

HOW MUCH IS OUR HERITAGE WORTH? FUNDING QUEBEC'S SMALL MUSEUMS

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Heritage

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News



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Sherbrooke's Union Cemetery and Montreal's Protestant Burial Ground

The Outaouais and Gatineau Valleys

Celebrating Conservation and Recalling "Deals"

Quebec Heritage News

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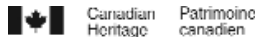
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CONTENTS

Editor's Desk 3

Bucking the system *Rod MacLeod*

Letter 4

No blame to Blue Bonnets *David Watson*

Timelines 4

Passage, settlement, communities: the 2012 FHQ congrès *Ann Montgomery*

How much is our heritage worth? Quebec's small museums *Nick Seebruch*

The Great D'Arcy debate: *Kevin O'Donnell*

Jeannie Johnson Foundation promotes history

Beyond oral history: the Société d'histoire de Sherbrooke *Nick Seebruch*

Community and Cultural Heritage 12

Chelsea's Union Mission Church Park *Carol Martin*

QAHN's 2012 AGM and Young Heritage Leaders Fair 14

Gatineau Valley Historical Society wins Richard Evans Award *Sandra Stock*

Michael Cooper wins Phelps Award *Sandra Stock*

QAHN AGM Biggest Ever *Matthew Farfan*

Photos *Renee Arshinoff*

Charles Bury

Matthew Farfan

Bodies on the Move 19

The transfer of Sherbrooke's Union Cemetery to Elmwood *Anne-Reet Ilves Annunziata*

Umbrageous Branches and Melancholy Ruins 22

Digging up Montreal's old Protestant Burial Ground *Rod MacLeod*

Stealing Deals 25

Business and politics along the Ottawa River *Joseph Graham*

Review 28

Growing up in Montreal's East End *Sandra Stock*

Swinging on a Star by Patricia Bissonette

29

Hindsight *Sandra Stock*

Down Memory Lane

Cover image: The British Gaspesian Heritage Village in New Richmond.
(Photo: Matthew Farfan)

EDITOR'S DESK

Bucking the System

by Rod MacLeod

It stands a bit grim-faced across from Burger King on St. Catherine Street. You can sit munching a Whopper and stare out at its big eye of a window, now encrusted with out-of-date signs and ominous scaffolding. You can cast your mind back to before it was marked for redevelopment, back to its years as a shop, as a video store, and as a porno cinema (reportedly the last of Montreal's downtown porno cinemas to close, drawing a veil over a particular piece of heritage we don't tend to celebrate all that often). You can, if you are getting on in years, recall when the building showed more savoury fare, as the cinema known to generations as The System.

That this building's history has been so undistinguished is surprising, given its location, standing as it does shoulder to shoulder with such prestigious institutions as The Bay, Christ Church Cathedral, Birks' Jewelry, the statue of Edward VII and, um, Burger King – which was once the site of the original Montreal Art Association Gallery. Whatever the scaffolding may reveal a few months from now, after major renovations, ought to benefit from this contact with Phillips Square and especially with the lauded Quartier des Spectacles nearby. Or it may be that there is some kind of low-grade curse on the site, condemning everything that occupies 539 St. Catherine Street West to mediocrity. Perhaps it is destined to be little more than a backdrop for burgers. Whatever the case, The System has joined so many other movie palaces in that dark forgotten pile of city detritus, its heritage value beaten out of it.

I never darkened its doors, not during any of its incarnations. Indeed, the only association I have with The System is a story my father told me. It took place when he was a kid – definitely before he turned 9 in January 1927, as the

Laurier Theatre fire (subject of Rohinton Ghandi's piece in the last issue) took place then and the ensuing legislation kept him out of the movies for the rest of his childhood. He described his visit to The System without being able to remember what the show was, although Tom Mix and Felix the Cat seem to have featured prominently in his early screen-



ings. He had no real memories of what The System looked like on the inside, although clearly it hadn't the reputation for glamour and glitz that the Loews, the Princess, the Capitol or the Allen could boast. On that occasion, my father was not focusing much on décor.

The System had been around since 1909, one of the city's first purpose-built cinemas. It started life as the Gaiety – not to be confused with the Gayety, located slightly further east and later home to Lili St-Cyr before being transformed into the Monument National – and was known as the London and then the Hol-

man before it was acquired by impresario John T. Fiddes in 1921, who gave it its lasting name. ("The System" stuck until 1974 when "Ciné 539" seemed more in keeping with the raunchy fare on its screen.) Fiddes was keen to fill all 500 seats in his new theatre, and offered the public such fare as *The Fox*, *Doctor Jim*, and *Winners of the West* at the cheap rate of 25c, or 15c for balcony and all matinee seats. In a newspaper ad, Fiddes promised that "after coming once to The System Theatre you will go away saying 'That's the System.'"

My father probably did not say this after his one trip to The System, but he would certainly have appreciated Fiddes' desire to keep prices low; indeed, the 15c seats may well have been a determinant on this particular occasion. Convenience may have been another. At that time, my grandparents and their four sons lived around the corner from The System on Union Avenue, in an apartment rented from the Anglican diocese. (In my day, the building featured the Diocesan Book Room; it was torn down in 1987 to make way for the Maison des Coopérants, the skyscraper that figured so prominently and ambiguously in *Jésus de Montréal*.) This was to be the family's last home together, as the two elder boys would soon leave to pursue their own careers and my grandfather would slowly succumb to cancer.

I never knew my grandfather, who died thirty years before I was born, but I have an image of him as a quiet, serious man, not without a streak of very dry humour (a family trait) but deeply troubled by a degree of natural empathy that did not sit entirely well with his stern Presbyterian theology, and by a social conscience that clashed with the middle-class propriety of a clergyman's world. For that matter, his youngest son did not

TIMELINES

Passage, Settlement, Communities

The FHQ holds successful congrès in Sherbrooke

by Ann Montgomery

know him that well; my grandfather had been 48 when my father was born and he died just before my father's twelfth birthday.

The bizarre thing about that visit to The System as my father recalled it was that it was his father who took him. Going to the movies was not something Presbyterian ministers did in the mid-1920s, and my grandfather was not the sort to believe in whatever passed at that time for 'bonding.' Whatever had prompted him to take his young son to see Mix or Felix on The System's silver screen eluded my father at the time, and for the life of him he could not explain the circumstances seven decades later. He remembered sitting there in the dark, joyful at having Pop beside him and shining this uncharacteristic attention on him, but also uncomfortable the way kids are when they know something is amiss but have no idea what and are unable to ask. It may have been that something was wrong at home, or that my grandfather was experiencing some crisis or a foreshadowing of mortality that told him it was time to go to the movies with little Angus. It may simply have been a visit from one of his many sisters-in-law that saw man and boy beat a hasty retreat. It may even have been a sudden urge by an otherwise frustrated middle-aged minister to buck the system and enjoy the antics of a cat with a disposable tail. I will never know.

Whatever the case, this trip to the cinema was my father's strongest memory of his own father. And whatever fate awaits this unprepossessing former theatre, I score one for heritage by fixing a distant, second-hand memory deep within The System's fragile walls.

LETTER

No blame to Blue Bonnets

I enjoyed the editor's article on the Montreal West Service Station ("Jimmy Darou and Carole too," *QHN*, Spring 2012) but there is one little error. Jimmy Darou had his accident at Connaught Park in Ottawa, not at Blue Bonnets. Just wanted to set the record straight.

*David Watson (Town Historian)
Montreal West*

The Fédération Histoire Québec held its 47th Annual Meeting in Sherbrooke on the weekend of May 25-27, 2012. The theme of the meeting was *The Eastern Townships: Land of Passage, Place of Settlement, Home of Communities*. Organized jointly by the Société d'histoire de Sherbrooke and the Quebec Anglophone Heritage Network, the conference attracted close to 250 delegates from all parts of Quebec. Activities took place at the Société d'histoire, the Granada Theatre, and the Delta Hotel.

The keynote address on the Friday evening was delivered by well-known Sherbrooke historian Jean-Pierre Kesteman, who spoke about the different groups of immigrants and settlers who have moved through this region and left their mark over the years. His talk, in French, is printed in the current issue of *Histoire Québec*, and is well worth reading.

Saturday saw a series of twelve lecture and round-table sessions, of which unfortunately delegates could attend only four as they were scheduled in back-to-back time slots. However, all the sessions were well-attended, and it was

gratifying to see that the audience for both French and English presentations contained members from both linguistic groups. Of particular note was Peter Southam's talk on the Irish settlement of the Richmond area, and Barbara Verity and Gilles Péloquin's presentation on the travels of explorer and surveyor David Thompson in the Eastern Townships. There was also an opportunity for students in the Master's programme in History at the Université de Sherbrooke to present their research projects and to show the older delegates that younger historians are very much able to do their part.

Sunday's schedule included a number of excursions around Sherbrooke, Lennoxville, and Compton-Coaticook, which allowed visitors from outside the region to see and appreciate the history of Sherbrooke, the countryside, and elements of local culture and heritage that our residents are so familiar with.

The annual conference in May 2013 is to be held in Chicoutimi. Members of the Fédération Histoire Québec should watch their mail and e-mail early in the year for details of theme and dates.



*About 250 people participated in the 2012 FHQ congrès.
Photo: Matthew Farfan.*

How much is our heritage worth?

Quebec's smaller museums face an uphill battle for funding

by Nick Seebruch

The history of Quebec is not merely a single story, but a vast collection of stories woven together into a common narrative. Some of the larger stories, such as the Battle of the Plains of Abraham, or the story of Jacques Cartier's first adventure along the St. Lawrence and his sighting of Mount Royal, are familiar to Quebecers and are part of our shared history. For every well-known event, folktale, legend and myth from Quebec history and culture, however, there are fifty other stories that are part of the local histories of the hundreds of individual communities across the province.

The history of Quebec that is preserved and promoted on the provincial and national levels is largely that of the founding of the province and of the major urban centres, and of the relationship of Quebec with the rest of Canada. The histories of our local communities, however, do not receive anywhere near the same attention – indeed, they are often neglected even by local governments. This neglect creates a gap in the narrative that makes up the history of Quebec.

The great events in Quebec's history are appealing targets for promotion and funding because, it is argued, they apply to all Quebecers. Not so local history. Small communities throughout the province each have their own stories and their own heritage, which are being preserved only by a few dedicated individuals, very often volunteers. The history that local museums and historical societies preserve, however, has applications for all of us rather than just those who can claim it as an immediate part of their heritage. History on any level can tell us something about society and about how people lived in different situations.

Earlier this year, I spoke with personnel at small museums in various parts of Quebec. These included the Greenwood Centre for Living History (Hudson), the Eaton Corner Museum (Eaton Corner), the Missisquoi Museum (Stanbridge East), the Gaspesian British Heritage Village (New Richmond), and the Colby-Curtis Museum (Stanstead). I asked these people about the type of history they promote, the financial difficulties they face, and the obstacles they meet in their attempt to tell their stories. When I asked if funding is a problem, one that hinders them from telling their stories to the public, the answer was always "yes."

Three of these institutions receive funding from the

province. All say that their funding is insufficient. All charge an admission fee, ranging from five to ten dollars. They have all had to reduce staff and hours of operation. Some have even had to close some of their exhibits.

Provincial support for museums is an important factor in museum operations and obviously makes a huge difference in determining how, and even if, smaller museums can continue to function.

Charlie Bury, the president of the Eaton Corner Museum in the Eastern Townships, took the time to give me a crash course in provincial funding for museums and historic sites. The province, he says, sees museums as fitting into three categories. The first category includes institutions that



meet the professional standards established by the province and that therefore receive government operational funding. The second category includes museums that meet the standards, but do not receive provincial funding – and this is where things get interesting. The reason these museums get no funding is that the list of museums that do has been frozen since 2001. According to Bury, Quebec is not going to expand the list to include other museums even if they do meet the eligibility requirements.

The third category includes museums that do not meet the professional standards and therefore are not eligible for operational funding from the province. This reveals the greatest flaws in Quebec's system of funding. For, rather than promoting and cultivating history, it would seem, the system as it now stands stifles the growth of local museums and historical societies, and hampers rather than promotes the preservation of Quebec's heritage.

The professional standards that the Quebec government requires of museums for them to meet funding eligibility are not designed to cultivate small museums, but rather to ensure the stability of established, larger ones. Among other things, these standards relate to such factors as the presentation, cataloguing and storage of artifacts, and to opening hours.

The standards as they are now defined seem to actively exclude many smaller museums. In order to meet these standards, a smaller museum has to invest substantially to improve its facilities and train its employees – and this without guarantee of funding. Most small museums simply do not have the money to spend.

Thus, Quebec operates under a catch-22 when it comes

to museum funding. Established museums with enough money to meet the standards may continue to receive funding, while those that are struggling get nothing.

Rather than excluding smaller, less “professional,” museums from support, Quebec should be catering to them. The number of museums receiving funding should not be frozen, but expanded where possible.

Of the five museums I contacted, all said that they need more money or that they would have to shrink the scope of their operations. The funding crisis is not restricted to a particular municipality or region but seems to be universal. Only one of the museums I contacted, the Colby Curtis in Stanstead, is open year-round.

One, the Missisquoi Museum, reported that provincial funding accounts for \$75,000, or less than 40% of its total \$200,000 annual operating budget. The museum still has to charge \$10 per adult for admission, and has unfortunately still had to reduce hours, lay off staff, and shorten the length of its season to one-quarter of the year. According to Heather Darch, curator of the Missisquoi Museum, the facility would need another \$75,000 to be able to pay its staff “salaries that meet at least an average standard.”

The funding problem is clearly getting worse. An example of the growing seriousness of the situation is the recent temporary closure of the Colby-Curtis. This museum, which is fully accredited and funded year-round by Quebec, actually had to close its doors for several months this past winter. According to museum president Ann Montgomery, the Colby-Curtis has an annual budget of \$215,000, \$120,000 of which comes from the province. Even with that level of funding, however, the museum still has to spend a significant amount of time fundraising because it is current-

ly running a \$50,000 deficit.

Right now, museums in Quebec like the Colby-Curtis, are having to reduce staff and operating hours. Soon, some may close their doors for good. We as a society will be poorer if that occurs; and another piece of our heritage will be irrecoverably lost.

All of the museums that I contacted also reported that they receive minimal to no support from their local municipalities and that they spend much of their time fundraising. Increasingly they are having to focus their energies and resources on raising enough money in a seemingly vain attempt just to maintain their status quo.

Local museums, of course, should be permitted to do what they are meant to do, and that is preserving and presenting our heritage. Clearly, the current levels of funding that they receive are insufficient.

Funding for heritage should not be taking a back seat. What is difficult to comprehend is why, when so many of our museums have had to reduce their hours of operation, the Quebec government insists on maintaining its restrictive system of support. The very museums that cannot afford to properly store and display their artifacts are the institutions that most need assistance.

When I asked local museums if they served primarily local visitors or people from away, each and every one reported that they served both the local community and tourists. Some, in fact, reported that most of their business came from those who lived outside their own community. Clearly, these institutions serve a role beyond merely preserving the history of a local community. They are contributing to a greater whole: that unified historical narrative that is our collective heritage.





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The Great D'Arcy Debate

Jeanie Johnston Foundation promotes history

by Kevin O'Donnell

It was 8:30 a.m. on April 26, and the Selwyn House School cafeteria was abuzz with the nervous energy of 172 high school debaters psyching themselves up to do battle – verbally – with their honourable opponents. These young people had assembled from every province in the country to take part in the 2012 Canadian National Debating Championships.

The 64 junior debaters had an especially daunting challenge: they were going first, in a few minutes. And their prepared rounds would centre on a man most admitted they had never heard of before this event: Thomas D'Arcy McGee. Their topic: "This House believes that D'Arcy McGee should be considered a Canadian hero."

Standing in the swirl of students, Leo Delaney and Sam Allison couldn't help but become caught up in the excitement. Chair and vice-chair respectively of the Jeanie Johnston Educational Foundation (JJEF), they had partnered with the provincial and national student debating societies to put forward an intriguing historical topic at the national championship level – a first, they believed.



and Pierre Laporte share the distinction of being the only Canadian politicians to have suffered this fate.

In offering to support debating societies as a means of bringing fresh perspectives on Canadian history to students, the JJEF was striking out into new territory. The Foundation put websites and social media at the service of this ancient but effective teaching tool that promotes learning, analysis of arguments, and thinking on one's feet.

Debates are judged events. The JJEF invited a representative from the Irish Embassy and David Wilson, author of a two-volume biography, *Thomas D'Arcy McGee* (McGill-Queen's Press), to act as judges.

By 9 a.m., after a review of the debating rules, 32 pairs of students had spread to classes throughout the school. The junior high school debaters were impressive. Using JJEF materials, they had researched McGee's life, his vision for Canada, his achievements and his shortcomings. They zeroed in on the core of the debate: what does it take to be considered as a hero by national standards? Compared to universally-recognized Canadian heroes like Terry Fox, does politician D'Arcy McGee measure up? All morning long the classrooms rang with the thrust and parry of verbal swordplay, as the juniors debated on both sides of the motion against teams from other provinces. The judges' score sheets (available online) demonstrate their own nimble if discerning decisions, as well as the high quality of the debaters' arguments.

At the end, the team from Sacred Heart School of Halifax racked up the most points over six grueling rounds, and were declared National Junior High Team Debating Champions 2012. All participants came away with a more intimate knowledge of Confederation's silver-tongued orator. The ten best speakers each received signed copies of Dr. Wilson's book, courtesy of the JJEF, which were handed out by Michael Canuel of LEARN.



With some 2,500 high schools across the country, Delaney and Allison felt that about 1,000,000 junior-level students would be exposed to what is still a live issue in Canadian history. D'Arcy McGee, an early and fervent advocate of Confederation, was somewhat controversial in his day. An alcoholic, this radical-turned-Conservative was reviled by some as a traitor to the cause of Irish independence. Assassinated in 1868, he



The original Jeanie Johnston was built in 1847 in Quebec City, then a ship-building centre and major inland seaport via the St. Lawrence River. Like many of her kind, the Jeanie Johnson, a three-masted barque, carried timber from the Canadian forests to Europe – Tralee in Ireland, to be specific – and emigrants from famine-stricken Ireland back to North America. Unlike the infamous “coffin ships” of the era, the Jeanie Johnson became famous for never losing a passenger or crew member, thanks to her having a humane captain and a qualified doctor on board.

In the early 1990s, as the 150th anniversary of the Great Famine approached, Tralee organizers undertook to build a replica and sail it to the U.S. – but not to Quebec, where the original had been launched. Learning about this, Leo Delaney, a businessman long active in Montreal’s Irish community, “kicked up a bit of a fuss,” as he put it. The Jeanie Johnston sailed to Montreal in September 2003 and then to Quebec City.

At the Montreal quay where thousands gathered to visit the Tall Ship, Leo met history teacher Sam Allison. The Irish brogue and Scottish burr of their native countries articulated a common dream, to make the history of the Famine, and other milestones of Canadian history, better known and appreciated. The JJEF was created in 2004.

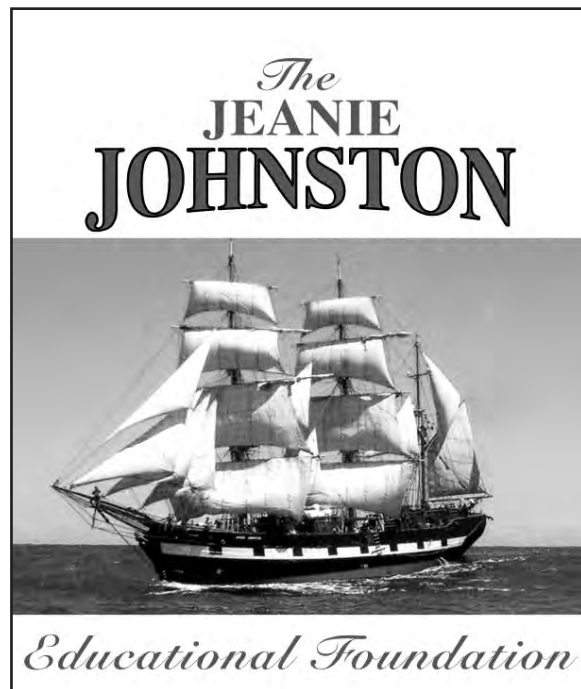
The Foundation’s first project, “Following the Famine,” brought together experts from several countries to trace the global impact of an Gorta Mór, the Great Hunger. In 2008, the Foundation published a four-page insert in the *Montreal Gazette* called “Champlain’s Gazette.” The Foundation has collaborated with LEARN, Quebec’s English-language educational resource centre, and has launched an ambitious project to add to the glitter of the CPR’s Last Spike by drawing attention to the huge influence of the Grand Trunk Railway (GTR) on the development of Canada. Currently, the Foundation is working on a War of 1812 project, with a focus on the 1813 Battle of the

Chateauguay.

The Jeanie Johnston replica now makes its home at Custom House Quay in Dublin, and can be visited there: <http://www.jeaniejohnston.ie/>.

As for D’Arcy McGee, has he settled back into relative obscurity after being swarmed by packs of high school juniors? Not really. While the St. Patrick’s Society announces on its website that “The Society is proud, too, that Thomas D’Arcy McGee, a Father of Confederation, was a member,” the venerable institution had stripped McGee of his membership in 1867. (To rub salt into the wound, Society president Bernard Devlin ran against him in the election that year.) This June 19, author David Wilson will engage St. Patrick Society historian Peter Shea in a friendly debate as to whether the Society should restore McGee’s membership after 145 years.

Living history indeed!



FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THE JEANIE JOHNSTON EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION, VISIT:

www.canadarailwaytimes.com/?page_id=45

THE JJEF’S PROJECTS CAN BE FOUND AT:

www.irishfamine.ca/
www.canadarailwaytimes.com/
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Beyond oral history

The Société d'histoire de Sherbrooke

by Nick Seebruch

Everywhere people have been they have left behind a history. It is part of human nature for us to want to leave our mark in some way. In fact, it is almost impossible for us not to do so. The stories and exploits of our ancestors are carried down through our families; we share them within our community to produce a communal history. Every place and every person has a story, and typically that story is preserved, through oral history, by passing it from person to person, from generation to generation.

Oral history is the primary way that family and communal history is preserved. There is a narrative which the national community preserves together, usually with some form of state support, and that heritage is an important part of our identities as Canadians, for example. But the heritage we preserve on the micro level is just as important.

There are, however, inherent deficiencies in the practice of oral history. By its nature, oral history is neither entirely reliable as a historical source, nor as a method of historical preservation. It is indeed interesting from a social and anthropological perspective to study what and why things get preserved through oral history, but oral history degrades quicker than other historical sources and artifacts. Stories change; details get added or omitted depending on the storyteller; and some societies let some oral histories die out altogether. Oral and other forms of history need the active help of the community in order for them to survive.

This is where local historical societies come into play. In Sherbrooke, we are fortunate to have a dedicated group at the Société d'histoire de Sherbrooke, which has taken up "the responsibility of preserving and conserving" our local history, as the historical society's executive director, Michel Harnois, puts it.

The Société d'histoire de Sherbrooke has been active since 1927, when the organization was founded as the Eastern Townships Historical Society, eventually changing its name in 1989. Today the mission of the historical society is "to conserve, study, promote and publicize the historical, documentary and ethnological heritage of the Sherbrooke region; to stimulate among residents an interest in the city and its history, and a sense of belonging; and to contribute to making Sher-

brooke a recognized tourist destination."

Currently, the Société d'histoire de Sherbrooke numbers about 200 members who take part in the organization, and between 10 and 15 people who run the day-to-day operations.

According to Harnois, the Société d'histoire de Sherbrooke, like many heritage organizations in Quebec, is unable to reach its desired level of funding, and that despite the fact that the institution receives financial assistance from Quebec's Ministère de la Culture, des Communications et de la Condition féminine.

Yet, despite its restricted budget, the historical society is still dedicated to putting on exhibitions at its interpretation centre, located in Sherbrooke's historic former post office building on Dufferin Street. In fact, the society typically has four exhibitions on display at any given time. One permanent exhibit features the history of the City of Sherbrooke, while another focuses on Sherbrooke's Frontenac power station. There are two temporary

exhibitions each year, as well.

This spring, the historical society unveiled a new exhibit on the history of music in Sherbrooke. It covers over 150 years of history, and every musical genre from classical, to jazz, to pop, to contemporary, and chronicles local artists such as Jim Cochrane and others. It is even interactive so that visitors can actually listen to artists from the Sherbrooke area.

Aside from its exhibitions, the historical society takes an active role in promoting history throughout Quebec. This spring, along with its partner, QAHN, the organization helped to organize the annual convention of Fédération Histoire Québec, which was held in Sherbrooke in May. The yearly event is an opportunity for historical societies from around Quebec to exchange ideas and to celebrate our collective history.

What does the future hold for the Société d'histoire de Sherbrooke? If Michel Harnois has his way, the organization will have more opportunities to take history out of its building and into the community. Whether through mounting exhibitions or conducting tours off-site, Harnois says, the historical society wants to bring the history of Sherbrooke to everyone so that it can be appreciated by all.



COMMUNITY AND CULTURAL HERITAGE

Chelsea's Union Mission Church Park

by Carol Martin

On October 2, 2011, Chelsea's mayor, members of Chelsea's municipal Culture and Heritage Committee, the Gatineau Valley Historical Society and former trustees of the Union Mission Church gathered with representatives of the local Anglican and United Churches, neighbours and former parishioners to celebrate the Union Mission Church Park. The event marked a culmination of efforts to find a way to use and commemorate a historic community church in Kirk's Ferry, a hamlet in this Western Quebec municipality situated in the Gatineau Hills, north of Ottawa. It was the result of very positive cooperation between municipal officials and community groups, and a reflection of some of the ideas inherent in cultural heritage.

My well-used, familiar *Concise Oxford Dictionary* defines "heritage" in qualified terms, as what is or may be inherited, while "cultural heritage" is according to Wikipedia a legacy of physical artifacts and intangible attributes of a group of society. As I reflected on these concepts, and how they applied to the community project I'm about to describe, I was struck by the notion of heritage as something that may be inherited, and the potential negative, that something may NOT be inherited – and in the second case, by the importance of physical artifacts related to intangible attributes in our cultural heritage.

For 75 years, until 2003, the Union Mission Church was a landmark on this site, but its history goes back more than a century, to 1898, when the first church was built on nearby land, now flooded by the Gatineau River. On July 13, 1898, a group of subscribers to the "Church

Building Fund" recorded their first official meeting to oversee construction of a building and passed a resolution providing for its shared use among different Protestant denominations. A local farmer donated the land where it was built, but most of the subscribers were summer cottagers attracted to the scenic Gatineau area that had become more



easily accessible since construction of a railroad from Ottawa. The project must have proceeded quickly, as a framed notice indicates that it was opened for Divine Service on the first day of August 1898. Once built, year-round residents as well as the summer tourists attended church services there, and during the week it served as the local elementary school. On Friday afternoons, the children pushed their desks to the back and set up chairs in rows, ready for church on Sunday.

Times changed. In 1927, a massive hydroelectric project on the Gatineau River raised the water level and flooded the main street and much of the original

village of Kirk's Ferry, including the church. The ferry crossing was no more, although the village kept its familiar name. Some buildings were moved, others simply torn down. New roads, a new store and post office were built, and the railroad line moved to higher ground with a new passenger station and baggage depot. The church also found a

new site, donated by one of its trustees, A. Ferguson Brown, on a 100-foot square lot at 16 Brown Road. The former building was not moved, but the Gatineau Power Company paid for a fine new church faced with white clapboard, roofed with green shingles and crowned with a small steeple.

The new church functioned only in the summer, with services alternating between the Anglican and United Churches, but it was a place that brought together the year-round residents and vacationing cottagers. My childhood memories of summers spent at a Kirk's Ferry cottage include Sunday services when my great-aunt Maud Brown was one of the occasional organists, as was

the renowned Dr. J. W. Bearder, an eminent organist and composer based at Ottawa's All Saints and St. Matthew's Churches from 1913-1950. In 1958, my fiancé, Bob, got a summer job in Ottawa, rented a cottage at Kirk's Ferry next door to the church, and also played the organ there. When we moved back as young marrieds in 1959, we attended the church and he continued to play the organ, an old pump-harmonium (now saved for the Fairbairn House at La Pêche). I had a strong family connection with the church. My parents' lovely garden at Kirk's Ferry provided flowers for a tall metal vase enclosed in a wicker stand that stood in front of the lectern

each week. My grandfather and great-uncle served as trustees over the years. My parents, with my two brothers and me in tow, would stop to chat with neighbours, outdoors in the churchyard after the service.

But times continued to change. In 1974, Marion G. Rogers wrote in the *Ottawa Journal* of the voluntary work including cleaning, grass cutting, and organ playing that kept the little church open for ten services a summer. What Miss Rogers did not mention was that some costs, such as electrical service (temporarily supplied by a neighbour's extension cord from his house to lights for the organist and preacher) were now more than the dwindling congregation could support. Permanent homes increasingly filled the available land in Kirk's Ferry, and enterprising souls were converting the old summer cottages to year-round dwellings. Most of the residents commuted to work in Ottawa-Gatineau, and it was easy to drive to a church in Chelsea or further afield. Finally, in 1979, the last regular weekly summer services were held, although the church was reopened on June 30, 1990, for a memorial service for my mother, Dorothy Reid Craig. By this time, I was one of the remaining trustees of the church, along with Harold Reid. We formed a Union Mission Church Committee under the aegis of the Gatineau Valley Historical Society, transferred the remaining funds from the church to a special account within the Society, and approached municipal officials, who were sympathetic but had no solutions to suggest.

The Union Mission Church was still a lovely landmark, a picturesque building with pine trees framing its borders. We knew that the best way to save a heritage structure was to find a use for it, and we applied our imaginations to think of new purposes. It was a discouraging task. Building regulations had also changed over time, and its lot size and lack of existing water and septic systems precluded converting the church building for housing or commercial use if it remained on that site. Estimated costs for moving it were high, and no potential user came forward.

Buildings age, and, like people, develop infirmities. In this case, a very heavy spring snowfall in 2002 was sim-



ply too much for the roof, and part of it caved in. The trustees were served with an order to demolish the building or undertake repairs to make it safe. Over the following summer, with new energy, we mobilized neighbours and historical society volunteers to form a work crew that removed interior furnishings and dismantled the exterior. The steeple, pews, windows and some of the lumber were salvaged and stored in a neighbouring barn, while the intact entrance section was moved to a municipal storage site. Then, over the next few years, we developed a plan for a small chapel made of the salvaged entry and steeple. A local architect, Alan Hopkins, drew plans for it, while we tried to interest Chelsea's Protestant churches and explored potential municipally-owned sites. During this time, the "saved" entrance section was accidentally demolished. We were fortunate to have stored the rest of the saved materials in a sturdy, heritage barn, but its owner—and we—were losing faith in our ability to develop a successful plan.

A few more years passed. Then, in 2005, Chelsea formed a Cultural and Heritage Committee. Its membership included a municipal Councillor and the Director of Recreation and Cultural Services, along with members from local arts, cultural and heritage groups. It was the larger scope and interests of this new committee that provided a "eureka moment," which refocused our ideas beyond the building (or what, by now, was left of it) and back to the site. The result

was a proposal for a park, where the steeple would be erected as a historic artifact, with interpretive panels telling the history of the church. In January 2008, the Municipality signed an entente with Quebec's Ministère de la Culture, des Communications, et de la Condition féminine (MCCCF), for several jointly-funded heritage projects, to be realized over a three-year period. One of these ("Mise en valeur de l'emplacement et du rôle historique de l'Union Mission Church") was to enhance the site and historic role of the Union Mission Church.

With a year's extension to the entente, the project finally came together



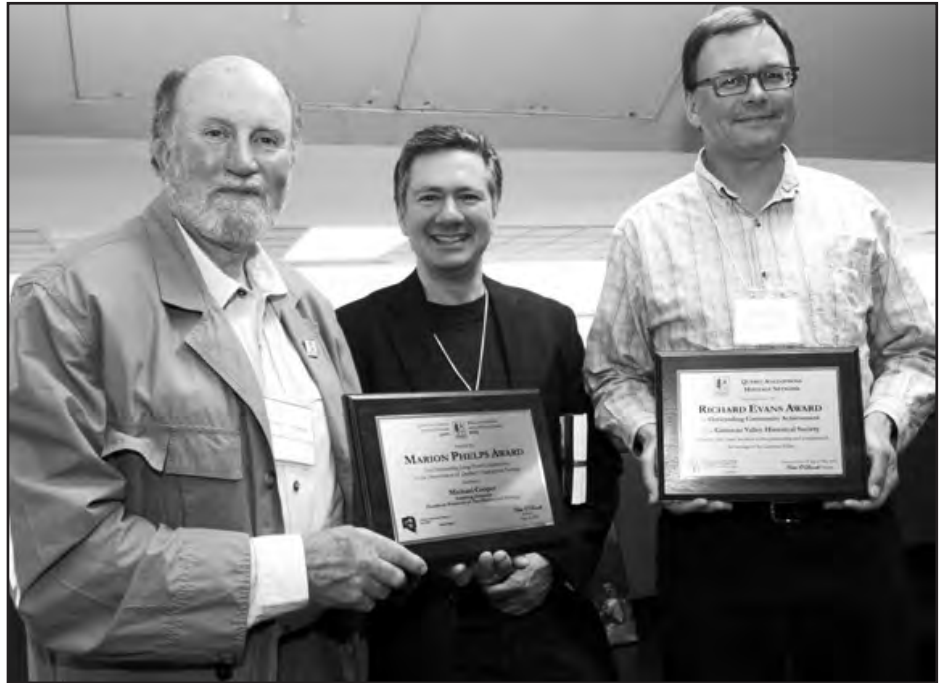
by the end of summer in 2011. The original steeple, refurbished and painted, was mounted on a raised cement base. (By then, the barn where we'd stored it needed roof repair, and we had moved it several kilometres to a different barn, before municipal staff took it to their shops and delivered it back to the site on Brown Road.) We located historic photos for the interpretation panels and wrote the text for them. Two benches invite visitors to sit, and plans for 2012 include further site clearing and landscaping. As our brief ceremony in October of last year drew to a close, a light rain began to fall, and the small crowd dispersed.

For a long time, the Union Mission Church heritage project seemed destined to be a failure. The adapted project preserved only a small artifact from the building, but it does exhibit it in situ, and the visitor can see photographs and read something of the original church. Some of the windows, lumber, and a number of pews were sold at the Gatineau Valley Historical Society auction and will provide further funds for beautification to the site. Two pews from the former church have also been conserved (in another barn, of course) for potential future use in Chelsea's public buildings. The conserved steeple and the interpretation panels there now convey some of the history of both the original church and the one that stood on this site for nearly three-quarters of a century.

Chelsea's Union Mission Church Park is truly an example of heritage that might not have been inherited. I am so happy that we found a way to preserve this part of Chelsea's cultural heritage, and grateful for all the support and assistance that made it happen.

For further information about this church, see "Kirk's Ferry's Union Mission Church and Other Shared Protestant Churches in Chelsea" by Carol Martin in *Up the Gatineau!*, Volume 25 (published in 1999 by the Gatineau Valley Historical Society).

Carol Martin, a long-standing member of the Gatineau Valley Historical Society, won QAHN's Marion Phelps Award in June 2011 for her many years' work promoting and preserving the heritage of the Gatineau Valley.



Gatineau Valley Historical Society wins 2012 Richard Evans Award

by Sandra Stock

The Richard Evans Award is presented by QAHN each year to a group of volunteers who, collectively, have contributed to preserving or promoting their community history, including some aspect of Quebec's Anglophone heritage. This year, this award is being presented to the Gatineau Valley Historical Society (GVHS).

2012 marks the 50th anniversary of the founding of the GVHS, whose mission is to promote the history and heritage of the Gatineau Valley. The founders of this organization have been involved in many dynamic projects over the years, including playing a leading role in the Fairbairn house project.

The GVHS has organized local historical walking tours, an annual "Heritage Paddle" down the Gatineau River culminating in a lumberman's supper and historical display, a community Remembrance Day ceremony, and an annual antique auction. In Cantley, La Pêche, Chelsea, and Wakefield, the GVHS has assisted with descriptions of historic houses and the installation of plaques. The GVHS has been active in

the ownership and maintenance of the Chelsea Pioneer Cemetery, and members of the historical society founded the Old Chelsea Protestant Burial Ground Committee which works with the municipality to support that 200-year-old site.

The Gatineau Valley Historical Society has collaborated with other groups in local anniversary celebrations (Low) and assisted new groups (Cantley 1889) to set up their own organizations. There have been displays for libraries and other public places, school projects in local communities, and loans of artifacts to organizations such as the Logue Museum in Maniwaki and the Aylmer Heritage Association.

For the past 38 years, the GVHS has published *Up the Gatineau*, a local historical journal to which over 120 authors have contributed.

Finally, the Gatineau Valley Historical Society maintains an excellent archive at the municipal library in Chelsea. Volunteers respond to research inquiries in person, by email or by telephone. For more on the GVHS, visit www.gvhs.ca.

Michael Cooper wins 2012 Phelps Award

by Sandra Stock

The Marion Phelps Award is presented each year by QAHN to an outstanding volunteer in the heritage field. This year, we are pleased to announce that the recipient of this award is Michael Cooper.

Michael is the co-president of the Fairbairn Heritage Centre in Wakefield, which opens this year. He has worked “hands on” (literally) with hammer and nails, and, along with other committee members, has overseen the project and met with local and regional politicians to raise awareness and funds.

The Fairbairn house, which dates to the 1860s, was the home of William Fairbairn, the founder of Wakefield. As a heritage centre, the house will serve as a meeting place for members of the Gatineau Valley community and visitors. It will offer exhibits, an archive, and space for workshops, school activities, and other events. It will also serve as a rest stop on the Trans-Canada Trail and a launching point for tours of the area. The story of the Fairbairn house, from its near destruction and its eventual restoration as a heritage centre through the efforts of community volunteers like Michael Cooper, is an inspiration to all heritage volunteers.

Michael Cooper’s other volunteer activities include membership in the Gatineau Valley Historical Society. He has worked as a consultant for the Western Quebec School Board, and has sat on numerous committees of Quebec’s Ministry of Education, working tirelessly to promote Canadian and local history.

In 2000, Michael served on the steering committee that founded the Quebec Anglophone Heritage Network. From 2003 to 2006 he was a member of the QAHN board, serving as vice-president. QAHN salutes Michael for his past and ongoing efforts on behalf of heritage and history in Quebec.

2012 QAHN AGM BIGGEST EVER

by Matthew Farfan

The 2012 Annual General Meeting of the Quebec Anglophone Heritage Network, held on May 12 at Champlain Regional College in St. Lambert, in conjunction with QAHN’s “Young Heritage Leaders Fair,” broke previous AGM attendance records.

Over 50 delegates, members and guests from as far away as the Gaspé, the Outaouais, the Eastern Townships, and Quebec City attended the business portion of the AGM, where annual reports were presented by QAHN President Kevin O’Donnell, Treasurer Dick Evans and Executive Director Matthew Farfan.

Other issues discussed included the need to update QAHN’s bylaws, recently announced federal government cuts to its archive funding program, and the election of new members of the board.

This year, three veteran board members – Sandra Stock, Doreen Lindsay and Heather Darch – bid their farewells, and each was presented with a dozen roses in appreciation for their long service.

Four new directors have joined the QAHN board, however, and each of them brings a different perspective to the organization. The new faces are: Steven High (Concordia University’s Centre for Digital Storytelling), Dorothy Williams (Black Community Resource Centre), Carol Meindl (Quebec Federation of Home and School Associations), and Grant Myers (Provincial Development Officer, Community Economic Development and Employability Committee (CEDEC).

Following the business meeting, participants congregated in the college cafeteria where they were served a delicious lunch, and where the presentations of the annual Marion Phelps and Richard Evans awards took place. Long-time heritage volunteer and educator Michael Cooper, winner of the Phelps Award, gave a Powerpoint presentation on the restoration of the Fairbairn House in

Wakefield, and its ongoing conversion as a community centre. On hand to accept the Evans Award for the Gatineau Valley Historical Society were Louise Schwartz and David Yuill.

Serenading the guests during lunch with old-time fiddle tunes from the Gaspé coast was surprise visitor Glenn Patterson, whose recent articles on Gaspé fiddle traditions were featured in *Gaspesian Heritage WebMagazine* and in the spring issue of *Quebec Heritage News*.

The “Young Heritage Leaders Fair,” which was coordinated by InHerit Project Manager Dwane Wilkin, and which was the culmination of QAHN’s year-long InHerit project, proved to be a major draw to this year’s AGM. About 35 students, educators, school administrators, and volunteers spent the day at Champlain showing off recent student heritage projects and networking with AGM attendees. They also participated in workshops on community-based learning (given by the CLCs), partnership building (by Lise Palmer of Spark), and youth engagement (by Ilona Doherty of Apathy Is Boring).

With the help of Tortuga Films, students learned about conducting interviews, editing film clips, and crafting stories.

Throughout the day, high school and elementary students showing off their school heritage projects included contingents from schools in the Magdalen Islands, the Lower St. Lawrence (Métis Beach), La Tuque, and Otterburn Park. School projects were interspersed with displays by QAHN member-organizations, including the Fairbairn House, Heritage Gaspé, and others.

Following the event, several of the participants said how pleased they were with the day’s activities, and with the opportunity for networking that the event afforded them.



2012 QAHN AGM

The new QAHN board. Back row: Barry McCullough, Matthew Farfan (Executive Director), Derek Hopkins, Kevin O' Donnell, Kim Harrison, Jo-Ann Oberg-Müller, Rick Smith, Dorothy Williams. Front row: Simon Jacobs, Ann Montgomery, Grant Myers, Carol Meindl, Richard Evans. Absent: Steven High, Susan Chirke. Photo: Charles Bury.



Heritage Gaspé display. Photo: Renee Arshinoff.



Claudia, Tristan and Sabrina from Mountainview School, Otterburn Park. Photo: Matthew Farfan.



Guillaume, Metis Beach School, Métis-sur-Mer. Photo: Renee Arshinoff.



Dwane Wilkin, Inherit project manager. Photo: Renee Arshinoff.



Fiddler Glenn Patterson. Photo: Matthew Farfan.



Naomi, Bianca and India, La Tuque High School and Metis Beach School. Photo: Matthew Farfan.



Jim Caputo, Heritage Gaspé. Photo: Matthew Farfan.



Lunch. Photo: Renee Arshinoff.

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BODIES ON THE MOVE

The transfer of Sherbrooke's Union Cemetery to Elmwood

by Anne-Reet Ilves Annunziata

It was an unusual challenge. In 1918, all persons interred in the Union Cemetery on Belvedere Street in Sherbrooke's South Ward were removed and reburied in Elmwood Cemetery in the North Ward of the city.

The process leading to this decision was slow, beginning in the late nineteenth century when the Union Cemetery had become sadly neglected. Established in 1849 on 3¾ acres of land (Lot 1442 in the Sherbrooke cadastral records), it had been designated for use as a cemetery by Protestant denominations other than Anglican: Congregational, Methodist, Presbyterian and Baptist. (The Anglican Church cemetery was established separately.) The Congregational Church had paid for the purchase of the land (\$445) but all of these churches were jointly responsible for upkeep and maintenance.

By the end of the century the cemetery was almost full and was poorly maintained. The area around it had become highly industrialized so that the location was no longer appropriate for a cemetery. The minutes of the Trustees of the Plymouth Congregational Church for June 19, 1894, reflect these concerns: It was moved that "the Chief of Police take steps to prevent persons loitering in and desecrating the grounds" and "to proceed against trespassers."

Although it can be assumed that the problems at Union Cemetery continued, the concern for maintenance does not resurface in the existing Trustees' minutes except in a short comment in 1905 regarding doing "what is necessary in the way of repairs." On September 8, 1907, the first discussion of the transfer of the bodies was recorded: "It was moved by A. M. Sangster, seconded by J. S. Mitchell, that action be taken towards closing up and removing the bodies from Union Cemetery, and that the matter be referred to the secretary of the

Church for legal opinion as to the necessary procedure." Elmwood Cemetery, established in 1890 by local businessmen concerned about the deteriorating conditions at Union, was considered to be the appropriate transfer site.



An additional motivation for action at this time was pressure from city fathers, Alderman McManamy among them, who expressed interest in zoning the land for commercial use. Plymouth Church minutes record that "Mr. McManamy was very anxious on behalf of the City that the Union Cemetery should be removed, and the land... made available for manufactory, as it is right in the heart of manufacturing industries." The city's determination was such that they declared that if the Church would not authorize the transfer "the City will obtain authority to expropriate the property and remove the bodies and the Church would thereby lose control of the situation."

Plymouth Church minutes indicate

that a cemetery committee had been formed in 1908 to deal with the Union issue. This committee examined the costs involved in a potential transfer by having the process evaluated by a marble dealer and an undertaker, who provided an estimate. Deliberations continued slowly, however, and it was not until 1913, five years later, that a formal offer was presented to Plymouth Congregational Church by the Elmwood Trustees, detailing the move. The offer stated that persons would be able to choose their relocation site in Elmwood from any available spaces and that all persons not claimed by relatives would be re-buried in the "new" South West corner, which was to be beautified with pathways similar to the other sections of Elmwood. All monuments and stones would also be repositioned.

However, as Plymouth Church Trustees needed an Act of Legislature to confirm their title to the property in preparation for the sale and transition, another four years passed before this was formalized, in October of 1916. As a consequence, negotiations with Elmwood were not taken up formally again until 1917. Correspondence indicates that the costs and property value were assumed to have increased considerably since the initial estimate was proposed. Despite these cost increases, the estimated accrual from the sale of Union's land is believed to have been adequate to pay for the transfer of approximately 700 bodies.

In the correspondence, the president of Elmwood suggests in emotionally-charged language that any profits from the sale of Union land should be given to Elmwood Cemetery, not held by Plymouth Church; Elmwood was now the steward of the Protestant community's graves. "While admitting that legally the Church has a right to this surplus...I am profoundly convinced that morally,

which is the only standpoint from which the Church should consider the question, it has no right and would place itself and religion in a false position before the Community.” The president states that the original financial outlay of \$445 contributed by Plymouth did not reflect the value of the property, even at the time of purchase, and that they had spent no money to maintain the cemetery during the intervening period: “With the exception of the payment of some \$50,” Plymouth had not “assumed any responsibility for the proper care of it, what has been done has been by private effort and its condition past and present has been a standing disgrace unkempt, a resort for the disreputable and at present its graves are befouled with human excrement and filthy beyond words.”

Heated dialogue appears to have ensued. After much discussion and negotiation, however, arrangements were made between the Plymouth Congregational Church Board, representing Union Cemetery interests, and the Board of Trustees at Elmwood to relocate the persons buried in Union to comparable spaces on the Elmwood grounds. The Trustees at Plymouth finally sent a firm request in May of 1918, stating that they expected to sell the land for \$15,000 and would use this money to pay for the transfer, keeping only the original \$445 with simple interest accrued.

At this point, however, the Elmwood Trustees, aware of the passage of four years since their earlier proposal and the potential cost increases generated by the war, decided that current actual costs should be validated before formalizing their agreement. In June 1918, Elmwood Cemetery Superintendent Luther Stevenson was sent to Mount Royal Cemetery in Montreal with the mission to report back regarding the costs of various services, not only related to the transfer itself but also to perpetual maintenance, in order to ensure that their proposal reflected current expenses. As a result of Mr. Stevenson’s report, the Elmwood Board notified the Trustees of the Congregational Church that, based on the information from Montreal, they must raise their prices from their earlier quotes to reflect cost increases since the 1913 proposal: “The



cost of labour, teams and material has more than doubled, and has also very considerably increased since the date of our last communication, 24th July 1917, in addition to which the subject has been further complicated by the difficulty now of getting workmen at any price.”

It seems that an agreement was reached: on September 16, 1918, the members of Plymouth Congregational Church were notified that their Trustees would be entering into a contract with the Elmwood Cemetery Company for the transfer of Union. A notice was published in the *Sherbrooke Daily Record* (Sept 17, 1918) that “legal representatives” of the persons buried in Union have the opportunity to choose a suitable site of comparable size in Elmwood from “all the unsold ground available.” The announcement had been made from

the pulpit by Reverend Read the previous two Sundays.

The transfer began in the fall of 1918 and continued through the following year. “The cemetery committee reported that about 300 bodies had been removed from the old Union cemetery to Elmwood and the work was progressing very favorably,” according to the Plymouth Church Trustees minutes of November 21, 1918. The minutes of September 11, 1919, note that the “removals” work was completed and they could proceed with selling the land.

Although the transfer of bodies and stones was completed in the fall of 1919, financial negotiations regarding the land sale continued for some time. The minutes of the cemetery committee of May 17, 1920, report that one part of the Union lot had been sold to Imperial Oil



for \$10,499. In August, the minutes report that the balance of the Union Cemetery land was sold for \$26,331.47. From this amount, payments were made to Elmwood, the attorneys (\$255.46), as well as the Mitchell Estate (\$462.58) for a loan, leaving a profit balance of \$11,814.60 to the Church. Final calculations of money owed to Elmwood for the work was based on a total of 895 bodies removed at \$23.57 per body for a balance of \$21,096.15.

The committee minutes of September 20, 1922, report how the monies received from the sale of the land had been used: \$8,500 was invested in two mortgages, which would be paying first interest in December of that year. "It was moved by Mr. Webster and seconded by Mr. Sangster that other money from the earnings should be used to paint the outside of the church including the steeple, two coats; and that the contract be given to the lowest bidder."

And although the President of Elmwood had suggested to the Board of Plymouth Church that they as a religious institution should not be making a profit from the sale of Union land, a clue to the actual financial outcome of the event can be found in a note from a Plymouth Board member to Pastor Read on August 11, 1922: "I saw Stanley on the street today and he said that you were anxious to know just how the cemetery matter was coming out," he wrote. "\$12,000 which will be net to the Church...on the

whole I think we can congratulate ourselves upon our handling of a very delicate matter with the minimum of criticism or dissatisfaction, and after all coming out with a fairly substantial balance on the right side of the ledger."

The names of all reinterred persons that were available are listed in the Elmwood Cemetery records. Some have been noted as "from Union." For others, the date is the only clue. And many have no name, identified only as "Unknown - from Union - no burial slip."

For those interested in locating the graves of persons transferred from Union, a walk through Elmwood Cemetery would be in order. The South West corner of the cemetery, the section in which many of the transferred were buried, can be found by taking a right

turn on the first drive after passing the office. At the end, before the drive turns north, the entrance is identified by a low granite monument on which the event is described.

As families were able to choose any available lots, transfers are also scattered through the older sections of the cemetery. These can be identified by dates of death prior to the establishment of Elmwood (1890). 110 stones and monuments were moved.

As there were a number of the transferred persons buried in the South West corner who had no stone and no relatives to claim them, they lie under the grass without markers to identify their remains. Hopefully the monument at the entrance to this section acknowledges their memory.

Anne-Reet Ilves Annunziata is Vice-President of the Board of Trustees at Elmwood Cemetery and also Chair of the Executive Committee. Her parents, who are buried at Elmwood, arrived in Sherbrooke from Estonia in February 1949 to work at the Dominion Textile plant. Her childhood was spent in Sherbrooke and she still owns the family home on Durham Street.

Sources:

Plymouth United Church Archives,
Eastern Townships Resource Center,
Bishop's University.
Minutes, Elmwood Cemetery Company.



UMBRAGEOUS BRANCHES AND MELANCHOLY RUINS

Digging up Montreal's old Protestant Burial Ground

by Rod MacLeod

Anyone who has applied for a passport in downtown Montreal in recent years, or who has had any other business with the federal Department of Canadian Heritage in the Guy Favreau Building on Boulevard René Lévesque, may not know they are standing over ancient corpses.

Of course, there may well be no corpses left. When they were building the Guy Favreau complex in the late 1970s, excavators dug up a number of bones which were respectfully (given the circumstances) reinterred in a special lot near the back fence at Mount Royal Cemetery. The lot lies in what used to be known as the Poor Ground, an area featuring the numerous Protestant charitable organizations in nineteenth-century Montreal that undertook to provide free burial to the destitute. We know that the Guy Favreau corpses were Protestant (assuming that Protestantism can be interred in the bones) and we're fairly sure they were poor; they had gone unclaimed for over a century. If there are any bodies the excavations did not uncover, they are well and truly buried.

All of the other bodies in the city's old Protestant Burial Ground had been removed between 1852 and 1875 and reburied in the newly-opened Mount Royal Cemetery. The new cemetery was itself the product of early Victorian fear of contagion which saw "intra-mural interment" as the height of danger. According to the proponents of "rural" cemeteries, burial should take place away from the city where nature could do its work without infecting urban dwellers. In Montreal, the rural cemetery movement prompted the creation of beautiful park-like spaces on the side of the mountain (distinct ones for Protestants, Catholics

and Jews) where anyone would want to be buried. Even before intra-mural interment was forbidden by law in 1854, certain families were having their old lots dug up and their loved ones transported to the new lots on the mountain. For example, on December 1, 1852, architect and Mount Royal Cemetery trustee William Spier reinterred four daughters and four sons who had died between 1829 and 1848. There were no



other bodies in Spier's Mount Royal lot at that time; possibly, as a trustee, he was setting an example. Most families waited for a death to occur in the family before reburying their loved ones from the old ground, to save the effort and expense of opening graves. Reburial was strictly voluntary. Those who could afford to, did; those who could not, waited.

Over half a century earlier a similar story had unfolded as citizens grew uneasy over the lack of burial space – and in those days it really was intra-mural: eighteenth-century burial took place in the northwest corner of Old Montreal, where St. James Street would later be laid out. To relieve congestion, Catholics looked far outside the walls to the near side of the mountain, and opened a cemetery on what is now Dorchester Square. Protestants looked slightly closer

to town – to a 160-by-260 foot piece of land in an area known (appropriately) as Près-de-Ville, reached via Chenneville Street. In 1797, the "Protestant Inhabitants of Montreal" (represented by designated trustees) purchased this "garden-orchard" lot and opened it as a burial ground. That is, they offered burial lots to "each person...according to his means and inclination." The space soon proved much too small, so the trustees purchased an additional lot immediately to the north which doubled its area. The trustees also built a tiny stone chapel – or so it was called; it served "for the convenience of persons attending funerals."

Over the next decades, the burial ground acquired new neighbours, drawn to this still uncongested area. Many of them were institutions: the British and Canadian School in 1826, the Scotch Secessionist Church in 1835, the Chenneville Street synagogue in 1838, and the Christian Brothers' school in 1839. Près-de-Ville Place was a square formed by two segments of La-gauchetière Street that did not align (they still don't). By the 1840s, the presence of the synagogue drew to this square many prominent Jewish families, including Rabbi Abraham de Sola, who lived at No.1. To judge from contemporary maps, the surrounding streets were steadily filling with houses.

The area was far from overcrowded, however, even by mid-century, although by then cholera and typhus had raised their heads in the city on more than one horrific occasion, resulting in much traffic of a grisly kind to and from the burial ground. A campaign was launched to find a site for a new, "permanent" cemetery far from where people lived. A more pressing problem for the trustees was how to maintain the grounds, particular-

ly once all the lots had been sold and there was no more revenue to pay the superintendent. (Perpetual care was a thing of the distant future.) Indeed, the search for a new cemetery was arguably as much about starting over with a better financial arrangement than it was about handling corpses far away from citizens. When the new site was found on Mount Royal in 1851, the trustees saw the importance of encouraging people to use it – hence Spier’s conspicuous reinterment of his children just after the new cemetery opened (and just before the ground froze). The trustees’ petition “to close all the Burying Grounds in the city” helped convince the city to do so on May 1, 1854. Significantly, there were burials in the old ground right through the spring of 1854, and even a small number over the course of the summer, which suggests that the formal closure was not tightly enforced. After all, a dead body in July could not be left unburied for long, and if the family of the deceased had a plot in the old ground, it made far more sense to inter it there, law or no law, than to wait for arrangements to be made at Mount Royal. Anticipating this problem, the trustees had made it relatively cheap and easy for the owners of old ground plots to acquire new ones in the Mount Royal Cemetery, although this offer does not appear to have been taken up with any great urgency by the

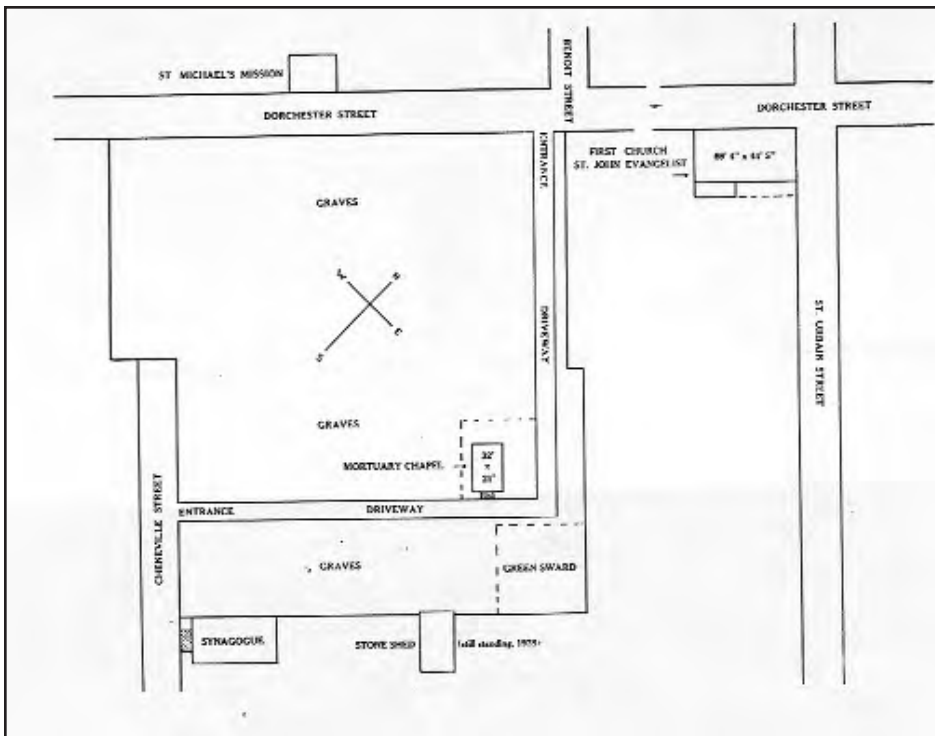


rank and file of the Protestant population.

Although closed, the old cemetery remained a feature of Montreal’s landscape for another two decades. The old chapel continued to serve as the starting point of funeral processions heading up to Mount Royal; it also functioned as office of the superintendent, Joshua Pelton. One of Pelton’s main functions was to supervise disinterment; in some cases it was up to him to go around filling in the graves that had been left open after the bodies had been removed. The trustees often received complaints about

the way disinterment was taking place, and about the consequent deteriorating appearance of the old ground – although it is not clear whether these complaints came from other plot owners or the public in general.

When Pelton retired in 1858, the trustees leased the chapel to the fledgling Anglican congregation of St. John the Evangelist, whose minister, Reverend Edmund Wood (who would later found what would eventually be known as Lower Canada College), gave his first sermon there on December 5. When the parish of St. John the Evangelist was formed a few years later and a permanent site found for the church (now the familiar red-roofed building behind Place des Arts) the chapel was once again abandoned. When an anonymous *Montreal Gazette* contributor visited the old ground in September 1872, the prospect was one of mournful decay. With a certain morbid fascination, the writer noted that “the melancholy ruins of tombs, monuments, and head-stones scattered about, show clearly the mutability of everything human.” More shocking, however, was the “desecration, of the most disgusting character,” including “several lewd inscriptions on tombstones.” For the most part, this seems to have been the result of careless disinterment: “The place is overgrown with wild and unkempt grass and weeds, the earth which covers the graves has in many places sunk in and left unsightly pits and hollows, the monuments, those evidences of love and respect for friends who have forever passed away, are



Top: Old Poor Ground, Mount Royal Cemetery. Photo: Rod MacLeod.

Bottom: Plan, Protestant Burial Ground, from The Church of St. John the Evangelist: A Historical Record.

crumbling into dust.” The writer yearned for “some kindly ‘old mortality’ to wander among the graves, restore the stones, and wake in our citizens some love for the memory of their ancestors, and respect for their now violated tombs.”

Decay notwithstanding, the romance of nature was very much present in the writer’s description. “Large clumps of rose bushes, lilac, and wild cherry trees have grown up... a fine row of ancient Lombardy poplars mark out the course of an old avenue, and... a giant balm-of-gilead tree spreads its umbrageous branches making a cool shade round.” The problem was that “where nature has done so much man has done less than nothing.” The writer did not point specific fingers, but the tone of the entire piece implied that the cemetery’s current state could have been avoided, and that if feelings could only be made to run high enough, the dilapidation could be reversed.

Alas, this was not to be, for the city had decided to turn the grounds into a public park. Such a move would put an end to the unsightliness of open tombs and neglected monuments, and it would settle the question that had been brewing over whether the land would in fact be expropriated and sold to developers. Municipal councillors were mindful of the situation that had arisen a few years earlier when the Catholic authorities had considered converting their old cemetery into building lots to much public outcry; they were also mindful of the much



greater outcry when attempts to disinter bodies from the Catholic ground had resulted in the public spectacle of decomposing heads and limbs rolling about the construction site. Councillors and Protestant cemetery trustees opted to give people fair warning to remove bodies from the old grounds before the end of May 1875. Many who had delayed for years finally did so. Many could simply not afford to. A great many bodies in the old Protestant Burial Ground had no living representatives in the city, so no one spoke for them.

The new park, known as Dufferin Square, proved an attractive replacement for the old grounds, although the area continued to decline into the twentieth

century and was ripe for urban renewal by the 1970s. Even so, one might well lament today the lost opportunity for Montreal to have the kind of downtown sacred open space that many large cities enjoy, one that combines aesthetic pleasure (assuming it is well maintained) with a sense of history. Halifax has its Old St. Paul’s Burial Ground, which is a vital heritage space in the historic heart of the town – even the Spring Garden Cemetery (the equivalent of Mount Royal) is just off what is now Halifax’s main drag. Boston has several inner-city cemeteries which are visited by countless tourists every year: King’s Chapel, the Old Granary, and Copp’s Hill are all historic shrines, boasting the tombs of Paul Revere, Sam Adams, John Hancock and Mother Goose. In Montreal, the downtown’s loss is the mountain’s gain, of course. But Dorchester Square, the former burial ground for the city’s Catholics, has recently taken pains to pay homage to its former role as cemetery and sacred space. Today the only heritage activity taking place on the site of the Old Protestant Burial Ground is within the Department of Canadian Heritage, six storeys above ground level.

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Mount Royal Cemetery Archives.
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Top: Dufferin Square, 1943. Photo: Coolopolis.blogspot.ca, January 30, 2007.

Bottom: Granary Burial Ground, Boston. Photo: JPizzle1122.

STEALING DEALS

Business and politics along the Ottawa River

by Joseph Graham

David Pattee saw his options narrow until he was forced to leave home. Born in Goffstown, New Hampshire, in 1778, David had hoped to emulate his cousin, Dr. Moses Pattee, by pursuing medical studies, but because of an accident or a fight, he lost the use of one eye, and his hopes of a medical career were dashed. In 1803, he fled to Upper Canada to avoid debts and a charge of forgery.

David began homesteading along the Ottawa River, where he met Thomas Mears, a hydraulics engineer, who had worked on a mill at St. Andrews. Together they planned a more elaborate mill on the Ottawa River at the location of modern Hawkesbury.

Mears, who hailed from Massachusetts, was involved with a group of Americans who had built Canada's first paper mill, situated across the river from the seigneur's gristmill on the North River in St. Andrews East. By 1805, he had acquired land on the other side of the Ottawa along the shore of a passageway called the Chenal Écarté, (remote channel), a name that evoked the isolation of the area. Colonization was only beginning.

To build the mills, the partners had to acquire two islands in order to anchor their structure on either side of the racing current. They are said to have bought the islands from the seigneur and to have leased them from the Nipissing and Algonquin. Both jurisdictions had to be respected. The Proclamation of 1763 left this land to the resident Indians, who could lease it out, but the Assembly of Lower Canada had chosen to ignore their rights and eventually the leases, too, were ignored.

The partners' mill was a success and

the English-speaking workers and settlers that used it called the area Snye Carty, in their attempts to pronounce the French name, and it might have stuck in some form if the colonial authorities had not seen fit to honour Baron Hawkesbury, Earl of Liverpool.

Since farmers coming to a gristmill



were usually short of currency to pay for the service, the miller would often accept payment in other forms. This barely contributed to the costs of machinery imported from Great Britain and elsewhere. For Pattee and Mears, real success was not to be achieved in operating the gristmill but in the more ambitious sawmill, where they could trade in the

big leagues and be paid in some more useful form of currency. We have become so comfortable with our monetary system that we have trouble imagining the problems confronting a couple of entrepreneurs like Pattee and Mears. Not only was there no paper money, the most common coins in the United States were still the Spanish and Spanish-American dollars. These round, almost-pure silver disks could be broken into 8 bits and had been the closest thing to an international currency for two centuries, but in the Ottawa Valley in the early nineteenth century there was competition from the pound sterling and the *louis* remaining from the French regime. It would not be until after the War of 1812, when the British government conscientiously redeemed army bills at full face-value, that people began to have confidence in paper currency, giving rise to banking and credit.

All these changes came too late for Pattee and Mears. Short of funds and lacking credit or other backing, they negotiated with the Hamilton brothers who had recently acquired a wharf in the Seigneurie of Lauzon, near Quebec, which they dubbed New Liverpool Cove. The Hamilton brothers, Scots-Irish, relied on one family member established in Liverpool, and traded wines, nails, Baltic timber and other products. As brokers and underwriters, they had contacts in London and Aberdeen as well. Shut out of the Baltic during the Napoleonic blockade, they realized that the Royal Navy would become much more dependent upon timber coming to Quebec City from outlying areas like the Ottawa Valley. Ruthless British businessmen with excellent contacts, the Hamilton

brothers happily advanced Pattee and Mears payment in anticipation of delivery for timber and ‘deals,’ the word used for certain sawed lumber needed in shipbuilding. They also insisted the mill owners sign an obligation against their mill if they failed to deliver.

History does not record all the details of what happened next. Thomas’s *History of Argenteuil and Prescott* paints a distorted picture of the Hamiltons’ acquisition and challenges, generously describing the rise of the Hamilton dynasty, but the simple truth is they foreclosed ruthlessly at Mears and Pattee’s first signs of delay. Their actions explain the antagonism that existed between the parties over the following decades. By 1811, the war with Napoleon was driving up the value of timber, but it was not facilitating credit. At the same time, the Americans were sabre-rattling and the local American community in the British colonies was suspect, especially in the eyes of the Tory elite. George and William Hamilton, with their financial connections in Liverpool, had been quickly welcomed into this upper-crust society, but Pattee and Mears were part of the republican-tainted American immigrant community. These expatriates were a part of large group of rough, working-class colonists with its own understanding of loyalty.

Late in the year 1811, as winter set in, Thomas Mears and David Pattee were obliged to sign over the mill they had built together at Snye Carty. They had mortgaged it in order to have the means to supply an order of ‘deals,’ milled planks used in shipbuilding. The financing came from the same source as the order for the wood: Hamilton Brothers, near Quebec City.

From the Hamilton perspective, Mears and Pattee were up-country lumberers, naïve country boys. The Hamiltons, with their operations in Liverpool and London, were more aware of the changing influences in the main British market and thought themselves to be socially superior. Smaller operators like Pattee and Mears would often depend upon financing that was based on the supply of a certain product by a certain date, although not necessarily from the client they were supplying. The creditor might capitalize on late delivery by insisting on a penalty, but would not want



to suffocate the supplier by actually taking possession of his business. After all, everyone has his own expertise. It came as a cold, hard punch to learn that the Hamiltons were not interested in a penalty, but would exercise their mortgage. It was business, but for Pattee and Mears, it felt like their years of effort and risk were being stolen. They knew the Hamilton foreclosure was beyond their control, but they also had a right to believe that their backers would levy penalties, increasing their profits. The Hamiltons wanted the whole thing, but justice and fairness could be expressed in many ways: shortly after the Hamiltons took possession of the Mears and Pattee mill at Snye Carty, it burned to the ground.

The British government introduced preferential duties, protecting the timber trade in the colonies in 1808, in large part because they had become more dependent upon their colonies and needed to assure their supply. France had successfully threatened the British navy by blockading the Baltic where the pines used for shipbuilding grew. A worldwide search for other sources led to the remaining forests of their North American colonies.

The Hamiltons saw the advantages of the preferential duty and capitalized on it. They could not have wished for a better outcome than the default of small players like Pattee and Mears. The mill closed for the winter of 1811-12 and nothing changed in Snye Carty until April 20, when the river was running ice-free again. Then the suspicious fire wiped out the mill and all the stock. The

Hamiltons would have to start again from the beginning, just as their upcountry predecessors had done.

There is no proof that the fire was set deliberately other than the insinuation that it was suspicious. While a loyal employee of Pattee and Mears might have been more vindictive than negligent, it is unlikely Pattee or Mears would have been involved. They had too much to lose. In 1812, Thomas Mears was elected to represent Prescott in the Upper Canada Assembly and Pattee went back to his successful farm. He did not venture into lumbering again, but Mears, from his new mill in Grenville, remained a serious competitor to the Hamiltons, who faced a large financial and technical challenge to rebuild their mill. William Hamilton came out to Snye Carty first, but he wanted to retire, and his brother George soon took his place. They had two other brothers: one, John, stayed at the wharf in Quebec, while the other, Robert, was head of their firm in Liverpool. It was through Robert that their operations were financed. In Snye Carty, there was no love lost between the two factions, Hamiltons on the one side and Mears-Pattee on the other.

In 1816, Pattee was named a Justice of the Peace and a Surrogate Court judge, while Mears became the district Sheriff. Simultaneously, George Hamilton was also named a Justice of the Peace and an Ottawa Court Judge as well as co-commissioner with the seigneur, Joseph Papineau, for the improvement of water communications on the Ottawa and St. Lawrence rivers.

The two factions represented very different backgrounds. The Hamiltons,

whose friends included some of the staunchest members of the Family Compact, saw themselves as overlords, seigneurs – a class above the commoners. Most of the population was either French Canadian or American, with some Scottish farmers and Irish working-class people. To the Hamiltons, democracy was a radical, even distasteful, idea. The upper class was the only one capable of guiding society and should benefit from the responsibility of class. The Assembly was a place for controlling patronage, but its power should remain advisory only, deferring to the governor and his appointed executive council.

The two Americans were from the republican, democratic United States. Most of these Americans were highly suspect given the tensions that brought about the War of 1812. An oath of allegiance would not suffice to reassure people like George Hamilton.

With the approach of the election of 1820, Mears backed the nomination of his respected friend, David Pattee, while George Hamilton convinced his brother William to come out of retirement to be honoured as their member. Pattee was much more popular. He would carry the whole American immigrant community as well as much of the working class. At the same time, the Hamiltons were still in desperate financial shape. Their plans had not included rebuilding the mill and

they were facing their own creditors. To keep afloat, they were illegally cutting trees in Crown timber reserves, an action that left them vulnerable to Mears, the sheriff. George had his work cut out.

George leaned heavily on his friend Joseph Fortune, the returning officer. He also began a campaign of intimidation, threats and even violence to assure himself the necessary votes to see his brother win over Pattee. There was no secret ballot and the voting took place publicly over several weeks. Down and dirty, George dug up an old accusation dating back to 1803 in New Hampshire. Pattee had been charged with forging banknotes in a case that was never resolved. Even with the mud-slinging, Pattee received the majority of votes and would have been declared the winner if Joseph Fortune had not been the one counting them.

Joseph Graham is writing a book on the history of the Ottawa Valley, of which this is an excerpt.

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Quebec Heritage News

Growing up in Montreal's East End

Swinging on a Star

by Patricia Bissonnette

Self-published, 2011

So many family histories appear to emphasize the intimate, the emotional and the life events – births and deaths and so on – at the expense of the wider context of time and place. Patricia Bissonnette has avoided this tendency; although her family members are totally believable, even unique, characters, the greatest achievement of *Swinging on a Star* is the recreation of East End Montreal in the decades of the thirties, forties and fifties. The many and varied dwellings of her family and friends are clearly described, the neighbours and fellow tenants brought to life and the then very active street landscape and businesses around de Lormier Street appear with authenticity.

Although Bissonnette's background was French-speaking, her grandfather had been one of the thousands of Quebecers who had left for the United States in the early part of the twentieth century. By the time the family returned to Montreal (rather than to the Eastern Townships of their origin), English and the “American way” seemed to have taken over – at least for Rodrigue, known as “Duke,” Bissonnette's rather disreputable father. His career before her birth was as a small-time rumrunner and, although he attempted to turn to the straight and narrow life, it didn't seem to be for him. The Great Depression didn't help either, as it caused economic hardships in the time before any social safety nets. You had to do what you had to do...

However, Bissonnette's mother, Monica, was from a very respectable Irish Catholic working-class family that lived in east-end Maisonneuve ward, a mixed English- and French-speaking area at that time. It is interesting to notice how the cultural attitudes of the time constrained Monica and prevented her from pursuing both further education and work outside the home. When this misalliance of a marriage finally broke

down and “Duke” ended up first in prison and then unemployed and living with another woman, the effect on Monica and her four children was devastating. This world was completely geared to the prosperous and conventional family. The only real assistance available was through the Church, and luckily Patricia, at least, appeared to have had some support from various school and parish clergy – and, of course, nuns.

The descriptions of schools and of hospitals, of orphanages, of probably one of the last blacksmith shops in Montreal, of small businesses and larger industries in the area make this family history very interesting to anyone curious about Montreal before the present time. Most people are unaware that there was a large percentage of English-speaking residents east of St. Lawrence Street. Maisonneuve was at one point the home of many skilled laborers, a number of whom were British Isles emigrants and others who had moved from older working-class districts like Griffintown.

As city demographics of change, neighbourhoods evolve as well. Yesterday's high-end houses may become today's neglected ruins. The houses may disappear altogether, replaced by new buildings, usually not residential. Luckily, Montreal has escaped somewhat the fate of having all its residential districts pushed away from the city core to the suburbs. People can still walk to work in many parts of Montreal. There are still strong neighborhood identities and a lot of older, often heritage (if not historic), dwellings. Being squeezed onto an island with a fairly steep mountain in the middle is most likely a factor.

Patricia Bissonnette can be contacted at patricia.delaney@hotmail.com.

Reviewed by Sandra Stock.



HINDSIGHT

DOWN MEMORY LANE

by Sandra Stock

How long ago is history? It's easy enough for objects – fifty years old is memorabilia, like ticket stubs from a Rolling Stones concert, and one hundred years old is antique, like a Tiffany lamp or a Victorian necklace. However, it is often only when we are reminded, usually out of nowhere, of something in our personal past, our living memory, that we suddenly realize that maybe it's now History – with a capitol H...

There is an often misused saying: “born at the right time” – but now, looking back over forty years, perhaps this really can apply to my particular generation who were young in the 1960s. This was not, as is popularly portrayed, a time of nothing but continual partying – sex, drugs and rock and roll, although there certainly were elements of those. The sixties were essentially a very serious and disruptive time of profound social change.

The four years I spent at Sir George Williams University, now part of Concordia University, graduating in May of 1968, definitely marked one of the most important periods of my life. The first two years were spent in what I'd call the “Old Sir George” – the higgly-piggly, overcrowded world of the Norris Building on Drummond Street, its Annex and a few adjacent buildings, including some areas of the Salvation Army building next door. Finding the classrooms was always the first challenge. However, the urban setting of Montreal during what was definitely one of our city's finest creative times was an outstanding asset. Unlike many other universities (one in particular that will remain anonymous, but we know which...), our environment was not divorced from the great world outside. The lack of a grassy campus and nineteenth century limestone walls didn't seem to matter. Sir George was urban, creative and an environment where we felt anything was possible.

In the fall of 1966, the Arts Faculty moved into the new Hall Building on de Maisonneuve. The chief wonder of this then very stylish facility was the escalators. After two years of puffing up and down through the labyrinth of the Norris, the great windowed lobby of the Hall with its dynamic escalators had a rather science fiction-new age aura. This was also the time of the opening of the metro, Expo 67 and Canada's 100th anniversary. It was the time of the Beatles, Bob Dy-



lan, the Viet Nam War, the American civil rights movement, the Pill, and the Quiet Revolution. It was a time of everything being questioned, everything being re-evaluated, everything open to change. This kind of social upheaval can be frightening. It can also be liberating. It is always a time of great creativity.

Sir George was already emerging as a place of artistic and literary strength. There were series of poetry readings and other events with writers such as Leonard Cohen, Margaret Atwood, and Gwendolyn MacEwan – then all relatively young and fresh on the Canadian cultural scene. The English Department was one of the best academic faculties at any university in Canada. My professors were without exception committed to their subjects and their students. Nearly all were remarkably accessible and encouraging to us. However, two of my fa-

vorites were outside my choice of major subject, which was English. One, Hubert Guindon, taught what we called the “Movements” course in Sociology – the theories of revolution and social change. Prof Guindon smoked Gitane cigarettes (how politically incorrect he would be today!) and often talked about his family's cheese factory in Eastern Ontario. (Odd what one remembers...!) He also taught the same course, in French, at Université de Montréal. His objective and down-to-earth perspectives on events that were really relevant to what was going on outside our classrooms probably helped me maintain my own objective and somewhat “at a distance” approach as a student journalist with *the georgian* (as our paper was officially known.)

The other really memorable course from, I think, the spring of 1966 or 67, was with a Professor Cameron in Historical Geology. For some reason, these classes met in the old Norris Annex in the early evenings. While Prof. Cameron was explaining the details of the Jurassic Period, we had a Middle Eastern style band practicing belly dance music in the nightclub downstairs from us on Drummond Street. This lent a certain *je ne sais quoi* to this mandatory natural science option for Arts students. However, this was really a great course that included climbing all over Mount Royal, noting the one small section of Devonian rocks up there and other geological features. Physical fitness was a definite requirement for this class. It certainly gave us the Really Big Picture of history...

In the two years in the Hall Building, I was one of many student writers for *the georgian*. My career began in “Features,” writing reviews of poetry readings, student theatre and art exhibits. The influence of newspapers of all kinds was much greater then. There was no Internet, texting, or Facebook, and television was limited to about five channels.

Radio was just on the brink of developing alternate broadcasting such as what became CHOM-FM, oriented towards our age group.

This was a time of evolution in student journalism. *The georgian* came out once a week and had been a good, if somewhat predictable, publication covering campus events, sports and arts. It was a friendly and inclusive group – *the georgian* took anyone as long as he or (less often) she could write a clear and accurate account of something of interest. All writing was done on typewriters – not even electric ones – and the printing process involved long sessions at the plant for the editors. Layout was challenging and done by hand and eye. This was the pre-personal computer age, long, long before that writers' best friend, Spell Check. Yet there were computers – big old-style ones – lurking in quiet mystery towards the Hall Building's top floors.

Thinking back to this, it feels as though I spent a much longer time than two years with *the georgian*. A lot happened. This was an action-packed era at Sir George and in Montreal so we found ourselves with an ever-widening arena of subjects for publication.

In 1967-68, (the now late) Frank Brayton became editor of *the georgian*. Frank was a truly gifted journalist and took the paper to a level beyond just the usual university concerns. Not everyone was happy about this. Frank was perceived as too extreme politically and too questioning of the status quo, of society in general and Sir George in particular. This didn't, at first, effect those of us in "Features" very much and we continued covering art, books and music. Yet a transition happened. My experience with performance events probably helped when I suddenly found myself covering demonstrations on the streets of Montreal and Quebec City instead.

In October, 1967, the paper investigated what was revealed to be considerable profit making by the university through its bookstore. A committee was set up and demanded that these profits (amounting to the then large sum of \$85,000) be put towards the Students Association to fund student activities. To impel this along, Frank produced a *georgian* with the headline, "Bookstore Owes Students \$90,000. Sit-in Today at 9 a.m." This was accompanied by a photo of a

bookstore clerk with a fist full of money. The students sat in – and filled up the Hall Building's epic lobby. The money was rerouted to the Students Association and the issue resolved peacefully. At the end of the 1967-68 academic year, *the georgian* received the Canadian University Press award as the best student newspaper in Canada.

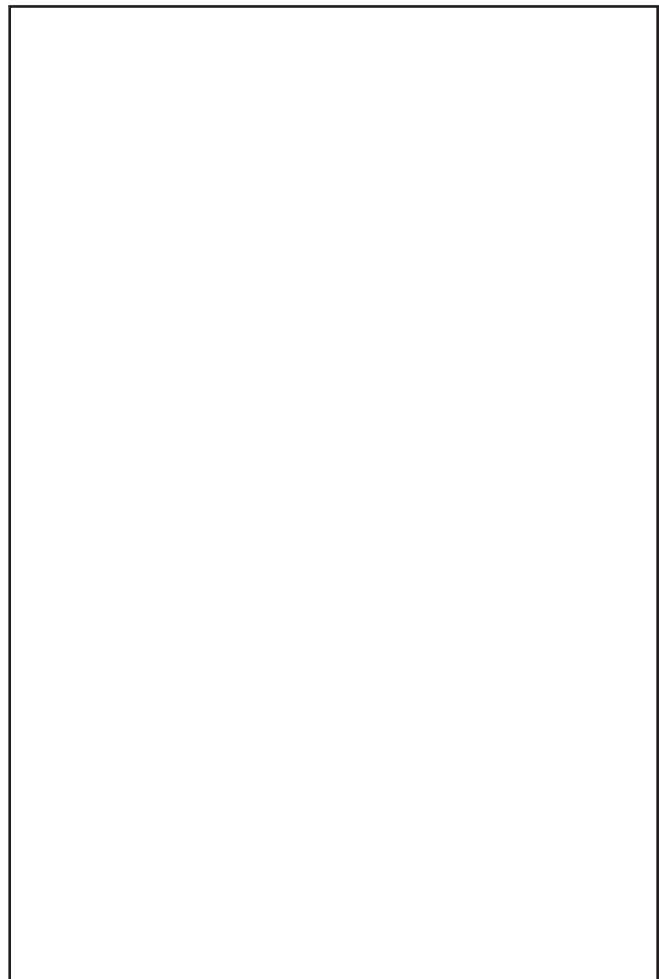
The year after I graduated, many of the long festering issues regarding students versus administration erupted in what has been erroneously called the Computer Centre Riot in February of 1969. Although I was no longer there, I knew many of those involved who were still Sir George Williams students. One of whom, Mark Medicoff, was president of the Arts Students Association and had been a fellow Features writer with *the georgian*. Mark, along with several other friends and acquaintances of mine, was arrested when this debacle finally resulted in the fiery destruction of the ninth floor computers.

An odd combination of an alleged prejudicial action by a professor against six Black students, the well-intentioned but totally out of touch attitude of the administration, the mix of various radical political types of the time, those just caught up in something exciting, and those there with friends, resulted in a bizarre neo-Luddite attack on the enormous computers that stored mainly student records. The case against the accused professor was never proven and quietly dropped. No-one, including the majority of those arrested, ever knew who actually vandalized the computers. Computers were still new and mysterious and initially seen as threatening. It's ironic that such technology is now used to foment change throughout the world – the Arab Spring, for

example.

Many years later, I reconnected with Mark. Like so many others who had been involved in, or even on the periphery of, the Computer Event, he said it had definitely altered his life. In spite of about ten years of what he termed "floundering" with both personal and career setbacks, Mark has had success in business and teaching and now also writes a monthly travel article for the *Senior Times*. How many others had life altering experience because of this event? Probably everyone.

How does where we were and what happened there as young people ultimately affect the course of our lives? What were the really important influences? This year (2012), Sir George Williams is rather sedately celebrating its 75th anniversary. Like a river that is never the same each time we step into it, the university isn't the same place it was in 1968, as time alters, and hopefully heals, everything.



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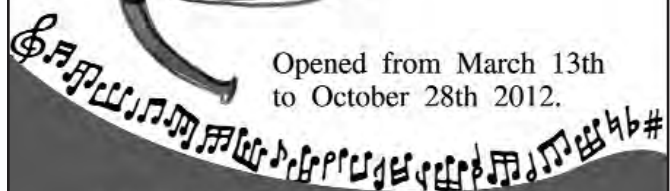
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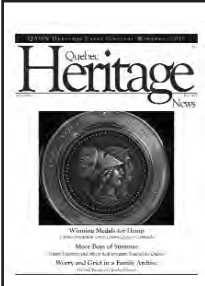
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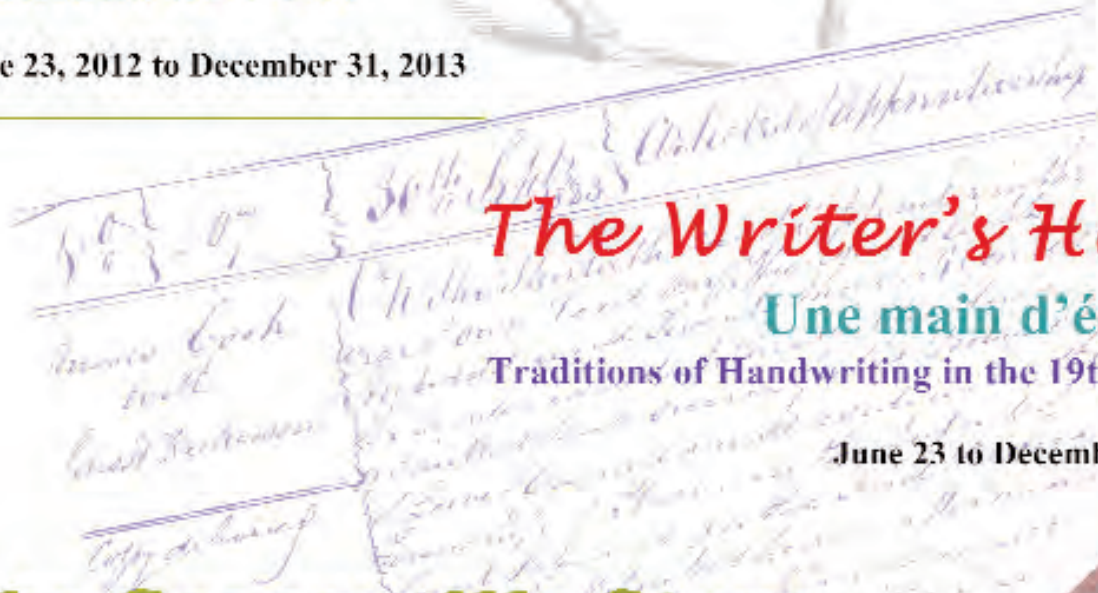
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