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Quebec Heritage

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News



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The Junior Symphony Orchestra and One Lost Piano

Quebec Heritage News

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Cover image: Original doors from a now demolished original wing of the Trafalgar School for Girls, Dr. Penfield Avenue, Montreal. Photo: Rod MacLeod

EDITOR'S DESK

Fixing a Hole

by Rod MacLeod

We've been hearing a lot about crosses lately, about how they are somehow fundamental to Quebec's culture and identity. Whether or not that is true, I would argue there is one particular cross that is fundamental to Montreal's culture and identity, for two reasons. One reason is that it typifies the modern cosmopolitan city we are all proud of. The other is that it filled a nasty hole that no one loved.

I, perhaps alone, a mad voice in the wilderness, hate this particular cross. I quite liked the hole.

The hole was once filled very nicely by a large house and garden belonging to the Joseph family (see QHN, September 2009) known as Dorchester House, after the street on which it was built. The Josephs sold the property in 1912 to developers, the ones behind the Canadian Northern Railway project to dig a tunnel under Mount Royal and give their trains a downtown terminus. Other, smaller buildings were also sacrificed to create a large piece of real estate. By the time the tunnel was finished, there was a long trough running north-south between Mansfield and St Monique (roughly on a line with McGill College Avenue) which emerged from the side of the mountain and ran under the wide bridge that Dorchester Street had become. Hugging the edge of this trough were such prestigious buildings as St Paul's Presbyterian Church, Mary Queen of the World Cathedral, the Sun Life headquarters, and another lovely mansion-in-a-garden known as Homestead.

Montrealers who remember this hole almost universally lamented what they saw as a scar on their city. But anyone who has visited Edinburgh (a city whose New Town was the inspiration for Montreal's downtown) will know that a trough with trains running through it can make for a pleasant urban environment,

given a reasonable amount of thoughtful planning. Alas, for much of the twentieth century, Montreal's planners were far too preoccupied with grandeur (of buildings and egos) to give much thought to pleasant urban environments.

The small terminus at the southern end of this site, facing onto La-gauchetière Street, was good enough for



the Canadian Northern Railway, but far from adequate for the Canadian National Railway, which had swallowed it up by the late 1920s. In order to create a proper rival for the Canadian Pacific's Windsor Station, Canadian National bought additional land to the east, as far as University Street. Homestead and St Paul's Church were demolished – the latter, fortunately, rebuilt in St Laurent as part of a college.

This loss of architectural heritage might have been justified had planners

striven to create the kind of grand terminus the city deserved and for which the site was well-suited: McGill College Avenue offered a vista running from the steps of the Arts Building right down to the prospective terminus – a version of New York's Grand Central Station, perhaps? Architect John Campbell Merrett designed a striking Art Deco interior concourse, but from the outside the building that rose by the end of World War II was a dull, squat box set some distance from Dorchester Street as if ashamed to go near it. It was Central Station, but never Grand.

The CNR eventually cottoned on to its new terminus's mediocrity and decided to build a vast hotel complex on top of it, recalling the great hotel-termini of the CPR. This being the 1950s, however, the result was no Viger Station or Gare du Palais – rather the monstrosity we know today as Hotel Le Reine Elizabeth. The building is even more of an affront to Montreal's skyline than its title is to French grammar. (Isn't the queen a woman?) If you don't believe me, go to the top of the McGill Arts Building steps and look down the length of the street at the hotel's endless boxy grey windows. They couldn't even centre the building properly.

North of Dorchester Street, between Mansfield and University streets, there was still plenty of hole. To fill it, developers decided to vault bravely into modernity, leaving behind the stale pseudo-Deco of Le Reine Elizabeth. They hired architects Henry Cobb and IM Pei, who had some experience fitting skyscrapers into heritage areas in cities such as Washington and Philadelphia. For some time it had been apparent to Montrealers that their city, too, needed a dose of urban renewal, particularly given the kind of blight still on offer along Dorchester Street – such as the

elegant St James Club and the distinguished Burnside Hall (recently home to the Fraser Institute Library). Both promptly fell to the bulldozer.

The building that rose on the north side of Dorchester Street, completed exactly fifty years ago, was to weather the controversy it immediately engendered and emerge as Montreal's most beloved building. The new head office of the Royal Bank consisted of a massive tower in the shape of a cross (as you looked down on it, which of course you could not do other than from an airplane as it was the tallest thing around) and a series of lower buildings framing the kind of windswept plaza that planners were fond of in the 1950s. Despite some obvious acquaintance with the work of Mies Van der Rohe, Cobb and Pei seem to have been influenced principally by the architects who designed the *Exposizione Universale Roma* (the "EUR") for Mussolini in the 1930s, albeit on a vaster scale. Like that fumbling attempt at classical pastiche, Montreal's cruciform tower and its subordinate blocks offer rows of vacant black windows instead of the clean lines and stunning surfaces that is Modernism at its best. Compare the Royal Bank tower with Victoria Square's Bourse, or with Dorchester Square's RIBC building, or with the complex at Westmount Square – which was actually designed by Mies. These were all products of the same period, but seem infinitely fresher.

Despite that, Place Ville Marie (as



the Royal Bank building is now generally known, though that name originally referred only to the mall beneath it) won its way into Montrealers' hearts as proof that they were hep and progressive and on their way to being citizens of a World City. Montrealers also like it because of its cross shape, which is of course a reflection of the cross on top of the mountain, which is also the city's symbol. The architecture of Place Ville Marie is secondary. We've long since stopped actually looking at its massive bulk, or for that matter noticing how complicated (albeit warm and dry in the winter) it makes getting to and from Central Station. We think it did great things for us as a city, but I would argue that Montreal emerged as the livable place we cher-

ish today despite, not because, of Place Ville Marie. Fifty years on, we ought to look back and realize we deserved something better. A grand central station facing up McGill College Avenue to the mountain. Or even just a hole.

This is a rant, I know. You can stand there and disagree if you like – but I should tell you that I'm fixing another sort of hole: one that lets the rain get in and stops my mind from wandering...

LETTER

Street level screenings

I enjoyed Rod MacLeod's article about the System Theatre. I remember frequenting it in the fifties, when admission was well under a dollar.

The theatre was at street level. What I remember the most about The System was that when you went in the front door from St Catherine Street, the screen was on the right, right beside you (with its back against St Catherine) so that you faced the people looking at the screen as you walked up the aisle to get a seat.

Also, I think the "Sy" disappeared at one time and it was called the Stem for a while.

Good Stuff.

*John Annesley
Frelighsburg, QC*



Top: Central Station at its opening, 1943. Photo: *Bibliothèque et archives nationales, PS47, S1, SS1, SSS1, D0002, P1877R*. Bottom: The Dorchester Street bridge over the CNR trestle, 1930. Photo: *McCord Museum, MP-1989.20.2*

TIMELINES

The Cost of Our Heritage

The Paul Holland Knowlton House

by Jessica Campbell

In 1815, Col. Paul Holland Knowlton, a son of Loyalists, settled and farmed on the land that has been owned since 1921 by the Knowlton Golf Club. He occupied a modest structure on Lot 14, Range 11, near a footpath through the woods that would later become Lakeshore Road and eventually, Lakeside Road. It is unlikely that Paul Holland Knowlton constructed the three-winged house, which, in 1832, was reported to look like it had been built for at least ten years already.

The “block house,” as historic documents call it, was surrounded by fields where Knowlton farmed potatoes. Knowlton sold his crop in the west wing of the house, nearest the road, along with flour, codfish, tea and tobacco. The road was then only a footpath leading to a single home, that of Alva Tibbits, where the village of Knowlton now lies. Through the distribution of land, and the establishment of mills, a store, farms and a school, the town was born. Paul Holland Knowlton lived to help repress the Lower Canada Rebellion of 1837, and was appointed to the Legislative Council of the Province of Canada where he fought for the under-represented interests of the Eastern Townships. In later years, the site of his house belonged to Christopher Dunkin, who became Brome County’s first Member of Parliament after Confederation.

Today, the fate of the Knowlton House hangs in the balance, as the discussion of its demolition, relocation or restoration continues between the owners the Knowlton Golf Club and the Town of Brome Lake. As of summer 2012, the two parties have been working two years towards an agreement. The subject is sensitive, and each party is trying to reach an amicable and peaceful solution that will satisfy both sides.

In November 2010, the golf club requested the removal of the house by demolition or relocation. The club’s motives for removal: landscaping and parking. Shortly thereafter, an opposition was born: 106 town residents signed a petition opposing the demolition and letters from concerned citizens found their way to the town hall. Additionally, this year saw the formation of a preservation committee composed of volunteers interested in restoring the house on its original property. Town resident Judith Duncanson publicly invited all who were interested in the house’s preservation to join the committee. When contacted recently, Duncanson reported that “the volunteer committee is at the moment dormant,

waiting for some decisions from the town and the golf club.” Jacques Lecours, Brome Lake’s councillor responsible for culture and communications, is leading the preservation project, and the committee cannot give information it does not have. Duncanson added, however, that “there is a great deal of support among the population of Brome Lake to preserve the house, so this will be an ongoing project.”

A core element of the debate remains: is the house of historic value and worthy of preservation? The Knowlton Golf Club recently stated that the house is “falling apart.” It feels the house is unoccupied and a burden to the club.



According to last year’s findings by architects Beaudry and Michaud, the house has been modified beyond recognition. Originally, its floors were “fine pine boards, very wide and smooth, nailed with extra-large square iron nails.” Since then, they reported, the building has been demolished, rebuilt

and modernized. The architects’ seven-hour-long inspection and 40-page report, which cost roughly \$70,000 and an extra \$7,500 for its analysis, resulted in conclusions favoring demolition: “one would be ready to sign its death warrant and bring it to the dump.”

The architects’ findings dampened the preservation group’s hopes that the house is convincingly historic. Councillor Lecours disagrees with the Beaudry and Michaud report. He contends that the building has not gone through major modifications. The modifications, he says, are reversible and have not compromised the integrity of the building.

Lecours’ statements presumably derive from a local architect’s assessments of the building: David Kininmonth’s. He has also taken their word that the cost of restoration would be far less than the \$500,000 cited by Beaudry and Michaud. And he rejects as unrealistic Beaudry and Michaud’s estimate of \$486,163 to relocate the house to the Brome County Historical Society (BCHS) site.

While Lecours disagrees with the idea of relocating the house, a public consultation on April 30, 2012, led to suggestions for the relocation and renovation of the house on different grounds.

A large part of any house’s historic value, however, lies within its foundations, and its surrounding environment offers the purest understanding of its context. The Tibbits Hill Schoolhouse, for example, is owned by the historical society and remains on its original site, where visitors are able to ap-

precipitate the purpose of the mid-nineteenth century building and have a better understanding that Knowlton was once an isolated rural community with limited means. Likewise, visitors to a restored Knowlton House could view the rolling hills that were once Knowlton's potato fields and the highway, which was once a rough country road.

Contrary to Kininmonth's conviction that the Knowlton House on site would remain a "dead exhibit" due to an inability to access it on private property, it is unlikely that the golf club would agree to full restoration on site only to deny public access. If the club were to allow access and perhaps some parking for visitors, then the house could be managed in a fashion similar to the Tibbits Hill Schoolhouse, and be opened to the public during specific times, perhaps outside of the golf season. Possibly it could join other monuments on the Brome Heritage Trail and be used for purposes compatible with its historical value. Perhaps it could serve a more modern purpose, such as a youth retreat where youths could learn the history of the Townships and the contribution made by the Loyalists in this part of Quebec.

Not surprisingly, the issue of funding that plagues so many small museums throughout Quebec has crept into the debate. Diana Timmins, President of the BCHS, who has been advised by both the golf club and the town not to get involved at the moment, formerly rejected offering funds to move or restore the house.

According to Quebec's Cultural Property Act, a town may cite a building as a heritage site and thereafter compel the owners to maintain the house. Once the house is cited, the town may apply for funding that would contribute to its renovation. Yet, government funding is difficult to obtain.

In the case of the Knowlton House, private fundraising among the public might better enable a restoration on site, or relocation, and might show that Brome Lake is behind the project. Councillor Lecours believes that if Council sees the community investing in the house, then it too will invest in the project. Perhaps these funds, added to the \$10,000 that the golf club is willing to contribute to the move, would enable the house to retain some of its historic value, if not all

of it. The fact that the BCHS has little space to offer has not been mentioned recently.

As of now, the future of the Knowlton House remains uncertain. The house sits on a property with owners who thus far have no legal obligation to maintain it and a town council that remains wary of funding the project on behalf of a hesitant community.

"Only part of the community is actively interested in the house; the other half couldn't care less," Lecours says. "It would be best if the money came from the townspeople."

When the Dunkin property was first transferred to the Knowlton Golf Club, historian Ernest Taylor mourned that that it "was a loss...to the entire public." Likewise, the town will suffer from losing the original Paul Holland Knowlton House, whether or not it understands the ramifications.

Is it the town's ambivalence or its apathy that lies behind the stagnation on this issue? Lecours laments the town's general lack of interest in its past. After all, he says, only 30 people attended the April 30 consultation meeting to discuss the house. "If you're not familiar with the past," he says, "you can't understand the present, and you cannot prepare for the future. The past is who we are, it has shaped us and how we think. This house is an object that enables us to glimpse into our past."

In other words, whether one is English- or French-speaking, or a permanent or a part-time resident, this house is a monument to the founder of Knowlton. It is where Col. Paul Holland Knowlton envisioned the village that bears his name.

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Mystery objects from Rawdon

The Rawdon Historical Society wonders if any of our readers could help solve this puzzle. The grandfather mentioned in this query was a descendent of one of the early families to settle on a farm in Rawdon.

A couple of years ago I photographed some old wooden objects that my grandfather had among his personal possessions. No one in the family knew what they were for. The bottom object looks like something to polish or sharpen knives with. The first and second objects seem to be related. The dowel with the eyelets seems to fit in the opening of the first object. Would you have any idea?

Beverly Prud'homme
Rawdon Historical Society
Rawdon, Quebec



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GUIDED TOURS

Between St Lambert and Longueuil

Remembering the Town of Montreal South

by Kevin Erskine-Henry

The City of Montreal is flanked on both sides by the towns of Montreal East and Montreal West each with their own distinct character. Even after the municipal mergers of 2002, the former city of Montreal North remains a separate borough on the island map. While most points are covered it is South that is missing from this Montreal compass. Almost forgotten is a town known as Montreal South, located at the base of the Jacques Cartier bridge on the South Shore, nestled between St Lambert and Old Longueuil.

The history of Montreal South starts in 1888, when a large tract of land located between Government Farm (Old Longueuil) and Woodrow Farms (St Lambert) just opposite Montreal was opened and divided into building lots. The developer was George Parent who would later buy and subdivide land in Greenfield Park and St Hubert. The Longueuil-St Lambert lots were sold to twelve English-speaking families (mostly northern English and Scots) who had worked on building the Victoria Bridge. Wanting to escape the grime of early Montreal, they longed for a place in the country. There were no roads, and these early settlers had to have their supplies drawn across the fields and through bush or over the snow in the winter. The first graded earth road with ditches was called Victoria Avenue (now Goupil), after Queen Victoria. In 1889, after several houses were built and families moved in, a station house was built at the junction of St Helen Street and the Grand Trunk railway tracks, which connected Montreal South to Montreal via the Victoria Bridge.

Having a direct link would allow Montreal South's population to grow

quickly. By 1890, a small building was used for a school as well as for Methodist and Baptist church services. When it became too crowded, church services were moved to the railway station. On April 30, 1892, with a grant of



\$200, Montreal South Union Church would open on St Helen Street. The church was called Union because Methodists, Baptists and Anglicans would meet, each taking a different time to hold their services. Also the Church hall would later be rented for use as a two-room English schoolhouse for the younger grades; older students went to school in Longueuil. The Presbyterians were a larger community and opened their own church, Gardenville, a year later in 1898.

By 1905, Montreal South's population had grown to 590 and was incorporated as a town. By 1906, the newly-formed Montreal & Southern Counties Railway began a daily interurban trolley across the Victoria Bridge; for eight cents, workers had quick transport to and from the factories along the Lachine Canal. The M&SCR located their first station in Saint Lambert and soon added a branch line to Montreal South. Being less than 10 minutes (5.2 miles) from Montreal's McGill Street-Youville station, and only a short walk from the shops of St Lambert, increased land val-

ues. As a result, most of the new residents who moved to Montreal South were the higher-paid middle managers and plant foremen, and this gave Montreal South a higher social status than their St Hubert Trolley line cousins. Montreal South residents also enjoyed electricity earlier (1906) than others on the South Shore.

With its country lifestyle, Montreal South would provide the best of both worlds. By 1943, a new English school called William White opened on the corner of Lafayette Street with a capacity of 250 students. Most of the English community life focused around the churches:

Montreal South United, Gardenville Presbyterian, and St Oswald's Anglican. The churches would host dinners, bazaars, fairs. They would join together for snowshoe tramping in the open fields and winter sleigh rides, trips across the frozen river along the Ice Road. During the summer, outdoor picnics and hiking trips along the river were common. Mrs K Campbell, who served as a United Church secretary until its closing, recalled:

"During the twenties Sunday school picnics were held at King Edward Park, located on the island directly opposite Boucherville. There were few private cars in those days so everyone was transported from the church by buses. Often the people from St Oswald's Anglican and Gardenville Presbyterian would join us... Since we rarely locked our doors and with almost no one left in town any thief would be able to make off with whatever they wanted..."

The population of Montreal South re-



mained largely English-speaking until the late 1940s. The end of the war and the opening of the Jacques Cartier bridge brought much expansion to the area around the base of the bridge.

The South Shore was now growing. By 1951, the population more than tripled from 1,441 to 4,214. The English community was now in the minority. While life in Montreal South was very peaceful and uneventful for most of its first fifty years, a growing problem for its residents in the 1940s was their neighbours to the east. The town of Jacques Cartier had grown almost overnight and with few rules and a mishmash of poor housing, it truly became the place known as the wrong side of the tracks. Crime would often spill over and for long-time residents who had once sought a gentle country life, it was now time to move on.

By the 1950s, the run of the M&SCR was coming to an end. The transit system was replaced by a come-by-chance bus network. The old Factory district located at the base of McGill Street was undergoing much change as plants closed or moved westward. Employees now preferred to stay on the island of Montreal. Newer, more attractive South Shore suburbs were also opening closer to the just-completed Champlain Bridge. The population had reached 5,756 and there was now a need to provide better municipal services. On January 28, 1961, Montreal South merged in-

to Longueuil. (Jacques Cartier would merge in 1969.) This new municipal merger would bring about some important physical changes to the community. New housing would replace the smaller homes that once lined the streets. With the opening of shopping centres, there was less business for the stores along St Helen Street, and most would soon close.

Nevertheless English community life in Montreal South in the early 60s remained fairly active, centred mostly, as always, on church life. Ladies would prepare afternoon teas and luncheons. In 1964, to celebrate the town's 75th anniversary, a huge dinner and concert for over 300 people was held. However,

this would also prove to be the last hurrah for the English-speaking community of Montreal South. With new English-speaking residents now choosing to locate in Greenfield Park or Brossard, the already small community would continue to shrink. After marking its 81st anniversary on June 28th 1970, Montreal South United Church would close its doors. A year later, St Oswald's Anglican Church would host a final service, attended by a handful of remaining worshippers, to officially dissolve the church – despite the fact that its building was only fifteen years old. Both churches were later torn down. The old M&SC train route through Montreal South lay abandoned for many years, serving as part dog walk and night spot for romantic teenagers. Recently, the old railway tracks were removed and replaced with a bicycle path leading into Longueuil. By 1998, with less than fifty students, the once bustling William White School was closed. Montreal South became a faded memory.

Longueuil has since placed historical plaques in its new Hotel de Ville to serve as a reminder of the former towns now merged under its name. In Montreal South's official 56-year history there is barely a line that speaks about the town's once deep English-speaking roots.

Kevin Erskine-Henry is chair of the South Shore Community Partners Network. Part of the SSCP's mandate is to promote Local Community History.



SPEM SUCCESSUS ALIT

125 Years of "Traf"

by Janet Chandler Allingham

The QAHN meeting at the Smith House a few years back was the first time in a long while that that I had been on Mount Royal, and it brought back childhood memories of skating on Beaver Lake, tobogganing down the adjacent hill, skiing by the cross, and sipping hot chocolate at the Chalet. I realized that much of my education had taken place within a few minutes of the meeting's location: at Trafalgar School for Girls ("Traf") and McGill University. I think the context of that meeting helped me to "see" the historical link between these two educational institutions, both still thriving where they first opened their doors in the nineteenth century.

At Traf, we were aware of a McGill connection: the names of graduates who went on to receive degrees at McGill were inscribed in gold on plaques adorning the walls of the gymnasium. Students got the impression that McGill was the only university in the world! We took it for granted that upon leaving Traf we would be qualified to enter the institution of higher learning "next door." At the QAHN meeting, someone mentioned the "Golden Square Mile," and I realized that the significance of attending school in this location had escaped me as a student.

It is, of course, not by chance that the two institutions are located in such close proximity; their intertwined histories are part of the history of higher education for women in Montreal. It was here that a combination of wealth, beneficence and far-sightedness influenced the way young women were to be educated. This year the Trafalgar community gratefully and proudly celebrates 125 years of providing education to young women in the same location, bordering what is now referred to as the "Historic and Natural District of Mount Royal."

This article summarizes the history of how the school, now the oldest Eng-

lish school for girls in Quebec and the third oldest in Canada, originated and developed.



The Founder of the Trafalgar Institute (after 1934 the Trafalgar School for Girls) was one of a number of early Scottish immigrants to Montreal who amassed considerable fortunes in business and were leaders in the city's churches, schools, and other organizations. They lived, for the most part, in what was referred to later as Montreal's "Golden Square Mile," in the west-central part of downtown.

Donald Ross (1811-1877) was typical of these young Scots. Son of a Ross-shire blacksmith whose early death left his widow with four children to support, Donald was sent to Montreal to live with his childless uncle and work for his dry goods business. At the age of 21, Donald's apparently bright future was threatened by a robbery during a trip to Toron-

to wherein he lost a large sum of money. Fortunately, his uncle set him up again, this time as an auctioneer; so successful was this venture that in four years he had amassed a fortune of nearly \$50,000. This, and inheriting much of his uncle's estate, made Donald a very wealthy man.

Donald and his wife, Jane Ross (a cousin), lived at Viewmount, located on what is now Côte des Neiges Road. Their garden was famous for its fruits, vegetables, and flowers, thanks to the efforts of their capable gardener Patrick McKenna, who was later able to set up a fruit and flower stand on the road nearby with the produce Donald and Jane generously allowed him to use. (Eventually it became "McKenna Côte des Neiges Florist," an enterprise that stood in exactly the same location until 1993.) The Ross property extended some distance west of Cote des Neiges Road after Donald acquired the Trafalgar estate in 1860. This estate had once been owned by John Ogilvy, who was an admirer of Lord Nelson and gave the farm its name. Ogilvy had erected a tower there, and placed a cannon beside it which was ceremoniously fired on October 21st, Trafalgar Day. It was on this estate that Ross set his sights on establishing a school for young women.

Why this childless, middle-aged man should have wished to do this has long been debated. Perhaps he was thinking of his mother and sister, neither of whom had received much education. He must also have been aware of the growing belief in Canada and elsewhere that girls should be offered the same educational opportunities as boys. Despite the wealth within Montreal, no solid educational opportunities were available for young women. Some private schools for girls existed, but they focussed on such ladylike pursuits as music and embroidery. Rich families employed governesses to provide education in the home. Accordingly, Ross's will, written in 1867, called for trustees to "erect, es-



establish and forever maintain” a school for girls on the Trafalgar property. His stated aim was to “do the greatest amount of good possible in educating the female sex,” at least those who belonged “not to the lower ranks, but to families of the respectable and middle ranks.”

At their first meeting in 1872, the trustees passed a resolution to establish the Trafalgar Institute; they adopted as its seal the Ross family coat of arms and its motto, *Spem successus alit* (success nourishes hope). The board of trustees included John William Dawson, principal of McGill College, and several Protestant ministers. In its first years, many of the trustees came from the prestigious St. Paul’s Presbyterian Church, located on Dorchester Street, whose members (Ross included) supported numerous educational and benevolent projects for the good of the larger community. At first there were no funds, but in 1884 the St Paul’s Reverend James Barclay, “the preacher who knew where the money was,” became chair of the board. Barclay approached Donald Smith (later Lord Strathcona), one of the richest men in Canada, governor of the Hudson’s Bay Company, president of the Bank of Montreal, one of the principal railroad developers in North America, and a member of St Paul’s congregation.

Already a benefactor of McGill University, Smith offered the Trafalgar trustees \$25,000 with three conditions: (1) that the Institute should be Protes-

tant, but non-denominational and non-sectarian; (2) that it seek affiliation with McGill University as soon as possible; and (3) that building should begin no later than June 1st, 1885. These requests were compatible with the terms of Donald Ross’s will, but then Smith made a further stipulation that was not: that the Institute be built within the boundaries of the City of Montreal to be closer to the population. After much debate, the trustees decided to accept Smith’s terms. The Trafalgar property was sold, and the proceeds used to support the Institute.

Smith’s donation made it possible for the trustees to purchase Chalderton Lodge, home of Dr. Alexander Mitchell, who generously agreed to a price that was less than the house was worth. Built in 1848 at the top of Simpson Street by a British military officer, Colonel George Augustus Wetherall, Chalderton Lodge was a “gabled fairy-tale cottage” surrounded by trees and a garden, with a view of the St. Lawrence River to the south.

year, enrollment stood at twelve.

There were three staff members, all men: the school physician, and the Classics and Vocal Music teachers. In December 1887, Trafalgar’s first principal, Miss Grace Fairley, arrived from Scotland. Through the Association for the Higher Education of Women (which later served as a model for the admission of women to McGill), she had been one of the first women to graduate from the University of Edinburgh. It is reported that she was a cheerful presence in the girls’ lives, despite her belief that “work is everything; the worker but a means to the end.”

The curriculum, drawn up by the principal of McGill, Dr. Dawson, and Rev. Barclay, was representative of its time, but also progressive in that Gymnastics was included. The first students were examined in Reading, Spelling and Writing, Grammar and composition, Arithmetic, Geography, Scripture, Latin, and Geometry. Students were given access to the McGill University College li-



On September 28, 1887, the Trafalgar Institute opened its doors for the first day of school. Effie Baker was the only student that day, but one more arrived from Toronto during the evening. A third student arrived by Christmas. Traf’s first class consisted of the aforesaid Effie, Nora Morris, Florence Trenholme, Lizzie Shewan, Lena Labatt, Ethel Dobell, Florence Botterell (one of Trafalgar’s first McGill graduates – the other being Katherine Mitchell), and Edith Reford. By the end of the first

brary. There was an expectation that everyone would help with the “light domestic work” of running the Institute. Fees were set at \$280 per annum for boarding students and a \$100 per year for a limited number of day students.

Miss Fairley and the board appear to have had a harmonious relationship, and the school thrived under her leadership. By the second year, the boarding school was filled to capacity with an enrollment of twenty girls. Advertisements of the time spoke of the school’s “commodious residence,” its 1½ acre garden, and an “elevated situation above the

City providing both a view and good health." By 1890 enrollment stood at 56, and soon other classes were added.

Chalderton Lodge had been adequate when numbers were small, but as the school grew the board was happy to provide for an expansion. This took place in 1890, making way for a gas-lit gymnasium, and a new East Wing containing dormitories as well as a large dining room and music room. A second expansion in 1902 provided more classrooms, cloakrooms, and an assembly hall. The architect for both was Andrew Taylor, who had designed many buildings for McGill University and homes for Montreal's wealthy families.

The 1902 expansion is the only part of the school still in current use, and contains three architectural features: a steeply step-gabled roof, a double door of carved oak (on the Dr. Penfield side) and the assembly hall, with its Gothic features. The assembly hall, the scene of daily prayers for so many years, now serves as the Library.

By the early twentieth Century, the Trafalgar Institute had established for itself a reputation based on academic achievement, a progressive curriculum, and competent staff. A sign of its success was the ongoing need for more space. Despite the difficulties posed by World War I, Trafalgar's board of governors authorized another expansion. A new wing was added on the north side, on ground that is now Dr Penfield Avenue and Percy Walters Park; it consisted of six more classrooms, cloak rooms, a washroom, a boarders' study, a new art studio and an up-to-date science laboratory.

Traf rallied around the war effort. Students formed a Red Cross work group, producing a total of 2,230 articles such as sweaters, socks and mufflers; they also made pillow cases and blankets for the Convalescent Military Hospital and purchased a \$100 Victory Bond. Former students paid their own way to do volunteer work at the front. Many Traf traditions started during this period, including the house and prefect system, a school magazine *Echoes*, a Brownie Pack and Girl Guide Company, and the Trafalgar Old Girls Association (TOGA). Inter-school athletic activities were born in this era.

The war placed stresses on staff.

Both principals who followed Miss Fairley stayed for short terms: Miss Hardy (1913-1915) and Miss Windsor (1915-1917). It was only with the hiring of Miss Janet Cumming that the school saw continuity in leadership. Like Miss Fairley, Miss Cumming had been born and educated in Scotland, at a time when women could not be fully admitted to university. She had followed a curriculum at the Elgin Academy and the Ferrers' School in Aberdeen, eventually sitting for university-level exams. Like many young women of her day, she sought employment in Canada, arriving



at Havergal College, in Toronto, in 1910. She applied for the principalship of Trafalgar, was turned down the first time, but appointed in 1917. The board must have thought highly of Miss Cumming, for it gave her more authority than her predecessors. She was given full responsibility in hiring staff, and they were interested in her recommendations in the general running of the school. By the time she retired in 1940, Miss Cumming could take credit for a job well done.

Traf's first native-born principal, Dr. Joan M.V. Foster, had impressive credentials. Her father was Walter E. Foster, premier of New Brunswick (1917-1923), whose Liberal government had given women the vote in 1919. Joan Foster had attended Havergal, and then went on to earn BA and MA degrees at McGill in English and European Histo-

ry. She then attended Oxford on a Moyse Travelling Scholarship. She returned to McGill as Warden of Royal Victoria College and Assistant Conference Instructor in the Department of History. After teaching for seven years at Riverbend, a girls' school in Winnipeg, she resumed her studies at Bryn Mawr College in Pennsylvania, earning a PhD in 1937. (This institution was, interestingly, the first American university to grant PhD degrees to women.) While teaching at St. Agatha's School in New York, Dr. Foster was recommended by the Warden of the Royal Victoria College to apply for the position of principal at Trafalgar. In the summer of 1940, Dr. Foster began to work with Miss Cumming to effect a smooth transition.

Dr. Foster was known as a brilliant teacher and administrator who was keen on ceremony. She donned a velvet-barred Oxford gown for Prayers each morning, and added an academic hood on the days when marks were read out. Each morning the hymn player assisted Dr. Foster with her gown, walked behind her carrying the Bible which was finally placed on the lectern, pointed to the hymn number for her to announce, and finally sat down at the piano. Even during the late sixties, students were still curtsying to Dr. Foster.

World War II brought difficulties in staffing and procuring supplies, as well as a disrupted schedule. Trafalgar also became home to an unexpected arrival of 29 students from Britain, France, and elsewhere in Europe as part of the War Evacuation Scheme. As an act of patriotism, the board reduced the boarding fees charged to the daughters of serving military men and government employees. The cost of living rose during wartime by twenty per cent, causing financial problems for the school. Dr. Foster recommended closing the boarding school and increasing enrollment at the day school. This was not done, but the issue had to be faced later on.

Dr. Foster was responsible for a number of innovations. She initiated Arts and Science streams as well as outdoor sports like skiing and skating, and introduced shorts for gym class. Boarders' Dances and the Trafalgar Day Open House made the school more open to visitors. In 1957 a TV was purchased for the boarders. Prefects and the Head Girl

were to be elected by the students, instead of being appointed by the staff. True to Donald Ross' wish for a school that was not only for the wealthy, a scholarship (funded by the Trafalgar Old Girls' Association) was offered for the first time in 1941 in memory of Miss Cumming.

In 1955, the City of Montreal re-



quired that the north section of the school be removed to allow for the extension of McGregor Street (now Dr. Penfield) across the property. The City offered the school \$160,000 as compensation, which was far less than the cost of the required renovations. A major fund-raising campaign was necessary. The new wing was opened by Governor General Vincent Massey on February 10, 1956. After the ceremony, he promptly advised Dr. Foster to give the girls a holiday in the name of the Queen.

Dr. Foster's health began to decline, and in 1964 she was obliged to resign. She was replaced by Jean Harvie, a Trafalgar grad and teacher of Classics there since 1939. Miss Harvie had been an excellent student, coming first in the McGill Matriculation examinations of 1931 and winning the Henry Chapman Gold Medal in Classics. She also won a Moyse Travelling Scholarship, which enabled her to study at Oxford for two years, after which she completed a post-graduate diploma in Education at the University of London. With the threat of war in Europe, she booked passage on the ill-fated SS Athenia, the first ship to be bombed in World War II. Miss Harvie survived by climbing into a lifeboat

wearing high heels and an evening gown, with nothing more than a tiny purse. Trafalgar's organist and choir director, Frederick Blair, credited with making Montreal a centre for organ music, drowned on that voyage. Three decades later, reminiscing about the event during a Latin class, Miss Harvie digressed in order to advise the availability of practical footwear at all times.

It fell to Miss Harvie to lead the school during the tumultuous changes that were taking place in Quebec. Some of the more memorable events played out close to the school: the kidnapping of James Cross and the ensuing presence of soldiers with bayonets drawn outside Metro stations and embassies once the War Measures Act had been evoked. The transformation of Quebec education also brought insecurity; what would be the long-term role of private schools? The Quebec Association of Independent Schools, of which Trafalgar became a member, argued that private schools provided "quality education: they offered diversity and enrichment; they met special needs of individuals and particular communities, and they preserved values in a pluralistic society." Under the provisions of the Private Education Act of 1968, Trafalgar was declared a school "in the public interest" and was thus entitled to a grant of 80% of the average cost of educating a pupil. However, since the school had not been able to prepare its budget prior to receiving the information, it faced the very real possibility of bankruptcy because of the shortfall between operating expenses and fees. In order to survive, Trafalgar needed 100% enrollment.

To top it off, the school's infrastruc-

ture, though historical, was outdated. Chalderton Lodge, built in 1848 and crumbling, still served as the boarding school. Classrooms in the main part of the school also needed to be upgraded. Once again, a member of the local community came to the rescue: Miss Marjorie Caverhill, who was a Trafalgar School graduate from the Class of 1907 as well as neighbour, living in a grey-stone mansion south-east of the school. Principal owner of Caverhill Learmont, her family's hardware firm, Miss Caverhill was a well-known businesswoman, philanthropist and supporter of the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts. When she died in 1970, she bequeathed her property to the school.

The board considered how best to use this windfall, and in the end decided that "form follows function." The southern portion of the old school would be torn down in order to build a modern gymnasium, classrooms, laboratories, offices, and a cafeteria. Today, what remains of the original school is its gabled roof and the historic oak door that now faces Dr. Penfield Avenue. Miss Caverhill's home was sold, and then demolished. Sadly, the carpet of blue scylla, long-admired by generations of Trafalgar girls, also disappeared. The new Caverhill Wing was opened amid much fanfare on May 8, 1974. While some Old Girls missed the character of the old buildings, the modern look inspired a sense of optimism. Separate labs for physics, chemistry, and biology demonstrated the importance of science. The new gym made it possible to host games "at home."

That year, Miss Harvie retired as principal. This Latin scholar's parting



words reflected on the school's motto, which she confessed had always puzzled her:

Spem successus alit – “Success nourishes hope.” One would expect success to be the result, whereas here it is the beginning. This makes it very easy to misinterpret... The motto does not mean “Hope nourishes success.” That is sheer nonsense, for just hoping never achieves anything. Success comes only as the result of effort. So, as I see it, the motto must mean that first one works hard to achieve success, then one may hope to succeed again or perhaps even to do better... Let success spur you on; you can, because you think you can.

Mrs. Jeanette Doupe, who succeeded Miss Harvie as principal in 1975, introduced advanced courses in physics and chemistry, and managed to work creatively around the curriculum imposed by the Parti Québécois government. In 1981 the first three computers arrived at the school, and the board funded even more including printers and software. Mrs. Doupe also raised the general admission and academic standards. Some have suggested that she “saved the school” at this juncture in its history. One of the arguments she mounted, prevalent during the era, was that girls do better in math and science when they are learning in an all-girl environment. This seemed to inspire the board even more to safeguard the education of girls. Between 1975 and 1985, the students also became involved in community outreach and participated in more opportunities within the city. Some travelled to Ottawa, Stratford, and England. All of the above strategies contributed to a sound reputation for the school, and in the mid-1980s there was a waiting list of 275. However, with high rates of inflation and the need to keep salaries competitive with those of public school teachers, finances were tight.

Mrs. Doupe resigned in 1985, having been appointed principal of Havergal College in Toronto. She was succeeded first by Mrs. Shirley Packer (to 1987) and then by Miss Barbara Armbruster (to 1994), who was herself an Old Girl (Class of 1957) and Latin scholar like Miss Harvie. The 1987 Trafalgar centennial was celebrated, in part, by a building campaign so that yet another wing could be added. This time, the extension

would require that the third floor roof be raised.

Traf's centennial celebrations were the occasion to note that it was now the oldest English-speaking girls' school in Quebec. It aimed to remain a “flagship” school, with state-of-the-art laboratories and teachers who were enthusiastic about innovation. Pressure to amalgamate with a local boys' school was rejected. Trafalgar seemed to be on a firm footing to face the future. It was even confident enough to change some of the



long-standing traditions: the Christmas Concert became the Trafalgar School Family Celebration, and in place of daily Prayers there were faith-related assemblies.

When Miss Armbruster retired in 1994, there was to be yet another significant event: the arrival of the school's first male principal. Mr. Geoffrey Dowd had spent all of his previous teaching experience at Selwyn House, a school for boys in Westmount. Born and raised in Quebec, he had received his post-secondary education at McGill, Queen's and Concordia. As the father of two daughters, he “thought it would be interesting to work with young women, whose ambitions and aptitudes are similar, but whose way of being is not.”

The appointment aroused criticism – some felt it was counter to what the school stood for – but the board stood by its decision that Mr. Dowd was the best candidate. For his part, the new principal said that he viewed his appointment “rather as a sign that Trafalgar recognizes and has signalled that now – and in the future – women and men alike should be judged on merit in any hiring process in any institution.” He won-

dered if “most boys' schools would be as open-minded.”

Today, 125 years after it first opened its doors, girls still climb the Simpson Street hill to attend Trafalgar School for Girls. They come from across the Island of Montreal and even beyond, arriving from nearby train, bus and metro stations. Instead of tunics, they are clad in kilts and ties of the Hunting McRae tartan. They use cell phones to talk to one another; by the fall of 2012 every Grade 7 student will be required to use an iPad. Nowadays the school is surrounded by apartment buildings, and the view of the St. Lawrence, even from the top storey, is blocked by the Montreal skyline. The garden, however, is still an oasis of calm in the midst of the concrete: a little postage stamp of green space, with the needed addition of a paved parking lot, but still a garden. The high fence keeps the physical world out, while the Internet connects Traf to the world.

Mr. Dowd proudly and fondly refers to Traf as “a little jewel.” The current enrollment stands at 200. There is a feeling of order, security and friendliness when one enters the building. The students, during a recent Career Day, were attentive, polite, and respectful. At the request of parents, they study subjects in French at both junior and senior levels. The staff organize extra-curricular activities including community outreach. Donald Ross would approve. He would also be happy that girls from Traf do well in high school leaving exams, and in Canada-wide Debating, Mathematics, and Science contests. Graduates of the school are now spread out all over the world, engaged in a multitude of professions and activities unheard of in his day. His dream, taken up by others, is being achieved.

Janet Chandler Allingham graduated from Trafalgar School for Girls in 1968 and from the McGill School of Nursing in 1974. She currently lives in Vale Perkins, Quebec.

The main source of information for this article was Traf: A History of Trafalgar School for Girls by Margaret Gillett, published in 2000.

QAHN PHOTO CONTEST 2012

QAHN's first-ever Heritage Photo Contest has proven to be a big success! Seventy-eight contest entries were received from students at six schools around the province. The following schools participated in QAHN's 2012 Heritage Photo Contest:

*John Grant High School, Montreal
Paul VI High School, Montreal
Three Rivers Academy, Trois-Rivières
Laurier Senior High School, Laval
Maniwaki Woodland School, Maniwaki
Beaconsfield High School, Beaconsfield*

Our judging committee was very impressed with the quality of the photos we received, and are pleased to report that the following students have been chosen as the winners of QAHN's 2012 Heritage Photo Contest:



1st Prize (\$150 with Certificate)

Lloyd's Tractor

by Esther Grebe, Secondary 3, Maniwaki Woodland High School, Maniwaki

Category: Cultural heritage

This tractor is Lloyd's companion. It's weathered many seasons but is still going strong. Like Lloyd himself it has seen hard times but is steady and dependable. His tractor allows Lloyd to live responsibly off the land. He does enough logging to sustain himself, but he's left the land relatively untouched. He doesn't enjoy cities or traveling, but prefers to have his feet rooted in good soil. Lloyd lives on the farm he grew up on but life was never easy. He's endured many hardships, even losing a finger to a saw. Nature is his passion. He enjoys putting out apples and carrots for deer, not to hunt them, but to watch and observe. He plays recordings of nature sounds in his basement and can recognize each animal's song. Lloyd's dream is to pass on his love of nature to the next generation. This tractor will help fulfill his dream.



2nd Prize (\$100 with Certificate)

Hall of Fame

by Alaethia Poettcker, Secondary 3,
Beaconsfield High School, Beaconsfield
Category: Cultural heritage

Canadian heritage is something we cherish and build off every time we spend time with loved ones doing something we love. Heritage is tradition with family and the ones that are close to you. Heritage helps us persevere and motivates us to do our best. The photograph titled “Hall of Fame” represents our cultural heritage. If you live in Canada you are probably a fan of hockey. Families sit around the TV cheering on their favorite teams, hoping their team wins the Stanley Cup. Because we live in Montreal, my family’s team is naturally the Canadiens. The bleu, blanc et rouge have been here for over 100 years making them a very special and important part of our culture. This image represents the spirit of our heroes which keeps this sport we love so much alive. They have inspired so many people to keep reaching their goals and never give up, and that you can do something you love for a job.

3rd Prize - tie (\$50 with Certificate)

Abuelas on the Staircase

by Kristina Martinez, Secondary 5,
Laurier Senior High School, Laval
Category: Cultural heritage

I took this photograph in summer 2010 on my trip to Havana. These two old ladies were sitting on the base of a staircase chatting. I got to speak to them for a little while and they were a true delight. I think they really showed a form of cultural heritage, as they represent a classic scene in these Cuban cities. These grandmothers sitting on the dusty steps represent the origin of families, their wrinkle lines a testimony of their age and experience. I named this photo “Abuelas on the staircase,” because abuela is the Spanish word for grandmother.



3rd Prize - tie (\$50 with Certificate)

Graveyard Tree

by Maddison Rea, Secondary 3,
John Grant High School, Montreal
Category: built heritage / family heritage



QAHN HERITAGE ESSAY CONTEST WINNERS, 2012

Sixty-eight students from five elementary schools around Quebec participated in QAHN's 2012 Heritage Essay Contest. Students from the following schools submitted essays:

Terry Fox School, Saint-Hubert
Royal Vale School, Montreal
Heroes' Memorial School, Cowansville
Sainte-Agathe Academy
Royal Charles School, Saint-Hubert

Our judging committee was pleased with the quality of work submitted this year, and have awarded the following prizes:

1st Prize (\$150 with Certificate):

Austin Roy, "The Eastern Townships Railroads,"
Grade 5, Heroes' Memorial School, Cowansville.

2nd Prize (\$100 with Certificate):

Dylan Desormeaux, "George Knight Nesbitt,"
Grade 5, Heroes' Memorial School, Cowansville.

3rd Prize (\$50 with Certificate):

Cassie Lapierre, "The Orchards of Frelighsburg,"
Grade 5, Heroes' Memorial School, Cowansville.

The Eastern Townships Railroads

by Austin Roy

In the nineteenth century, railways were needed in the Eastern Townships to get to raw materials, for fast travel, the growth of businesses, and to fill in the desire to build more railway lines. In the past



most people didn't have cars to travel with or trucks to carry materials. Railways met this need. Today most of the railways and the stations have been shut down because they are not needed.

In 1836 the first railway in the Eastern Townships was built called the Chaplain and St Johns where it connected to the water route to New York via Lake Champlain. Three years later other lines were built to Ontario via Kingston. More railways were needed to help develop the Township area.

By 1900 the three railways that were mostly used were The Grand Trunk Railway (which became Canadian National), Quebec Central, and Canadian Pacific. Towns near railway stations grew faster.

Often the railway lines were shut down because of flooding and work needed to be done on the lines. All the different railway lines could not stay in business.

In the twentieth century, lots of lines and stations closed. The Canadian Pacific railway bought the Southeastern Railway. The service to Highwater stopped in the mid-1960s. They had changed the name of Mansonville Station to Highwater in 1909 because of the yearly flooding on the Missisquoi River.



The Canadian Pacific Railway also purchased the line through Foster, namely the Foster station. In the 1970s the Foster station was closed and the Lac Brome Tourist Bureau used the building. In Cowansville the railway station was torn down and today there is a restaurant called La Station on that site.

George Knight Nesbitt

by Dylan Desormeau

George was born in Napierville, in the province of Quebec, on September 29, 1836. His father was of Irish descent, and he was a farmer and a mill owner. The early days of George's life was spent on the family farm and in his father's mill.

As a young man George went to the United States for a while before returning to Canada in 1869, where he settled in Cowansville. In 1870, he purchased the four mill which had been built in 1839 by Andrew Cowan, the brother of Peter Cowan and William Carter, Andrew's brother-in-law. Peter Cowan is famous for giving his name to the town of Cowansville.

George Nesbitt became a successful businessman and he was also the owner of flour mills in Frelighsburg and Mansonville.

In 1881 George built a huge family house. It is still standing. There were several houses built in the Empire Style around that time, but his is the only house still here. Right now the house is medical clinic right beside our school.

In 1891, with the help of his son Albert, he installed at his mill, a generator with enough power for 300 lights, creating the first electric lighting in Cowansville. In 1903, he was the first owner of an automobile in Cowansville.

He was the second Mayor of Cowansville in 1877 and 1878.

He was married to Mary Jane Dunn and they had three children. He died in Cowansville in 1909.

Because of George Nesbitt, Cowansville got its first electric power and the town has a beautiful building that everyone can still look at and admire.

The Orchards of Frelighsburg

by Cassie Lapierre

In the month of May, the apples blossom. In fall, the apples are ripe and ready to be picked. Apple growing has a main industry for Frelighsburg since 1930, but apples have been grown in the area for a long time.

Frelighsburg is a good place to grow apples because of the gentle hills, the soils, and the pattern of the winds will blow in the area. Farmers began to change their farms to apple orchards.

Adelard Godbout, who was once the premier of Quebec, had an orchard in the Frelighsburg area.

The first crop that was to be sold was picked in 1939. Eight thousand bushels were sold. The year before the crop had been destroyed by a hurricane.

A Co-Operative of Apple Growers was formed in 1949 in this region and Rouville. In Farnham they built a packing and storage plant. It could hold 200 000 bushels. That's a lot of apples!

The favourite apple for a long time was the McIntosh. That is my favourite kind of apple too. Apple growers try out many different kinds of apples. Some use insecticides and others are trying to be organic.

Apples can be used to eat as is, or to make apple sauce, apple juice, apple jelly, or apple cider. Apples are important to this area. Apples and apple products are sold here, in Montreal, across Canada and the World!



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MONTREAL'S MUSIC MAN

Lewis V. Elvin and the Junior Symphony Orchestra

by Carol Martin

Author's note: The Quebec Heritage News of March-April 2010, carried a request from a New Zealand music biographer researching Harry Norris for information about a possible connection of Norris with the Montreal Junior Symphony Orchestra and Lewis V. Elvin. I responded to that request by reviewing my personal files about the MJSO, and researching the material held in the Music Archives of Library and Archives Canada. The resulting research led to this article.

In the 1940s, Lewis V. Elvin founded one of the earliest youth orchestras in Canada, the Montreal Junior Symphony. Like the charismatic protagonist of the Broadway musical *The Music Man*, Elvin had a vision of students playing instruments and making music together. He also had the charm, organizing skills and musicianship to create and lead such an orchestra, and he was its conductor until his retirement in 1971.

Elvin arrived in Canada from England in 1928, just before the outset of the Great Depression. This energetic young man of 22 found work that allowed him to follow his musical avocation and receive advanced musical training, leading to (and continuing while he held) a teaching position with Montreal's Protestant school board. And in Montreal he found himself among several other English, or English-trained, musicians who were making their mark on its music scene. He credits one of them, Irvin Cooper, for his move to a full-time career in school music. According to biographical notes in a 1954 concert programme (MJSO at York, England: Rialto Cinema, July 19, 1954), Elvin "immediately became active in amateur musical organizations" after arriving in Canada, "eventually giving up an accounting position, upon the advice of Dr. Irvin Cooper, to enter the Montreal [Protestant] schools as a Music Specialist." Elvin was hired as a school music teacher in Montreal in the early 1940s. His energy and inspirational teaching style coincided with, and enhanced, the school board's expanding

interest in instrumental music for younger students as well as those in its high schools. By 1945 he had formed an inter-schools orchestra for students; in 1947 it expanded to become the Montreal Junior Symphony.

Lewis Vernon Elvin was born in 1905 in Bamsley, Yorkshire, a coal mining and industrial town with a population of about 40,000. With the exception of three childhood years in South Africa, he grew up and received his



schooling and early musical training in Bamsley and Manchester. While Bamsley and the surrounding villages were noted for their tradition of brass bands, originally created as social clubs for its mining communities, there were clearly wider music options, as Lewis Elvin learned the violin and developed an interest in classical music. But the declining industrial towns of Yorkshire offered limited employment opportunities, and in the summer of 1928 Lewis left a job in a local paper mill and set out with his younger brother Jack for Canada. With \$49 between them, the brothers' announced intention was to take up farming in the Canadian west, sponsored by a Manitoba-based organization, the British Settlement Society of Canada. Lewis Elvin and his brother Jack arrived August 5, 1928 in Quebec City aboard the *Athenia*. (LAC Immigration records, RG75, Series C-1-a, Reel T-14746, 1928, Vol. 17, p. 219.)

Whether or not the brothers ever farmed

in Canada, within a few years Lewis Elvin was living in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, and working at clerical and accounting jobs in that city. A few traces of his music activity during this time appeared in newspapers reporting on Kiwanis Music Festivals. In 1933, the Saskatoon *Star-Phoenix* of May 30 mentioned his participation in a trio ensemble group. The members of this group were not ideally matched, according to the reviewer, but received a mark of 81, and "the violinist [Lewis Elvin] had more range, colour and quality than the cellist." Five years later, he was conducting an orchestra competing in the 1938 Saskatchewan Kiwanis Music Festival. The Regina *Leader-Post* of April 28, 1938, had a glowing review of the festival's closing session, as follows: "The closing session, at which all three adjudicators were present, opened in fine style with two exceedingly fine performances by the Kiwanis orchestra (augmented) conducted by Lewis Elvin. So well were they received that Maurice Jacobson suggested that both selections be repeated." Elvin's string orchestra entry received 88 points, while his entry in full orchestra received 90.

By 1941, Lewis Elvin was in the Montreal area, involved with the newly-formed Verdun Civic Symphony Orchestra, of which he was conductor. The *Montreal Gazette* announced and described its initial concert, in April of that year, and another in July. Although Elvin had been following his musical avocation while living in Saskatoon, Montreal offered opportunities for amateur and professional music as well as advanced musical training in an environment with several other English, or English-trained, musicians who were making their mark on its music scene. With characteristic energy, Elvin was soon involved in work and after-hours study, and he was finally able to find paid employment in the music field.

One of his mentors was Irvin Cooper, a fellow Englishman born in Nelson, Lancashire, who had emigrated at about the same time as Elvin, and by 1930 was a music teacher with the Montreal Protestant school board, becoming its Supervisor of Music in 1938-39. Cooper also taught at McGill, and

Elvin studied orchestration and arranging under his tutelage. Douglas Clarke, from Reading, Berkshire, had been involved in the Winnipeg orchestral scene before relocating to Montreal in 1929; Elvin mentions that he studied counterpoint and composition with Clarke. And there is also Harry Norris, a New Zealander who furthered his music studies in England, where he was music director during the 1920s for the D'Oyly Carte music company, and took up residence in Montreal in 1929. Although Norris's sphere in Montreal was primarily light opera, he also taught violin, and he and Elvin were clearly acquainted and in contact with each other. From Montreal, Elvin also furthered his musical education during summer vacations in Boston and studied conducting with Leon Barzin of the National Symphony Orchestra of New York.

The 1930s and 1940s were a good time for music, both choral and instrumental, in Montreal's Protestant schools. For some time the McGill University Conservatorium of Music had been allowed classroom space in several schools for after-hours teaching of instrumental music (available to students in the board's schools and to others in the neighbourhood), but in the mid-1930s, music became a High School Leaving Examination subject. By 1938, the Board was offering its own orchestral classes, 11 different classes in four high schools; a few years later it had begun instrumental music instruction at the elementary school level. In October 1944, when Lewis Vernon Elvin married Grace Parkin, he was a teacher of music for the Montreal Protestant school board (and she was also a board employee, a clerk in Herbert Symonds School). In that autumn I was a student at Willingdon School and a beginning violinist in its string orchestra under the baton of Mr. Elvin.

In 1945, Elvin conducted his newly-formed Inter-Schools Junior and Senior orchestras in a concert at Montreal High School

that also featured the Baron Byng High School Choir, directed by Irvin Cooper. Elvin was then teaching instrumental music at Bancroft, Gilson, Iona, Rosedale and Willingdon elementary schools, according to programme notes. He was also studying in after-school hours at McGill, from which he received a Bachelor of Music degree in 1946.

In 1947, the school board reported on the "music event of the year," the International Festival of School Music held in Montreal in April. (Protestant School Board of Greater Montreal Annual Report for 1945–47, p. 26, 27.) The Montreal schools, Catholic and Protestant, French and English, took part, along with school groups from Ontario, New York and the New England states. Five huge concerts were held in the Forum and publicly attended, with additional concerts in venues such as McGill's Sir Arthur Currie gymnasium. Lewis V. Elvin is listed on its programme, directing the Montreal schools orchestra, made up of 75 players (including me), at the festival. In 1948, Elvin received his Licentiate of the Royal Academy of Music (LRSM).

The Montreal Junior Symphony Orchestra (MJSO) expanded the group of school-trained instrumental musicians to a full orchestra complement. Elvin also saw the potential within it to create and develop sub-groups such as string and wind ensembles and quartets, and in the 1950s extended its admission to include some young musicians up to the age of 20 who were no longer in the elementary or high schools. In 1948, he took the Montreal Inter-Schools-Orchestra/MJSO to the Ottawa Music Festival. It was a tour de force for the Montrealers, Elvin, and the school board, as it received first class standing in all of its entries. He followed this success two years later by entering the MJSO in Toronto's Kiwanis Music Festival, with equally rewarding results. During the summer of 1954, the orchestra toured England and played eleven concerts in various cities there,

a ground-breaking experience for participants and the orchestra itself, described as "the first Canadian symphony orchestra to make a European tour." (Library and Archives Canada, MUS 23: Montreal Junior Symphony Orchestra fonds, 1947–1973.) Subsequent concert tours followed: Scandinavia in 1963, and Switzerland in 1970. There were also regular annual concerts in Montreal and frequent performances for local organizations in the city, providing opportunities that encouraged the group to expand its repertoire and hone its performance skills.

The early benchmarks of Elvin's Montreal Junior Symphony Orchestra, including the Ottawa and Toronto festivals and the tour of England, were also part of my own experience. In my mind's eye, I see us on the floodlit stage at Ottawa's Glebe Collegiate Auditorium. I'm 13 years old, in the back rows of the violin section, playing third violin. Lewis V. Elvin raises his baton, and we launch into Verdi's "Grand March" from the opera *Aida*. The strings have the opening bars, and then the wonderful trumpets sound. Around me, the different instruments join in, and the auditorium is filled with music. I am part of this encompassing "surround sound," understanding music in terms of the interwoven actions of each section. The time is April 1948, and the event my second music festival experience. The Festival adjudicator, Dr. Gordon Slater of Lincoln, England, praises the orchestra for "fine orchestral discipline . . . unanimity of bowing . . . really professional standard in individual players." On our return from Ottawa, Montreal's mayor, Camillien Houde, received the MJSO at Windsor Station, and followed this with a civic reception.

Elvin had a flair for showmanship along with his musical ability and teaching skills. Orchestra members wore uniforms. Learning and practising instruments led quickly to performances, and then to festivals and competitions. In conjunction with these events, young musicians met other young musicians and their families, as well as local dignitaries; they also visited interesting sites. While he did not expressly "sell" music as an alternative to less desirable extracurricular pursuits – the "music man" of the Broadway show had convinced parents that a school band would keep their sons out of pool halls – Lewis Elvin knew how to make music fun for students. He organized the MJSO as a corporation, with himself as both a Director and its first conductor. In 1954, as it



MJSO at BBC studio, London, England. Image courtesy of Carol Martin

campaigned to raise funds for a tour of England, honorary patrons included the governor-general of Canada (the Right Hon. Vincent Massey), the Quebec lieutenant-governor (Hon. Gaspard Fautoux), the Mayor of Montreal (Camillien Houde), Wilfred Pelletier, Director of the Quebec Conservatory of Music and Donald Gordon, President of the CNR. Remarkably, the orchestra players did not pay membership fees, as the organization managed to cover expenses for sheet music, rental of rehearsal halls, concerts, and general administration through proceeds of concert ticket sales and contributions from patrons. This financial decision, and the opportunity for most of the participants to use instruments provided by the Montreal Protestant school board, kept access open to the widest possible number of eligible students. From its inception until 1954 (the years I played with the orchestra), it rehearsed in various Protestant schools: Alexandra (on Sanguinet Street), Montreal High School (University Avenue), and Aberdeen (St-Denis Street). Orchestra tours, including the first ones to Ottawa, and Toronto, saved costs by billeting us with host families in the cities we visited, in itself a cultural experience.

The Junior Symphony's tour of England took place in 1954, after a year's delay to raise sufficient funds. Its 58 student musicians, with Mr. Elvin, several orchestra committee members and a nurse, left Quebec City for England on June 30, 1954, aboard the *Atlantic*, a Home Lines ship. The month-long tour involved 11 concerts in cities that included Tunbridge Wells, Brighton, York, Darlington, Sheffield, Bristol and Bournemouth. In London the orchestra performed twice at St. James' Palace and in the BBC television studios. It was a whirlwind schedule that often ran late, and included regular pre-concert rehearsals, along with attendance at other musical and cultural events. British audiences and press were enthusiastic, and the reviews of the orchestra's performances praised its professionalism and its conductor. Behind the scenes, my diary notes that as we crossed the Atlantic, I helped transcribe second violin parts for

"God Save the Queen," since Mr. Elvin had forgotten to bring music for it. During the tour, two of the three buses hired to transport the orchestra had breakdowns, and one had a fire in the luggage section. There were probably other logistical nightmares for the organizing committee, but our concerts were on time and continued to reap praises. Rereading the diary I kept, I'm struck by its happy tone, filled with impressions of



the people and the music scene in the places we visited, the amount of sight-seeing we managed, and the comments about our performances and audience reaction. The tour included a stop at Barnsley, Elvin's home town, on July 15, where he and the orchestra were "officially received" en route to Sheffield for an afternoon rehearsal and our evening performance there. As the intensive schedule honed the orchestra's performance throughout the tour, the group's confidence and precision increased. For Lewis V. Elvin, the tour was also a homecoming that showed his own progress and development in Canada.

The orchestra's 1963 Scandinavian tour probably followed a similar format to its tour of England. Press clippings list concerts given in Copenhagen, Aarhus, Thisted, Stockholm, Oslo, Lillestrom, Bergen and Stavanger, with official receptions in various cities and enthusiastic audiences and press. The 1970 summer trip to the International Festival of Youth Orchestras in Switzerland had the MJSO giving pre-festival concerts in

Vevey and Berne, and for the Festival closing concert five members, including the concertmaster, were selected to play as part of an international orchestra conducted by Walter Susskind. That tour was also Elvin's final one with the Montreal Junior Symphony, and the end of his tenure as its conductor, although he remained a director until 1973. In 1971, Eugene Husaruk – one of its early members (1948–54, including the tour of England) – returned as the orchestra's new conductor, to be succeeded by Joseph Milo in 1977.

At the time of his retirement from the orchestra, Elvin was also leaving his position as a teacher with the Montreal Protestant schools; 1970 was the last year Lewis and Grace Elvin are listed as Montreal residents. Their remaining years were spent in England, where he died in Bournemouth, (Dorset) on April 5, 1985.

Some of the young musicians trained by Lewis Elvin went on to study music at McGill and elsewhere, and themselves became teachers or music performers. For many others, like me, the Montreal Junior Symphony experience enriched our musical abilities and appreciation. Lewis Elvin was the school music man who made music exciting.

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JUST WHEN THINGS COULDN'T GET MUCH WORSE

The Trials of George Hamilton
by Joseph Graham

This is another excerpt from a forthcoming book on the history of the Ottawa Valley, and follows the events described in "Stealing Deals," QHN, Summer 2012.

After the 1820 election results in Prescott and Russell Counties revealed William Hamilton to be the winner, his brother George wasted no time in trying to sabotage the reputations of those officials who had supported the opponent, David Pattee. He knew that Pattee would contest the results and he had an urgent need to publicly discredit as many of Pattee's allies as he could. If he succeeded, then Pattee's petition to contest would likely be rejected.

During the last days of the election, he had promoted a story that Pattee had been accused of forgery in New Hampshire 17 years earlier. As one of the largest employers in the area, he also put a lot of pressure on voters to come out for his brother William. If you were an employee of the Hamilton Brothers and you had the right to vote, they would be watching how you voted. There was no secret ballot as we have today. Your vote was public and visible.

Cornwallis Joseph Fortune was the returning officer. Son of an Irish Loyalist from South Carolina for whom Pointe Fortune is named, he fought in the War of 1812. He served in the militia with George Hamilton and was a part of the elite associated with the Family Compact. Like many members of this group, he must have felt very conflicted at the idea that an American immigrant could be elected to the Assembly of Upper

Canada. Worse yet, Pattee argued that the people should have power through their elected officials, a radical, republican notion. The role of the Assembly was only advisory, and that was how it should be.

It is hard to imagine today, but there were two very different types of immigrants from the Thirteen Colonies. Many British Loyalists, like the Fortunes, had

life in New Hampshire, steeped in the democratic notion that the people elected a government.

The two sets of immigrants, Loyalist and economic, had little reason to get along. Even the atmosphere during the 1820 election was still filled with figurative smoke from the War of 1812, during which immigrants like Pattee and Thomas Mears had to declare their loyalty to the King – and were not believed.

Fortune had risen to the rank of colonel fighting the Americans during the War of 1812. Many influences predisposed him to see Pattee as someone who had to be stopped in order to protect Upper Canada. The executive government, taking its orders from Great Britain, was the proper way to govern – not the Assembly, taking its orders from the people. The British Colonial Office had inherited the assembly structure from the Virginia Company that created the concept simply to control a rowdy bunch of employees and settlers.

It was never intended to be the government.

Fortune destroyed and miscounted enough ballots to prove William Hamilton the winner, and George Hamilton sent a messenger to Goffston, New Hampshire, to get the documentary proof that Pattee had been accused of forgery.

It is a credit to Attorney General John Beverley Robinson that Pattee received a balanced hearing. Robinson was among the staunchest conservatives in the Family Compact and he had little use for the likes of Pattee and others whom he described as forming the "scum" and "the rascals of the



first gone to the rebelling colonies in the decade leading up to the war. Joseph's family arrived in South Carolina in 1766 and he was born there in 1773. Most of these Loyalists moved to the remaining British colonies during the American War of Independence, rejecting their new American home because it was fighting with the mother country, a place that was still very much a part of their lives. A second wave, economic migrants, arrived well after the war was over. Their formative years had been spent in the newly created United States. David Pattee was a classic example. Only five years younger than Joseph Fortune, he spent the first 25 years of his

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province.” Ultimately fair-minded, he dismissed much of the slander generated by the Hamiltons, leaving only the charge of “forgery and uttering counterfeit banknotes.” Pattee, a modest and sincere man, wrote in his own defence that a felon who was bargaining his own terms with the State of New Hampshire had falsely accused him. Pattee also added that he was not guaranteed any kind of immunity to return to clear his name. Even so, he showed that he had made good on the debts he had incurred in New Hampshire and he promised to resign immediately if the Assembly found fault in what he had done. He further asked, though, that the Assembly not “gratify the Spirit of Revenge and persecution” that he perceived as driving his opponents in their slander of him and his supporters.

For their part, the Hamiltons needed all the influence they could muster to keep their business afloat. They had built a much larger mill than their predecessors had left them and they were seriously extended on all fronts. Their illegal cutting operation on Crown Land was an offence that, should he stand accused, would have to be heard in the very court where George Hamilton sat as a judge. Simultaneously, they were painfully aware that their brother Robert, charged with finding the investments to keep them afloat, had signed guarantees against their property with Gillespie, Moffatt and Company, a firm with branches in both London and Montreal.

The Assembly’s decision is recorded as a rebuke of George Hamilton. It reject-

ed his claims about Pattee and stated that Hamilton’s argument did not demonstrate “such Proof of Guilt of the Charge of forgery as to weigh against or outweigh eighteen years of irreproachable Conduct in this Province as certified by so many respectable Inhabitants.” The seat was awarded to Pattee, Joseph Fortune slipped discretely into Argenteuil Township and George Hamilton’s bad luck was only just beginning.

It was a setback for the Hamiltons, but the spring had brought with it a large supply of logs for their 40 saws and 80 employees. They took comfort in what they had achieved – some people claimed theirs was the largest operation of its kind in the world. George Hamilton’s ambition, to be the effective squire of the Hawkesbury region, was coming to fruition with an ever-increasing number of local families dependent upon his operations. The next election was only three years away, and his star was rising. He would have to tread carefully, maybe completely abandon the illegal cutting his men were doing on Crown land, but their supply store had worked well by giving smaller loggers merchandise in exchange for their logs. His brother John ran their huge installation near Quebec City, dubbed New Liverpool Cove. It comprised over 2,000 feet of beaches, 450 acres of land and three houses, as well as work sheds, yards and wharves. Robert, another brother, presided over the firm Robert Hamilton, Brothers and Company in Liverpool, and they had become the recognized St. Lawrence River represen-

tative for underwriters in London, Aberdeen, Dundee and Liverpool. None of them had yet reached forty. They anticipated a great future.

In the meantime, the summer and autumn proved to be difficult as they learned that the British timber market was oversupplied. Robert made new arrangements, mortgaging all their properties to Gillespie, Moffatt and Company whose principal partners were in Montreal and London. They just had to sell their wood into a soft market, take their losses, and ride out the downturn. One year could change everything.

The following spring, 1822, also brought a large new supply of logs and the millpond was again full, ready to start the new season. There was even evidence that demand was picking up. George waited impatiently for the unusually heavy floodwaters to subside and for the first mail to arrive, giving him news from his brothers. As the spring brought its burden of ice water downstream towards his operations, the river rose to unprecedented levels and, breaking its customary banks, it carried away the millpond dam as he and his men watched, helpless. All their logs broke muddily into the main river and were gone.

This disaster was followed shortly by the arrival of the first mail boat, bringing the sad news to George that his brother Robert had passed away in Liverpool. The impact of the loss of the logs must quickly have faded in the face of this news, but George, father of three young children and one of the largest employers on the Ottawa, had also to anticipate that their creditors would soon come, asking for full payment of the Hamilton mortgage, just as they, in their turn, had come to Thomas Mears and David Pattee only ten years earlier, confiscating their mill.

Among George's closest friends was the reverend Joseph Abbott, father of the future prime minister, Sir John Abbott. The reverend told the story of the Hamilton trials and tribulations, comparing him to the biblical Job. Possibly his own vocation predisposed him to a certain exaggeration, but the facts remain. He recounted the arrival of the mortgage demand and "[s]hortly after this, so immediately indeed, that I might almost literally say, 'while the messenger was yet speaking,' another arrived to

tell him that his other brother [William] was dead."

Showing a fortitude that seems the stuff of legends, George explained to his wife Suzannah that they should prepare to move to Montreal with their three young children while he and his brother John negotiated terms with their creditors. They would soon return, he reassured them, but even before they could finish packing up, their house caught fire. They had time only to save themselves and to watch. It was a total loss.

On the day of their departure, the three children, living in a bubble of reassurances and comfort, laughing and playing, were seated with their parents in a large transport canoe guided stern and bow by capable French Canadian canoeists. Reverend Abbott was present to see them off. He described the paddling songs echoing over the water as the canoe headed across and down the calm river to the first rapids. Getting through rapids, canoeists look for the deepest channel, sometimes breaking around rocks, sometimes spilling down over sudden drops. The river was a transport corridor and had been one for thousands of years. The men were experienced. They had done this many times. This time, though, the bow canoeist, guiding them through the fast water, misjudged his paddle, which caught in a rock, and the canoe was immediately flipped into the rushing current.

In the water, George saw his 18-month-old son, whom he saved, just as they were both pulled tumbling through the rapids to the calm below. When he finally gathered his senses, he discovered he was no longer clutching the boy, who was gone. He spotted the two canoeists, clinging to the upside-

down canoe, but no one else. Suzannah and the children were gone.

George swam towards the canoe and they slowly hauled it from the water. Underneath they discovered Suzannah, unconscious, clinging to a strut, but there was no sign of the children.

The good reverend Abbott told more: "'All things shall work together for good for them that love God.' And so they did in this instance; for my friend Hamilton was afterwards blessed with as fine a family of children as I ever saw..."

Joseph Graham joseph@ballyhoo.ca is writing a book on the history of the Ottawa Valley.

References include *History of the Counties of Argenteuil and Prescott* by Cyrus Thomas, *Steamboat Connections* by Frank Mackey, *Great Britain's Woodyard* by Arthur R.M. Lower, and the *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*.

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DEVASTATION'S PURSER

Thomas Kains and the War of 1812

by Gordon Rainey

As we unravel local history and piece together the contributions of our forebears, we are often amazed at what we uncover.

How did the White House get its name? What inspired the composition of "The Star-Spangled Banner?" Who knew that Thomas Kains, a prominent citizen of early Grenville, Quebec, played a key role in both, but perhaps not in ways you might expect.

We are now commemorating the bicentenary of the War of 1812. Most of us know of Laura Secord and her grass-roots reconnaissance on the Niagara Frontier, the repulse of the Americans by Sir Isaac Brock at Queenston Heights, the valiant fall of Tecumseh at Thames River, or, closer to home, the Battle of Crysler's Farm. Not so familiar are the burning of Washington, DC, and the bombardment of Fort McHenry in Baltimore, events to which Thomas Kains lent his hand.

Let us review how Thomas Kains' life was interwoven with these events and with the history of Grenville.

Thomas Kains was born in 1790, in Chatham, Kent, England, son of a boatswain in the Royal Navy. In 1804, at

the age of 14, he joined the Royal Navy as a midshipman on none other than the HMS *Agamemnon*, the three-deck, 64-gun man-of-war that was said to be Horatio Nelson's favorite.

At 15, Thomas Kains was promoted to clerk on the HMS *Hyacinth*, an 18-gun sloop, on which he served from 1805-1810. Thus, he reached manhood during the tumultuous Napoleonic Wars, engaging in many of its epic naval battles. By 1813, Thomas Kains had been promoted to purser aboard the HMS *Devastation*, an 8-gun bomb vessel.

Napoleon was defeated in Europe in the spring of 1814 and banished to Elba. Britain shifted resources to quell American attempts to invade Canada, initiated in 1812. But, instead of merely defending Canada, Britain went on the offensive.

In August 1814, Thomas Kains' ship HMS *Devastation* was dispatched to engage in what became known as the Battle of Washington. On August 17, *Devastation*, *Seahorse*, *Euryalus*, *Ætna*, *Meteor*, *Erebus* and *Anne* were detached from a British fleet in Chesapeake Bay and moved up the Potomac River to bombard Fort Washington.

In the Battle of Washington, British



troops met with light resistance. Caught by surprise, President Madison, government officials, residents who could flee and most military units, hastily abandoned the American capital.

On August 24, 1814, Thomas Kains was part of the British company charged with destroying the White House, known then as the Presidential Residence. Upon entering the building, they found a dinner prepared for about forty people. They ate heartily of the sumptuous food and drank the vintage wine. Then they gathered what souvenirs they could carry and set the White House ablaze. Much of Washington was torched, as the British had resolved to burn all government buildings.

The White House was substantially gutted by the fire, but not completely destroyed. Whitewash was used during its restoration, to cover the smoke damage and it was only then that it became known as the White House.

British forces turned their attention north to Baltimore, intent on exacting revenge on the notorious privateer-operated Clipper ships that were harassing the British Merchant Navy while outrunning and taunting Royal Navy battleships. But



the cannons at Fort McHenry guarded the entrance to Baltimore Harbor.

On the September 12, 1814, Devastation, Erebus, Meteor, Ætna, Terror, and Volcano were deployed from Chesapeake Bay up the Patapsco River, in preparation for the attack on Baltimore.

The bombardment of Fort McHenry began at 5 a.m. on the morning of September 13. Devastation and her 5 sister ships fired rockets and mortars at Fort McHenry for twenty-five hours, but the defenders held. At 6 a.m. the following morning, bombardment ceased.

The most memorable outcome of this engagement was not military in nature, but a poem penned by a young American lawyer named Francis Scott Key, who happened to be on one of the British ships to negotiate the release of prisoners captured at the Battle of Washington, three weeks before. He had watched throughout the night, the red glare of the British rockets and cringed at the sound of exploding bombs. To his amazement, in the dawn's early light of September 14, after 1,500 bombs and rockets had fallen, the American flag hoisted at Fort McHenry was still flying. The poem, which was later renamed and set to music, became America's national anthem, "The Star-Spangled Banner." Thomas Kains had delivered the fireworks.

Despite their repulse at Baltimore, the British were satisfied with their diversionary raids, especially the burning of Washington. In Canada, Governor General Prevost proclaimed that the burning of

the proud American capital was just retribution for the sacking and burning of York (later renamed Toronto) by American troops in 1813.

Kains remained as purser with the HMS Devastation until August 1815, after the final defeat of Napoleon at Waterloo, which brought years of war to an end.

In 1818, Thomas Kains settled briefly in Carillon, Quebec, and then in Grenville. In 1821, he married Mary McMillan, the eldest daughter of Grenville's founding father, Archibald McMillan. Nine of their children were born in Grenville.

Thomas Kains was engaged for some years in the saw milling and grist milling business in Grenville, where he was also a church warden and justice of the peace. During this time, Kains was appointed, with Denis-Benjamin Papineau, commissioner of roads and bridges, to build the Grenville to Hull road.

Steamboats had started operating on the Ottawa River in 1823. In 1830, Kains entered the employ of McPherson & Crane, as captain of their steamer Shannon. He shuttled cargoes of mail, passengers and goods between Grenville and By Town until 1841. In 1845, he purchased the steamer, Princess Royal, and ran his own company until 1853.

In the 1851 census, Thomas Kains (61), appears with his wife, Mary McMillan (50), and three of their offspring -- Thomas (28), Isabella (18) and Zebee (16). The family was living on Range 1, Lot 7, (about where the old Canadian Na-



tional railroad bridge once crossed the Ottawa River to Hawkesbury).

But Kains' Royal Navy career was not yet over. At the onset of the Crimean War, Kains was still a half-pay officer in the Royal Navy. On December 31, 1853, at the age of 63, he was called back to active service as paymaster aboard HMS Victory, which had been Nelson's flagship at Trafalgar. By that time Victory had been converted to a hospital ship, and docked at Portsmouth, England. He held this post until September, 1854. Kains died shortly thereafter, in Montreal, on May 9, 1855.

In the intervening years, Kains' younger brother, George, and several of his own offspring had left Grenville and established themselves in St. Thomas, Ontario. Both Thomas Kains and Mary McMillan are buried there. Thomas Kains' epitaph reads as follows:

Then are they glad because they are at rest, and so we bringeth them into the heaven where they would be.

Archibald Kains (1865–1944), the grandson of Thomas Kains, journeyed to Washington, DC, in 1939, to return to President Franklin Delano Roosevelt, some sterling silver and a small medicine chest that his grandfather had pillaged from the White House on August 24, 1814.

Now, whenever I hear "The Star-Spangled Banner" before NHL hockey games, at the Olympics, or elsewhere, I think of Thomas Kains, the 24 year old purser aboard the bomb ship HMS Devastation.



LOST: MORRIS LISTOWEL PIANO, CIRCA 1915

Contains: unrealized dreams. If found, please play.

by Eve Krakow

When I was growing up, we had an old piano in our living room. It was a full upright, with dark brown wood, ivory keys, and a loose, full sound. The middle C was chipped, which made it easy to find when I was learning to play.

It was a player piano, and when I was little it still worked. I loved to watch the keys go up and down; then I'd open up the front panels to see the scroll turning, with the little holes punched out in patterns. It worked with compressed air: two foot pedals folded out from a sliding panel in the base; you had to pump them to keep the piano going.

Over the years the tubing for the player mechanism dried up and fell apart. But it was a great piano. I played it all through my childhood, composed songs on it, and used it to accompany myself singing.

When my Dad and my step-mom sold their house, my childhood home, I made some enquiries about getting it restored and moving it to my place. But it wasn't considered a particularly good make and, because it was a player piano, it weighed a ton. I was living in a small apartment at the time. So when my Dad mentioned he'd had to reinforce the floor to support the piano's weight, I gave up. My parents sold it.

If I'd known what I know now, I would never have let it go.

* * *

I'm sitting on a sofa in my uncle's bungalow in Saint-Lazare, a suburb just off the western tip of the island of Montreal. David, my uncle, settles his 6-foot plus frame comfortably onto the other side. Now in his early seventies, his movements are slow, deliberate, unhurried. Perhaps he has always moved that way: always in control, always gentle, speaking in a measured voice, with a laugh coming right from his belly.

On the floor before us lies the reason

for my visit: two large cardboard boxes, containing old family photographs and newspaper clippings chronicling my grandfather's involvement in the Jewish community when he was young. I'm here in search of his stories, hoping to fill the gaps in what I know; I'm here to learn about my roots.

My uncle takes the items out one by



one, studying them under his glasses, his dark bushy eyebrows furrowing as he tries to figure out who is who, what is what. There are stacks of pictures, black and white, various sizes. A few are in cardboard frames: my mother as a little girl; my grandparents on their wedding day; my grandfather in his late 20's, in a formal pose with two other young men. In one picture he leans proudly against a car, a Model T Ford, from his job as a traveling salesman.

David hands me a copy of *The Canadian Jewish Chronicle* from November 7, 1930. It's in tabloid format with the tagline "The first and foremost Anglo-Jewish Weekly in Canada—Successor to the Canadian Jewish Times, Founded in 1897" (year of my grandfather's birth in Russia). On page 10 is my grandparents' engagement announcement. On page 3, an article by Winston Churchill about

Palestine.

Other miscellaneous items: a balance sheet for my grandfather's company, S. & K. Clothing Inc., for the fiscal year 1929-1930 (net loss: \$518.89); a five-page speech, typed on legal-size paper with the occasional correction hand-written in ink, which my grandfather delivered at the eighth annual convention of the "Zionist Order Habonim"; my uncle's and mother's school report cards, signed by their mother (my grandmother).

* * *

Whenever I used to see my uncle David, he'd hug me and ask, "How's the writing going?" He knew I wanted to be a writer: as a kid I was always writing short stories, poems and songs. But as a young adult, my reaction to his question became one of recurring guilt. I knew I should be trying harder. Sure, I was writing some newspapers articles, but that's not what he meant. I'd complain that "real" work (i.e. paid work) always got in the way.

So when I first called David to tell him I wanted to write a story about my grandfather, about his and my late mother's father, I thought he'd be thrilled. He wasn't.

"We were never close," he explained, in his distinctive deep voice. His father was 44 when he was born. It was too big a gap. "My father didn't understand the life of a Canadian teenager. We came from different worlds. He was born in Europe, and though he grew up here it was within a European community. He was very old school. Society changed. He never adapted."

Now, photos and newspaper clippings spread before us, David tells me what he knows.

Abraham Aube Katz was born in 1897 in the town of Dinovitz, near Kamenetz-Podolsk, in Russia. The area, which later became part of the Ukraine, was in the "Pale of Settlement," the territory where Russian Jews were forced to live.

In 1907, when Abe was 10, his family fled the pogroms, bringing him and his three sisters to Montreal. His father opened a butcher shop on Roy Street. Around age 13, Abe left school to work in the shop and help his father deliver the packages of meat by horse-driven wagon.

At some point, he lived in St. John, New Brunswick, working as an insurance salesman; he returned to Montreal a few years later. He started a men's clothing business with a partner, but went bankrupt around 1930. So he got a job with the Premier Brand Clothing Company, travelling to small towns in western Quebec and Ontario selling men's clothing.

Then he met Chaim Korenberg, father of Clara Korenberg, his wife-to-be. "Clara was pushed into the marriage," David explains, his tone becoming bitter. "I think her father wanted to go into business with Abe... I don't know." He hands me the wedding invitation, dated January 17, 1932.

"Did they love each other?" I ask.

He shrugs. "Love didn't enter into it in those days."

We look at the wedding photos, large black and white prints of the bride and groom in classic poses. Young Clara holds a bouquet of roses, her head slightly tilted, looking to the side of the camera with a closed-mouth, half-smile. To me it's a classic wedding pose, but David comments, "She was not a happy bride."

And that's when he reveals a piece of information which seems to belong to someone else's family.

"You see, my mother, your grandmother, wanted to be a concert pianist," he says. "She even attended the McGill Conservatory for a year."

I look up at him. "Really?" I've never heard this before.

He nods, staring at the photo. "The piano your mother and I grew up with—it was Clara's. Years later I met one of her friends, a music teacher: she said Clara could have been one of the greats." There is regret in his voice. Sadness.

I think of the piano that I played as a child. I had known it was my mother's, but I hadn't realized it had been her mother's too. "What happened?"

"Her father pulled her out. Said he needed the money to educate *the boys*." He emphasizes the last two words with sarcasm, almost disdain. "Her life ended there."

I am still trying to absorb this information when he says, "But you want to know about my father." He puts the photo aside and goes back to the chronology of my grandfather.

* * *

All week, this new fact about my grandmother nags at me, like a puzzle piece in search of a puzzle. I question my sisters and my father: it's news to them too. I begin to have doubts. I decide to call Lela.

Lela is my late mother's cousin in Toronto. Lela's father, Morton Korenberg, was one of Clara's three brothers—the "boys" her father needed the money for.

I don't actually remember Lela. The last time I saw or spoke to her was... probably when I was 10, at my mother's funeral. Will she even want to talk to me? I take a deep breath and pick up the phone.

Of course she remembers me. Of course she can tell me about her aunt Clara.

Clara Korenberg was 12 years younger than Abe. Her parents too had fled the pogroms, leaving Kishenev, Russia (Bessarabia province) in 1905, but she was born in Montreal, in 1909. Unlike Abe, she attended high school, graduating from Baron Byng in 1926.

"David mentioned she had wanted to be a pianist?" I venture.

"Oh yes, she was very talented," Lela says. "When her father pulled her out of the Conservatory, Mort was furious! He felt she had a gift. As a musician himself, he could appreciate it."

That's when Lela tells me the whole Korenberg family was musical. Once again I feel like I'm hearing about someone else's family—not my own great-uncles.

Morton was a prominent doctor at Montreal's Jewish General Hospital and later a psychiatrist, but he had initially considered studying music and composition, Lela explains. He could sing—he had perfect pitch—and he played the piano and the violin.

But Lela doesn't think Clara's father was trying to be cruel. "That's just the way women were treated then," she explains. Women married and had children. Men earned a living to support the family. What did a woman need to go study music for?

"It must have been very hard for Clara," Lela reflects. "She was a smart woman, but she wasn't expected to do anything special other than get married."

* * *

My parents read my early stories with enthusiasm. When I was in elementary school, my father brought home an old Ditto machine and I printed my own newspaper. But by university, I sensed he wanted me to choose a "real" career, not some artsy English literature and journalism program. My sisters had gone into solid professions: architecture and computer science. "I only want you to be happy," my father would say—meaning, financially secure.

After graduating, I worked at a weekly paper. Occasionally I wrote short stories and sent them off to literary journals. Rejection letters followed. I went to Spain for a year, and found work as a translator. When I returned to Montreal and decided to study translation formally, my father seemed relieved. But David said, "What happened to the writing?"

* * *

I decide to ask David more about Clara. On this visit, we sit on his back patio, admiring a small grove of birch trees separating his house from the neighbour's.

"My parents led a hard life," David explains. As a travelling salesman, his father was away a lot. That was hard on Clara, who was left to manage on her own, without much money, raising two kids in their dark, second-floor flat on Hutchison Street.

Clara's mother had died young. "My mother never learned how to cope," David reflects. As Clara grew older, she became bitter and paranoid. She thought her husband's family hated her, and she kept to herself. She grew suspicious of her husband when he was on the road. They fought. "I was the peacemaker, the glue holding the family together," David says. "Your mother stayed away as much as possible. She blamed her mother for causing all these problems."

I ask David if he ever heard Clara play. No. She refused. "That was a part of her life she couldn't have, so she wanted nothing more to do with it." But she encouraged her children to take lessons. Sal-

ly (my mother) did, but David didn't want to, said it was "for girls." He regrets that now.

He does remember, once or twice, his mother showing Sally how to do something on the piano. His eyes take on a far-away look. "She didn't touch the piano—she caressed it." Whereas Sally banged away, Clara's touch was "magic, like an angel." He makes a delicate movement with his own hand, curving his wrist, remembering.

And he remembers the piano. His face becomes animated. "I couldn't play, but I could put in a scroll and pump the pedals and watch it play," he laughs. He takes off his glasses to wipe them. "You know, it could probably still be restored—" he begins, and I realize with dread: he doesn't know.

"We don't have the piano anymore," I say.

Oh. He pauses in wiping his glasses. It's a fraction of a second but I catch a glimpse of something in those blue eyes, or maybe it's my imagination, but something changes in his face, like a smile fading, like a last piece of his mother's dream dying. I rush to explain how I had wanted

to keep it, but it wasn't feasible at the time. Of course not, he says, regaining his characteristic composure.

Driving home, it hits me. Why, ever since I was little, my uncle has always made a point of encouraging me in my writing, in my own artistic pursuits: his mother never had the chance to develop her talents, but I do. He does not want me to neglect that opportunity.

* * *

I call Lela back. I don't really expect her to remember the piano, but she does. "When I was small, we would go to Clara's house, and she would play it for us," she recalls.

"You heard Clara play?" I ask, surprised. "Yes, she was very good."

I ask if she knows where the piano came from, and she says that Clara's father bought it for her. I mention that I grew up with that piano, but that—

"You still have it?"

I can hear the hopeful joy in her voice; once again I have to break the news.

"Oh God, it was sold!" she says, her dismay and disappointment palpable even over the phone. "It was so precious. Everyone

played it."

* * *

I don't remember my grandmother much at all; I was nine years old when she died of colon cancer. I remember she wore square glasses, looked a lot like my mother, and was always shaking. Nervous. But nice to me.

I email my step-mom to ask what became of the piano. She says they sold it to a young man from B.C. who was studying at McGill. They ran into him two years later in Pointe-Claire; he had moved and left it with a friend.

"I wish I could track it down," I say.

She asks, "What would you do if you found it?"

I'm not really sure.

First I'll write about the piano. Then I'll look for it.

This story is the first to result from QAHN's "StoryNet" project, which matched emerging writers with established mentors to produce innovative works of non-fiction with a heritage theme.

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