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Quebec Heritage News Talks

Join your fellow history buffs this year as we rediscover fascinating stories and people from the past.

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Talks last under an hour, with ample time for questions.

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Thursday, February 22, 2018

12:30 p.m. to 1:30 p.m.

Atwater Library

1200 Atwater Ave., Westmount



Drawing the Aberdeen School Strike

by **Rod MacLeod**, Phd., historian, author, *Quebec Heritage News* editor

When six young boys at Montreal's Aberdeen School organized a student walkout in February 1913 to protest anti-Semitism, they could hardly have suspected that their actions would lead, a century later, not only to scholarly analysis but to a festive centenary commemoration, a dramatic reading, and a trilingual graphic novel.

Then again, when Rod MacLeod started work on the Aberdeen School Strike research project he never expected to meet descendants of the strikers either, or witness historical characters he had come to know on paper arguing with each other in the flesh. Nor did he suspect he would find himself writing comic-book dialogue, reviewing an artist's storyboards or helping to provoke a small culture war over which form of Yiddish would best reflect St. Urbain Street slang as it was spoken more than a century ago. The cottage industry that the Aberdeen School Strike Project has become is an example of the creative ways that small-scale history can be adapted to reach readers and audiences in the 21st century. This talk revisits the process of bringing the Aberdeen School Strike to life, and describes the challenges of thinking – and drawing – outside the historical box.

Wednesday, March 7, 2018

1:30 p.m. to 2:30 p.m.

Caserne 18-30 Centre Communautaire

3622 rue Hochelaga, Montreal (Joliette Metro)



The Heroine of Hochelaga: Sarah Maxwell

by **André Cousineau**, Atelier d'histoire Hochelaga-Maisonneuve

On a mid-winter's morning more than a century ago, Montrealers were shaken by news that a terrible school blaze in the city's east end had killed 17 people – all of them children, except for one. Thirty-one-year old Sarah Maxwell, an unmarried teacher and principal at the Hochelaga Protestant School also succumbed to the smoke and flames that consumed the school building on February 26, 1907. But not before courageously intervening to save the lives of several young pupils trapped in a second-storey classroom.

In a predominantly French-speaking district of Montreal, the Hochelaga school served the neighbourhood's English-speaking children, most of whom belonged to working-class families. In the days that followed the tragic fire, city officials vowed to erect a memorial to honour Miss Maxwell's heroism and to commemorate the student victims. But the story of the blaze faded from memory, as did plans for a memorial. In this talk, André Cousineau will describe the life and times of Sarah Maxwell, drawing on his work with the *Atelier d'histoire Hochelaga-Maisonneuve* to present a glimpse of the social diversity that characterized East Montreal at the turn of the last century. He will also recount how he and other local historians working with the Borough of Mercier-Hochelaga-Maisonneuve lobbied successfully to have a local park renamed recently in Maxwell's honour.

Saturday, March 10, 2018

1:30 p.m. to 2:30 p.m.

Brome County Historical Museum

130 Rue Lakeside, Lac-Brome (Knowlton)



The Business of War: Canadian Companies During World World I

by **Caitlin Bailey**, MLIS, director and curator, Canadian Centre for the Great War

Businesses of all types and sizes participated in support of Canada's war effort from the moment the Governor General officially declared war on Germany in the summer of 1914. Private-sector involvement in the First World War is usually portrayed as uniformly corrupt and inefficient, but the nature of this participation was actually much more diverse, with lasting consequences for the future of Canada's industrial economy as a whole.

Originally created as a travelling exhibition in 2017 this talk explores the many surprising ways in which various businesses and industries helped Canada fulfil her obligations to the Mother Country while contributing towards the emergence and development of a sense of Canadian nationhood. Presented by Caitlin Bailey, "The Business of War" brings a fresh perspective to our historical understanding of World War I and its implications for Canadian society. Since its inception, the exhibition has been shown in a number of cities across the country and has been seen by more than 5 000 visitors to date, attracting media coverage in such publications as the Calgary Herald and the Winnipeg Free Press, among others.

Sunday, March 18, 2018

1:30 p.m. to 2:30 p.m.

Stanbridge East Community Centre

5, rue Academy, Stanbridge East



Journey Down the Pike: Reflections on Missisquoi's River Heritage

by **Frederic Chouinard**, MEnvSc, and **Charles Lussier**, agroforestry researcher

Waterways reveal the past and shape the future of life. In their joint presentation, Frederic Chouinard and Charles Lussier explore the rich heritage of the Pike River valley from pre-colonial times to the modern era, sharing their insights into the geography, history and ecology of the river's catchment area.

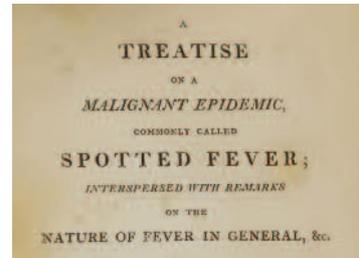
From its main headwaters in Vermont, the *Rivière aux Brochets* winds its way along the Quebec side of the international border through the historic communities of Frelighsburg, Stanbridge East, Bedford and Pike River before emptying into Lake Champlain. Drawing on their work with the watershed management authority, the *Organisme de bassin versant de la baie Missisquoi*, our guest speakers trace the region's ecological and human history, including its importance to Indigenous peoples, the establishment of the Saint-Armand Seigneurie, the growth of forestry and agriculture beginning in the early 1800s, and the river's value as a source of power during the industrial heyday of Missisquoi County, 1860 to 1950. What impacts have these various human activities had on the watershed? What will be the environmental legacy of today's land uses? Highlights from recent water-quality studies promise to help answer these questions. Learn what communities are doing to preserve this natural resource for generations to come.

Friday, April 13, 2018

7 p.m. to 8 p.m.

Uplands Heritage and Cultural Centre

9 Speid Street, Sherbrooke (Lennoxville)



Spotted Fever: An Epidemic in 19th Century New England and Quebec

by Grant Myers, vice-president, Quebec Anglophone Heritage Network

In late December 1814, Timothy and Sarah Rose of Stanstead County lost five children to a mysterious illness known only as “The Spotted Fever.” The personal tragedy experienced by this early pioneer family was part of much wider epidemic that ravaged communities throughout New England and southern Quebec during the first two decades of the 19th century. What was the cause of this deadly disease? Where did it come from?

Hindsight shows us that sudden, unforeseeable threats to human health may arise when pathogens originating in one part of the world are carried by their human hosts into distant lands along trade or migration routes. As contact between Europe and North America increased, so did opportunities for disease to spread from the Old World to the New. Knowledge of the existence of germs and their role in contagion was still decades away. With reference to contemporary accounts, Grant Myers will explore the nature and identity of Spotted Fever and discuss the various factors that fueled the disease’s outbreak and its northern expansion up the Connecticut River valley into the Eastern Townships of Quebec.

Sunday, June 3

10:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

Colby Curtis Museum

535 Dufferin, Stanstead



Elsie's Garden: Putting Trial and Error to Work in Grand-Métis

by Alexander Reford, director, *Les Jardins de Métis*

The Edwardian Garden signifies a movement in garden design that celebrated both architecture and perennial plantings and is a happy medium between the floral bombast of the Victorian era and the modernist gardens of the 1930s. Elsie Reford was a gardening pioneer who adapted the vocabulary of the Edwardian period to the unique growing conditions of the Lower St. Lawrence, transforming her fishing camp on the Métis River into one of the largest and most ambitious private gardens of her time. Open today as Les Jardins de Métis, they are one of Canada’s premier garden destinations.

Blessed with immaculate timing and a long life, Elsie Reford began to garden in the 1920s, just at precisely the moment when many of the most interesting perennials were being introduced into horticulture by plant explorers in Tibet and the Himalayas. Through decades of trial and error, over time she was successful in incorporating many of these new introductions to her property in Grand Métis. Weaving the story of Elsie Reford’s gardens through a unique archive of historic photographs and recently uncovered documents, her great grandson Alexander Reford, director of Les Jardins de Métis (Reford Gardens), will present the unique story of this horticultural innovator.