.

“The monument is being rebuilt by private subscription,” reported the newspaper, “principally through the energy of Mr. Henry Fry, who, anticipating that it would soon fall to the ground a heap of ruin and debris, brought the matter before the public through the columns of the press, and his exertions were soon after crowned with success.”

The newspaper expressed disappointment at the absence of the Mystic Order of Masons at the cornerstone ceremony, since the Order had participated in the original stone-laying. At the gate to the upper garden, Mr. Fry greeted the celebrants, including Sir Narcisse Belleau, Lieutenant-Governor of Quebec. Into a small cavity in the stone, Belleau placed a variety of coins from the reign of George IV, which had been in the original monument. The Chronicle went on to report that “a jar was also deposited at the back of the foundation stone containing a tracing of the plan of the Monument, with the following inscription: Wolfe and Montcalm Monument, restored at a cost of \$1,000, raised by public subscription in 1869, in the 34th year of the Reign of Her Majesty Queen Victoria.” Fry did not want it to appear that he alone was responsible for the

costly work.

In the final act, Sir Narcisse passed a trowel over the cement, and the large stone was lowered into place. “His Excellency again took the implements of the art into his hand,” reported the Chronicle, “and gave the stone the customary three taps, declaring it laid. Mr. Fry and other gentlemen then took up the mallet and went through a similar ceremony.” Among the others present were the Hon. Mr. Chauveau, Major Taschereau, J.M. LeMoine, J.H. Oakes, James Dunbar, Mr. Thompson, Rickson the architect and Hatch the builder.

Before the end of the year 1869 the monument rose skyward again, as it stands today. The cement and everything else in the reconstruction proved to be first class. “The workmen, who are skilled in such matters, say the obelisk will remain firm for 200 years,” reported the Chronicle in its September 9, 1869 issue.

Quebec has separate monuments to Wolfe, and to Louis-Joseph de Montcalm. But the oldest monument in Quebec is perhaps the most meaningful ever constructed in Canada. It is that lapidary tribute to the settling of old scores, the monument to both Generals and arguably to both Canadian cultures, which stands in the little park next to the Chateau Frontenac.

Parks Canada, which is responsible for the monument today, has no record of further disassembly in the ensuing 140 years. Presumably it, or someone, periodically cleans the stone. (The author’s repeated calls to Parks Canada about its procedures for maintaining and repairing the monument, and about the contents buried inside, elicited a numbing non-response from the agency.)

The monument was designed by a captain on Dalhousie’s personal staff, described in Hawkins’s Picture of Quebec as “an officer whose taste had been greatly cultivated by foreign travel.” Hawkins admired the monument’s chaste design, “a combination of beautiful proportions to be found in some of the celebrated models of antiquity.” It was simple, austere -- not a physical depiction of dying men or bodies lying on a gory battlefield -- but an abstract invitation to contemplate death, heroism, sacrifice. And so it does.

Montcalm’s name appears on the

north side of the monument, Wolfe’s on the south, facing the river whose cliffs his men had scaled. Fry and Hatch saw to it that the lettering of the original inscription was properly cleaned and restored. When the original monument was built, a medal had been offered to the person who furnished the most appropriate inscription to go on the cenotaph. The winner was Doctor of Literature J. Charleton Fisher, who wrote: *Mortem virtus communem. Famae historia. Monumentum posteritas dedit. (Valour gave them a common death, history a common fame, posterity a common monument.)*

The inscription mirrored Dalhousie’s sentiment. Sixty-five years after the deaths of the two generals, he did not want to fuel feelings of conflict and resentment, but rather inspire reconciliation -- not a bad model for our own times.

John Fry grew up in Montreal, attended Lower Canada College and McGill University, and had a fifty-year career in journalism, over half of which was as magazine editor for the Times Mirror Company and for the New York Times Company. He has edited and/or contributed to numerous publications, including Ski Magazine, Snow Country Magazine, and European Travel Magazine. He is the co-author of No Hill Too Fast, published in 1985 by Simon & Schuster, and the author of The Story of Modern Skiing, published in 2006 by University Press of New England.

Henry Fry died in 1896, just after publication of his definitive “History of North Atlantic Steam Navigation.” He is the great-grandfather of the author, who has adapted this article from his forthcoming biography of Henry Fry, *A Mind at Sea*.

The author seeks information about Dr. George F. Slack of Farnham, who cared for Henry Fry from 1882 to 1890.

NURSERYMAN & MAN OF CULTURE

A sketch of Robert Cleghorn of Montreal

by Susan McGuire

“Robert Cleghorn was a public-spirited citizen and a man of domestic tastes, and the influences of a home of culture and refinement left their impress...”

So did W.H. Atherton sum up the life of Robert Cleghorn in his *History of Montreal*, written some years after Cleghorn's death. Atherton gave few details, because the piece was about Robert's prominent son, James Power Cleghorn.

Robert Cleghorn should be remembered for being the owner of Montreal's first large commercial nursery.

He was born in Scotland in 1778, the son of Dr Robert Cleghorn, an Edinburgh-trained physician who lectured in materia medica (which included botany) in the years 1788-91 at the University of Glasgow, and later taught chemistry, as well as carrying on a medical practice.

Botany was probably an early interest of the young Robert Cleghorn. Growing up in a medical household at a time when the study of plants played an essential role in medical education, he was most likely exposed to its many ramifications. Physicians needed to know about the simple drugs sold by herbalists and

apothecaries, and to recognize plants that had medicinal properties. There were no pharmaceutical representatives around at the time to properly indoctrinate them.

In any event, the botanical world became the young Robert Cleghorn's major interest. Early in the 1800s, he was in Montreal establishing his nursery, which he ran for some 30 years. According to Paul-Louis Martin (*Les Fruits du Québec*, 2002), these were the first nurseries in the Montreal area:

- Louis Charles, on the property of Simon Mc Tavish [d 1804], fur merchant
- Robert Cleghorn, owner of Blinkbonny Gardens, who sold fruit plants and fruit trees—among them Belle de Montréal, Cirée and Blinkbonny Seedling.

Soon after his arrival, Cleghorn began to investigate the local plants, and sent unusual ones back to England and Scotland. In an article entitled “On the Culture of North American Plants” in John Claudius Loudon's *The Gardener's Magazine* (Vol. 2, March 1827), Ayrshire nurseryman John Goldie listed plants he observed 1817-19. Among them:

Cypripedium arietinum, in a swamp in Montreal, which I believe is the only place it has ever been found. It was discovered about 1808 by Mr. Robert Cleghorn, Montreal, and sent by him to London...it grows well in vegetable mould and soil, and should be kept “moist and shady.”

This plant, known as Ram's-Head Lady's-Slipper, is now an endangered member of the orchid family.

By 1812, Robert Cleghorn was listed in the *Montreal Herald* as secretary of the Montreal Floral Society (which became the Montreal Horticultural Society in 1818; Cleghorn was again its secretary in 1829). He was evidently known in the wider botanical community, because the important Saxon botanist Frederick Pursh, who lived for some years in the United States, died at the Cleghorn home in Montreal in 1820, less than 50 years old, destitute and alcoholic.

In the 1820s, Cleghorn sent plants to Glasgow, where William Jackson Hooker – whose son was a friend of Charles Darwin – was the University of Glasgow's Regius Professor of Botany. Some of Cleghorn's plants were recorded in Hooker's “Exotic Flora”, among them *Coral-*



Frontispiece of J.C. Loudon's *The Gardener's Magazine*, 1826

lorhiza multiflora, another member of the orchid family. Hooker notes: “For the introduction of this singular and highly curious plant, our Botanic Garden is indebted to Mr. Cleghorn of Montreal, who sent living roots of it...”

A description of Blinkbonny Gardens at Côte-à-Baron (now the St. Louis Square area of Montreal) appeared in John Claudius Loudon’s *An Encyclopedia of Gardening*, editions of 1860 and 1878. (These editions appeared long after the deaths of both Loudon and Cleghorn; presumably the original reference was in an earlier edition that was not updated.)

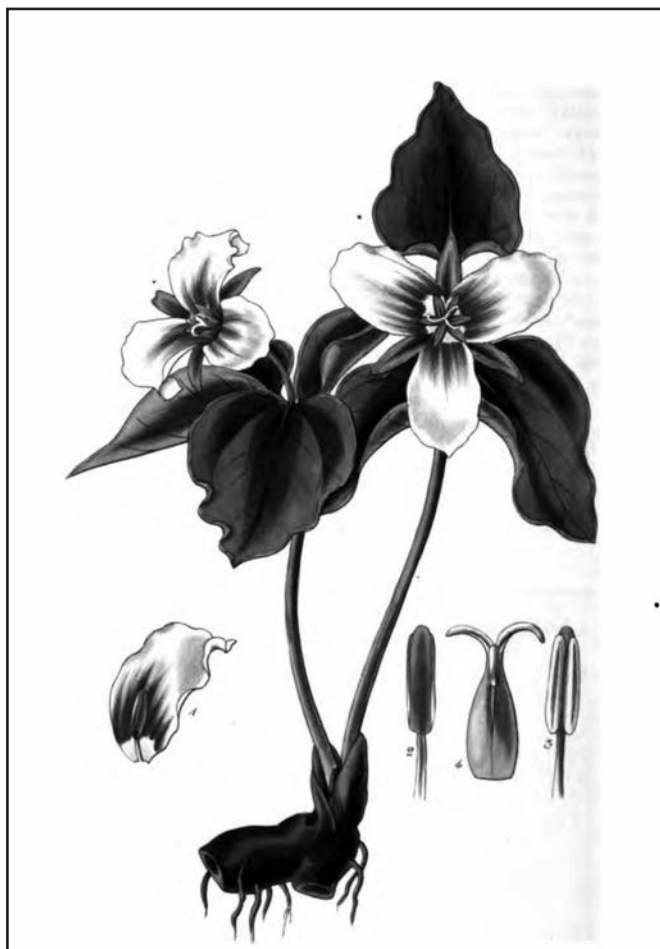
The principal nurseries in Lower Canada are at Montreal, and the best of these is Blinkbonny Garden, kept by Mr. Robert Cleghorn. Mr. Cleghorn has paid great attention to the introduction and cultivation of fruit trees, and has for sale about 30 kinds of apples, fifteen or eighteen kinds of pears, about as many kinds of plum, three or four kinds of cherry, as many grapes, and about six or eight kinds of gooseberry. He has also a collection of perennial, herbaceous, and greenhouse plants; and an extensive collection of indigenous plants and trees.

An interest aligned with Cleghorn’s nursery activities was a continuing study of the weather in Montreal. Before 1840, Canadian meteorological observations were made by private individuals and explorers, and by some organizations such as the Hudson’s Bay Company. Robert Cleghorn provided diaries of the Montreal weather to at least two organizations in Montreal.

Robert Cleghorn’s first wife Margaret died in Montreal after a long illness, aged 22, as recorded in the *Montreal Herald* in 1817. He remarried, Eliza Ann Power from Sorel and, according to Atherton, there were 10 children in the Cleghorn family. The 1825 Montreal census notes his “grand jardin à fleurs et verger, pépinière...serre.”

Cleghorn’s family and business commitments did not prevent him from participating in the wider community of Montreal. He was a militiaman, and as such had participated in the funeral of his neighbour James McGill (founder of McGill University) in December 1813. He was active in the Natural History Society of Montreal (formed in 1827) and contributed items to its museum. These included:

- 1827: a petrified Echinus from Berkshire, England; and a curious stone from Three Rivers acted upon by water
- 1828: Mineral specimens from Mount Etna; an Egyptian pipe
- 1829: A tree wasp’s nest and comb, and three specimens of boletus. From Mrs. Cleghorn, three specimens of virgin honey comb



- 1831: An Indian stone axe found in his garden in Montreal
- 1831: From Masters William & George Cleghorn, 69 specimens of butterflies and other insects, collected by them during the last summer
- 1832: Diary of the weather, 1831
- 1834: Diary of the weather, 1832 and 1833

In December 1828, Robert Cleghorn became a member of the first committee of management of the Montreal Mechanics’ Institution (now the Atwater Library and Computer Centre) and served on committees from 1832 through 1834. He donated diaries of the weather to the MMI for the years 1829, 1832 and 1833.

The respected Dr. A. F. Holmes collection at the McGill University Herbarium contains a specimen of *Tofieldia glutinosa*, labelled “Cleghorn’s, Quebec” collected 1821. It is commonly known as false asphodel. It was likely collected by Robert Cleghorn. Both Cleghorn and Dr. Holmes – who was to become McGill’s first dean of medicine – were associated with the Natural History Society and the Montreal Mechanics’ Institution.

Graham Hardy, serials librarian at the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh, discovered this reference to Robert Cleghorn in James McNab’s journal of his 1834 North American tour (McNab was later curator at the RBGE):

[Mr. Cleghorn's] collection of indigenous plants...for the British market was very great, viz., Cypripedium, Orchises, Habenarias, Goodyeras, Monotropas, &c. In the Nurseries the fruit tree flower department appeared most attended to. Few of the indigenous plants are cultivated, although enumerable masses of the Genera Cypripedii, Trillium, Orchis's, Habenaria, Calypso, Pogonia, and Sarracenia lay stored in boxes for sale and barter with the British merchants.

In his latter days, Robert Cleghorn converted his nursery grounds into a garden promenade. In *The Gardener's Magazine* of January 1840, Alexander Gordon wrote: "Its numerous shady walks and rural retreats render it a desirable field of recreation for the citizens in general; while its rich and botanical stores eminently adapt it to the pursuits of the scientific."

The Montreal Gazette obituary in January 1841 notes Robert Cleghorn was "deeply regarded by all who knew him." Three years later, in April 1844, his widow Eliza Ann went to Notary Stanley Clark Bagg to formalize the apprenticeship of her minor son, James Power Cleghorn, age 13, to drygoods merchant Samuel Ralston, thereby starting him on a long and successful business career.

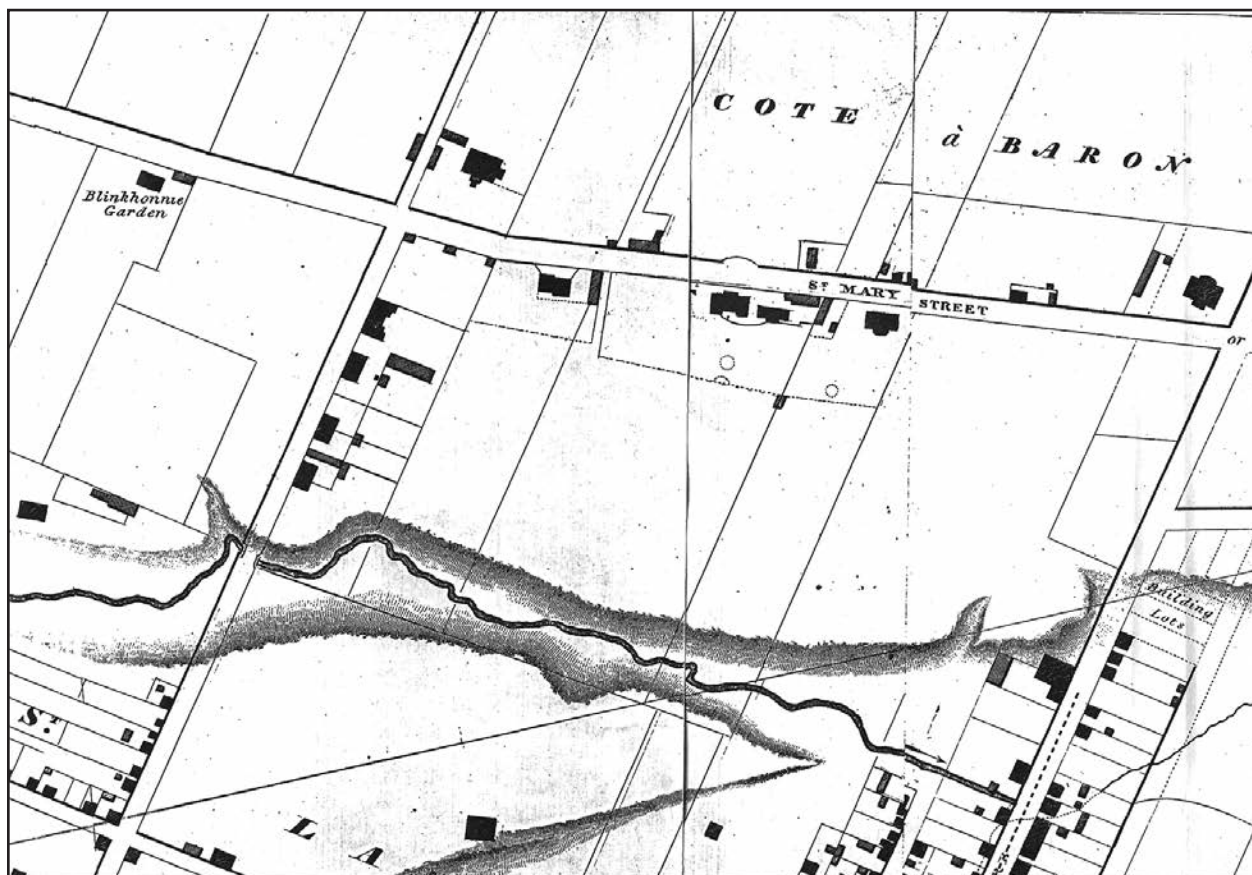
This article is based on research originated by the Rev. Harry Kuntz. Other reference was kindly provided by Leonie Paterson, Graham Hardy and Lynsey Wilson at the Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh and by Marcia

Waterway from the McGill University Herbarium.

Susan McGuire grew up in Knowlton, attended Bishop's University, and currently is historian for the 181-year-old Atwater Library and Computer Centre in Montreal

A section from John Adams' 1825 atlas of Montreal shows Robert Cleghorn's nursery in Côte à Baron, labelled —Blinkhonnie Garden. □ The discrepancy is typical of nineteenth-century Scots spelling, but that it is specifically listed at all is remarkable, given that the map lists very few individual properties – not even the former home of James McGill, located just slightly to the west of Cleghorn's.

St Mary Street was also known as Sherbrooke, and soon acquired that name permanently. The north-south street just east of Blinkbonny is Bleury, and the intersection at lower left is Bleury and Ste Catherine Street. The north-south street at the right is the main street of the St Lawrence Suburb – now St-Laurent Boulevard.



Detail of John Adams' 1825 Map of Montreal

FRONTIER MOTHERS

Lives of hardship and courage among three colonial traders' wives

by Anne Joseph

Just who were some of these eighteenth-century heroines who lived at the time of the founding of today's anglophone community in Quebec? Their obituary notices routinely defined them by the status and achievements of their husbands. There are some people who still believe that the sphere of activities of these women was limited to leisure functions and those charitable endeavours deemed appropriate to their social and economic standing.

Who were these women who gave so much and received so little recognition? When I started exploring the role of my husband's antecedents among the earliest post-1760 families to settle in Quebec, it was the men who dominated the stories. They certainly did amazing things, achieving highs (punctuated by lows) that leave most of us marvelling at their persistence, skill and courage as they established the viable community that thrives to this day.

These pioneer men were not stupid. They chose as their wives women who demonstrated in their own feminine way the same level of persistence, skill and courage. Many of the difficulties that arose in those early days were challenges shared by all, but somehow each one of these women was also called upon to face her own unique problems.

Phoebe Samuel (1736-1785) was married to Lazarus David (1734-1776) in Rhode Island in 1761. Phoebe was born in Arnwick, England, and her father is listed as Ezekiel Samuel of Rhode Island. How and when the Samuel family got to Rhode Island is not clear. Lazarus David, who is thought to have crossed the Atlantic in about 1754, was born in Swansea, Wales, into a fledgling community thought to have emigrated from continental Europe.² Some years ago, my attempt to retrieve further information from Swansea ended when I learned that all the records had been destroyed in

February 1941, when the entire town centre was demolished in three nights of explosive and incendiary bombing raids during the blitz.³

The newly-wedded Phoebe and Lazarus David set up home in New York, where their first child, Brandele Abigail, was born on 13 May 1762.⁴ By 1763, they were settled in Montreal, where Lazarus became a highly successful merchant and landowner. Lazarus had certainly spent time in Montreal since 1760, the year in which the installation of the new British regime enabled Jews to settle legally in Quebec.⁵ This opportunity was most inviting, and is no doubt what attracted the David family, and others, to move to Montreal. When Phoebe gave birth to their son David on 14 October 1764, he became the first Jewish child to be born in Quebec. Two more sons, Samuel and Moses, arrived in 1765 and 1767.⁶

Making a home for her busy husband and children was not an easy task for Phoebe or the other wives in this harbourfront community as they faced all the usual difficulties of pioneer living, along with springtime flooding and frequent fires, but in the spring of 1768 things got even more difficult. Around 10:30 pm on Monday, 11 April, a major fire broke out and quickly spread along St Jacques, Notre Dame, St Paul and surrounding streets, engulfing between 75 and 80 houses before the night was over. Phoebe and Lazarus escaped with their four children, who ranged in age from five years down to six months, but their home was totally destroyed.⁷ Fires occurred frequently in those days, and in spite of their proximity to the St Lawrence River, fighting them was so difficult that most times they tended to become conflagrations of spectacular size and devastation. Phoebe dealt with her frightened and probably crying children, and then, in the unrelenting aftermath of caring for her homeless family, had to call on her energy and composure to re-establish the David family home

elsewhere. Two years later, Phoebe gave birth to her fifth and last child, a daughter named Fanny.⁸

Up to this point, Phoebe's life had been running along tracks shared with many of the other wives in the neighbourhood. Little did she know that a nightmare was just around the corner. Lazarus died on 22 October 1776 at the age of 42, leaving Phoebe alone to raise their children and continue her husband's business enterprises. While the idea of a woman running a business was not totally exceptional, it was definitely not typical. Lazarus had been a very successful merchant and landowner, and Phoebe was determined to continue her husband's success, with the objectives of providing her children with a good life as well as a good inheritance. It was all very stressful, and although her eldest son, David, did in time mature to become as successful in the business world as Lazarus had been, he was only a few days past his twelfth birthday when his father died. Sadly, people took advantage of the young widow. In early 1780, just over three years after her husband's death, Phoebe's inability to collect some long overdue debts meant that she could not feed her children. As a result, she felt the need to petition the governor, Frederick Haldimand, for justice and assistance in putting pressure on the debtors. It worked. It also taught customers not to mess with Phoebe. Interestingly, she signed the petition "Pheby David."⁹

Feisty Phoebe never let hard times get her down. After the son of a London merchant met her in 1785, he commented that he found her to be "really a very sensible clever old woman and very entertaining in her conversation. I never laughed more in my life than at the droll stories she told."¹⁰

Old? She was 49!

By the time Phoebe (Samuel) David died on 10 October 1785, she had succeeded in ensuring the continued success of her husband's business enterprises,

and would have known that all five of her children were doing well. Her oldest sons, David and Samuel, administered her estate and announced in *The Quebec Gazette* on 10 November 1785 that they had taken over the David family business. In the fullness of time, all five children made significant contributions to the fostering of the Montreal community.

Rebekah Franks (c.1750-1812) married Levy Solomons (1729/30-1792) in 1775. Rebekah's date of birth is not known, but most sources suggest that she was about twenty years younger than her husband. Her father was Abraham Franks, about whom tantalizingly little is known. He is believed to have been one of the earliest Anglophones to arrive in Quebec, spending time in both Montreal and Quebec City.¹¹ Rebekah's older brother, David Salesby Franks, is reported to have been born in England in about 1742¹² and moved across the Atlantic at an early age.¹³ If that is so, then Rebekah was probably born somewhere in North America, from which place she moved to Quebec as a child in the early 1760s.

In that Rebekah continued to live in her hometown after her marriage to Levy, she had a distinct advantage over Phoebe David. But that did not mean her life was smooth sailing. Levy Solomons' first wife, Louise Loubier, died in 1772 after less than five years of marriage, leaving her husband to raise their two small children. There is no record of how Levy managed during his years as a single parent, but it is reasonable to assume that the close-knit community would have given him support, and the Franks family may well have been among those lending a helping hand. So when Rebekah became stepmother to Sarah and Levy Jr, they would not have been strangers. The record of Rebekah Franks' marriage to Levy Solomons on 31 May 1775 is the first entry in the Solomons Bible. The births of all eleven of their children are also recorded in this bible, now housed in the Lande Room of McGill University in Montreal.

On 13 November 1775, American troops led by General Richard Montgomery entered Montreal, which was not defended, and took possession of the



city. Even though the occupation lasted only a few months, the Solomons family found themselves in a difficult position. Rebekah's father, Abraham, was loyal to the British, and her brother, David, served with the Americans. And Levy Solomons quickly discovered that General Montgomery regarded him as a former American, and as such requested that he supply food for the army and provide hospital facilities for wounded American soldiers. Levy complied, furnishing a large house for this purpose and later two additional houses for smaller infirmaries. Levy even provided all the necessary supplies for the patients as his own expense.¹⁴ The degree of Levy's willingness to comply is unclear, but the lack of any reimbursement by the Americans certainly lessened his enthusiasm for the tasks.

Rebekah was pregnant throughout the months of the occupation, giving birth to her own first child, Mary, on 6 March 1776. The American troops withdrew from Montreal that spring, but hard though the winter had been, worse was to come for the young Solomons family. They were exposed to the wrath of the English, who branded Levy Solomons as a traitor for having openly fraternized with the enemy. The Americans had confiscated all his possessions, and then the English ejected him from his own home on 4 July 1776.¹⁵

And so it happened that Levy Solomons was ordered "to quit his house, and he was turned into the street

by an Ensign of the 29th Regt. And a party of soldiers, himself, his wife and children, destitute of everything, except the clothes on their backs." The family in this spring of 1776 consisted of Levy, Rebekah, Sarah, Levy Jr and the newborn, whose name was either Mary or Polly.¹⁶

After a while the Solomons family did secure permission to return, and although the exact date of their homecoming is not known, it was probably only a few months after their eviction. Solomons later appealed to the Americans for compensation, but the American government ignored the petition.¹⁷

Rebekah went on to give birth to 10 more children. Her husband died in 1792, and the final entry in the Solomons Bible records the death of Rebekah Solomons on 27 March 1812.

Louise Dubois (c.1750-c.1813) married Ezekiel Solomon (c.1740-c.1804/08) in Montreal in 1769. The names of the parents of both Louise and Ezekiel remain unknown, but it is thought that Ezekiel was a cousin of Levy Solomons.

Unlike Phoebe Samuel (the English born lady who married Lazarus David in Rhode Island and made her home with him in Montreal) or Rebekah Franks (who first moved to Montreal as a child and stayed there after marrying Levy Solomons), Louise Dubois was a French-Canadian who married Ezekiel

Solomon in Montreal, and lived there with him throughout much of their married life, but not all the time, and most certainly not in a conventional manner.

When Louise married Ezekiel on 23 July 1769, she was well aware that her groom had spent much of the last decade as a fur trader in the Mackinac area at the head of Lakes Michigan and Huron, and that he intended to continue in like manner. Throughout the 1760s, Ezekiel and the other settlers had experienced many hair-raising adventures as they set about developing for themselves their role in the rich northern fur trade. Bands of Indians threatened destruction, at times necessitating daring rescues by English troops, and in the horrors of the general Indian uprising in 1763 that became known as Pontiac's Conspiracy, Ezekiel and other settlers were captured and faced the imminent threat of death by torture. Obviously Ezekiel had survived this, emerging broke but alive. But Louise would have been well aware that such dangers remained a possibility.¹⁸

For the next 35 years, plucky Louise faced hardships and hazards that would scare the bravest among her friends and relations, as she travelled back and forth between Montreal and Fort Michilimackinac, sharing in her husband's life. Throughout the decade beginning in 1772, four sons and two (or maybe three) daughters were born. Throughout these years, the Solomon family routinely spent the summer months at Fort Michilimackinac and returned to Montreal for the winter.¹⁹ Sometimes, perhaps, Louise needed to stay in Montreal and let Ezekiel under-

take the summer trip without her. The journeys could not have been easy for the menfolk, but for Louise and the children, there must have been many anxious and difficult days of travel.

Details are sketchy when it comes to the deaths of both Ezekiel and Louise. From records we know that Ezekiel was on Mackinac Island on 28 June 1803, and we also know from Mackinac records that accounts for household supplies were opened at the store of the American Fur Company there for Mrs. Solomon on 31 October 1804, and for William Solomon on 5 December 1804. While these two accounts continued for two or three years, there were no entries for Ezekiel Solomon.²⁰ From this, it might be reasonable to consider that Ezekiel died in 1804. Louise was still alive on 13 April 1808, when hearings on land claims at Michilimackinac were conducted in Detroit, and reference was made to a "claim to the widow and heirs of the late Ezekiel Solomon." She may have lived for several more years, if the reference in a letter written by Madeline Askin dated 23 June 1813 does indeed refer to her: "I do not think that Mrs. Solomon will live long, she is very feeble and has kept her bed for some time now."²¹

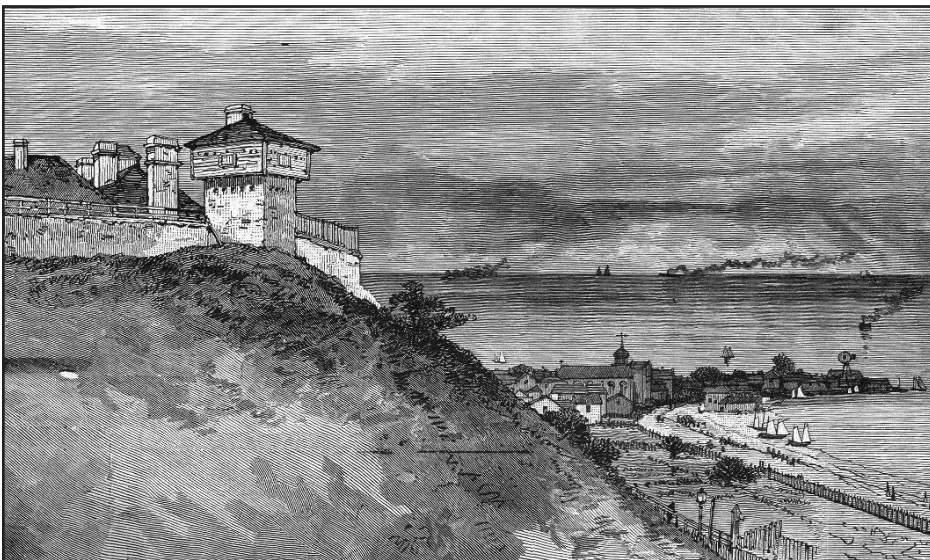
Of course we all know that women of more recent times – right up to today – faced, and continue to face, comparable difficulties brought on by fires, extreme weather, poverty, even war. But in

pioneer areas like Quebec during the eighteenth century, the likelihood of experiencing strife was far greater than one would generally expect in today's world. Deep in hardship – and without modern communications like radio, television, telephones and the internet – the pioneers of old must often have felt isolated. So I, for one, salute Phoebe and Rebekah and Louise and all their pioneer sisters who paved the way for the rest of us.

Anne Joseph has spent most of her spare time for the last dozen or so years researching and writing about the earliest Canadian Jewish families who arrived in Quebec in the 18th and 19th centuries.

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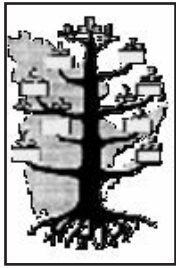


QUEBEC FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY

Quebec's Anglophone Genealogy Society

Part III: The Learning Centre

by Robert Dunn



QFHS holds all day educational seminars at our Heritage Centre in Pointe Claire. These sessions deal with a wide range of subjects, which include finding your ancestors in countries such as Ireland, Scotland, or England. Sessions are also held on how to organize your genealogical "piles of paper," and workshops on specific genealogical

database programs such as Family Tree Maker or Legacy. Seminars featuring Quebec Land Records or the military are also popular.

There is a nominal fee for participation.

The following is a brief description of a few of the QFHS seminars.

Ireland



Tracing your Irish Ancestors can be very frustrating. All-day seminars are held on the World of Irish Genealogy as well as what new databases are

available to help you find your Lost Irish Ancestors.

Scotland



Once parish registers and civil registration records have been exhausted where do you look next? This seminar explores the many different types of records and resources that are available for tracing Scottish ancestors. Find out what they are, where they can be found and how to research them.

England



This seminar examines what's new and exciting in the world of English Family History and how to find your ancestors lost in England.

Quebec Genealogy

The purpose of the session is to examine research in Quebec.

Digging for Treasure in Land Records

This session introduces a rarely used source for genealogical data -The Land Register of Quebec. The information provided could lead to discoveries of hidden gems that will help your family tree grow.

The seminar will show how you can locate records for properties across Quebec during the 20th and 19th Centuries and earlier.

Legacy and Family Tree Maker



The courses on Legacy or Family Tree Maker demonstrate how to use the software and what results are produced. We show the many aspects of the newest versions of the software. It is not important which version you are currently using, or planning to use. Bring your questions - as

many as possible will be answered.

Army Military Records 1660 - 1945

Discover if your ancestors served in the British or Canadian Army and what types of records are available to Family Historians.

Come and see us or visit our website. Guests are always welcome

Robert Dunn is an active member of the Quebec Family History Society, manages the QFHS bookstore, has written or co-authored several church repertoires and is part of the team working to make all QFHS databases available on the QFHS website.

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THE PRETTIEST CHURCH

A visit to St Mark's of Longueuil

by John Kalbfleisch

This article was first published in the Montreal Gazette on July 19, 2009, and is reprinted here with permission from the author.

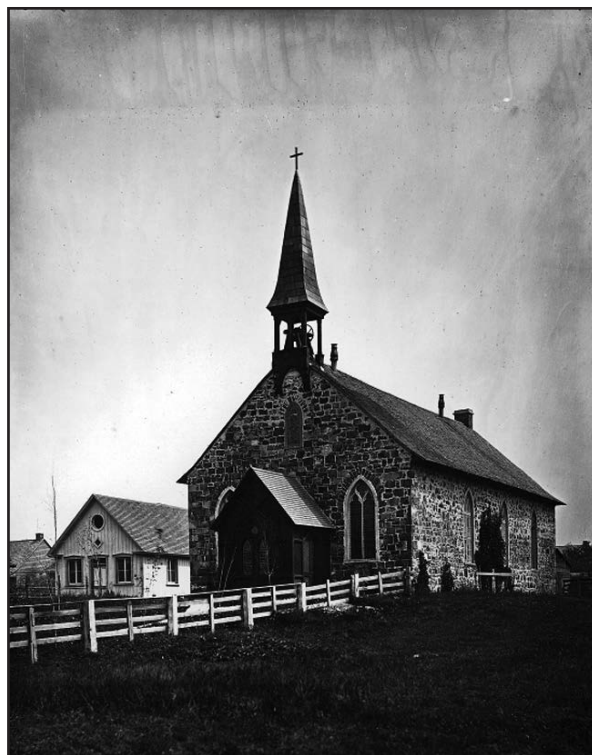
As you enter the door of St Mark's Anglican Church in Longueuil, you'll see, to the left, an old harmonium, or cabinet organ. It no longer accompanies services, a full-sized organ having been installed in the church in 1900. But though the harmonium is now nearly a century and a half old, it can still be played - so long as the pedals are vigorously pumped.

According to an engraved-silver plaque on its top, the harmonium was largely paid for by a concert on July 18, 1865. It was organized by the congregation and held in the Grand Trunk School House several streets away, there as yet being no church hall. Even so, some of the audience had to stand outside where they "listened to the performance through the windows."

The organizers might have known there'd be an overflow crowd that evening. Not only did local people turn out, but in addition a steamer was chartered to bring even more over from Montreal. "Although the weather looked anything but promising," The Gazette reported, "she was pretty well loaded."

Songs we'd probably dismiss today as being over-sentimental, like "Jessie's Dream" and "The Blind Girl to Her Harp," were prominent on the program. A mock-serious story from the Ingoldsby Legends was "well delivered, its only fault being that it was perhaps a little too long." And at the close, a lady present volunteered to sing Meyerbeer's "Robert, toi que je t'aime," which "she did with a great deal of taste and judgment."

Everyone seemed well pleased with the evening, the Gazette reported, "and the managers no doubt have



every reason to be satisfied, both peculiarly and otherwise." That the harmonium could be purchased attests to that.

St Mark's was built in 1841 by Charles William Grant, fifth Baron de Longueuil. It was "somewhat in advance of the needs of the village," as an old account puts it, but that changed when the Grand Trunk Railway built a station nearby. The boost was all too brief, however, for after the Victoria Bridge opened in 1860 the Grand Trunk's centre of gravity moved across the river to Point St Charles.

But by no means did the church die, especially in summer when vacationers from Montreal swelled the congregation. Father Edmund Wood, the dynamic rector of St John the Evangelist in Montreal, did double duty as the curate in charge of St Mark's from 1863 to 1872.

Father Wood was the driving force behind renovations that substantially altered the original church building. When they were finished, little of the old structure beyond the four stone walls remained. For example, the flat plaster ceiling was removed to allow a lofty space above. A chancel, vestry and organ chamber were added. Outside, a porch and bell tower were built.

One notable parishioner during the 1870s was William Notman. The well-known photographer kept a summer home in Longueuil and was involved in real es-



Anglican Church, Longueuil, 1876. Image: McCord Museum - II 41979. Bottom: Willaim Notman's house, Longueuil, 1872. Image: McCord Museum - I 77888

tate in the community. He served as a church warden for two years and later donated an especially fine window to St Mark's in memory of his daughter Elizabeth, who died in 1867, and his father, who died late that same year

Several of the windows in the church are the work of JC Spence and Sons, a church-furnishings enterprise on Bleury Street. John Spence was a warden of St Mark's at the time of the harmonium fund-raiser in 1865.

Despite the Grant family's support, St Mark's inevitably had new debts to deal with this. Only after these were cleared away could the church be consecrated. That finally came on June 9, 1880, in the presence of Bishop William Bennett Bond of Montreal.

A rectory adjacent to the church was completed in 1894. It was taken over by the city of Longueuil in 1990 and now is a cultural centre. Six years later much of the grounds around the church became a municipal park.

In 1994, St Mark's was united with the Church of St Margaret of Antioch in St Hubert to form the new parish of St Hubert and Longueuil. One priest serves the two churches, but services are held in both every Sunday.

Longueuil is now Quebec's fourth-largest city, and far from the rural village it once was. But certainly in one respect, St Mark's remains as The Gazette described it the day of its consecration 129 years ago: "Of the pretty churches of the country parts of the Diocese of Montreal, St. Mark's Longueuil is amongst the prettiest."

John Kalbfleisch writes the weekly column "Second Draft" about historical events in Greater Montreal and is featured in the Montreal Gazette each Sunday. He can be reached at lisnaskea@xplornet.com

Vieux Longueuil's Charm

by Kevin Erskine Henry

While no longer considered in the country, St Mark's Anglican Church in Longueuil remains a pretty oasis on the South Shore. The peaceful garden surrounding St Mark's serves as a public park with a central music kiosk where a series of popular Municipal musical concerts and cultural events take place year round.

You are invited to take a tour of this historic church and afterward explore Old Longueuil and enjoy a pleasant meal at one the many cafes along St Charles Boulevard. To visit the church please call in advance:

St Mark's Anglican Church
310 St Charles St Vieux Longueuil
450-646-5500

From Montreal, take the métro to Longueuil and then take either a South Shore transit bus or a twenty minute walk to the church. If driving, the Jacque Cartier Bridge is the closest - take the St Charles Exit.

You can also plan your visit in advance by taking an online walking tour of Old Longueuil: <http://marigot.ca/html/visites/indexEng.html>

Kevin Erskine-Henry is chair of the South Shore Community Partners Network, which provides information and supports various South Shore community services to the English-speaking community. The SSCPN can be contacted by email at sscpn@bell.net or by visiting <http://communityboxer.multiply.com/>



St Charles Street, Longueuil. Image: Blork-mtl.

AN ELECTRIC HISTORY OF THE TOWNSHIPS

Remembering the grid that Southern Canada Power built

by Nick Fonda

Like good health, electricity is one of those things that we are aware of only when we don't have it. For many of us, electricity remains a mysterious and marvelous invisible power. Potentially lethal? Yes, but benign. In our homes we bathe in a warm sea of electric waves. When are we not in front of our TV sets, or our desk-top monitors? Don't we cook supper on an electric range while listening to the radio, then read the paper under a good light while the dishwasher runs?

Of course, when there's a power outage we instantly find ourselves in the situation of our ancestors not that many generations past. The first spectacular use of electricity in Canada occurred in Montreal, when the first light was turned on. Prior to that, electricity had been used to transmit telegraph signals (1846), and later telephone conversations (1876).

It was two years after Graham Bell strung four miles of telephone wire between two houses in Brantford, Ontario, that a Montreal merchant, J.A.I. Craig, startled a number of people, many of them Jesuit priests, when he used telegraph batteries to provide electric power to an arc lamp and so illuminate the wall

of the college that once stood at the corner of Bleury and René Lévesque in downtown Montreal. That was in the fall of 1878, shortly after Craig had returned from the World Fair in Paris where he had seen electric arc lights on display.

Craig (despite his name, a Francophone) converted part of the factory in which he made furniture and started producing light bulbs and other electrical equipment. By 1886 Montreal has its first electric street lights—much to the chagrin of the Montreal Gas Company which up to then had provided the service.

Electricity was clearly the way of the future. In Montreal there was fierce competition to provide electric power both to municipal infrastructure and to residential homes. Despite the much greater costs involved in delivering electric power to rural areas, it was not long before small companies sprang up to service the hinterland. By 1888, Sherbrooke had the Royal Electric Company which was providing power to corset factories and breweries. The same year, just downriver, the Richmond County Electric Company switched on the current for the first time. Within a very short time numerous other companies

were selling power: Lennoxville Light and Power, Stanstead Electric Light, Eastern Townships Electric.

There was power and there was power. In Sherbrooke, a single company, Sherbrooke Gas and Water, came to hold a monopoly on the supply of water, natural gas and electricity. What was likely very good for shareholders was much less so for clients. Public protest eventually led Sherbrooke City Council to municipalize water services, and a little later to municipalize gas and electricity as well. Sherbrooke Hydro was one of the rare power producers not to be nationalized by Hydro Quebec in 1963.

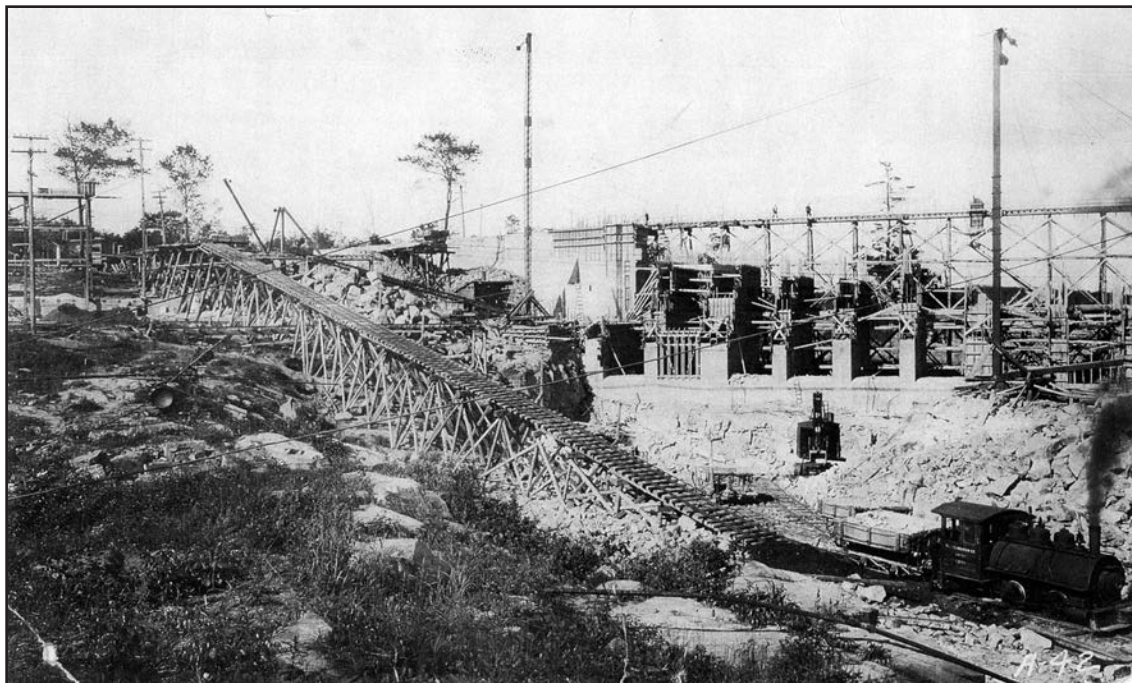
Elsewhere, small power producers were growing but finding that growth required ever-increasing capital investments. In 1910, a Montreal financial institution, McCuaig Brothers and Company, began a series of mergers, takeovers and amalgamations that began with the acquisition of the Sherbrooke Street Railway Company which provided tramway service in Sherbrooke and Lennoxville. Within three years, McCuaig Brothers pulled La Compagnie de Gaz, Électricité et Pouvoir de Saint-Hyacinthe and the South Shore Power and Paper Company into its fold and created the Southern Canada Power Company. For the next half century, in what is now the Eastern Townships and the Montérégie, Southern Canada Power was synonymous with electricity.

Today, Ron Husk is retired and keeps busy with the Lennoxville Curling Club and the Sherbrooke Snowshoe Club. In 1945 he was seventeen years old and living in his home town of Ulverton when he landed his first job. "I was hired by Southern Canada Power," he says, "and I was assigned to the powerhouse where I had to keep an eye on a control panel. I spent my career in what was called the Generation and Transmission Department. We looked after the generators in the powerhouses, the high voltage transmission lines and the substations as well."



Ron joined a large, well-established company, but he speaks with admiration of his predecessors. “When Southern Canada Power (SCP) started up,” he comments, “electricity was in its infancy. I admire these people who had the foresight and the fortitude to embark on the electrification of the province. It involved great financial risk, and it’s also hard for us to imagine the amount of hard physical labour that was involved. SCP built a power house in Drummondville in 1918, and then a second one nearby at Hemmings Falls in 1925. Shortly after another power house was erected at the other end of the Townships, at Borough’s Falls, near Ayer’s Cliff.”

In 1930, SCP had five power generating stations to serve the vast area it covered and by 1948, four more powerhouses were added to the grid. Ron points out that SCP helped attract industry to the area. In 1919 SCP set up an Industrial Development Department, the first power company in Canada to do so. “In the 1920s and 1930s,” he continues, “SCP had a policy whereby customers were able to purchase shares in the company. On the one hand, this was good for



the company as it tapped into a new money market. On the other hand, it was also very good for the clients of SCP because they were able to collect good dividends as the company grew. On average SCP grew by 7% per year which means that every ten years it doubled in size.”

Bill Wilson joined SCP as a temporary worker in 1948 and eventually became a foreman on maintenance crews. “I was nineteen when I was hired,” he recalls, “and I think when I got on permanent, my salary was I was \$120 a month. It was a good company. When you got married SCP would give you \$50, as a gift to start your married life.

Similarly, you got a \$50 gift with the birth of every child.”

Bill has a great deal of memorabilia including a large collection of photos, newspaper clippings and magazines. Much of the information in this article comes from Bill’s treasure trove of documentation.

Like his friends and former colleagues, Angus McElrea also joined SCP as a teenager. “I was nineteen in 1949 when I signed onto a construction gang,” he says. “There was no automation in those days and everything was done by hand. My first job was digging out holes for the 40-foot to 60-foot poles that carry the lines. I’d dig out a hole big enough to put in a barrel, a 45-gallon drum with no top or bottom. Once the barrel was in the ground, I’d get what was called a spoon—a shovel with a ten-foot handle—and continue digging straight down, just the diameter of the barrel, till I got down about six feet. There were two holes in the barrel that would allow us to lift it out of the ground to use it for the next hole. It was hard work. Later on, I worked as a lineman for a while on the 48,000-volt



Top right: Construction of the Hemmings Falls dam at Drummondville, circa 1925.
Bottom left: installation of a new transformer. Photos courtesy of Bill Wilson

lines.”

It was during his time as a lineman that Angus witnessed a rare phenomenon. “We were a big crew, about ten of us, working on some lines when a lightning storm blew in out of nowhere,” he recalls. “Our foreman had spotted it first and called us all down. All of a sudden there was a ball of fire rolling along the wires. It came to ground with a heck of a bang, maybe 500 feet from us.”

Angus recalls that, in the 1950s, SCP had its head office in Montreal, but had smaller branch offices throughout its territory. “The branch office in Rock Island had about ten employees, the Ayer’s Cliff office six, the Richmond office eight. The Drummondville office was the largest with 40. There were offices in practically every town: Bedford, Knowlton, Granby, St. Hyacinthe. The offices all sold and serviced electrical appliances. Lennoxville had a shop with about 10 employees who repaired small transformers and other equipment. In St. Hyacinthe about the same number of employees repaired and recalibrated meters for residential, commercial and industrial customers. There was a government inspector who was always there to attach an official seal to the meter.”

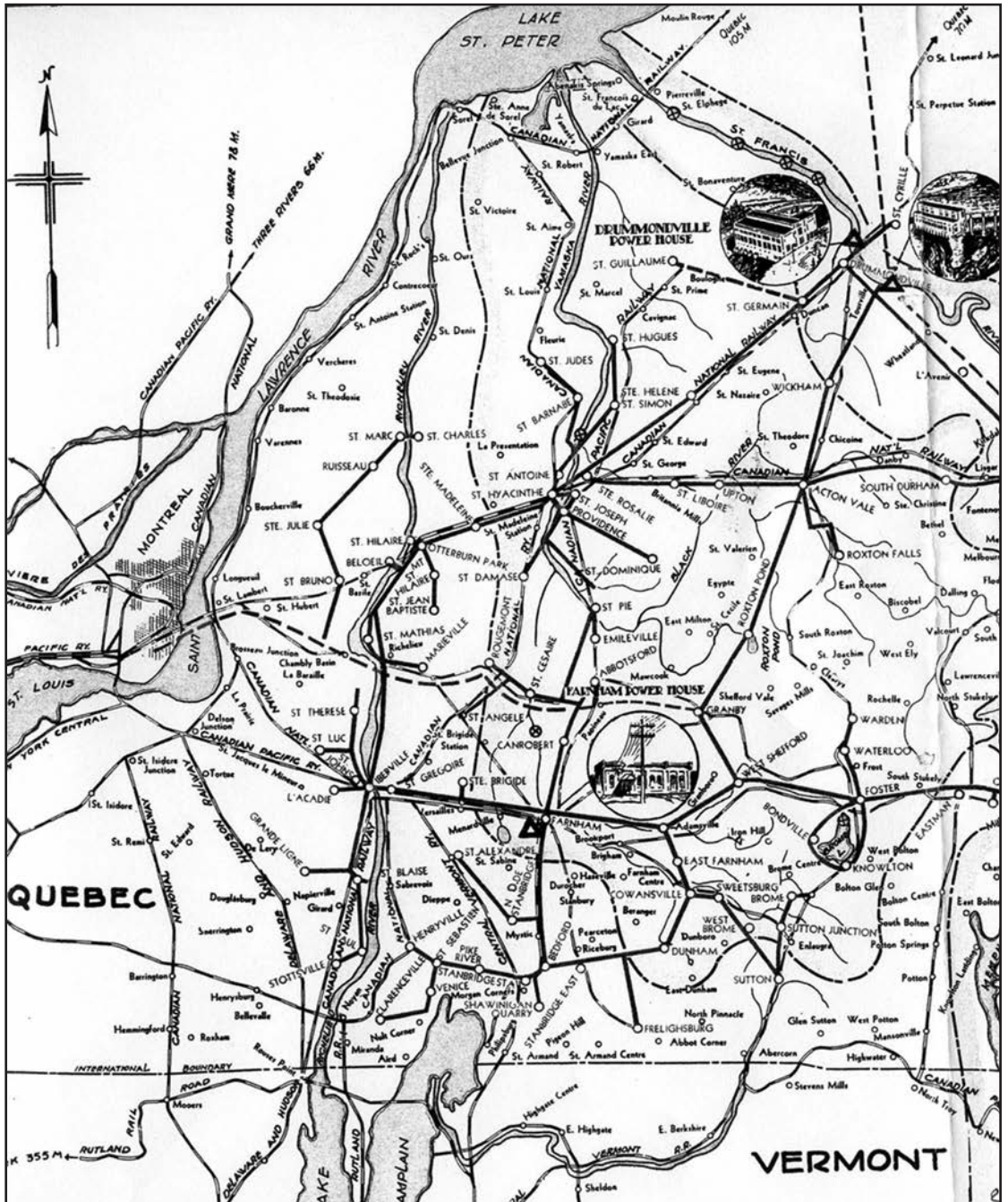
In 1960, when computers were just starting to appear, Angus worked on a computerised system to itemize 24,000 items the company had in stock: bolts, screws, insulator anchors. Eventually Angus became a meter inspector and a commercial representative for the company. “Even back then, we’d find customers stealing power,” he notes. “Whenever we discovered a customer doing so, we’d estimate how much power had been stolen and bill the customer for it.”

Someone else who worked as a lineman for SCP was Gordon Humphrey. “I started in 1957,” he says, “as a temporary worker. My starting salary was a dollar an hour, although as a temporary worker I only got paid if I actually worked. If the weather was bad and the crew wasn’t sent out, I didn’t get paid. At first I was cutting brush and digging post holes. After a few months I was hired on permanent, which means my hours were guaranteed, and I became a lineman.”

Gordon was one of a breed that did ‘hot line’ work. “That meant that I was working on wires that were conducting

electricity,” he explains. “That was done so as not to interrupt power to the customers. It wasn’t dangerous if you were careful, and generally I was. Safety superintendents, managers and foremen endeavoured to have all employees working in a safe manner to protect each other.”

“On 120,000-volt lines you can sometimes see the corona effect, a sort of shimmering light, like a halo, around the wires,” he says. “But even on the old 48,000-volt lines there was lots of current. Especially when the humidity was high you’d hear noise up there, like thousands of bees. It came from the in-



sulators that were leaking over. If you were working with someone else up there you'd never pass a tool directly to the other person. Say you had to pass a wrench over. You'd put it on the edge of the bucket and a second later, the other fellow would pick it up. That was to avoid shocks of static electricity. Today, the fellows who work on the 735,000-volt lines wear special suits made with carbon threads. The carbon grounds the current so the linemen don't get shocks."

Still, the work could be dangerous. The former SCP employees all knew of someone who died on the job. Gordon still has a scar on one arm from an acci-

dent he had when a wire caught him. To add to the difficulty of working 40 feet in the air, crews were often sent out very early in the day or at night so that even if the power was off, very few customers would notice.

Al Whittier wasn't trained as a surveyor, yet that was an integral part of his job. "I worked in the Distribution Department," he explains. "I was an estimator. Whenever a power line had to be extended, or a new line had to be built, it was my department that did the survey work and drew up the plans. For example, when Highway 55 was built down to Rock Island, all the power lines had to

be relocated to avoid having lines near the highway."

He speaks fondly of SCP. "The company had a motto," he says. "It was: Owned by those it serves. The customers, many of them, really were part owners. Starting in 1926, SCP put out a monthly newspaper called Contact, fully bilingual, which was distributed to customers to keep them abreast of what was going on. There was a separate small magazine for the employees called SCP News. We weren't unionized at SCP but we were very well treated. Salaries weren't high because times were different and there was a lot less money around, but we enjoyed lots of perks. For example, SCP employees who lived in an area served by the company, got their electricity at half price."

Hydroelectric power depends on water flow and SCP, to keep their generators going, kept a careful eye on the water levels of the lakes which fed the rivers, including relatively large lakes like Massawippi and Brompton. Logs were kept to put into slots on the sluice gates and flashboards on the spillways could raise or lower lake levels as much as five feet or more.

Southern Canada Power Company was formed in 1913. In 1933 the company had 260 employees, and 1,080 miles of line to service 27,343 customers. In 1962 SCP had 731 employees, 4,631 miles of line and 99,539 customers. In 1957, although it continued to function separately, it was acquired by Shawinigan Water and Power which was sold to Quebec Hydro via nationalization in 1963.

Nick Fonda is the current president of the Richmond County Historical Society



Stealing Wellington

by Rod MacLeod

Joseph Wiseman, the Montreal-born actor who died in October at the age of 91, earned his fifteen minutes of fame as the first screen nemesis of James Bond. That is, in fact, an exaggeration, for although the persona of Dr No haunts a great deal of the film, Wiseman appears surprisingly briefly towards the end. His performance is quite brilliant, however: predictably inscrutable – as perhaps only a Jewish Montrealer made up to look half-Chinese and half-German can be – but simmering with a calm menacing evil that you know can burst into hideous violence at a moment's notice even did he not sport those mechanical hands that were apparently designed for crushing tin figurines.

I have been a Bond fan since the age of ten when my father took me to *Diamonds Are Forever* in its first run at the glorious Capitol theatre on St Catherine Street. (I would add that it no longer exists, but that would be pointless as virtually none of the classic Montreal cinemas do.) In recent years, I've seen some of the Bond films again with my kids and found that they – the early ones especially – have generally worn well. Not Dr No, alas. Connery hadn't quite got his teeth in the part (though, boy, was that a good career move!) and the plot stumbles along. Wiseman is the best part of the thing, doing what he can with the material. I particularly liked the idea that, although Dr No declares he has never made a mistake, his secret headquarters features a power generator that can conveniently be set to Self Destruct – the equivalent of having a setting on your toaster that enables it to set fire to your kitchen, should you wish it to – and plenty of Abandon Area signs which

light up when it's time to run for your life.

The best scene in the whole film – though possibly obscure four decades later unless you have a spouse who teaches art history – is when Bond, on his way to dinner with Dr No in his lair, does a double take over a painting prominently displayed. Evidently, Dr No's aesthetic sensibilities are not confined to giant aquariums and squishable tin figurines. He has, in fact, acquired Goya's portrait of the Duke of Wellington – and 1961 audiences would have



gotten the joke.

Goya is remembered above all for his no-holds-barred depictions of the atrocities committed by the French troops on the Spanish people during the Napoleonic Wars. He painted Wellington, then Arthur Wellesley, as the defector of the former conquerors and, Goya and others hoped (in vain, as it turned out), the bringer of British-style parliamentary democracy to Spain. The future duke didn't care for the portrait, but he did help himself to the artistic loot that Joseph Bonaparte, the defeated French puppet king of Spain, was attempting to smuggle over the Pyrenees as he fled home. As a result of this high-way pilfering, several pieces of Spanish patrimony remain the highlight of a visit

to Apsley House, the Wellesley home in London. When the Duke's portrait came on the London market in 1961, the National Gallery was quick to purchase it – only to have it stolen from under its nose a mere three weeks later. For chutzpah, the perpetrator clearly aimed to rival the Iron Duke himself.

While the hunt was on for the missing masterpiece, the National Gallery received a large number of anonymous letters from people claiming they would burn the painting if vast sums were not handed over. The staff tended to dismiss

these as idle threats until one day a box of ashes turned up which 1960s technology determined was oil paint and wood but could say nothing more conclusive. Several years went by before a tipoff led to the recovery of what certainly looked like the original, but the possibility it was a mere copy hung like a cloud over the celebrations – until a bright member of the team remembered that the

painting that that had been in her hands so briefly in 1961 had a small chip missing from one corner. So, fortunately, did the recovered version. Apparently the thief was an unemployed bus driver, not an inscrutable master criminal bent on world domination. Had it been Dr No, of course, the Goya would have been fried once Bond turned the power setting in the lab to Self Destruct.

You can see I'm playing the Degrees of Separation game. Another of Joseph Wiseman's fine moments was portraying Uncle Benjy in the film version of *The Apprenticeship of Duddy Kravitz*. I'll leave you to run with that one...

EVENTS LISTINGS

Eastern Townships

Uplands Cultural & Heritage Center
9 Speid St.(Lennoxville)
Info: 819-564-0409
7 February to 7 March
Exhibition - Susan Monty & Alex De Lavoie

11 to 21 March
Exhibition - Quebec Week for Intellectual Handicap

14 March
St-Patrick's Tea -With Live music! To Reserve (819)564-0409
Brome County Historical Society
Info:450243-6782, b
chs@endirect.qc.ca
Email: bchs@endirect.qc.ca

HISTORICAL REPRINTS NOW AVAILABLE

The History of Brome County Volumes 1 & 2 by Rev. E.M. Taylor have been reprinted. They are available individually or as a set. The set sells for \$99.95, individually \$53.95

ST. PATRICK'S SOCIETY OF RICHMOND AND VICINITY
Info: Dennis Ridley at 819-826-5231
OR Mark O'Donnell at 819-826-2535

March 21, 2010
ST. PATRICKS 2010 PARADE
Each year in March, the St. Patrick's Society celebrates St. Patrick's activities throughout the month of March including an annual banquet and dance, and the St. Patrick's parade.
WHERE; Starts at 7th Ave., Richmond, Quebec

Montreal

Quebec Family History Society
Info: 514-695-1502
Website: www.qfhs.ca

March 13th, 10:30 a.m.
Lecture: Paths of Opportunity"
Sharon Callaghan will talk about her

book Paths of Opportunity, which evolved from a desire to discover more about the Irish Montreal experience of her great-great-grandparents.
WHERE: St Andrew's United Church, Lachine

March 16th, 7 pm
TALK ON THE IRISH IN QUEBEC (POINTE CLAIRE)
Dr. Lorraine O'Donnell, curator of the Being Irish Exhibit O'Quebec at the McCord Museum of Canadian History will give a talk on the integration of Irish immigrants and their contribution to the social, cultural, political and economic fabric of Quebec from the era of New France to today.

WHERE: Pointe Claire Public Library, Central Branch, 100 Douglas-Shand Avenue, Pointe-Claire (Québec)

Info: Contact the Library at 514-630-1218 or visit http://www.ville.pointe-claire.qc.ca/en_1046_index.php

Westmount Historical Association
Westmount Public Library, 4574 Sherbrooke St. West
Info: 514-925-1404 or 514-932-6688
Email:info@westmounthistorical.org

LECTURE SERIES
March 18, 7 p.m. to 9 p.m.
WESTMOUNT STATION AND THE CANADIAN PACIFIC RAILWAY
SPEAKER: Justin Bur, M.Urb. (urban planning)

Exporail, Canadian Railway Museum
110, rue Saint-Pierre, Saint-Constant
General Information: 450-632-2410

Atwater Library and Computer Centre
1200 Atwater at Ste-Catherine (métro Atwater)
Info: Contact lverge@atwaterlibrary.ca or visit www.atwaterlibrary.ca

March 17 at 12:30 pm
LUNCHTIME SERIES: IRISH MUSIC BY CRAIC-ATAC

For the Atwater Library Lunchtime Series, on St. Patrick's Day the group CRAIC-ATAC performs traditional Irish music with joie de vivre. Band members are Claude Bertrand on guitar and bouzouki; Janet Laskey on fiddle, small harp and low whistle; Jocelyne Pate-naude on button accordion and hurdy gurdy; and singer Donna-Marie Sullivan Marosi, who also plays the bodhrán (celtic drum). Everyone is welcome and coffee and biscuits are served. Free admission; donations invited

Outaouais

Gatineau Valley Historical Society
80 ch Summer, Cantley
Info: 819-459-2004
Email: info@gvhs.ca

March 15, 7:30 p.m.
LECTURE
Barry Wilson will reveal the strong connection he discovered between the vast majority of prime ministers and the Gatineau Valley

Quebec City

Morrin Center
44, Chaussée des Écossais Quebec
Info: 418-694-9147 or 0754
Email: info@morrin.org
Website: www.morrin.org

March 14, 2 p.m.
CELEBRATION ST-PATRICK'S DAY
LE VIOLON VERT

Back for the first time since the 2009 Quebec City Celtic Festival, the talented dancers from the Le Violon Vert are ready to share their passion once more. After the show, the audience will be invited to take part in a dance workshop. Come learn new steps and join in the fun, as we celebrate St. Patrick's Day!

Free 12 years and under-13-16 years old
\$8. – adults \$10.

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Bob Laberge, Mary Martin and Charles Bury

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