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News



The Nymark Touch

In search of a future for log-built Laurentian heritage site

Championing Burgundy

High hopes for a revitalized Montreal community landmark

People of the Corn

Reviewing the mystery of the St. Lawrence Iroquoians

Quebec Heritage News

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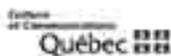
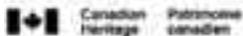
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Cover photograph: The Dr. Lowell Foster house, circa 1930. Built on Mont St. Sauveur by Victor Nymark in the Scandinavian style with round logs, sod roof and carved details. Photo courtesy of John Harvie.

Correction: An article which appeared in the Sept/Oct 2003 issue of *Quebec Heritage News*, [Vol. 2, No. 6: "A bustling hive ..., p. 14] incorrectly described the exact function of the "charleymen" who laboured in Quebec City's wooden ship-building industry in the 18th and 19th centuries. Charleymen did not install ropes, but rather hauled the huge timbers to wherever they were needed on the yards.

Remarkable Century by Rod MacLeod

I often wonder what my very Presbyterian grandmother would have thought had she been told that her great-grandson would have a great-grandmother who was a gun-runner for the Anarchists during the Spanish Civil War.

Of course I refer to two separate ladies. My own grandmother died 32 years ago at the age of 95, forty-five years after her husband. Her knowledge of the Spanish Civil War, while it was going on, might just have extended to an awareness that her eldest son supported the loyalists and had an admired colleague at the Royal Victoria Hospital who had gone off to serve in Spain—on his way to serving in China. (If you don't know who I mean you join the ranks of my students, none of whom had a clue when I told them the name of the most famous Canadian in history!)

My grandmother-in-law died a few months ago at Mount Sinai Hospital in Montreal, just shy of her hundredth birthday, having outlived her husband by fifty-six years. She spoke neither English nor French, and as far as I know she made no direct contribution to the heritage of Quebec, but she was a resident for over forty years and for most of that time a proud Canadian. At another level, of course, her heritage contribution has been considerable: she helped raise two grandchildren, and then two great-grandchildren, who are very conscious of how diverse their cultural backgrounds are, and consequently of how rich their world is. A significant passing reminds us with a jolt of how the past has shaped us. We feel for a familiar foothold and find it missing, and only then take stock of how much we relied on it. My grandmother-in-law died while I was at the Quebec Community Groups Network meeting in Gatineau, and although this outcome was half-anticipated, I was surprised to hear my teenage son tell me the news when I phoned before getting on the bus back to Montreal. "Someone's gone," is how he put it, his awkward struggle for words speaking volumes.

Here is a major chunk of my children's heritage:

Their great-grandmother grew up on the outskirts of Havana, Cuba, in a house full of animals. Her mother kept a menagerie, more out of tenderheartedness than need, being something of a local eccentric who could not turn away any creature left on her doorstep. One such creature was a pig

who grew to enormous proportions, as well-loved pigs are wont to do, and whose favourite position was with its head in the lady's lap so that she could saw away at its neck with the edge of her hand in a parody of the slaughterhouse: "Come here and I'll slice you up!" was the way these affectionate rituals always began. Another such creature, I gather, was my grandmother-in-law herself, who never knew the woman who actually gave birth to her and thought the well-to-do gent down the street was a family friend. One day, when she was in her early twenties and the gent was getting on, he informed her that he was her real father and that she should come and take care of him. Having told him what he could do with his suggestion she promptly married a tall (over six-foot; did I mention she was about 4' 10" ?) young Spanish refugee dockworker whose clear political views promised relief from the muddle-headedness around her.

My children's great-grandfather proved a loyal and loving husband, but he came with an awful lot of baggage, not least of which were his political views which eventually brought the ire of the police down on him. He was told to leave Cuba or face execution; so he left, promising as soon as he was able to send for his wife and their expected child. He returned to Spain, having heard that a republic had at last been established there. The year was 1931. Unfortunately, upon his arrival it was discovered that he had technically been AWOL from military service for some years and was drafted into the army. Despite this setback, his young wife was determined to join him. Two weeks after her daughter's birth in Cuba she and the baby caught the first boat to Bilbao.

It was a year or more before the family were reunited in Madrid, by which time the Republic had taken a turn to the political right and radical unions were leading the opposition. The Anarchist-led FAI (Federación Anarquista Ibérica) were no friends of the government, even the left-wing one that was elected in the spring of 1936, but when an army coup under General Franco threatened to install a dictatorship they tentatively sided with the Popular Front. It wasn't long, however, before the government was refusing to give arms to anyone it didn't trust, especially anyone not entirely comfortable with Stalinism. Like most An-

archists, my children's great-grandparents kept a stockpile of weapons to defend against any aggressive outside authority. One night the police came and grilled their five-year-old daughter on whether there were any guns in the house; she loyally refused to cooperate, although it was a nail-biting moment. This nasty chapter in this terribly nasty civil war ended with the arrival of Franco's troops in Madrid in the spring of 1939. Some years ago when my grandmother-in-law had had a few glasses of wine we got her talking about the war years, and she went on for a couple of hours describing the people she knew from those days and ending with an account of how each of them in turn was shot.

My children's great-grandfather was in Barcelona when the war ended and escaped into France. In order to get people like him back, Franco arrested their family members, promising their release only if the wanted men returned. Hearing that his wife was being held for ransom my children's great-grandfather went dutifully back to Madrid, where he spent the next half decade behind bars in the hands of savage guards keen to punish Republicans. Despite his earlier promise Franco did not release my grandmother-in-law for a couple of years; her stories of prison life were almost as interesting as those of the city under siege.

My children's grandmother and great-uncle became wards of the state, and even after their parents' release from prison there was a long battle to regain custody. The children spent many years in boarding schools run by nuns who strove to cleanse them of any secular, let alone anarchist, tendencies. At one such school in a suburb of Madrid the daughter, now 16, took to gazing across the street at a serious young med student reading in the window opposite; later they met, and went for long walks in the Retiro gardens.

My children's great-grandfather struggled to find work, but his health was broken by years in jail. By the spring of 1950 he died, aged 42. Had he achieved anything by going back to Madrid at the end of the war? Perhaps: two of his brothers who remained in France were arrested by the Vichy government in 1940 and shipped off to die in Mauthausen concentration camp.

The rest of his family now had little use for his widow and children, and so they made their way back to Cuba where old friends found mother and daughter work as dressmakers. As working people, the family were guardedly supportive of the Communist revolution when it came in 1960, but soon blanched at Castro's evident friendship with the hated Soviet Union. It was the Madrid med student, with whom my children's grandmother had continued to correspond, who came to the rescue; he married her in Cuba, giving her the right to

emigrate. She then "claimed" her mother and brother, and the whole family soon found themselves in Venezuela, where a daughter was born. The brother went his own way, but the young couple started looking around for a nice, safe country to settle in. Of course they chose Canada.

The last four decades of my children's great-grandmother's life were by far the least tumultuous and probably the happiest, even given her widowhood. Despite her difficult past, or perhaps because of it, she had a remarkably sunny outlook and was famed for a perpetually cheerful disposition. After some years in a Montreal apartment while her son-in-law completed his specialization she moved to Joliette and then Gaspé, where he helped start up the new psychiatric facilities in these communities. In the 1970s the family bought a house in Town of Mount Royal so to be handy to the Montreal General as well as to high schools, CEGEP and McGill, where their Venezuela-born daughter embarked upon a set of relationships that would lead to the birth of the young man who so poignantly informed his father on June 10, 2006, that "someone's gone."

His great-grandmother had kept her health until about six months earlier, an operation for colon cancer in her early 90s notwithstanding. When he was a baby we watched her rocking his cradle (well, what passes for a cradle these days: a detachable car seat) and wondered what she was thinking, sixty years after whisking her own first-born off to Republican Spain. We doubted she would last long enough for him to remember her, but not so: as a toddler he spent hours curled up on the sofa with her, reading picture book after picture book (in Spanish, of course) and later the two would cooperate on kitchen-table art projects and enjoy a merienda (coffee and hot chocolate with a variety of cookies) together. Her mind steadily deteriorated, unfortunately, and she was unable to have the same relationship with her great-granddaughter—but there remained a great deal of mutual affection; the two even shared a first name. Over the last six months it was my daughter who went into the sick room, watched her being washed and fed, and visited her in the hospital.

It's no fun watching an elderly parent decline; it is particularly difficult when you yourself are no longer young or able to take care of them. Their passing is, alas, often a relief. But we think back, as I did with my parents, and as I remember my parents doing with theirs, over lives lived and what they meant to us and how their passing leaves us. My children's great-grandmother's peaceful death, surrounded by daughter, son-in-law, and granddaughter, has left a mark that they are all now trying to deal with.

Although I had almost nothing to do with it, hers is a legacy that I am delighted and proud to be able to pass on to my own children.

Letters

Royal treatment

On November 30th, 2006, my wife, Sylvia and I were invited by the Princess Royal to a reception at Buckingham Palace for the launching of the Kurt Hahn Foundation, connected with my old school, Gordonstoun, in Scotland. Her Royal Highness, whose two children went to Gordonstoun, is the school's patron and her father, Prince Philip, was a contemporary of mine at the school just before World War Two.



The following day we took the train from Charing Cross to Seven Oaks and from there a short taxi ride to Quebec House in Westerham, childhood home of General James Wolfe. Readers may be interested to know that it was through the generosity of Mrs. J.B. Learmont of Montreal, influenced by my late uncle, Sir Campbell Stuart, one-time honorary director of the United Empire Loyalists Association of Canada, that this 17th-century brick house became the property of the British National Trust. It is now open to the public as a museum.

Quebec House is endowed with paintings, engravings and books all connected with Wolfe's life and career, and his role in Canada's history. As members of the 78th Frasers,

Sylvia and I were given the royal treatment as well as a cup of tea. This would be a worthwhile venture for any Fraser visiting London.

Incidentally, HRH's invitation was addressed to "Mr. and Mrs. Okill Stuart" and since proof of identity was required at the entrance to the palace it took more than a little explaining to convince security guards that in Quebec today wives go by their maiden names, and that Sylvia was indeed my wife!

Due to my age rather than to my pocket book, Sylvia and I were honoured by being number one in the receiving line when Princess Anne arrived in the reception room. We found her to be most attractive and charming in addition to being very well informed. The press could give her better coverage.

*Okill Stuart
Montreal, QC*

Wiser school counsel

I've just been through the November-December edition of *Quebec Heritage News*, and I congratulate you on a stimulating, informative and eminently readable magazine. You are filling an important niche for English-speaking Quebecers wherever they reside in the province. I think you can count on us, our member school boards, their parents and teachers as supporters and perhaps, occasional contributors.

I do nonetheless want to express my disappointment at the inclusion of a commentary from retired union leader Jim Wilson ["Wisdom of the Rubber Stamps," page 6] who lambastes the Quebec English School Boards Association (QESBA) for the report of an Advisory Council it commissioned on the future of English public schooling in the province.

We were privileged—and we think English public education will be the better for it—to secure count-

less hours of volunteer participation from such prominent Quebecers as Alex Paterson, Centraide director Michèle Thibodeau-Deguire, business leader Pierre Lortie, Father Emmett ("Pops") Johns, retired university Rector Frederic Lowy and former Assistant Deputy Minister Robert Bisailon in producing this report for us.

Without any direction or control from QESBA, the Council produced a series of 32 recommendations on how to improve our English public schools. Your readers are invited to read the full report, at www.qesba.qc.ca. We have developed a preliminary action plan (also available on the site) to move forward on a number of the recommendations. There are tough challenges faced by public education, but we have a strong working partnership of teachers, board members, administrators and parents ready to face them. This report was a pro-active and, we believe, visionary contribution to that effort.

We think your readers will agree.

*Marcus Tabachnick
President, QESDA
Montreal, QC*

Principal failure

As a still-active school teacher (Grade 5, or to use the new jargon, Cycle 2, Year 1) who sits on his school's governing board, I read with more than cursory interest both Rod MacLeod's "School Spirit," [page 3, Nov/Dec] and Jim Wilson's "Wisdom of the Rubber stamps" [Opinion, page 6].

In my mind there is no doubt that the creation of the Ministère de l'Éducation du Québec four decades ago is the source of almost everything that ails public education today. It was the MEQ which opted for the big-is-beautiful educational model, and nothing grew quite as big as administration.

Half a century ago the school I

now work in was part of a small school board which oversaw the education of some 6,000 students. All school principals taught—the principal was the “main” or principal teacher. The school superintendent, the only non-teaching administrator, visited every classroom in the board at least once a year.

The school board for which I work today has some 6,000 students. In-school administrators (principals) avoid the classroom like the plague. The number of directors, consultants and administrators continues to swell despite the fact that the student population is decreasing.

Worse, the entire *raison d’être* of this top-heavy administrative superstructure is to ensure that teachers and students adhere strictly to the Quebec Education Plan—the “Reform.”

Administrators know that the QEP is producing students whose basic skills in both math and language are frighteningly weak and whose general knowledge is all but non-existent, yet they pretend all is well. My own children all ended up in private school.

My role on the governing board, and so far I’ve been conspicuously unsuccessful, is to foment revolution: all administrators should have a teaching load; all documentation (report cards

in particular) should be written in clear and simple language which can be easily understood by the layman; all policies and initiatives should come from the grass-roots.

*Nick Fonda
St. Francis Elementary School
Richmond, QC*

Error in reason

We were most grateful to find the generous notice you published of our book in the last issue of *Quebec Heritage News* [p.25] At least one of my co-editors will be taking out a subscription. Richard Mason says “it’s a bargain.” From my point of view, I find the new format very professional and easy on the eyes and commend you on the improvements. Richard has asked me to point out that his email address is remason@ican.net—a crucial letter “m” was, unfortunately, omitted from the notice. Is it possible for you to make a note of this in the next issue?

*Daniel Parkinson
Toronto, ON*

The CD version of Cyclone Days is available for \$12 from Richard Mason, 117-2205 South Millway, Mississauga ON, L5L 3T2.

Speech talking

From the Spring 2005 newsletter of the Quebec Provincial Association of Retired School Educators, by Ann MacLeish, a volunteer director of the Quebec Anglophone Heritage Network.

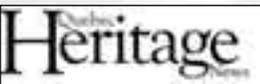
Reading newspapers and listening to electronic media has made me realize that the English language has evolved a new rule of English grammar: using nouns as adjectives that are in turn used to modify empty or redundant nouns. For example, a writer may now combine “verbal symbols” and “visual representations” instead of merely combining words and pictures; a coach promises that improvement should set in with each “game-type adventure”; three cows are described as “three head of cattle.”

Redundant nouns arise when a speaker or writer uses one word to help define another. Thus Americans talk of sherry wine, whereas in Britain sherry is sherry. A wonderful specimen of a combination of emptiness and redundancy in the noun is a recent newspaper report about a man who was resting comfortably after undergoing “leg amputation surgery.”

Why should current English have developed these tricks? One can readily see why radio and television announcers use them. These people have a task to fill so many minutes with verbiage, whether they have anything to say or not. The amusing thing is that they become so addicted to the ready-made and round-about expressions that even when they are actually pressed for time, they go on using padded language but speak it faster.

Many writers and speakers, however, do not have the announcer’s excuse. They are simply pompous, and in their minds, the more and bigger the words, the more impressive the statement will be. They “utilize” instead of use and “donate” instead of give and “verbalize” instead of talk. Such expressions may sound impressive because they are at first out of the ordinary, but this virtue is lost as they gain in usage: those who use them come to consider them as normal English and the simpler words as somewhat substandard.

The trend toward the use of empty nouns continues, but where is it going to lead? Just think, if the adjective plus its empty noun is the standard formula, then it is possible to make the whole thing into an adjective expression modifying a new and even emptier noun. Schools never taught driving, for example, only driver education; which explains why nowadays there are programs for “teaching driver education skills.” Once you double the padding, the possibilities become infinite.



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TIMELINES

The Nymark touch

In search of a future for log-built Laurentian landmark

by Sandra Stock

The future of religious sites and structures has become a major concern, especially in rural Quebec and especially in regard to the English-speaking communities. The overall decline in participation in, and support for, traditional religious denominations is only one factor. Even among church parishes that are still alive, even if not thriving as they once were, there appears to be a trend towards selling off any buildings that are perceived as economically challenging.

The recent sale of the St. Francis of the Birds Anglican church hall in St. Sauveur-des-Monts serves as an example of this trend. This large round-log structure was built in 1958, six years after the construction of the church, which is on the adjoining lot. Both buildings are important Laurentian heritage sites that recall the Scandinavian influence on the region's development during the last century. However, because the municipality of St. Sauveur declined to rezone the site of the church hall for commercial activities, the only persons interested in buying it were the owners of the Manoir St. Sauveur hotel. Their stated intention is to remove the building altogether and use the space for a parking lot.

This proposal, tabled in late 2006, led to a great deal of protest from the community, prompting St. Sauveur mayor Michel Legacé to voice his support for a local committee that is now seeking to preserve the striking structure by dismantling it and rebuilding it as a new building adjoining the church. Here it could

continue to serve as a somewhat smaller meeting hall. The hotel owners, who offered to pay the Anglicans \$695,000 for the building also seem favourable to this idea.

St. Francis church was built in 1951 and was the product of a unique combination of people and circumstances. Canon Horace Baugh, who ministered in the parishes of Mille Isles, Morin Heights and St. Sauveur from 1950 to 1983, conceived of building a church in St. Sauveur early on in his

Laurentians term to serve what was then a fairly large and mainly English-speaking population of seasonal residents, weekend skiers and tourists. In the early 1950s many wealthy Montreal families owned properties around St. Sauveur and Canon Baugh was able to receive more than adequate financial support for his project.

At first the idea met some resistance from the local Roman Catholic parish, which perceived it as signaling a possible "turf war," but this was pleasantly resolved. Then the Anglican Diocese of Montreal itself objected, on grounds that the church's proposed name, St. Francis of the Birds—a tribute to the 12th-century Christian mystic and legendary nature lover Francis of Assisi—sounded "too

Roman Catholic" or what used to be called "High Church." However, Baugh and his influential backers, including John Molson, won the day.

The first meeting of the planning committee was at Nymark Lodge. Victor Nymark, a builder and contractor, had come to Quebec come from Fin-



land in 1924 and was a leading proponent of Scandinavian architectural traditions in Eastern Canada. He had already worked on the famous Château Montebello, the world's largest log building, and his influence was evident in many smaller hotels and private homes across the Lower Laurentians, including the Mont Gabriel Club in Ste. Adèle. All of them were modeled on the classic Scandinavian round-log house.

Nymark had also bought some land in the mountain area behind St. Sauveur village where he established Nymark Lodge, near the present-day site of the Mont St. Sauveur Ski Centre. Here he and Fred Pabst installed St. Sauveur's first cable ski-tow in 1932; the following year Nymark and Adolphe Bélanger founded the St-Sauveur Sport Club and fitted the hill with a ski jump. Nymark died in 1983.

contributed.

Six years later the need for a church hall became apparent as there was nowhere at that time to hold large events in St. Sauveur. Again, the fundraisers, led by John Molson and Chipman Drury, went to work and again, the Bamberger and Nymark team settled on the Scandinavian round-log style. This time the logs came from the property of Matt Kirkpatrick, a farmer from the Morin Heights-Mille Isles area. Lucille Wheeler, famous Olympic skiing champion, laid the church hall's cornerstone.

"The hall was a wonderful help in giving the community a social centre," Baugh recalls. "Wonderful square dances were held, plays were performed, dinners were served, wedding receptions were held and a badminton group started by Barbara (Barney) Aylette. This group called themselves 'The Badminton of the Birds,' still active today. Some ladies who played in the 1950s when it opened are still playing in the 1990s."

Today, the unique and very beautiful stained glass windows are probably the most notable feature of the log church's interior. The large window over the altar, another gift from John Molson, shows St. Francis surrounded by twenty-one species of birds, all native to the Laurentians. The long narrow stained glass windows on the sides of the church show the four seasons in the St. Sauveur valley and were donated by various parishioners.

Over the years the St. Francis hall has been well used by groups not directly connected to the church, such as Alcoholics Anonymous, a cancer support group, the Laurentian Ski Museum and others. The Parish of Morin Heights and St. Sauveur has used the hall for youth activities and, until recently, operated a used-clothing market every Thursday. The large fieldstone fireplace, the soaring windows and the warm ambience of the logs create a welcoming atmosphere, even in such a huge space.

As time has passed the congregation has aged and numbers have declined. Costs for heating and general upkeep have increased. The windows require refitting, probably replacement, and even though logs are still one of the more easily maintained construction materials, they still need treatment for preservation as time goes by.

It's still hoped that the meeting hall can be saved and will continue, in some form, to provide a gathering place for remaining parishioners and the surrounding community.



Construction began in March and the church was opened on October 6, 1951. In his 1999 memoirs, *My Father Before Me*, Canon Baugh recounts that John Molson supplied the wood, donating some 600 pine trees that had been felled by a freak windstorm on the family estate. The architect was Erwin Bamberger and the building contractor, Victor Nymark. Volunteers did a lot of the work and most of the fittings were donated. Captain E.J. Rodgers gave two brass lanterns, installed at the front of the church. These were from the Isle de France ocean liner of which he had been the captain. The lectern was donated by John Molson and had been on the ship, Nooya. The Molsons had owned and sailed on this ship in 1870. The wrought-iron lighting fixtures inside were from H.B. Bydwell and the two crucifixes at the head of the aisle were made at the Shawbridge Boys' Farm, now called the Batshaw Youth Centre. Many other people, such as the Raffenon, Dinsdale, Fisher and other local families

Street victory

City Hall drops bid to erase historic Park Ave. name

There's nothing like a bad idea to bring folks together. An unpopular proposal to change the name of Montreal's historic Park Ave. gave rise in January to a broad coalition of heritage activists, business leaders, public figures and ordinary residents who had vowed to fight the change—all the way to the Supreme Court, if need be. Now they won't have to.

City council led by Mayor Gerald Tremblay voted last November in favour of renaming the street after the late Quebec premier Robert Bourassa, in a resolution that many observers denounced as heavy-handed and undemocratic. The city's bid to change the name was still under review by the provincial toponymy commission when Tremblay announced Feb. 7 that City Hall was going to formally withdraw its request, apparently in response to an appeal from the Bourassa family.

The Commission de toponymie du Québec, the body that rules over whether or not a municipality's street-name choice becomes official, had not yet issued its own decision when the announcement was made public, and was still sifting through an estimated 600 letters and emails from concerned citizens who had made submissions. The panel reviews hundreds of name-change requests from municipali-

ties each year, not all of which are approved. One of the rules supposed to guide the commissioners' deliberations states that changing existing names must be avoided if doing so is likely to generate controversy; the commission may also block a proposal to commemorate a deceased public figure if descendants of that person object.

A number of prominent organizations, including the Park Avenue Business Council, Héritage Montréal, the Fédération des Sociétés d'Histoire du Québec (FSHQ), the Canadian Centre for Architecture and Les Amis de la Montagne, banded together to add their voice to those of more than 42,000 Montreal residents who opposed the renaming by signing a petition. The proposal was also de-

nounced by former Quebec premier Bernard Landry and Jean Decarie, retired Montreal city planner. Phyllis Lambert, founding director of the Canadian Centre for Architecture, noted in a letter to the Commission that the name Park Ave. embraces a history that is woven deeply into the city's fabric.

A joint submission by Héritage Montréal, the FSHQ and Les Amis de la Montagne calls on municipal leaders to consult with the city's municipal heritage committee to find another way to honour the late premier.



Worthy of a Phelps?

Heritage network issues call for 2007 award nominees

The Quebec Anglophone Heritage Network (QAHN) is currently inviting nominations for its 2007 Marion Phelps Award. The award is given out each year to honour a community volunteer who's made an outstanding lifetime contribution to the protection and preservation of anglophone heritage in Quebec. Past recipients have included volunteer archivists, chroniclers of local history and a museum founder.

The award is named for Marion Phelps of the Brome-Missisquoi Historical Society in Knowlton, honoured in 2001 for the five decades she spent as a volunteer archivist in her home community in the Eastern Townships. Since then QAHN has paid trib-

ute to Joan Bisson Dow, co-founder of the British Gaspesian Heritage Village, historian Kenneth Annett, and authors Norma Geggie of Wakefield and Byron Clark of the Magdalen Islands.

Is there someone you know who has consistently worked towards the promotion and preservation of Quebec's heritage? Send us his or her name and contact information accompanied by a one-page biography describing this person's contribution, no later than April 30, 2007. The Phelps Award will be presented at QAHN's annual general meeting in Sainte-Anne-de-Bellevue in June. Send nominations to the QAHN office in Sherbrooke (address on inside front cover) or by email to: execdir@qahn.org.

New guide to Outaouais archives

Aylmer Heritage Association sets high standard

With a grant from Quebec's national library and archives, the Aylmer Heritage Association has completed a comprehensive and eminently readable bilingual guide to its archives, containing an overview and descriptive inventory of the contents of each of its collections. The guide should be of particular interest to researchers hoping to navigate the Association's considerable wealth and diversity of archival material relating to the rich history of Quebec's Outaouais region. The archives consist of eleven sets of documents, letters and photographs kept by local families over many generations, dating to the early 19th century.

Among the archives is a collection of papers belonging to Scottish settler James Finlayson Taylor, office clerk and bookkeeper for Hull Township founder Philemon Wright. Taylor was instrumental in organizing the township's first Methodist congregation. "Indeed," notes the Association's volunteer archivist Enid Page, "it is through the eyes of James Taylor, and his extraordinary legacy, that we know as much as we do about the social history of those early days of settlement in Hull Township and of the many families who struggled to establish a living and lay a foundation for future generations." The collections are,

appropriately, housed in one of West Quebec's most historic buildings, the Old Methodist Chapel of Hull Township (1827), believed to be the oldest surviving church building in Quebec west of Montreal.

The Aylmer Heritage Association is inviting other historical and societies and heritage groups to share similar information about the contents of their own archives, and researchers can only hope that others will follow this excellent model for presenting and illuminating local documentary heritage. Particularly useful are the brief introductory texts that precede each inventory.

Volunteers endeavour to keep the office open to the public three days a week, but interested parties may also arrange an appointment by contacting the Association by phone at (819)-684-6809 or by email: heritage.aylmer@ca.inter.net. The Association's mailing address is: P.O Box 476, Aylmer, QC. J9H 5E7.

The guide was prepared by Enid Page, Lorraine Deslauriers and Marie-Adèle Lueger.

A printed copy of the archives guide and inventory was recently sent to the Quebec Anglophone Heritage Association (QAHN), and may be consulted at the QAHN office in Sherbrooke (Lennoxville).

Lead role for anglo heritage

Townships Trail to highlight historic towns and villages

The latest tourism-development scheme in Quebec's Eastern Townships draws its inspiration from the charms of the past and will focus largely on promoting the region's English-speaking heritage. Sponsored by a mainly francophone regional tourist association, the Chemin des Cantons heritage driving tour is intended to emphasize the historic role that American and British immigrants played settling the territory in the late 18th and early 19th centuries and their subsequent influence on farming and industry.

The Townships Trail, as it will be known in English, is a novel undertaking in a province that tends to pride itself on its dominant French-speaking heritage. Then again, the towns, villages and small cities of the Townships have a unique history in Quebec, marked by successive waves of colonization, first from New England, then the British Isles and later, from older established French-Canadian settlements of the St. Lawrence River valley. At its peak in the mid-1800s, the English-speaking population of this largely rural region reached almost 90,000, accounting for nearly 60 per cent of all households and leaving an indelible imprint on the built landscape. Anglophones today constitute less than 7 per cent of the total population.

The first step in the proposed Townships Trail tour,

which spans a total distance of 415 kilometres, will be to erect a series of signs along the side of existing highways, tracing a suggested visitor circuit that winds its way from the sleepy village of Ulverton on the St. Francis River to the already bustling tourist town of Bromont. Interpretation materials currently being developed for the tour are expected to feature visitor stopovers in 31 municipalities, including museums, churches, covered bridges and local heritage-walking tours. It's hoped that a well-indicated travel itinerary highlighting the area's historic ties to Great Britain and New England will make a valuable contribution to the development of heritage tourism in southern Quebec.

Alain Larouche, head of Tourisme Cantons-de-l'Est, chose St. Mark's Chapel at Bishop's University in Lennoxville to unveil the proposed itinerary, which describes visitor attractions of heritage interest in the following communities: Danville, Asbestos, Saint-Camille, Dudswell, Bury, Cookshire-Eaton, Sherbrooke, Lennoxville, Waterville, Compton, Coaticook, Barnston-Ouest, Stanstead, Magog, Potton Township, Sutton, Knowlton, Waterloo and Granby. Located off the route but indicated as side trips are: Windsor, Valcourt, Gould, North Hatley, Cowansville and Stanbridge East. Larouche said the blue signs will be in place along roadways by June.

CHAMPIONING BURGUNDY

Black leaders push to save a Montreal landmark
by Carolyn Shaffer



For fifteen years, the longtime home of Little Burgundy’s historic black community centre has sat empty and derelict. Now, armed with a new business plan, supporters of the 80-year-old NCC believe they just might finally realize their dream of reopening.

“There is momentum for the project now,” says Michael Farkas, who is coordinating efforts aimed at re-viving the centre in partnership with Montreal city officials. “The community needs this place. Our children are at risk. Having a place like the NCC will bring us back dignity and continuity with previous generations’ achievements.”

But the battle’s not over yet.

Directors of the NCC, formerly called the Negro Community Center, have been trying since 2004 to find a way to preserve the 110-year-old landmark. The City of Montreal and its South West Borough got on board in 2005 and later hired the urban planning firm *Conversité*—responsible for the Benny Farm Project and the recent redevelopment of St. James United Church on Ste. Catherine Street—to help draft a plan that would suit the needs of the whole neighbourhood, one of Montreal’s

most ethnically diverse. The plan unveiled last October calls for modifying the former church to accommodate affordable housing units for the elderly, institutional space for community groups, a small museum and library focusing on black studies, a rental banquet hall, an auditorium and office space.

It also depends on \$7 million in public funding from the three levels of government.

Although a cost-sharing agreement could be reached within the next few months, Michel Gervais, a spokesman for South West Borough mayor Jacqueline Montpetit, says the project will require more than just governmental support. “Just to be able to reopen the building will cost millions of dollars,” Gervais says. “We expect the black community and the greater Montreal community to help as well.”

Situated at the corner of Coursol and Canning streets, the imposing stone structure has been the subject of a number of failed renovation attempts over the years, mainly due to the NCC’s past inability to match government funds, a condition of many renovation-grant programs. That’s too bad, say neighbourhood residents, because the building has been intimately connected with

The NCC building sits empty today. Photo by Carolyn Shaffer.

the social history of Montreal's West End district, where many English-speaking black immigrants to Quebec first settled with their families in the late 1800s. The neighbourhood was renamed Little Burgundy in the 1960s.

The former Methodist church, built around 1897, has served Montrealers under many different names over the years. It once housed the city's venerable Old Brewery Mission and later opened as the Iverly Community Centre, before the NCC moved here from Atwater St. in 1955. Since 1965 the building has belonged solely to the NCC, now known officially as the NCC/Charles H. Este Community Centre, in honour of a United Church minister and prominent black rights champion who immigrated to Montreal from Antigua in 1913.

For decades after its founding in 1927, NCC activities served to unite the West End's mostly black and diverse immigrant communities, and provided a haven from the racism and discrimination found in other social settings. As black families began to move out of the old neighbourhood and Little Burgundy saw the influx of different residents, including new immigrants and French-speaking Québécois, the community centre came to serve a diverse population. As historian Dorothy Williams discovered researching her book, *The Road to Now: A History of Blacks in Montreal*. [Vehicule Press, 1997] the NCC's white membership soared to 50 per cent for a period after the its merger with the Iverly. "Although official membership for non-blacks was accepted only after World War Two," Williams wrote, "in the early years anyone, black or white, who went to the NCC received help."

The NCC remained a second home to many Montrealers, says community centre president and volunteer Shirley Gyles, who used to travel to Little Burgundy by bus and streetcar with her sister every Saturday to take tap-dance and piano lessons.

The community centre began running into serious financial difficulties in the 1980s. It was closed temporarily,

first for repairs, then a second time because of funding cutbacks. The local black community tried to raise funds to match government grants, but the money raised was never enough to satisfy building safety and operating requirements. The NCC closed again in 1993 and has not since reopened.

Though other organizations have tried to pull up the slack, the old neighbourhood stills feels the loss, according to Anthony Simonds, coordinator of recreational programming at Tyndale-St.George's Community Centre. Simonds, who took part in NCC activities as a child, remembers people from all cultures and backgrounds coming to the centre. "Now, there's lots of division between all the different groups," he says. "There's no more common ground."

In its heyday, the NCC ran a nursery school, offered sports and recreation programming, taught music and dance, played movies and held dances on Friday nights. It had what Little Willy Tzeard, a semi-retired musician and a lifelong resident of the neighborhood, terms "atmosphere." The kind of place where you could take horn lessons from some of the stars of the West End's famous jazz scene when they weren't playing at nearby clubs like Rockhead's or Esquire.

With all those memories and a heritage building in need of a major overhaul, Tzeard wonders why saving the NCC isn't a priority, especially since there seems to be plenty of funding for other projects, like the new sports complex on the corner of Notre Dame and Seigneur streets. "Why are they spending money building other places, when we already have this one?" he asks.

In Tzeard's view, the sports complex was never intended serve the local black, immigrant and low-income population. "It was built for the condos, and everyone knows it," he says. "Nobody feels right in it. It's not Burgundy. Then, pointing out of his window toward the NCC, he adds: "*This* is Burgundy."

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ONE OF A KIND

Tyndale centre doubles as welcome mission

by Carolyn Shaffer

At the entrance to the Tyndale-St. George's Community Centre, toddlers' laughter drifts out from the doorway of a brightly-coloured classroom into the noise of the nearby Ville-Marie Expressway. Once targeted for demolition, Tyndale today is the only remaining community and social services centre serving residents of this multiethnic, largely immigrant neighbourhood. It's also a living link with the English-speaking heritage of Montreal's Little Burgundy.

Four decades years after Jean Drapeau and city hall began to appropriate large swaths of this historic working-class neighbourhood to make way for the expressway, the controversial "urban renewal" program still has the power to conjure up bitter memories. "This used to be a vital black community," recalls Rosemary Segee, a vocational counselor who works in the employment office at Tyndale, which is celebrating its 80th birthday this year. "Families were kicked out of their homes, given very little compensation and forced to move elsewhere. That's when all those antique stores on Notre Dame Street opened—people had to sell all their things."

Drapeau's scheme proved devastating for Little Burgundy's blacks, prompting a massive exodus of residents in the late 1960s and early 70s as single-family homes were razed and replaced with condominiums and government-subsidized housing developments.



It's a legacy that continues to haunt the present.

Lacking in green spaces, faced with poverty and the social problems endemic to subsidized housing developments such as drug abuse, crime and mental illness, Segee says that youth and particularly adolescents in Little Burgundy are the ones who continue to suffer the most. "There are no high schools in the neighborhood so no school yards to play in. The police kick them out of the parks, the NCC is closed, so where are they supposed to go?"

Alan Marjerison, an energetic man of 93 who has worked as a volunteer at Tyndale for 30 years and who is currently writing a history of Tyndale, says Montreal's English-speaking black heritage is rooted in

this neighbourhood, around the railway terminals and the historic "porters' quarters" between Windsor and Bonaventure Stations, centred on rue St. Antoine. The majority of blacks who settled in Montreal's West End in the late 19th and early 20th centuries were British subjects who had emigrated from the Caribbean. Being a porter was one of the few occupations open to black men of that era, then still very much characterized by racial

segregation. Marjerison, who serves as Tyndale's chaplain and treasurer, describes the old West End of the early 1900s as being mainly populated by two English-speaking communities: white blue-collar workers and black employees of the nearby Canadian National and Canadian Pacific railways. It was here that the city's immigrant blacks first began to organize themselves as a community by establishing a number of social institutions, including the Union United Church, in 1907, a chapter of the New York City-based United Negro Improvement Association, (UNIA) in 1919 and the Negro Community Center (NCC) in 1927—the same year as Tyndale House. The UNIA, the Union United Church and Tyndale remain active today.

As their community grew and its members became more affluent in the post-World War II era, English-speaking black families moved into other neighbourhoods, such as NDG and Côte-des-Neiges, bringing their institutions with them. An offshoot of the NCC still operates in Côte-des-Neiges. The 1940s also marked the be-



ginning of the heyday of Montreal's legendary jazz-music nightclubs, among the first public venues in the city to achieve a measure of racial integration.

During the push to clear the way for the expressway, Tyndale House at 870 Richmond Square was also expropriated, remembers Marjerison, but it escaped demolition and local supporters were able to lease the building back from the city and keep it open to the community. Twelve years later, Tyndale supporters repurchased it.

As in the past, Little Burgundy today is a mostly English-speaking neighbourhood, adjacent to the city's old industrial area and bounded by rue St. Antoine in the north, the Lachine Canal to the south, Atwater Street to the west and Guy Street to the east. But today it's also an ethnically diverse community, home to many hispanics, and South Asians as well as blacks. Today's residents are more divided by income than by race, with two distinct population groups: affluent condominium owners, and a poorer black and multiethnic immigrant community.

The ideals of multiculturalism are put to the test every day at Tyndale, whose original mission has, nonetheless, remained unchanged since its beginning 80 years ago: to "empower individuals and families to lives of greater self-reliance and fulfillment and to help people help themselves."

Although the black community here has strengthened in recent years, "it still has no voice," laments Segee, who lived in Little Burgundy as a child and who returned to live here nine years ago, becoming active as a community organizer. Segee

founded the Little Burgundy Black Family Support Group, which meets monthly to discuss issues affecting them and to hold community organizations accountable for their decisions. She was also co-founder of Youth-in-Motion, a drop-in centre for teens that provides hot meals, recreation programs, after-school tutoring and counseling services.

Perhaps no one better exemplifies the ethnic *mélange* of Little Burgundy quite like Youth-in-Motion's other co-founder Kim Kidder, a social worker who heads up Tyndale's department of school-aged children, youth and families.

Kidder is a white woman from a middle-class, West Island family who met her black husband at Tyndale and whose own mixed-race children now attend Tyndale's after-school program. Kidder has worked

at the centre for 18 years, and says that both her friendships and family revolve around Tyndale and the surrounding community. "I am Tyndale," she says, laughing.

Kidder notes that language barriers can sometimes present problems for a community that is traditionally

anglophone but largely populated by recently-arrived immigrants who are placed in local social-housing projects. Immigrants to Quebec are offered free French classes by the provincial government, but must look elsewhere if they want to learn English. Which is why Tyndale started to provide this service in the 1990s. Classes are taught by volunteer students from Concordia University.

Another issue is racism, which as Kidder points out occurs on a daily basis on Montreal's streets, and in its institutions. But advocating on behalf of a black and multiethnic community means helping all people to learn to see beyond skin colour.



Kim Kidder, part of the Tyndale family . Photo by Carolyn Shaffer.



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BANQ COLLECTIONS

A brief tour of Quebec's national library and archives network
by Pierre Louis Lapointe



The quantity and importance of English-language archives kept in various Quebec-based repositories as well as in Library and Archives Canada's holdings in Ottawa and Gatineau is quite considerable. McGill University, McCord Museum as well as Bishop's University usually come to mind as the main storehouses of that heritage. However, one of Canada's most significant sources of printed and archival holdings that document the evolution of anglo-Quebec society is Quebec's national library and archives, the Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec, or BANQ, formed just over a year ago by the merger of the old Archives nationales du Québec with the Bibliothèque nationale du Québec.

Since the founding of the Quebec Provincial Archives in 1921 under the leadership of Pierre-Georges Roy, Quebec's first provincial archivist, the BANQ has evolved into an extensive network of public

and private collections, featuring every possible type of documentary resource. The fact that these are all kept under the same roof and that Quebec's national library and archives is responsible for copyright registration of all books published and of all films produced in the province makes for an extremely rich and growing storehouse of documentary heritage. Since the BANQ also provides library and archives expertise, it aims to play a dominant role in accessioning and preserving this heritage, whether it originates with historical French- or English-language communities, or with other cultural traditions.

While past acquisitions of private archives were frequently marred by instances of outright rivalry with other archival institutions, things have simmered down somewhat and cooperation has set in, with most parties nowadays trying to respect well-defined fields of interest or territorial and institutional boundaries. English-speaking Quebecers are, of course, invited to participate in the ongoing building of BANQ, both as users and as donors, in order to ensure that this vital public institution will play an even larger role in the future preservation and development of English Quebec's

Pierre Louis Lapointe, Ph.D. works as a reference archivist at the BANQ-Quebec City archives centre. Visit the BANQ website at www.banq.qc.ca.

archival heritage. Let's start with a brief tour.

The BAnQ's Archives Branch is made up of nine archival centres located in Quebec City, Montreal, Trois-Rivières, Saguenay, Gatineau, Rouyn-Noranda, Sherbrooke, Rimouski and Sept-Îles, together with 30 private archives associated with and accredited by the BAnQ. The Quebec City archives centre, located on the Université Laval campus, is housed in the old seminary chapel at the Louis-Jacques-Casault pavilion. The Montreal archives centre, at 535 Viger Avenue East, is housed in what used to be the HEC (Hautes Études commerciales), for a number of years the home of Dawson College.

BAnQ's archival centres contain a veritable gold mine of information about the institutions and the men and women who have shaped Quebec society over the past four centuries; their extensive holdings owe much to the fact that Quebecers have been largely spared the destruction of major conflicts and natural disasters. The manuscript or record groups, also called fonds—defined as all the records or archives accumulated by a particular individual, institution or organization in the exercise of its activities—and collections kept in these archives may include all or some of the following types of media: unpublished text documents such as handwritten, typed and digitized correspondence, minutes, studies and reports; photographic and audiovisual documents such as films, videos and cassettes; maps and architectural plans; iconographic and digital documents such as diskettes and CDs; and microforms. Acquired over the years by simple transfer, loan, gift or sale, the archives bear eloquent witness to the evolution of Quebec's administration and shed significant light on its political, social, economic, cultural and religious history.

All fonds and collections belonging to the BAnQ are kept in temperature- and humidity-controlled rooms, and can be located by using BAnQ's computerized archival guide to its holdings, dubbed PISTARD. Unless subject to restrictions, all archived documents are open for consultation, to ordinary citizens and academics alike, at reading rooms across Quebec.

Government records transferred to BAnQ's various repositories by government departments and agencies and by district courthouses are designated as public archives. They include civil and criminal court case files, vital statistics registers, public notary contracts and land surveyor files and notebooks dating back to the 17th century, "curatorship" and tutorship files, ho-



mologated wills as well as departmental correspondence files, land-books, photographs, maps and a variety of other documents that reflect government policies and decision-making. Close to sixteen kilometres of shelving is devoted to judicial records alone: 2.3 km in Quebec City, 9 km in Montreal and 4.4 km in the other, smaller, regional repositories. Civil records take up six kilometres: 3.4 km in Montreal, 1.4 km in Quebec City and a similar quantity in the other regional centres.

A large percentage of these records, probably 30 per cent overall, are in English and deal with individuals, institutions and firms closely linked to Quebec's historic English-speaking communities. The percentage is of course much higher for records from the late 18th and 19th centuries when English was prevalent in public administration and even well into the first half of the 20th century, since corporations insisted on dealing with the Quebec government in English. Historians wishing to document the life and career of lumber baron Henry Atkinson, for instance, would have to delve into the 50,000-odd contracts of public notary Archibald

Campbell, the civil court case files involving him and other members of the business community as well as the correspondence files of the Lands and Forests Commissariat—most of it in English. A good knowledge of English, therefore, is essential for anyone interested in carrying out research in government or judicial records from these periods.

Manuscripts, photographs, films and any other documents originating from non-governmental sources are deemed private: they are accessioned by loan, donation or sale, and a written contract spells out clearly the conditions agreed to by both parties. These private archives reflect the existence of individuals, families, organizations and business firms and often bear witness to more intimate episodes or events of private life, opening new vistas for understanding Quebec history.

Because preservation and description of archives is a time-consuming and costly process, accessioning the right manuscripts is of paramount importance to the BAnQ: defining priorities and establishing guidelines that spell out clearly the collecting areas and the fields of interest is a priority for all serious archival organizations. Since it is impossible to acquire everything, the best collecting strategies take into consideration the nature of existing fonds and collections in order to avoid accessioning identical materials. Unless an archival centre is highly specialized (e.g. a labour archives) a representative sampling of fields interest, geographical areas, languages and chronological periods should guide the accessioning decision-taking.

BAnQ's accessioning guidelines stress the need to respect the collecting areas and fields of interest of its archival partners. This means that a potential donor of documents may be redirected towards one of the accredited repositories. Documents linked to a family or business that operated in Western Quebec, for instance, would not end up in BAnQ's Quebec City archives centre, but manuscripts linked to the immediate family of a Quebec premier would.

Accessioning priorities for all of BAnQ's centres include the archives of cultural minorities (English, Scottish, Irish, Welsh, Lebanese, Haitian, Chinese, etc.), business and industrial archives and the archives of Quebec politicians (MPPs, MNAs, and premiers).

As for all archival organizations, BAnQ's preferred form of acquisition is by gift or donation, the donor being offered tax receipts in the amount of the fair market value of the documents. This value is established by a recognized merchant of manuscripts or by a NAB (National Appraisal Board) regional committee. Sometimes, in rather special circumstances, a loan of the documents is negotiated, in the hope that they will eventually be donated. In dire need, when all other approaches have failed and when documents of great historical value are threatened with destruction or export from the country, the BAnQ may offer to buy them outright.

Yards of reading fun

The important role played by Quebec's English-speaking community in the history and development of Quebec and Canada is reflected in the seven kilometres of shelving taken up by the BAnQ's private archives. At present, roughly a kilometre of this shelving is devoted to private archives linked to Quebec's historic English-speaking communities, including the following outstanding fonds:

Montreal archives centre

IODE (Imperial Order Daughters of the Empire) fonds
 United Church of Canada fonds
 (*Montreal and Ottawa Conference*)
 Quebec Women's Institute fonds

Outaouais archives centre in Gatineau

The James MacLaren Company fonds
 The Stone Consolidated Company fonds
 The Gatineau Fish and Game Club fonds
 The Loyal Orange Lodge fonds

Quebec City archives centre

Price Company and Family fonds
 (*Available on 113 microfilms in Quebec City. Originals temporarily deposited at Saguenay archives centre*)
 Neilson Family and Neilson Publishers fonds
 YWCA fonds
 Lady's Protestant Home fonds
 Literary and Historical Society of Quebec Collection
 The James Thompson Jr. fonds
 The William Sharples Family fonds
 Lady Aylmer's Journal (*Illustrated by Colonel Cockburn*)
 1,500 magnificent Staveley architectural drawings

Sherbrooke archives centre

United Church of Canada fonds
 (*Quebec-Sherbrooke Conference*)
 The Bowen Family fonds
 The Compton Free Will Baptist fonds

Trois-Rivières archives centre

The Wabasso Cotton Company fonds
 Rouyn-Noranda archives centre
 Noranda Mines fonds
 Beattie Gold Mines fonds

Sept-Îles archives centre

The Iron Ore Company of Canada fonds

WORLD ON STAGE

Interpreting Canada from the 'third perspective' of immigrant artists
by Carolyn Shaffer



Trailblazers in intercultural theatre, the Teesri Duniya players have consistently held a mirror up to Canadian society with their biting social commentary. After 25 years of delighting Montreal audiences, founding member and artistic director Rahul Varma remains faithful to the group's motto: change the world, one play at a time.

During their recent production of renowned Canadian playwright Jason Sherman's prize-winning *Reading Hebron*, for instance, the company ended up hosting an open debate between Jews and Palestinians in the audience. One of the functions of theatre, after all, Varma says, is "to bring people under an umbrella where they can air their disagreements."

True to form, Teesri Duniya's anniversary party at Pangée Gallery in

Old Montreal paid artistic tribute to the ideals of multiculturalism with an exhibit entitled "Dialogue: Bridges of Hope", featuring paintings, photography, poetry, music and dance created by a dozen artists from places Canada, Albania, India, the Caribbean, Egypt and Nigeria. Gathered on stage during the speeches, their skin tones crossed a broad palette but identical pride shone from their faces at being part of the event and the organization behind it.

Teesri Duniya, which means "third world" in the Hindustani language, specializes in plays that reflect the immigrant experience, provoking thought and asking tough questions about issues that affect visible minorities both within their own communities and in the larger society. When the company was founded in 1981, it was intended as a way for South Asian ac-

tors and playwrights to practise their craft in their adopted city. At the time, recalls Varma, who immigrated to Quebec from India in 1976, "there were no forms of cultural expression concerned with South Asians I found satisfying. Theatre offered a more political voice."

At first, Varma wrote plays in Hindi that were set in Canada. Later he wrote in English as his fluency increased. Teesri Duniya also produced works by other English-language playwrights, their first being Susan Townsend's *Great Celestial Cow*, a story about immigrants in England. Within two years, though, the company evolved into a multicultural group, with members inspired to write and produce plays about issues facing other communities and cultures besides their own. *On the Double*, for in-

A recent Teesri Duniya production, Bhopal, dealt with the 1984 industrial disaster in India, believed to have caused the deaths of 20,000 people.

stance, written by Teesri co-founder Rana Bose, focuses on intergender conflict in a South American community.

Varma himself picked up an award at the Quebec Drama Festival in 1987 for his play *Job Stealer* which dealt with the racism faced by new refugees to Canada. It was inspired by TV footage of Sri Lanka refugees who were being greeted on their arrival by people chanting “trash go back” and the racism exposed by a subsequent investigation. His play *Isolated Incident* retold the tragic story of Anthony Griffin, a young black man shot dead by Montreal police in 1987.



Varma is quick to stress that Teesri productions are not obsessed with victimization, but rather tend to focus on immigrants’ struggle to fit in with and contribute to Canadian and Quebec society. In their plays, they use specific incidents to pose broader questions about life in Canada for cultural minorities but they do not simply point the finger at whites.

Varma’s play *Counter Offense* examined the issue of violence against women in a minority community from multiple perspectives. It was produced in collaboration with Montreal’s Black Theatre Workshop using a multiethnic cast and was translated into French and Italian. *Bhopal*, about the continuing after-effects of an industrial disaster that took place in India in 1984 was a big hit for Teesri that was translated into French and Hindi. Staged in India in 2003 and 2004, this reverse-export brought Varma’s Canadian-Indian perspective back to the motherland.

Having learned English as an adult, Varma says he still thinks in Hindi even while writing in English,

resulting in a unique “hybrid literature.” He is also proud that his plays have been translated into French and have entered francophone Québécois culture. Lately, Teesri has been producing plays in both official languages such as *The Trial*, staged numerous times in 2005.

Based on an adaptation of the Franz Kafka story by Matthew Behrens and Laurel Smith, the play critiques Canada’s anti-terror legislation from the perspective of five immigrants, including Montrealer Adil Charkaoui, who was detained on a federal security certificate for 22 months without any criminal charge

being made against him.

Despite its official policy of multiculturalism, in Varma’s view Canada remains essentially a bicultural society with multicultural components. Living and working in the heart of French North America adds another creative dimension. “Quebec offers a tension which allows me to push forward my immigrants ‘third perspective’ forcefully,” he says.

The company has no intention of resting on its laurels now that it has passed the 25-year mark. Its new motto is, “Stage peace in times of war.” All upcoming works will centre on this theme, Varma says. Teesri’s next production is playwright Aparna Sindhoo’s *Leaf in the Wind*, which draws attention to the plight of women in war and post-war situations and promises to offer what Varma calls a “third perspective” on the cause and consequences of conflict.

“We deal with issues that Hollywood doesn’t show,” he says.

Visit the Teesri Duniya website at www.teesriduniyatheatre.com. Or call (514) 848-0238 for play dates.

Rahul Varma is Teesri Duniya’s artistic director.

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WHAT'S IN A NAME?

DREAM RESURRECTED

Estérel's past links Château Clique elite with Old World aristocracy

by Joseph Graham

Trains and railways fascinated Edouard-Louis-Joseph Empain. Born in Beloil, Belgium, in 1852, he worked his way through university, but by the time he was 29 years old, he had founded the Empain Bank and he began to indulge his obsession with public transport. Empain built train tracks across France, Belgium and Holland. He also experimented with electric trams, supplying a long list of cities with their first public transit systems. He built the Paris metro, the Cairo transit system and a railway through China. He built a railway in the Belgian Congo and was involved in hydroelectric projects and many other initiatives. For his pleasure, he founded the town of Heliopolis outside Cairo and built a Hindu palace there. His great accomplishments, particularly in the Congo, led King Leopold II of Belgium to recognise him with the title of Baron in 1907.

When he passed away in 1929, he left an estate estimated to be worth six billion French francs to his two sons Jean-Louis Lain Empain and Louis-Jean Lain Empain. Whereas their father was the first Baron Empain, by Belgian rules, they both inherited the title.

Baron Jean-Louis Empain, the elder brother, took over the management of their father's holdings, while Baron Louis-Jean took his inheritance in money and began anew, setting up La Banque Belge pour l'Industrie, and looked for projects. Starting in the Middle East, he sought a totally new environment, one where he could distinguish himself from his brother, and this notion brought him eventually to Canada.

Both brothers also inherited good business practices from their father, and so, when Baron Louis-Jean came to Canada for the first time in 1934, he was already well prepared, and acquainted with the business and power elite. Only 26 years old, he had at his disposal the means to hire the best advisors and to meet the most influential people. He retained the services of

a lawyer named Leon-Mercier Gouin, son of the ex-premier Lomer Gouin, and grandson of Honoré Mercier, a legendary Quebec nationalist who had also been premier. L-M Gouin, who would one day be named to the Senate, was also closely linked with the newly formed Union Nationale party. The Baron immediately set upon the task he had in mind, creating investment companies and establishing a Belgian-Canadian spirit of cooperation, even going so far as to create l'Association Belgique-Canada.

Empain seems to have been guided by a vision of idealism and was called by some the capitalist of the left. In 1935 he created La Belgo-Canadienne de Crédit Ltée, acquiring forestry and mining concerns, and backing philanthropies. He also acquired some

5,000 acres of land in Ste. Marguerite du Lac Masson and began building an ambitious art-deco resort complex there which continues to stand as one of the region's most distinct architectural landmarks.

Empain engaged the best people he could find to plan and build it, including the celebrated Belgian architect Antoine Courtens. To complement his hotel, cinema and shopping centre and give it a fresh identity, he established a post office in 1939, calling it L'Estérel after the Estérel massif in the south of France.

Around that time, the Sulpician Order of Oka, having seriously overextended themselves in the creation of Université de Montréal, appealed to the provincial government to save them from their creditors. Under the guidance of Athanase David, at the time the provincial secretary for education, the government passed a bill through which the university property was merged with the large Sulpician holdings in Oka, and subsequently the merged enterprise sold 3,700 acres of cultivated land and 1,600 acres of forestland in Oka to Baron Louis-Jean Empain. The university was saved and what was once the Sulpician seigneurie became the property of the ambitious Bel-



gian. Without displaying bitterness, one of the senior members of the Sulpician Order remarked that the Baron would have some unfinished business to settle with the Mohawks. Soon the Sulpician land was being marketed to Belgian immigrants who wished to establish farms in Oka, and the Baron created support systems to help them.

The remarkable growth and rate of acquisition hit a wall with the beginning of the war. Baron Empain and his new bride, Geneviève Hone of Montreal, were in Belgium when the German army occupied the country. Rumours swirled around the couple in Canada, and he was accused of being a German spy, was said to have been detained and held prisoner by the Canadian authorities and was generally pilloried in the press. The Canadian government went so far as to sequester all of the Baron's Canadian holdings, justifying its actions because, as principal shareholder, he resided in a country under enemy occupation.

Meanwhile, in Belgium, the Baron and his wife organized a charity called Pro Juventute, created to feed and care for needy children. Faced with the risk of imminent invasion, the Belgian government called up all available men, creating an army of 700,000, and the Baron reported for duty. He participated in the heroic "Campaign of 18 Days," a series of battles that slowed the German advance and is considered to have given surprised Allied troops precious extra time to evacuate Dunkirk. He was captured and became a German prisoner, but was soon released, probably because the Germans needed to cultivate good relations with the powerful industrial family.

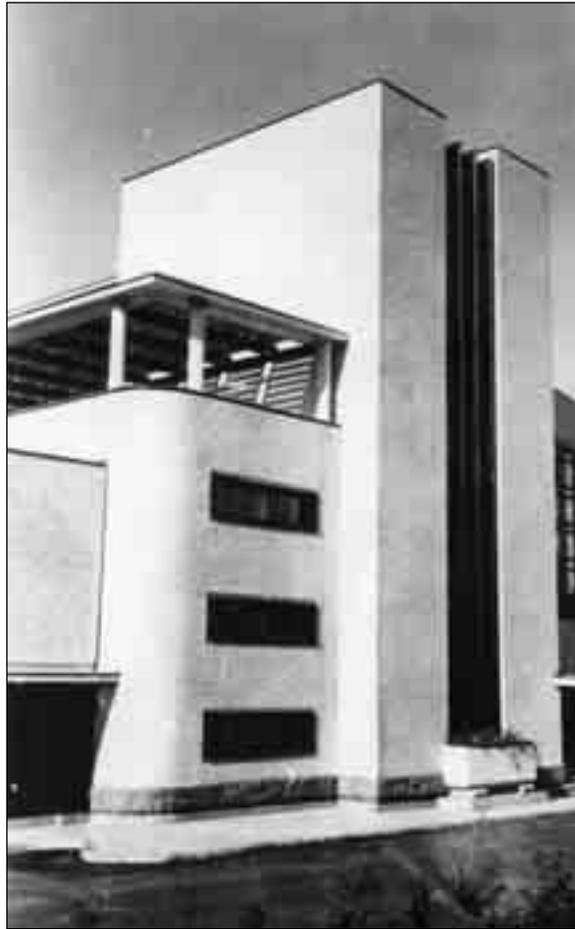
When the war ended, the Baron could not bring himself to forgive the Canadian government for the hardships and the insult of having treated him so badly. Married to a Canadian, volunteering for duty against the enemy, enduring prison and assisting the needy before and during the war period, he felt that the Canadian government would act as his ally. He instructed his managers to sell his Canadian holdings and concentrated on his philanthropy for the balance of his career. His Canadian dreams were left to be fulfilled by others, notably one Fridolin Simard.

One fateful summer day in 1958, Simard was flying over the Laurentians headed from his home in Alma to Montreal. From the window of his small floatplane, the rolling hills of the Laurentians unfolded, their jewel-like lakes twinkling in the sun, but off ahead of him, to the southwest, he was heading into dark thunderclouds piled above the horizon. His radio crackled with a message from the control tower at Dorval warning him and all small planes to change flight plans because the storm was playing havoc with the airport.

Below him, Simard could see a good-sized lake, easy to land on, and his charts told him it was called Lac Masson. As he would later learn, the story of the lake's name began with Joseph Masson, like him a business man who had moved from the countryside to seek his fortune in the city. When Masson arrived in Montreal in 1812, he had no money, but he had apprenticed as a shop clerk in St. Eustache, where he soon proved his worth to Hugh Robertson, eventually becoming a full partner, in the Robertson brothers' firm. A visionary and risk-taker, Masson became the purchaser and a partner in the Robertsons' concerns in Glasgow, Scotland, as well. Trading principally in potash and woollens, Masson encouraged the firm to buy ships, and he was also a co-founder of the Company of Proprietors of the Champlain and St Lawrence Railroad in 1846.

Masson, like Simard, did not know that French-Canadians were handicapped in business, and

during the difficult period of the 1830s, he was one of the most important businessmen in Lower Canada. He was a member of the Legislative Council, the ruling elite known as the Château Clique, in the stormy 1830s, and while he was sympathetic to the objectives of the Patriotes, his loyalty was to the mercantile class. He eventually became the sole owner of the import-export companies in both Scotland and Montreal when the Robertson brothers retired, and he brought his sons into the business. Joseph Masson, Sons and Company had offices in Montreal, Quebec City and Glasgow with marketing and buying offices in Three Rivers, Liverpool and Toronto. Eventually he acquired the Seigneurie of Terrebonne, and it was his son, Edouard



Masson, who undertook to colonise the area around Lac Masson in the 1860s.

Simard landed safely before the storm and found his way to a dock where he could secure the plane. His business expertise was in asphalt and concrete blocks, pier, bridge and tunnel construction, and his family concern, Simard-Beaudry, had grown out of their hometown offices in Alma to spread across Quebec and Ontario. Taking shelter near the dock, Simard found himself inside an elaborate, abandoned building complex. On one wall, he found a map describing the whole lake with projections for development. He explored further.

In 1864, Edouard Masson had been accorded 1,600 acres for his colony on the lake and even though it was not a seigneurie, he invested heavily to develop it, building both a saw and flour mill. Most of the colonists came from further south in the old Terrebonne seigneurie. The first post office, called Lac Masson, opened in 1868. Its naming served the dual purpose of honouring Edouard Masson and confirming the name of the lake. By 1880, the municipality took its name from the parish mission and the post office and became Ste. Marguerite du Lac Masson. Like many of these Laurentian projects, Masson's small colony experienced difficulties when the bulk of the wood was gone and the farmers had to rely on the thin mountain soil. While the railroad brought some

improvement, it was Baron Empain who identified the lake's real potential in the 1930s.

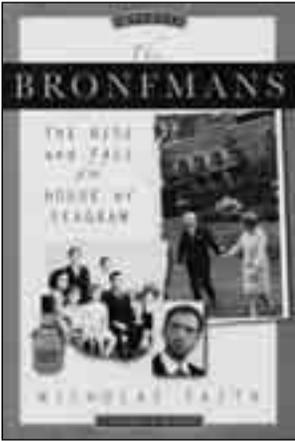
Among the properties Empain left behind when he returned to Europe at the beginning of the Second World War, was this large art-deco recreation and tourism complex, which had now sat idle for years. Simard looked again at the map on the wall, which showed development plans for 300 houses, a hotel and a cultural centre—but no provision for Empain's absence.

As though the spirit of the place had conspired to grab him out of the sky, Simard learned the property was for sale. Piqued by the ruins of Empain's vision sitting on the pristine lake named for Masson, Simard determined to complete the dreams of both of his predecessors. Acquiring the remaining Empain-Masson holdings, he built a large hotel and golf course and developed the lakefront with expensive country homes. In order to better manage his project, he obtained a separate municipal status, and inspired again by Empain's name for the post office, he called it L'Estérel.

References: Estérel website; Paul Jeanjot, Biographie Nationale, France; <http://www.bretagne-quebec.com/histoire-quebec.htm>; L'arbre généalogique de la famille Empain, Pierre Chartrand, Dictionary of Canadian Biography, Toponymie Québec and others. Special thanks to Sheila Eskenazi.

Contact Joe Graham at joseph@doncaster.ca.

REVIEWS



*The Bronfmans:
The Rise and Fall of the House of Seagram*

By Nicholas Faith
St. Martin's Press [New York] 2006
320 pages

British financial journalist Nicholas Faith set out to troll the much-charted deeps and reaches of the legendary Bronfman family after one of history's wealthiest business dynasties was suddenly and very publicly flung upon the rocks in 2001. After years of mismanagement, notably at the hands of company founder Sam Bronfman's "overage adolescent" grandson, Edgar Jr., the immensely profitable Montreal-based liquor company Seagram was gradually transformed in the 1990s into a sprawling media empire that was disastrously absorbed into the French entertainment conglomerate Vivendi. Surely this debacle, reckoned to have cost the Bronfman family \$3 billion in losses, would yield some valuable lessons. Is it any wonder publishers have brought out a half-dozen new books on the drinks biz in recent years?

Bronfman, who died in 1971, would hardly recognize today the company that he'd spent most of his life building up, a point that recurs frequently throughout this book as though Faith were somehow astonished to discover that entrepreneurial instincts are not genetically transmitted. But in a genre that is crowded with insider tell-alls, panegyrics and get-rich parables modeled on the latest fashions in management theory, this *House of Seagram* stands out, as much for its tidy rooms and winding corridors as it does for its insights. We are spared a reprise of the noisy melodrama that has swirled round bouts of

sibling discord in the recent past, hearing only the occasional muffled row behind closed doors. Nor do we gawk for too long at the piles of treasure generated, astonishingly, within the space of just a few decades by this incredibly successful immigrant family.

Within ten years of their arrival in Canada from Czarist Russia and with earnings their father EchieI saved from working at a Brandon, Manitoba sawmill and various sidelines—including reselling scrap wood as household fuel and peddling fish—the Bronfman brothers got their start in the hotel business in 1903. By adjusting their methods to fit ever-changing anti-liquor laws and regulations, they had soon established themselves on the prairies as major liquor wholesalers in a market long dominated by the Hudson Bay Company. During the First World War, for instance, Ottawa forbade anyone except registered druggists to deal in spirits, so the Bronfmans bought a license to set up a wholesale drug company next door to their Yortkon, Sask. hotel and proceeded to sell "medicinal" alcohol through the mail.

The early success of the family business owed much to U.S. Prohibition, a failed social experiment begun in the 1920 that drove drinkers underground and exports across the border, firmly establishing Canada's distilleries by the time the ban was repealed in 1933. Faith notes that Prohibition had the twin virtues of wiping out American competition in the continent's largest

market while making it all but impossible for governments to collect taxes. And for more than a decade, the Bronfmans got rich supplying American smugglers from a network of warehouses strung out across two dozen prairie railroad whistle-stops along the border. They weren't alone, of course. Their genius, writes Faith, was figuring how to go legit so successfully.

However, after gleaning dozens of published sources, including Toronto writer Rod MacQueen's seminal 2004 biography, *The Icarus Factor*, financial press archives and his own interview notes—Sam's architect daughter Phyllis was the only one of his children who agreed to cooperate—Faith searched in vain for an original theme broad enough to recast the Bronfman saga as a case study in corporate culture. We are left instead with uneven portraits of Sam and two of his colourful male descendants: son Edgar, whose "finest hour" at Seagram's we are told was turning its investment in a Texan oil company into over 20 percent ownership of DuPont in the 1980s; and the so-called "clown prince" of the Bronfman dynasty, Edgar Jr., whom *Business Week* magazine once described as "the stupidest person in the media business."

Above all, this book pays tribute to Seagram's strongman-founder, arguing that Sam Bronfman knew ahead of his rivals that Prohibition would some day end and that the future of distilling lay not with bootleggers and moonshiners, but in quality brands supported by a

marketing strategy that could finally make whisky-drinking respectable in America.

Bronfman, Faith concludes, had “all the capacities to succeed in business, the flair to understand the product required by the market, combined with the passionate, obsessive temperament to ensure that the drink he had dreamed up reached the drinker perfect in every respect.”

The late Canadian journalist Terrence Robertson, whose unpublished 1969 biography informs much of this new book, quoted Sam Bronfman as describing the Prohibition border trade in Saskatchewan as “insignificant.” The big money was being made back east where not a small portion of the illegal foreign drink was decent Scotch, the product of a centuries-old distilling and blending tradition that Sam set out to emulate. In 1923 Bronfman bought an idle distillery in Louisville, Kentucky, dismantled it and moved it to Ville Lasalle, near Montreal where it would remain the cornerstone of the family business for decades. He became, Faith recalls, “a brilliant blender in his own right.” He was also able to copy the Scots’ knack for marketing brands that could be sold at premium prices.

By 1927 Sam and his brother Allan were able to go directly into business with the Scottish distilling group DCL, giving them the edge over such rivals as fellow Canadian Harry Hatch of Canadian Club fame, Lew Rosenstiel of Schenley Distillers and Joseph Kennedy. Partnering with these “acknowledged aristocrats” of the world liquor also trade gave Sam Bronfman what Faith describes as “a step up the social, commercial, and financial ladder, and was the key to the whole of his subsequent career,” not to mention the inspiration for much parody in at least two novels, including Mordecai Richler’s *Solomon Gursky Was Here*.

Rather than rushing into the post-Repeal U.S. market with spirits of dubious age and quality, under Sam’s leadership in the 1930s Seagram’s held back, building up stocks of spirits aged in oak, and confining marketing efforts to a handful of whiskies, notably the imported VO, and two new American blends, 5 Crown and 7 Crown. The blends proved immensely popular, bolstered by an extremely effective and unprecedented advertising campaign that stressed quality

and moderate consumption—another industry first. “All this, writes Faith was part of “Mr Sam’s overwhelming objective: to give dignity to products normally maligned as low-class, if not downright dishonourable.” In a particularly brilliant example of his marketing chutzpah, Bronfman timed the launch of a new whisky blend to coincide with the British royal family’s first visit to Canada in 1939, then somehow to arranged to have ten cases of Seagram’s “Crown Royal” placed on the train that carried King George VI, Queen Elizabeth and their children across the country!

Placed at the helm of Seagram’s U.S. operations in the 1950s, McGill-trained Edgar at first distinguished himself more as a target for gossip columns than for his business prowess, flaunting his wealth with playboy abandon, and philandering his way from one mistress to another before inheriting full title to his father’s legacy in the early 1970s. Here Faith’s narrative lingers over-long on Edgar’s celebrity and bogs down in a series of weak comparisons between Edgar and his younger brother Charles. In any event, Edgar, who has penned three books of his own, will probably be remembered by posterity more for his accomplishments as leader of the World Jewish Congress than for his contributions to the family fortune. In the 1980s he led an international campaign to oust United Nations secretary-general and former Nazi collaborator Kurt Waldheim, and then successfully fought Swiss banks to secure restitution for money deposited in the 1930s by victims of the Jewish Holocaust.

Charles built shopping malls and office towers across North America and was founding owner of the now-defunct Montreal Expos baseball team from 1968 to 1993. Phyllis founded Montreal’s famed Canadian Centre for Architecture after pursuing a career outside Seagram’s corporate affairs, putting much of the capital her father left her to work in arts and culture—notably in Quebec where for the past two decades she has been a driving force behind the movement to save Montreal’s built heritage. All told, still a grand old house and a fascinating chapter in Canada’s economic history.

Reviewed by Dwane Wilkin

A MEETING OF THE PEOPLE

School boards and Protestant communities in Quebec (1801-1998)

by Roderick MacLeod and Mary Anne Poutanen



Delightful insight into the challenges overcome by early British and American settlers and the political struggle their descendants waged to keep education a community matter.

Winner:

Canadian Association of Foundations of Education Book Award (2006)

McGill-Queens University Press.

505 pages. \$32.95

Order online at

www.mqup.mcgill.ca



*Sons of the Mountains:
A History of the The Highland Regiments in North
America during the French & Indian War
1756-1767, 2 volumes*

By Ian Macpherson McCulloch
Purple Mountain Press, 2006
vol 1, \$35; vol 2, \$24

When Col. Harper wrote *The Fighting Frasers* in 1959, his research broke new ground. Today, though, it's showing its age: Some of his facts seem doubtful—ever tried to climb a cliff-face with a broadsword between your teeth?—and, what's more, Harper left no footnotes for those interested in his sources.

Hence the excitement many of us felt when Ian McCulloch, former commanding officer of Montreal's Black Watch regiment set out in this new work out to debunk myths surrounding the noble Highland soldier by concentrating on the facts, and McCulloch has enough of them to fill two volumes. The first chronicles the exploits of the 42nd (the Black Watch), Montgomery's 77th and Fraser's 78th; the second gives a biography of every officer in all three regiments: details on uniforms, weapons, soldiers and more. Simply put, this book tries to answer almost everything you could want to know about the Highlanders. One is in awe of all the work that went in to such an endeavour.

This means, however, that the author spends little time weaving an over-arching narrative of the Seven Years' War; he assumes you know all about the military campaigns and strategies, as well the political and economic aspects of the conflict. In most history texts the author's point of view shapes how he groups his facts, interprets them, and presents them to the reader. As McCulloch points out in his introduction, a careless author with an undeclared bias can perpetuate falsehoods that last for centuries. Previous "research" on the

Highlanders has presented a romantic, stoic image that is far from the truth, he argues. McCulloch spent years assembling what surely must be the most complete set of period documents and illustrations dealing with these regiments, in order to refute such myths. Yet, beyond the introduction, the finished work offers no direct counter-arguments, just facts.

What we are left with, then, are the many minute details of the Highlanders' participation in the war, without their being interpreted or put into context. For the most part, McCulloch's style consists of listing troop numbers and dates, movement and attack orders, battle phases and officers' decisions. It's clear that with such exact details he wants to establish a soldier's "personal angle of vision"—what war was like from the individual's perspective—and that's commendable. But sometimes McCulloch's aversion to narration can be detrimental. For example, the Battle of the Plains of Abraham, the 78th Regiment's moment of fame, is resumed almost entirely from one letter. While quoting large swaths can occasionally be refreshingly transparent, too often McCulloch's chapters feel like a lot of material collated together chronologically. Leaving it to the reader to make links between events and themes places a burden on those with only a casual knowledge of history.

In fact, the best parts of the book—especially the first few chapters discussing the recruiting practices in the highlands, as well as the later description of the Battle of Ticonderoga—are those in which the author overtly shares his ideas and contrasts them to other authors'.

When he supports his assertions, the resulting conclusions can be stunningly insightful. At other times McCulloch refers to a general as "incompetent" for example, without apparent reason. What's more, the few times a passage conjures up a poetic image, the footnotes disappear. Readers excited over some really juicy detail—like the exact tune the pipers were playing during a battle—find it to be totally unsupported, and resembling the fanciful imaginings McCulloch wants to dispel. The author can't always seem to meld his use of sources with his few burgeoning attempts at a narrative voice.

The most worrying problem with *Sons of the Mountains* is that it's riddled with mistakes. Most are punctuation or grammatical errors, mind you, but it makes one wonder how much attention to detail was put into a book that is supposedly "all about the details." Sure enough, there are even instances where the dates are wrong.

But for all of its faults, *Sons of the Mountains* is unparalleled in its depth. Occasional factual mistakes and bouts of undocumented, romantic guessing do not eclipse the ten years of research that unearthed so much new material. And despite the scarcity of narrative or direct argumentation, the author succeeds in presenting enough information for a devoted reader to gleam the most accurate image to date of the Highland soldier during the Seven Years' War. One cannot read the book without feeling it will stoke the passion many of us have for the 78th of Foot. It is the new regimental Bible.

Reviewed by Tyler Wood



St. Lawrence Iroquoians: Corn People

*Pointe-à-Callière Museum,
350 Place Royale, Old Montreal*

*Exhibit runs until May 6, 2007. For opening hours
call 514-872-9150 or email to info@pacmusee.qc.ca*

When French explorer Jacques Cartier first described the villages of the St. Lawrence Iroquoians during his visits to Canada between 1535 and 1541, he put their population at approximately 10,000. Sixty years later when Samuel de Champlain returned to the valley, they were gone. Herein lies one of the more enduring mysteries in Native American history: Why one of the first aboriginal cultures recorded by Europeans seems to have completely vanished from the St. Lawrence Valley in the 16th century.

What little we know today of the St. Lawrence Iroquoians comes from Cartier's writings and the fruit of more recent archeological research conducted at numerous village sites discovered along a 700-kilometre span in the river valley from Quebec City to Cornwall, Ont. and northern New York State. A wide selection of unearthed clay pots, tools and ceremonial objects feature in this latest exhibit. Taken together, the documentary and archeological evidence point to a fascinating cultural legacy that links Cartier's hosts with prehistoric Mexico.

St. Lawrence Iroquoians belonged to a much larger culture known to latter-day scholars as the Northern Iroquoians, whose population once reached 120,000 people, grouped into 25 nations and spread out along the St. Lawrence in an area roughly the size of Great Britain. The term "Iroquoian" describes a linguistic group of more than 900 languages, and is distinct from "Iroquois," which refers to the historic political confederacy of Iroquoian-speaking First Nations who inhabited territory in what is now upstate New York and southern Quebec.

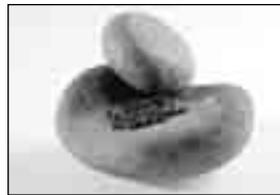
At the time of European contact, Iroquoian peoples were less numerous than Algonquian-speakers, their villages being concentrated around what is now south-eastern Canada and the northeastern U.S.

But further south, in what is now the central eastern United States, Iroquoian languages were also spoken, notably by the Cherokee and Tuscarora Indians. Maize—or corn as it came to be known in English-speaking North America—was a central feature of Iroquoian culture when Cartier visited, making up 50 to 60 per cent of villagers' diet. Domesticated in Mexico as early as 5,500 years ago, the Pointe-à-Callière exhibit shows how the northward spread of this important New World crop allowed groups of hunter-gatherers living in the St. Lawrence Valley to store enough food to begin settling in permanent villages between 800 and 1,200 years ago.

The village of Stadacona near modern-day Quebec City was the largest Iroquoian village of a dozen in the valley, with a population of 500-800 people when Cartier first encountered them. The only other villages he mentions are Hochelaga at the foot of Mount Royal and Tutonaguy, also on the Island of Montreal. Since the 19th century, dozens of St. Lawrence Iroquoian villages have been unearthed in Quebec, Ontario and New York. Evidence from an archeological site near St. Aniset, between Montreal and Cornwall, Ont. suggests that in the mid-16th century this village had 15 longhouses and more than 600 residents. There are also two major archeological sites between Quebec City and Montreal: at Lanoraie and at Mandeville. The largest known cluster remains near Watertown, NY, where more than fifty Iroquoian village sites have been located.

Some scholars believe that the remains of an aboriginal village discovered in the 19th century near McGill College Avenue may have been the original site of the village of Hochelaga described by Cartier. But since Iroquoian communities are also thought to have moved their villages every 10-20 years, the dearth of cor-

roborating evidence has so far rendered this hypothesis impossible to prove. However, Cartier left us a snapshot of the sexual division of labour that presumably characterized daily life in all these 16th century Iroquoian villages: women were in charge of the crops, which included beans and squash as well as corn; they also ran the household, cared for children, cooked and made pots and household tools, gathered firewood and hunted small game. Men hunted large game, carried on trade and were in charge of war and diplomacy. Iroquoian society was also matrilineal and matrilocal, meaning that men moved into the homes of their female partners and their clans. Each clan was led by a clan mother, who chose the village chief and had the power to revoke his authority.



The mystery remains as to why they disappeared, though intertribal warfare is a favoured hypothesis. Research has discounted climate change and the effect of

European diseases, which would decimate First Nations following colonization in the 17th century. Whatever the cause, studies show the St. Lawrence Iroquoians dispersed in various directions inland and merged with other groups. Scholars believe many were captured or adopted by other Iroquoian nations, such as the Wendat in Wendake and the Mohawk in Akwesasne, Kahnawake and Kahnésatake. Today the horticultural knowledge of the St. Lawrence Iroquoians lives on in these communities in the person of the Plant Keeper, a ceremonial title whose holder is charged with preserving original varieties of corn, beans and squash.

Beside the question of why they disappeared, one is also left wondering why it took so long for a Montreal museum to pay tribute to the area's first inhabitants.

Reviewed by Carolyn Shaffer

EVENT LISTINGS

Outaouais, February-April

February 19, 7:30 p.m.

Chelsea Community Centre

Looking at Emily Carr

Curator Charles Hill speaks about the late great painter's works exhibited at the National Gallery of Canada.

Gatineau Valley Historical Society

Info: (819)827-4432

March 19, 7:30 p.m.

The Aluminum Plant at Farm Point

Bob Walsh describes his father's work at the plant from 1944 to 1963.

Gatineau Valley Historical Society

Info: (819)827-4432

April 16, 7:30 p.m.

River Keepers

Speakers Meredith Brown and Neil Faulkner outline what local environmental organizations are doing to preserve the Ottawa and Gatineau rivers.

Info: (819)827-4432

May 21, 7 p.m.

Gatineau Valley Historical Society

Annual Dinner

Guest speaker: Fred Ryan, publisher and editor of the West Quebec Post and Aylmer Bulletin newspapers.

Info: (819)827-4432

Monteregie, February

Feb. 1-28, 1-to-4 p.m.

Missisquoi Museum, Stanbridge East

The Mystery of the Ruiter Ledgers 1799-1811: Were Thomas Morris and Joel Slaves?

Info: www.missisquويمuseum.ca

Tel: (450)-248-3153

Laurentians

April 15, 1 p.m.

Morin Heights Library

Morin Heights Historical Association

Annual General Meeting

Info: (450)226-2618

Eastern Townships

February 4 to March 11, 2 to 4 p.m.

Uplands Museum, 9 Speid St.,

(Lennoxville) Sherbrooke

The Happy Hookers

exhibit their works. Learn about the ancient craft of rug-hooking.

Info: 819-564-0409

Until May 13, 1-to-5 p.m.

Centre d'interpretation de l'histoire de Sherbrooke

L'automobile, quelle revolution!

Discover the impact that cars have had on the city at this exhibit featuring artifacts and photos from a century of automobile travel.

Societe d'histoire de Sherbrooke

Info: (819) 821-5406

Talking with Townshippers

Weekly Radio Show, CJMQ (88.9) FM Wed. at 12 noon & Thurs. at 5 p.m.

A 15-minute program about initiatives and events of Townshippers' Association and partners, also featuring music and books from the region.

Info: 819-566-5717

Montreal, March- April

March 24, 1-4 p.m.

Antique Books Road Show

Atwater Library

Antiquarian Wilfrid de Freitas evaluates old books. Fee; \$2 per book for library members; \$3 for non-members.

Info:(514)935-7344

March 8, 9:30 a.m to 4 p.m..

Ode to Women

McCord Museum

Unveiling of a painting and a public reading of a collective composition in praise of women to mark International Women's Day. Events include a tour of *Simply Montreal* exhibit.

Info: (514) 398-7100

April 5, 1:30-to-3:30 p.m.

Chocolate!

McCord Museum

Get a taste of chocolate's rich past at this lecture and tasting, presented by Catherine Macpherson, researcher in gastronomy. Presentation examines the marketing, manufacture, culinary use and historical importance of chocolate in Canada from the 18th century to the present.

Heritage Minute Video Contest

Students, tell us your story!

The Quebec Anglophone Heritage Network is offering Secondary Level students cash prizes for true stories about remarkable people from Quebecs past.

For complete contest details, visit our website, www.qahn.org and click on the News

First prize is \$250.
Second prize is \$150

Send your entries to:

Quebec Anglophone Heritage Network
400-257 Queen Street,
Lennoxville, Quebec
J1M 1K7

Deadline for submissions is April 30, 2007

Montreal Mosaic

Heritage Summit at the McCord

SKETCHES IN A MULTICULTURAL HISTORY

April 1st, 2007

Hidden Histories

English-speaking communities in Greater Montreal are composed of many different cultures, all of which have helped to shape the story of Quebec and Canada. Historians from diverse cultural traditions present little-known stories from Montreal's past.

Gathering Time

How do different communities view their history in Quebec? Conservation specialists and community leaders discuss ways to identify, preserve and promote local heritage, including oral history, neighbourhood landmarks, artifacts and family archives.

Tongue Ties

English shaped the identity of many immigrant communities in Montreal and continues to nurture the cultural life of Canada's first truly cosmopolitan city. Find out why and whether non-British English-speakers view their history as part of Quebec's anglophone heritage. Scholars debate the changing identity of English-speaking Montreal, from different cultural perspectives.

Plus:

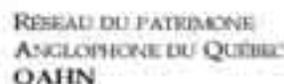
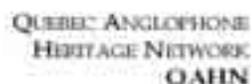
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