

A NEW LIFE FOR CANADIANA VILLAGE?

\$5

Quebec Heritage

Vol 3, No. 12

NOV-DEC. 2006
News



The Bagg Shul

A living history of Montreal's early Jewish community

The Street that Roared

Why the fight to save Montreal milestone matters to Mile Enders

Christbaum comes to Canada

Decorated tree topped pudding at Sorel party

Quebec Heritage News

EDITOR

CHARLES BURY

DESIGN

DAN PINESE

PUBLISHER

THE QUEBEC ANGLOPHONE
HERITAGE NETWORK
400-257 QUEEN STREET
SHERBROOKE (LENNOXVILLE)
QUEBEC
J1M 1K7

PHONE

1-877-964-0409
(819) 564-9595

FAX

564-6872

CORRESPONDENCE

EDITOR@QAHN.ORG

WEBSITE

WWW.QAHN.ORG

PRESIDENT

RODERICK MACLEOD

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

DWANE WILKIN

HERITAGE PORTAL COORDINATOR

MATHEW FARFAN

OFFICE MANAGER

KATHY TEASDALE

Quebec Heritage Magazine is produced on a bi-monthly basis by the Quebec Anglophone Heritage Network (QAHN) with the support of The Department of Canadian Heritage and Quebec's Ministère de la Culture et des Communications. QAHN is a non-profit and non-partisan umbrella organization whose mission is to help advance knowledge of the history and culture of English-speaking society in Quebec. Canada Post Publication Mail Agreement Number 405610004.



Culture
et Communications
Québec

CONTENT

President's Message 3

School Spirit *Rod MacLeod*

Letters 5

Opinion 6

Wisdom of the rubber stamps *Jim Wilson*

TimeLines 7

One stop culture shop

Taste of the world

The unknown settlers

A philanthropist's legacy

New owner, same purpose for Saguenay church

Canadiana Village changes hands

Tombstone rising

The Street that Roared 14

Why the fight for Montreal milestone matters *Carolyn Shaffer*

The Bagg Shul 17

Montreal's early Jewish community *Carolyn Shaffer*

Christbaum Comes to Canada 19

Decorated tree topped pudding at Sorel party

Bridge to Suburbia 21

Vanished English towns and the South Shore's past *Kevin Erskine-Henry*

What's in a Name? 22

Land of shrugs and strangers *Joseph Graham*

Book Reviews 24

Adventism in Quebec

The Eastern Townships

Cyclone Days

HindSight 26

Luck of the potted frog *Joseph Graham*

Event Listings 27

*Cover photograph: Park Avenue snow removal, 1910.
National Library and Archives of Quebec*

School Spirit by Rod MacLeod

Among the regular notices my daughter brings home from school are announcements of upcoming governing board meetings. I ignore these defiantly, the way I remember my father sneering at snowstorms after he'd retired. Been there, done that, can stay home and put my feet up. For two years I presided over our local governing board, going to meetings every six weeks or so along with seven other parents, the principal, and a handful of teachers. I learned a lot. Did I achieve anything? Hmn.

Governing boards were invented eight years ago as a way to keep parents and teachers off the streets at night. They exist to be "consulted" by school boards and the Education Ministry on a variety of issues, not all of which exactly burst with relevance. Much time is spent drafting Education Projects, Strategic Plans, and other busy paper work.

Like any institution that has been imposed from on high, however, local governing boards can take advantage of their legal existence to do other things. Some of these things no one else will do: painting classrooms, cleaning the school yard, controlling traffic, etc. Especially in urban areas these days, the governing board's most important function is marketing. There are a lot of schools in Montreal, far too many for the dwindling population. So it's a buyer's market—that is, within the rather small spectrum of choice in which most consumers of English schooling operate. A school's life or death hinges on getting bums on seats.

The competition is tough. When a school closes, other schools in the area get to survive a little longer. During my watch we learned that one of the four schools in our area would soon close, and after shedding appropriate tears we all asked, "How can we get their students?" Two hundred sets of parents had been left in the lurch and would now be looking for a new school. We had to catch as

many of them as possible, by convincing them that our school offered what our rivals did not: core English, for example, extra music and science, French tutoring. Dog-eat-dog, I tell you.

Now, away from the city there are other problems: even fewer schools, far fewer children, much longer distances. In many places the only choice is between English and French schools, and even apart from eligibility questions the decision is often weighted towards the French school, not only because of convenience, but also the physical condition of the building and the nervous condition of the teachers. The closure of an English school leaves a serious hole. Moreover, if you want to complain about this or any other issue to the school board, you would have to travel for miles to attend a meeting—in some cases, take a plane.

Lets' go back 150 years when every township or parish in Quebec had a school board, a group of dedicated volunteers who hired teachers, bought the books, set the mill rate, and paid someone to

repair the school house—or if there wasn't enough money for repairs they would do the work themselves. Government officials often thought school commissioners were ignorant and incompetent. Many of them were, but this doesn't mean they didn't care about their children or that this sort of local democracy wasn't a good idea. Arguably, public officials give better value for money when their neighbours are the ones paying the taxes.

Then things got complicated. First, we decided we wanted bigger schools so that kids could learn more things in better facilities. This meant consolidation: new buildings with gyms, labs, libraries, cafeterias, etc. as well as specialized teachers, social workers, guidance councilors and nurses. To run these schools we needed bigger school boards with bigger budgets and more administrators.



And although we always had a bureaucratic superstructure to determine curriculum and set standards—the Protestant and Catholic committees—eventually we needed a government ministry and this ministry came to have more and more power, to the point where even the super-boards were mere cogs in a wheel.

The next thing that happened was that the English-speaking population shrank. Protestants, who had the legal right to set up separate school boards if they wanted non-Catholic schooling for their children, found they had to form larger and larger administrative territories just to pull in enough students, driving up the cost of bus transportation. Urban Protestants came to rely on immigrants, especially Jews, to fill their schools. For some decades this supply was so fruitful that new schools were constantly being

institution is far from clear.

My kids don't have that many years left in the public school system, so I don't always feel the need to try and fix things. Been there, done that, can stay home and put my feet up. Still, as a society we should be worried about the future of our schools—and, frankly, very concerned for the quality of our children's education. Why aren't we paying our teachers more? Why are schools decaying? Why can't we afford text books? These questions have nothing to do with language, and yet we spend our energy debating terminology and weighing the value of conflicting rights—important concerns, but surely not more so than the fundamental challenges facing our schools.

English-speaking communities need to ask some basic questions about what it is we want from our public school system. 1) Should our children be educated in English? If so, why do we devote so much of the school day to French, often at the expense of other subjects such as science and history? 2) Is it important that school employees and administrators continue to serve us in English, even if teaching takes place largely in French? A parallel would be traditional English hospitals, where we don't mind what language employees speak as long as someone can explain what's wrong with us, in English. 3) Do we seek the best possible education for our children, regardless of its language of instruction? In other words, should having access to the best teachers in the closest schools take precedence over having access to education in English?

We might also question whether huge, highly bureaucratic "English" school boards are really the best tools we have for achieving these ends.

A hundred and fifty years ago, Government officials often thought school commissioners were ignorant and incompetent. Many of them were, but this doesn't mean they didn't care about their children or that this sort of local democracy wasn't a good idea.

built. English-speaking Catholics had no special rights; in cities there were enough of them to warrant separate sections within the Catholic boards, but elsewhere the choice was French or Protestant.

Then came the language legislation of the 1970s, completely changing the rules. The big issue became who had the right to be educated in English, and in the process the notion of an "English" community was born. By law, the supply of newcomers that had always kept Protestant boards and English Catholic sectors healthy was cut off. This newly defined community proceeded to regroup in the face of built-in decline. In many rural areas English Catholics made arrangements with Protestant boards to help fill their schools. Elsewhere, notably in cities, Protestant boards expanded their French sectors in an effort to retain control over their traditional constituents, including some of the immigrants who were no longer eligible to receive education in English. The creation of English school boards in 1998 was the final act in this regrouping; a logical move, although it left English-speaking communities with a school system whose numbers continue to shrink and cannot be replenished. Furthermore, the mandate of this new

Why are schools decaying? Why can't we afford text books? These questions have nothing to do with language, and yet we spend our energy debating terminology and weighing the value of conflicting rights.

My own experience as a volunteer on the local governing board—to say nothing of that old too-often unsung hero of educational improvement, the Home and School Association—suggests that a big part of the solution is just down the street.

Meeting starts at 7:30. Tea and cookies provided. Bring a paintbrush.

Letters

Clowning achievement

Illustrations are normally supposed to visually add to the understanding of a story, however, the picture of two militia officers clowning around ["Dangers of peace," page 6 Sept/Oct] has nothing whatsoever to do with the Fraser Highlanders or the firing of muskets. Anyone not knowing the history of the regiment would be led to believe that these two were actually members of the Frasers, which they were clearly not. Also, the picture shows that the clowns knew nothing whatsoever about fencing, but I digress.

The 78th Fraser Highlanders were disbanded in 1763 in Quebec. The real name of the regiment was the 78th Regiment of Foot (a British regiment, also known as Fraser's Highlanders, named after Simon Fraser, the Master of Lovat who raised the regiment in 1757). Other regiments were raised after that time. I do not know whether the old Notman picture used in the story is that of a British regiment stationed in Canada or a Canadian militia regiment, but in any event there are no photographs of any Fraser's Highlanders. The 78th Highlanders is another regiment altogether.

I loathe picky people, but since I do a magazine myself, I felt I should let you know about this, just in case no one else bothers.

*Yours aye,
Bill Campbell,
Pointe-Claire, QC*

Grave concern

I am concerned about the deterioration of a small historic cemetery in the village of Way's Mills. I was wondering if there is anything that I can do to make changes. Yard work is needed and a new fence needs to be put up; there are many gravestones that need fixing. Many of the gravesites themselves have sunken and need to be filled in. Even the grave of the village founder is in great disrepair.

Four generations of my mother's side of the family were buried in the cemetery and we go up at least three times a year to place flowers and clean up around their the graves. However, I notice that stones dating from the 1800s are not being taken care of and may have disappeared. Something needs to be done. I have contacted individuals who are responsible for maintaining the site, but my concerns haven't been addressed. What options do we have left? What the course of action should we take?

*Amanda McKelvey
Way's Mills, QC*

You are not alone. The collapse of English-speaking rural communities throughout Quebec means there are fewer volunteers able to care for old graveyards. Funds are often limited. Cemeteries are important heritage sites and should be protected, but no government policy or funding specifically addresses this looming threat. You can help strengthen your local cemetery committee by volunteering to serve as a trustee or helping to raise money for improvements. A Quebec Anglophone Heritage Network proposal for cemetery volunteers to hire students to help on restoration work is currently under review by the Department of Canadian Heritage.

War's afterpath

To help commemorate the 250th anniversary of the battles of the Plains of Abraham and Sainte-Foy on September 13, 1759, and April 28, 1760, respectively, the National Battlefields Commission has begun to identify, compile and establish bibliographical notes on members of the infantry of the British regular army who fought in New France during the Seven Years' War. These notes will allow us to identify those who survived the conflict and those who died, those who left and those who stayed on in North America after the conflict, and per

haps shed more light on the course of their post-war lives. A bilingual publication based on this material and similar research into the lives of French troops who fought in these battles is planned.

As you can imagine, this project requires a lot of work and the collaboration of many qualified people. As an archivist and historian with the Commission, I would be grateful for any information or guidance that members of the Quebec Anglophone Heritage Network or anyone else might contribute to our research. Kindly contact me by telephone at (418) 648-2589 or via e-mail at helene.quimper@ccbnbc.gc.ca

*Hélène Quimper
National Battlefields Commission
Sainte Foy, QC.*

Seemly omissions

Congratulations on your elimination of the apostrophe in the last issue! What appropriate symbolism for a Quebec-dedicated English-language heritage publication. You have respected the spirit of the Office Québécoise de la Langue Française without any real loss of clarity and given us one more item to add to the proof that we Anglos in this marvellous nation are in fact distinct. Not only can we tell people that we 'take' decisions, shop at dépanneurs, close the lights, do stages, eat paté chinois and live on subventions, we also...don't use apostrophes. Brilliant!

*Thomas D'Arcy l'Heureux
L'Avenir, QC*

Welcome to the realities of computerized lithography. Our apostrophes actually made it to the print shop but apparently got lost somewhere between the input and output stages. Alas they never reappeared. This could get worse. We have heard rumours that periods and commas may be next. And if North American capitalism declines, uppers and lowers may not be far behind...

Opinion

Wisdom of the Rubber Stamps by Jim Wilson

Looking for ideas that might help offset the decline of English education in Quebec? No need to read a recent report on the future of English public schools. The report of the Advisory Council on the Future of English Public Education in Quebec, recently presented to the Quebec English School Board Association (QESBA), is noteworthy for what it carefully avoids rather than for what it contains.

Plunging enrollment in English schools both in actual numbers and in proportion to French schools has two principal causes. Since 1977 when Bill 101, the French Language Charter, was adopted by Quebec's National Assembly, student numbers in English school have declined by 40 per cent. Restrictive entry to English schools and massive westward emigration by English Quebecers have produced the largest school population decline in any developed country. The report devotes just one line to this issue by stating "it does not choose to offer its views on language legislation." Helpful.

The other challenge facing public schools is the growth of the private schools. Yet, this too is dismissed in one line, saying that addressing special needs, "is a task that most private schools do not share." Are parents avoiding the public system because of the number of special needs students? Why does the report ignore this possibility?

The most glaring omission, however, in is the advisory council's refusal to examine the administrative structures and costs of public education in Quebec. A comparison with the private system might have been a healthy and useful exercise. As an example, there are 186 school board commissioners for only 350 schools in the English sector—approximately one commissioner for every two schools. With their stipends and expenses the annual bill for commissioners hits seven figures. Money well spent? The report's authors seem to think so.

In addition to school boards, each public school in Quebec has a local governing board. Even the report notes that parents serving on these local boards regard them as rubber stamps. But the solution to this malaise, according to the report's authors, is for local boards "to focus on educational projects, school safety, school

budgets, field trips, discipline, time allocation for subjects, fundraising and book selection." Isn't that what commissioners are for?

There are 8,000 teachers and 5,000 other workers described as "support" staff working in the English public school system in Quebec today, not counting bureaucrats on the Ministry of Education payroll. Yet teachers continue to face a lack of real support in the classroom. Furthermore, as student enrolment falls, administrative positions and the numbers of commissioners remain untouched. Is it any wonder, then, that in spite of fewer students, school taxes have actually increased significantly in recent years?

Anecdotes, not research, drive the advisory council's conclusions. Even by the low standards of reports on English education this one is poor. Six current and retired school-board administrators were involved in writing it, so it comes as no surprise that their analysis finds no fault with the boards themselves. "They exercise admirable judgment, compassion and leadership," the report states, particularly in dealing with special-needs students.

Does the advisory council make any recommendations at all? Yes, and many focus on how English school administrators can help the French system. For instance, the advisory council claims that we must "strengthen English education by exchanging our essential asset,

Does the advisory council make any recommendations at all? Yes, and many focus on how English school administrators can help the French system.

i.e. share the schools. Why? Did they indicate a need? Maybe the report's authors

did not notice that there many English schools in Quebec today are English in name only. We have, in fact, bilingual schools, and in many cases they teach more French than English. So how will "sharing" help the English community? Needless to say this policy will not increase English-language student enrollment.

This advisory council and its recommendations are not solutions but are part of the problem facing English schools—a reticence to face reality, a willingness to sacrifice taxpayers' money on reports and a timidity to challenge a bloated bureaucracy.

Jim Wilson is retired president of the Pearson Teachers Union. This article was first published November 15 in the West Island Chronicle newspaper.

TIMELINES

One-stop culture shop

Ottawa museums to get lion's share of 'new' heritage funding

News that the federal government intends to spend approximately \$100 million on five large museums in the Ottawa region has been receiving mixed reviews from Canada's heritage sector. The Canadian Museums Association (CMA), which is lobbying the federal government for a new national museums policy, welcomed the investment, but stressed that it doesn't make up for recent cutbacks to the Museums Assistance Program (MAP)

"Not all of our valuable heritage is located in the national institutions in Ottawa —far more is found in important museums across Canada that have been neglected for years" the CMA commented in a statement issued following the December announcement.

Of the \$245million that the federal government spends on museums each year, \$230million already goes to the national heritage institutions in Ottawa.

Beverly Oda, minister for Canadian Heritage, and Treasury Board President John Baird said the \$100 million will be spent over the next three to five years on repairs, renovations and upgrades to five federally owned institutions: the Canada Science and Technology Museum, the Canadian Museum of Nature, the Canadian Museum of Civilization, the National Gallery of Canada, and the National Arts Cen-

tre.

Nathalie Bull, executive director of the Heritage Canada Foundation (HCF) described the news as "an important first step," perhaps hoping that Stephen Harper's Conservative government may actually consider heeding the Auditor General's warning three years ago that heritage in federal hands is endangered. But she noted that there are many historic places across the country facing the same funding challenges as Ottawa-area museums. The majority of Canada's national historic sites are, in fact, owned by individuals and local organizations, and recent cuts to modest programs like the (MAP) and the Commercial Heritage Properties Incentive Fund (CHPIF) have hurt.

"Canada is the only G8 nation without coherent funding policies and programs for its built heritage," Bull lamented in a press release. According to the HCF, more than 20 per cent of Canada's heritage buildings have been demolished during the last thirty years."

Such a lukewarm response to what should have been exciting news for a heritage community largely dependent on public funding may stem in part from the fact that the \$100 million isn't really a new investment at all, but rather a reallocation of monies already set aside for the refurbishment of federal buildings.

Taste of the world

History project aims at stories from the 'hood

Montreal's English-speaking communities are composed of people from many different cultural backgrounds, all of whom in their own way have helped to shape the story of Quebec and Canada. It is a living heritage that continues to nurture the cultural life of Quebec's largest metropolis.

The Quebec Anglophone Heritage Network (QAHN) hopes to foster greater understanding of this diversity by inviting leaders of the city's various ethnic communities to share their memories of putting down roots here in one of North America's great immigrant gateways.

Touting the initiative as a groundbreaking exercise in public history, work has been underway since October identifying heritage sites and historical events of particular significance to anglophone Montrealers who do not define their cultural identity strictly in terms of British ancestry.

"One thing we hope to help encourage," QAHN president Rod MacLeod said, "is closer ties between heritage institutions and community groups interested in working with us to promote a deeper understanding of

the origins of this city's amazing multiethnic history."

Carolyn Shaffer, a Concordia University-trained specialist in the history of Montreal's Arab, Muslim and Jewish communities, was recently recruited to lead the project. Her professional experience includes research and development of a local history exhibit in Harrington Harbour on Quebec's Lower North Shore. She will be primarily responsible for establishing community contacts, identifying and developing subject material for Quebec Heritage News magazine and liaising with potential collaborators in Montreal's heritage sector.

The project, which is supported in part by a grant from the Department of Canadian Heritage, is expected to culminate in a day-long multicultural heritage celebration in April 2007, featuring community panel discussions and presentations, combined with cultural performances, information displays and a sampling of Montreal's world-renowned international cuisine.

If you'd like to help with this project, or tell us about historic landmarks and heritage treasures in your neighbourhood, please contact QAHN at home@qahn.org or call (819) 564-9595.

The unknown settlers

Missisquoi Museum to show rare record of black pioneer life in Quebec

Curators at the Missisquoi Museum in Stanbridge East are planning to display never-before-seen historical documents in hopes of shedding new light on the identities of black settlers who lived in the Saint Armand region of Missisquoi County at the end of the 18th century

The Philip Ruitter Ledgers (1799-1811), kept in an attic for more than 100 years, constitute a scant, but nonetheless important surviving documentary record of black pioneer life in rural Quebec. Ruitter was a general merchant and innkeeper at Philipsburg on Missisquoi Bay, a haven for Loyalist refugees during the American Revolution and the first real village to take shape in the old Saint Armand Seigneurie. His private account books contain numerous references to English-speaking black customers whose presence was otherwise largely ignored in official records from the period.

Apart from offering a glimpse of pioneer shopping trends, the exhibit, which begins in February 2007, will afford visitors a rare opportunity to study the ledgers to determine if they can help clarify the nature and status of the historic Saint Armand blacks. A strong oral tradition among Saint Armand's older residents holds that blacks were among the first New Englanders to settle in this borderland region east of Lake Champlain. But were these people really slaves?

Montreal anthropologist Roland Viau, who reviewed this oral history for his 2003 book, *Ceux de Nigger Rock*, contends that slaves belonging to Loyalist settler Philip Luke and his family were buried in a local cemetery near this prominent rock outcropping between 1794 and 1833, the year slavery was abolished in Canada. The Government of Quebec even

presented the Municipality of Saint-Armand with a plaque to commemorate the 170th anniversary of the abolition of slavery in Canada.

The landmark, declared a historic site in 2002, continues to be at the centre of ongoing debate about the identity of this pioneer community. A 2005 comparative study of the Ruitter ledgers, county census records, courthouse documents and notarial archives, commissioned by the Centre historique de Saint Armand, a local heritage group, cast doubt on the slave hypothesis.

"The true history of Nigger Rock can only be based on rigorous research," wrote the study's author Francis Back," and any definitive conclusion will only be found by archeological work carried out in collaboration with the owners of the site."

Thanks to a loan from Robert Galbraith and Phyllis Montgomery, the Ruitter ledgers will finally have their first public viewing during Black History Month, in honour of these Missisquoi pioneers who were forgotten by conventional local history. The opening and vernissage for the exhibit is planned for Thursday, February 1, 2007, beginning at 7 p.m. at the Missisquoi Museum. The special guest speaker will be Robert Galbraith. All are welcome.

The ledgers will be on display from Thursday to Sunday afternoon throughout the month of February, 1 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. Several lectures will be presented to accompany this exhibit throughout the month of February. For more information, visit www.missisquويمuseum.ca or call the Missisquoi Museum at 450-248-3153.

morrin

CULTURAL CENTRE • HERITAGE SITE

Your portal to the heritage of English-speakers in Quebec City

Join us for the fun of it
**Book talks, author readings, discussion groups and
 special events all year long for the whole family**

Come by and visit the charming Victorian
 Literary and Historical Society library,
 home of Canada's oldest learned society.

You'll be amazed with our impressive heritage
 site that has housed two prisons and a
 Scottish college.

MORRIN CENTRE

44, CHAUSSÉE DES ÉCOSSAIS, QUÉBEC, (QUÉBEC) G1R 4H3, TEL: (418) 694-9147, EMAIL INFO@MORRIN.ORG

A philanthropist's legacy

Former students seek official historic status for West Island high school

It still stands in all its late-Victorian splendour, an aging symbol of a bygone age, when Canadians still leaned on men of great means to lead the way into their future. In his case, the future sought by tobacco tycoon William Christopher Macdonald was one of learning and scientific progress.

While fine temples to industrial prowess rose as private mansions on the slopes of Mount Royal, here, in an historic farming community on the western tip of the Island of Montreal, a revolution in English-language education in Quebec was starting. Flush with profits from his flourishing tobacco trade, Macdonald began to buy up land in the Bout-de-l'Ile district around 1903, eventually founding the agricultural college that bears his name in 1905. And it was here in 1907, under Sir William's supervision and that of a certain headmistress named Miss Peebles, that Macdonald High School first opened its doors to pupils.

Generations of Macdonald High grads planning to mark the school's centennial next year with a special reunion in the town of Sainte-Anne-de-Bellevue now hope to commemorate the occasion by inviting local officials to recognize the school's significant historic value. Pieter Leenhouts, chair of the committee in charge of organizing the reunion, says alumni believe that the Macdonald high school building warrants the special designation because of its historical value and because of the magnitude of its founder's contribution to the local community.

"Not only did he found the college and the high school," Leenhouts notes, "he funded its entire construction as well as scholarships and professorships." Classrooms at Macdonald High were originally conceived as a training ground for future educators enrolled in the college's School of Teachers, which will also celebrate its centennial in 2007. Today the school operates under the Lester B. Pearson School board.

Born in Prince Edward Island on 10 February 1831, William Christopher Macdonald first gained his business acumen in the United States and then built a fortune selling tobacco under various brands owned by his Montreal-based Macdonald Tobacco Company. The college and high school in Saint-

Anne-de-Bellevue were but two of his many educational contributions. He was particularly devoted to farming communities and the advancement of agricultural sciences. Throughout his long philanthropic career, Macdonald established rural schools in New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island and he helped fund facilities at McGill, Guelph University and the University of British Columbia. His philanthropy earned him a knighthood, which Queen



Victoria herself bestowed upon him in 1898.

Leenhouts says the 2007 reunion is an outgrowth of a similar event, held in 2000, when 1,700 Macdonald High alumni from as far away as Australia, Japan, Africa and South America gathered in Sainte-Anne.

The centennial celebration next year is shaping up to be even bigger.

Official registration of heritage buildings in Quebec comes under the jurisdiction of a provincial body known as the Commission des Biens Culturels du Québec. But it's up to municipalities to identify and designate historic properties for inclusion in this registry. Leenhouts says Macdonald High alumni are considering spearheading a campaign to have the building designated as a historic monument in time for their reunion, planned for Victoria Day weekend, May 18 to May 20, 2007.

For more information on the upcoming celebration or to get involved with the campaign to designate Macdonald High as a historic site, please visit www.machigh.org.

New owner, same purpose for Saguenay church

Former schoolhouse changes hands



Although it has a new owner, the Saguenay Valley's last Protestant church is not closing down as its users and community had feared. It has a new owner instead.

It has been 116 years since Morrin College Presbyterian divinity student J.U. Tanner arrived in the district, becoming the first Protestant to hold church services in Saguenay Lake St. John. In the summer of 1890, using only his feet for transportation, Tanner found 17 Protestant families living in Chicoutimi, Ha Ha Bay, and L'Anse au Foin. The next summer he was back, using a horse and buggy supplied by Price Brothers agent David Blair.

Tanner's mission was so successful that the faithful few immediately petitioned Church officials to appoint a full-time, ordained minister to tend to their needs. Church authorities agreed and in 1892 Rev. J.D. Ferguson was hired for a princely \$600 a year.

In 1925 most of Canada's Presbyterian and Methodist churches merged to form the United Church of Canada. The time was ripe and within a year the new congregation spent \$250 to buy it-

self a home—a Catholic school that had closed some years earlier. The Grinder House School was located about a mile outside Kenogami. It took three months to haul it up the hill to its new home in what is now Arvida.

Arvida United Church was born. Its responsibility included Kenogami, Riverbend, Port Alfred and Maligne as well as Arvida.

All was well until the 1950s, when the region's English-speaking/Protestant population began to decline. Smaller and smaller as the years went by, the Arvida United congregation was faced with closing in 1994. It then joined with the local Anglican church to form the Shared Ministry of the Saguenay Lake St. John.

The church was renamed St. Andrew's and St. John's Church and Presbyterian and Anglican services alternated from week to week. However the Saguenay region's Protestant population continued to decline, and on June 25, 2006, Anglican Bishop of Quebec Bruce Stavert and lay reader David Bell conducted a final service. "We had to do something," said Robert Dole, one of the few remaining active members of the congregation. "We had about 30 people out for the final service

Church of St. Andrew and St. John, Saguenay. From Inventaire des lieux de culte du Québec, www.lieuxdeculte.qc.ca/index.htm.

but on a typical Sunday we had only six, or seven, or ten.”

The church was closed. Its liturgical furnishings, raiments and vestments, cross, banners, plaques and other memorable items were donated to the nearby William Price museum, doubly suitable because it is the former St. James Anglican Church. “It is a very beautiful display,” said Dole.

But St. Andrew’s and St. John’s had an unex-

pected offer. The Christian Missionary Alliance of Saguenay has a growing congregation without a permanent home. “We were on our third storefront in four years,” said Pastor Douglas Schroeder-Tabah. A symbolic dollar changed hands and all that’s left is the paperwork.

“We will be keeping the building’s appearance,” he said. “We’ll add a ramp for the handicapped and make a few improvements. The congregation is very enthusiastic about this.”

Canadiana Village changes hands

‘And we’re going to take care of it’



Its new owners say Rawdon’s Canadiana Village will carry on its current vocation as one of Quebec’s largest outdoor movie sets, an old-time country-flavoured meeting place and the perfect location for a good old-fashioned dress-up wedding.

Starting with one building in 1946, founders Earl and Nora Moore made their dream a reality, gradually building Canadiana Village into a huge tourist site covering 140 acres. They moved dozens of buildings there (estimates range from 38 to 52) from all over the area, filled them with original antiques and invited the public to come over for a visit.

The buildings on display included: a Blacksmith’s shop, Rowan’s Mill, Covered Bridge, Vault, Cemetery, Presbytery, Farm House, Buggy Display, Logan Schoolhouse, Rourke House, General Store,

Wheelright’s Shop and Carriage Maker’s, Barber Shoppe and Hat Shop, Shoemaker’s Shop, Westgate Homestead, Milkhouse, Henri’s House, Music House, Inn, Print Shop, Saloon, Bake Oven, Grandma’s House, Veterinary’s, Notary’s, Church, Prison, Jones/School Master’s House, Tinsmith’s, Doctor’s House and Dressmaker’s House.

The Village welcomed up to 30,000 visitors annually during its peak years but attendance began to decline in the 1960s and 1970s as other tourist destinations multiplied in the popular Lanaudière district northeast of Montreal. Costs kept rising though, and because it was privately owned the Village could not benefit from much government help. It didn’t help that the displays were mainly based on English-Quebec heritage, while the tourists spoke mostly French.

About a decade ago after Earl Moore died, the

family decided to shut the Village down. They tried to sell the whole installation, and there was discussion of selling off the million-dollar collection one piece at a time. But family members found a new purpose for the site—renting it. Customers included film and television producers looking for an accurate, instant 19th-century small town to use as a set, businesses in need of a site for meetings and conferences, and brides looking for the perfect place to hold their wedding. The family was still trying to sell, and finally this year they found a buyer.

Daniel Ferron is manager of the Village on behalf of the group of investors who bought it. “We plan to continue the existing activities, Ferron said in a recent interview. “This is only our first year but things are beginning to happen.”

Past films shot at the Village include such varied fare as two separate versions of the *Legend of Sleepy Hollow* (one starring Johnny Depp as Ichabod Crane, the other starring Brent Carver), and the TV Ontario miniseries *Morning in the North West*. Most recently, says Ferron is—wait for it—*I’m Not There*, the upcoming biography of Bob Dylan starring Richard Gere.

For the Dylan flick Canadiana Village seemingly changed countries and eras to portray the rock star’s home state of Minnesota. “One of the things we can do is change the appearance of the Village,” Ferron says. “In this case we reconstituted the vil-

lage for his (Dylan’s) childhood.”

Film and TV facilities include 550 amp electrical service without any visible service installation equipment (aerial cables, posts, transformers etc.), modification of existing buildings possible (without any limitation), reserved access to a pristine 140 acres site for rolling without disruptions or noise interference; short and long term rental of old-fashioned artifacts. Private security service is provided.

When no one is making a movie, the site is available for corporate meetings, training and festive events, with the Village supplying equipment, catering, live and recorded music, a hosted mystery dinner, special requests and a tent for 750. For private affairs and weddings “by a pastor of your choice” the Old Mill can hold 150 to 200, the Church a few more. Added services can include professional photographer and florist, and the heritage ride of your choice (horse-drawn wagons or antique cars).

It would take a group of several hundred to be able to pay for it so the building won’t be open to the public, Ferron says. But it is surviving intact, “and we’re going to take good care of it.”

Thanks to Beverly Prudhomme for much of the background information. To contact the new owners of Earl and Nora Moore’s Canadiana Village, visit their web site at www.canadianavillage.com.



T : 819 562-0266
 F : 819 562-1233
 1-800-361-0266
blitho@abacom.com

3, Conley, Sherbrooke QC J1M 1L8

- **Infographie** ■ **Direct à la plaque**
 Design Direct to plate
- **Presse** ■ **Finition**
 Printing Finishing
- **Impression Numérique**
 Digital Printing

DE VOS IDÉES... À L'IMPRESSION
 YOUR IDEA'S ON PAPER...

Tombstones rising

Pioneer gravemarkers have new role as monument

The cement forms are poured and ready to receive their plaques of inscribed granite. The old grave markers have been embedded, and donations are trickling in to cover their out-of-pocket expenses.

Townships heritage activists Milt and Bev Loomis, driving forces behind the charitable group Patrimoine-Ascott-Heritage, are at it again—this time managing to re-erect two historic gravemarkers in the Ascot Corner Cemetery, near Sherbrooke.

The tombstones, dating to 1850 and 1862 respectively, once marked the last resting places of George and Eliza Stacey, pioneers who immigrated to the Eastern Townships from England in the 1830s. In recent decades, the Staceys have received a great deal of attention, first through the publication of Jane Vansittart's 1976 book *Lifelines*, a collection of family correspondence spanning the 1836-1858 period, and more recently as the central characters in the musical stage production, *Louisa*, by

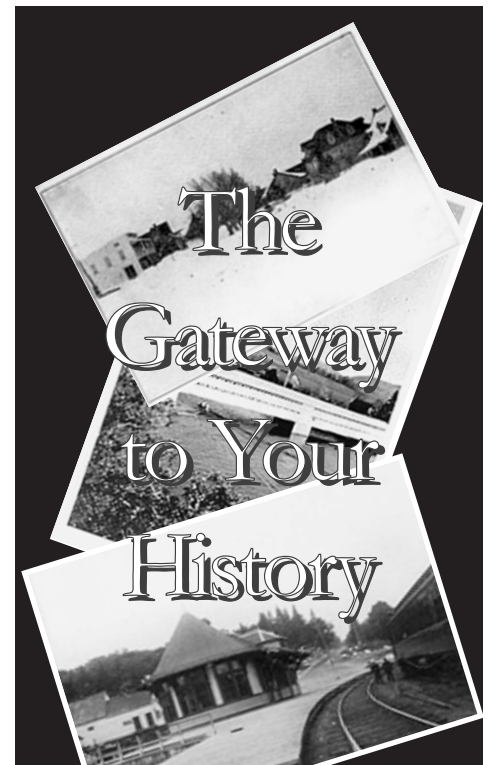
Sunil Mahtani and Donald Patriquin.

Many Stacey descendants continue to live in the region, across Canada and the United States, perhaps explaining the good response the Loomises' appeal for financial support has so far received. With help from the Megantic-Compton Cemetery Association, Patrimoine Heritage-Ascott-Heritage has written to dozens of potential donors, raising several hundred dollars in just a few week's time.

In the 1930s, the tombstones—along with the Staceys themselves—were dug up and moved to Ascot Corner from an older burial site. For many years the stones lay propped against a fence. At one time, the tombstones were even featured in a display of pioneer tombstone styles mounted by the Sherbrooke Historical Society.

Fearing they might be vandalized or stolen, Milt Loomis, a great-great grandson of the Staceys, took possession of the gravemarkers for safe keeping before coming up with the idea to reset them in cement. When completed, the new monument will feature a granite plaque listing the names of all of the pioneers known to have been buried with the Staceys at the original cemetery, accompanied by two granite etchings—one depicting the village's deconsecrated Holy Comforter Anglican Church (1876-1948), the other based on a fanciful drawing of the Stacey family's pioneer grist and saw mill, as imagined by the Stacey's daughter Louisa while she was waiting in England to join her parents in Lower Canada.

Donations, for this project can be sent to Patrimoine-Ascott-Heritage at P.O. Box 67, Station, Sherbrooke (Lennoxville) QC, J1M 1Z3. Receipts will be issued for income tax purposes, and gifts of \$100 or more will entitle donors to receive a CD copy of the Louisa musical soundtrack.



 **QUEBEC
HERITAGE WEB**

**Online Access to
Heritage Magazines**

**Quebec Tourism
Information**

Guided Trail Maps

**Heritage Organization
Information**

www.quebecheritageweb.com



**Quebec
Anglophone
Heritage
Network**

Dying to visit

From the Globe and Mail

The big talk in the industry these days is "creative tourism," coming up with something entirely novel to sell to the rest of the world.

India has just announced it is moving in to "cemetery tourism," convinced there is a huge market out there for foreigners, particularly from Britain, to come see where their forefathers lie. With this coming year the 150th anniversary of the Indian Mutiny, India is already expecting a rush of grave tourists. The Indian government estimates some two million Europeans are buried on the Indian subcontinent.

THE STREET THAT ROARED

Why the fight to save Montreal milestone matters to Mile Enders

by Carolyn Shaffer



What's in a name? To Park Avenue residents, quite a stink—at least since last October, when Montreal city council's executive committee led by Mayor Gerald Tremblay voted unanimously in favour of changing the name of Park Avenue to Robert Bourassa Ave. in honour of the late Quebec premier.

Bourassa, who died in 1996, would have admired the spirit of the political fallout, if not the tactics. No public consultation or announcement was made prior to the vote. When news of the plan got out, the street went wild. Councillors returning the City Hall to vote on the motion last November were met with a wall of protest.

"It's always been Park Avenue, and they should leave it that way," Frank Lucifero, owner of neighbourhood café and hangout called the Social Club, said.

"They should respect the many nationalities

here," echoed Pierros Karidogiannis, owner of drycleaner's shop, Nettoyeurs à la Grecque, on the corner of Park and St. Viateur.

"Many of us have lived and died on this street; worked like crazy on this street and made it beautiful."

Protests were staged outside the mayor's office, a petition was circulated garnering more than 40,000 signatures and "Save Park Ave." signs have been appearing in the windows of businesses all over Mile End, the neighbourhood surrounding Park Ave. Why all the opposition to the name change? One word: tradition.

For many residents, the idea of suddenly changing the street name is an insult to the neighbourhood's multicultural heritage. Some, like Karidogiannis, fear it's a deliberate attempt to undermine and denigrate the neighbourhood's multiethnic identity. It didn't help when the mayor's communications director, Richard Theriault

Photo by Carolyn Shaffer.

dismissed local opponents to the name change as “neo-Montrealers” in a written letter.

“I was quite insulted by the tone,” Park Ave. resident Marion Bialek told the Gazette. “It tries to minimize the significance of the communities that have lived for generations on Park.”

Ditto for Mile End resident Sheila Resels, whose parents immigrated to the neighbourhood in 1946. “Tremblay has doubly insulted me. First he’s trying to erase my history and then he makes me feel as though I really don’t belong anyway because, after all, I’m only a ‘neo-Montrealer’ she fumed in an online blog.

Dinu Bumbaru, program director of Heritage Montreal, thinks the ethnic debate conceals what’s really at stake: the preservation of a milestone in Montreal’s civic history. “Many people don’t realize that the name Park Avenue dates from the 1880s, and came with the creation of Mount Royal Park,” Bumbaru says. “This was the result of a very long and steady effort by citizens of Montreal who petitioned the city for twelve years to create the park, out of concern for the clearcutting that was taking place on the mountain.”

The park was inaugurated on May 24, 1876, and the street name soon followed. As such, Bumbaru says the name Park Ave. marks a civic achievement that continues to benefit all Montrealers “It’s unknown today because we live in our own time. But this is a legacy that is carried collectively from one generation to the next.”

City council voted in favour of changing the name November 27, in spite of the public uproar, but the controversy is far from over. Quebec’s provincial toponomy commission still has to weigh in on the proposal and the message that it will send to Montreal’s diverse ethnic communities who’ve been putting down roots here for generations.

Beside its place in Montreal’s civic history, the name Park Ave. is part of the social fabric of Mile End, a neighbourhood once known as Canada’s “cradle of immigration.”

Mile End once covered a much larger area than it does today and was originally settled by francophone labourers who worked in local quarries that were active in the early 19th century. They were later joined by Irish Catholic families who migrated from Griffintown. The population of the neighbourhood quickly grew towards the end of the 1800s. A railway line came in 1876, bringing more industry and residents to the area. In 1909, a tramway began operating on Park Ave. The following year, the town of St-Louis, as Mile End was called at the time, was annexed to Montreal.

Waves of immigrant settlement followed in the first decade of the 20th century. Jews migrated north from the area that is now Chinatown, and more arrived from the Old World along with other eastern European immigrants. By the 1940s, Jews comprised 70 per cent of Mile End’s population. Italians also moved into the area, coming both from their original Montreal neighbourhood around Berri and St. Catherine—the area now known as the Gay Village—and directly from Italy.

According to Susan Bronson, an architect specializing in history and conservation, Mile End’s first Italian immigrants were mostly young men who worked on the railway lines and in general construction. Some brought their wives and families when they could afford to. Greek and Portuguese immigrants arrived in the 1950s and 60s.

Since the end of World War II, Mile End has also been home to a growing community of Hasidic Jews, many of whom moved into neighbourhoods vacated by the earlier Jewish community. Men with black hats and sidelocks and wig-bedecked women pushing carriages flocked by groups of small children are a ubiquitous sight in the neighbourhood. In the fall, balconies are studded with succas, homemade shelters in which the Jewish holiday of Succot is celebrated. Children call out to one another in Yiddish in the alleyways and the kosher grocery store on Park and St-Viateur, where commerce takes place in Hebrew, Yiddish and English, is always bustling.

The Church of St. Michael the Archangel, constructed in 1914 for the local Irish Catholic community, embodies the cultural diversity and coexistence of Mile End. At the time, it was the biggest English-speaking Catholic parish in Quebec. The shamrock design over the entrance tells of the church’s original congregants. The interior paintings are by an Italian artist, and the church houses a statue of San Marziale, the Calabrian patron saint. The church became home to the Polish congregation of St. Anthony in 1964, and bears a statue of the Black Madonna of Czesestowa. It also contains statues of St-Jean Baptiste, the patron saint of Quebec, and St. Patrick. Midnight Mass is offered in multiple languages.

Each July, St.Viateur Street outside St. Michael’s church turns into a carnival for the Italian festival of San Marziale. Rosella Tursi, a filmmaker whose family came to the neighbourhood from Italy in the early 1950s, has particularly fond memories of this Park Ave. tradition. “The whole area closes down. A stage is put up in the corner of the intersection and bands play. There’s granita [lemon ice], balloons and food. When I was a kid they used to put up a wrestling ring.”

Tursi says the different ethnic groups always mixed in this neighbourhood. “Even today, when I go into a Greek shop on Park Ave. and they hear that I’m Italian, they say, ‘una faccia, una raga’—one face, one race.”

Mile End’s religious institutions testify to the passage of various immigrant groups through the neighbourhood over time. The synagogue Tifereth Israel, built in 1911 on St. Urbain St. became a Haitian Baptist church in 1960, and was taken over by the Greek congregation of St. Markela, in 1980. Synagogue Beth Jacob on Fairmount St. is now part of the College Française.

The old immigrant flavour of the neighbourhood is revealed in photos of Park Ave. from the 1950s and 60s and in scenes from the 1968 NFB film *The 80 Goes to Sparta*, named for the bus that serves Park Ave.

Today, much of the immigrant past remains. There are still signs in Greek on Park Ave., albeit in obligatorily smaller script than French. Mile End boasts two famed 24-hour bagel bakeries, both of which opened in the 1950s, not to mention Wilensky’s Light Lunch, a neighbourhood landmark that first opened for business in 1932. Nearby St. Viateur Street features a smattering of Jewish, Greek, Italian, Polish, Guyanese and African restaurants and shops.

These days, the neighbourhood has shed its

ghetto connotation. Many of the original immigrants moved out in the 60s and 70s. Mile End’s population fell throughout the 70s and 80s, and the neighborhood started to revive and gentrify in the early 1990s. New immigrants are drawn to more affordable neighbourhoods. Mile End is now an eclectic mix of old and new: first, second and third generation immigrants, students, artists, bohemians and young, middle class francophone and anglophone families.

Residents are proud of Mile End’s diverse and friendly atmosphere. Karidogiannis still deals with older customers in his cleaning shop who speak neither English nor French. “We just make signs,” he says, moving his hands, “and we never have a problem to communicate.”

Rivky Farkas, a young mother who owns the Toys 4 U store with her husband, says the name Park Ave. is important to her and others in the Hasidic community. Her family arrived from eastern Europe in 1945 and can now boast of five generations of Mile End residents. “Park Ave. is part of our life, we really lived here a long time. It’s like a heritage,” she says.

Losing this heritage may mean nothing to the city’s political elite, but it spells defeat for proponents of local history. “Personally, I have nothing against honouring Robert Bourassa,” Tursi says, “but I am against erasing one part of history to make room for another.”

Tell Ottawa that History Matters...

LANDMARKS, NOT LANDFILL
INCENTIVES FOR HERITAGE REHAB IN 2007 FEDERAL BUDGET

PRÉSERVER, PAS REMBLAYER
DES INCITATIFS POUR LA RÉHABILITATION
DU PATRIMOINE DANS LE BUDGET FÉDÉRAL 2007

COALITION AGAINST DEMOLITION!
FONDATION HERITAGE CANADA FOUNDATION
COALITION CONTRE LA DEMOLITION!

HERITAGE CANADA FOUNDATION LA FONDATION HERITAGE CANADA

Over the past 30 years,
Canada has lost twenty percent
of its historic buildings to demolition.

And the destruction continues.

It’s time to act.

Help urge the Government of Canada
to protect historic places by stimulating
more private-sector investment
in heritage rehabilitation.

Insist on tax incentives in the 2007
budget to build support for our heritage.

Sign our online petition at:

www.heritagecanada.org

THE BAGG SHUL

A living history of Montreal's early Jewish community
By Carolyn Shaffer



A cornerstone of Montreal's immigrant heritage stands at the corner of Bagg and Clark streets in Montreal's now-trendy Plateau district.

Congregation Temple Solomon, or the Bagg Shul as it is more commonly known, is Quebec's oldest original synagogue, "the only one left of its kind," notes Joe Brick, an officer of the synagogue for nearly forty years who is leading efforts to preserve the building as living historic landmark—against all odds.

More than six decades since his own bar mitzvah was held here, Brick, who has lived his whole life just a few doors down the street, remains determined to keep the shul open, although there are fewer and fewer Jews living in the old neighbourhood. Originally a du-

plex, the building dates from the 1800s, and was converted to a synagogue in 1921. Today, in a neighbourhood whose narrow, picturesque streets were once peppered with synagogues, the Bagg Shul stands alone.

"It is special," says Brick "because it is a replica of the old eastern European synagogues from Poland, Ukraine and other places which were all destroyed in the Second World War."

Thanks in large part to Brick and fellow congregants, the Bagg Shul has largely withstood the forces of time and the pressures of gentrification and change that have swept through the Plateau district over the last 30 years. In 1998, he helped lead a campaign to have the synagogue declared a religious heritage site. The designation enabled the synagogue to secure a grant for

\$230,000 from the Quebec government, which was spent on crucial exterior and interior renovations. The roof and windows were replaced along with the building's crumbling brick exterior, and the dank basement was turned into a bright, serviceable space now used for Sabbath and holiday receptions.

The grant came from the Quebec Religious Heritage Foundation, a funding program established by the Ministry of Culture and Communications in 1995. The Bagg Shul was the first synagogue to benefit from the program. At the time of its heritage designation, Quebec's culture minister Louise Beaudoin described the shul as "a reminder of a longstanding tradition and a past with which not many Quebecers are familiar."

In conversation with Brick, the intertwined histories of the synagogue and

the city's Jewish community come forward in full colour. In the shul's early days the Plateau district was home to a vibrant working-class Jewish immigrant neighbourhood at the heart of the city's *shmatka*, or clothing and textiles, industry.

"The textile workers would come from the Cooper Building and the Berman Building, to pray at this synagogue," says Brick, pointing towards St. Lawrence Boulevard and to buildings now occupied by film production companies, chic cafés, bars and shops.

The Bagg synagogue has long been a vital centre of Jewish community life. Brick remembers a poor scrap peddler and his wife, who use to show up regularly with a large platter of homemade gefilte fish. An old safe in the synagogue's basement contains original ledger books from the Bagg's earliest days. Records show that a yearly membership cost \$1.50, which included the services of a doctor who made house calls for 50 cents a visit. A funeral, according to old receipts, cost \$35.

Nowadays, the Bagg's unique interior, featuring robin's-egg blue walls and ceiling, with paintings depicting the twelve zodiac signs surrounding the sanctuary, its highly ornamental lights and fixtures and a U-shaped balcony—the women's gallery—draws tourists, history buffs and photographers.

Brick takes out a large hardcover book from under the cloth-covered *bima*, the stand on which the Torah is placed for reading during services, entitled *Synagogues of the World*, and turns to a full-page photo of the shul's interior, taken in 1995. The Bagg Shul sits alongside photos of synagogues in Istanbul, Shanghai, Rome and others.

Despite its historical value, the synagogue is struggling for survival. While it is beloved by its handful of aging members, Brick has been unable to draw in the younger generations and the crucial financial support that their annual membership fees provide. Eight years after the initial round of renovations, Brick is now trying to raise funds for further repairs. The main sanctuary's

ceiling is sagging and the electric wiring, which dates to the 1920s, has become an artifact in itself.

While the Quebec government has promised to pay for structural repairs, Brick estimates that an additional \$60,000 will be needed to restore the plaster and paintings in the sanctuary, and to replace old lighting and tattered floor coverings. But it's proving difficult to raise financial support from Jewish communities located elsewhere in the city. "They all have their own synagogues to support," says Brick. "They have no interest in giving to one that's all the way across town."

The exodus from the Plateau culminated in the 1970s. Today, Montreal's

speech with sweeping gestures through the now-empty space.

This year the synagogue attracted more than 150 people for the high holidays of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, the best turnout in years. Maybe this signals a trend. David Inhaber, a member for the past ten years thinks the Bagg Shul offers a personal experience that's hard to find in a bigger congregation. "There's a real sense of friendship It gives you a good feeling to come here," he says. And Brick's noticed a trickle of younger Jews moving back into the old neighbourhood, some of whom have dropped in to visit the shul. Most aren't religiously observant, though, and don't seem interested in becoming regulars.

Brick's own family was not particularly religious and while he was growing up they attended the synagogue only occasionally. His involvement with the Bagg Shul began with the death of his father in 1967, at which time he began attending services every day in order to perform the ritual prayers of mourning, required by Jewish law for a period of 11 months.

Over the past few years, Brick has tried to draw younger Jews, including denizens of the nearby McGill University student ghetto, to venture the few blocks up to the shul, but with little success, since they have their own student-run house of prayer. Still, he hopes to attract a younger presence to the synagogue, who will ensure its future survival if he cannot.

What motivates an elderly man like Brick to continue to fight for the preservation of this institution, when all the others in the area closed their doors decades ago? A sense of its heritage value, of its place in the community, and its link with the past whose traces, without our efforts, may easily disappear.

Joe Brick is appealing for donations from the public for the next phase of renovation and restoration efforts, which are scheduled to take place this fall. Cheques can be sent in the name of the synagogue: Congregation Temple Solomon, 3919 Clark Street, Montreal, QC, H2W 1W5.



Jewish community is centred in the city's west end, where over a dozen synagogues are scattered across several neighbourhoods. It's much more common today to hear Portuguese on the street around the Bagg Shul than Yiddish, the language spoken by Jewish immigrants from eastern Europe who had settled in the area in large numbers around the turn of the last century.

The Bagg Shul continues to serve a small base of aging locals and the occasional visitor or two. Its membership has dwindled to the point where it is open only on Saturday mornings and holidays, and it's a weekly struggle to scrape together the ten men necessary, by traditional interpretation of Jewish law, to constitute a *minyan*—the minimum required to perform communal prayers.

"This shul holds 350 people, and I remember in the old days sometimes it was so full, people were overflowing out the door," Brick says, punctuating his

CHRISTBAUM COMES TO CANADA

Decorated tree topped pudding at Sorel party



Though intimately associated with Christianity for more than three centuries, the Christmas tree actually stems from much older roots in European pagan customs. In many Nordic cultures, it seems, people cut down evergreen trees in late December and moved them into their homes or temples to mark the winter solstice. The evergreen trees were believed to have magical powers that enabled them to withstand the life-threatening powers of darkness and cold.

Surviving legends about the first Christian use of the tree include that of a woodcutter who's rewarded for helping a small hungry boy. In one version of this tale the boy appears to the woodcutter and his wife as the Christchild on the morning after the good deed. The child snaps a branch from a nearby fir tree and predicts that it will bear fruit at Christmas. Sure enough, the tree is magically laden with apples of gold and nuts of silver. By the 1700s the Christbaum, or "Christ tree," was a firmly established tradition in Germany.

It is widely believed that Martin Luther, the sixteenth-century Protestant reformer, first added lighted candles to a tree. Walking home one winter evening, composing a sermon, he was awed by the brilliance of stars twinkling amidst evergreens. To recapture the scene for

his family, he erected a tree in the main room and wired its branches with lighted candles. From Germany the custom of the decorated tree spread to other parts of Western Europe and eventually to North America.

The Christmas tree made its first recorded appearance in North America on Christmas Eve 1781, in Sorel, where the baroness von Riedesel was hosting a dinner party of British and German officers. Her husband, Baron Frederick-Adolphus Riedesel was commander of a group of German soldiers sent by the Duke of Brunswick to help defend British North America during the American War of Independence. Taken prisoners during the disastrous British offensive in northern New York in 1777, Riedesel and his family were not freed until 1780.

Dinner's highlight was an English pudding, but the evening's real sensation turned out to be a fir tree standing in the corner, its branches decorated with fruits and lit with candles. The story goes that, after all the family had suffered over the past two years, the baroness was determined to mark their return to Sorel, where most of the German soldiers were garrisoned, with an Old Country tradition. Little is known about the party in Sorel, but people liked the idea and it gradually caught on.

The Christmas tree was popularized in England only in the 19th century, by Prince Albert, Queen Victoria's German consort. Son of the duke of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha, a duchy in central Germany, Albert had grown up decorating Christmas trees, and when he married Victoria in 1840 he requested that she adopt the German yuletide custom.

The first time a Christmas tree was lit by electricity was in 1882 in New York. Edward Johnson, a colleague of Thomas Edison, lit a Christmas tree with a string of 80 small electric light bulbs, which he had made himself. These strings of light began to be produced around 1890. One of the first electrically lit Christmas trees was erected in Westmount, in 1896. In 1900, some large stores put up illuminated trees to attract customers.

Today the Christmas tree is a firmly established tradition throughout Canada. Beyond its pagan and Christian origins, the Christmas tree is a universal symbol of rebirth, of light in the darkest time.



Above: Baron Riedesel. Text adapted from Christmas Tree, O Christmas Tree, Your Branches Green Delight Us, by James H. Marsh, editor in chief of The Canadian Encyclopedia at www.thecanadianencyclopedia.com

Germans soldiers also left their mark on Quebec

Most of the German troops sent to Canada during the American War of Independence were stationed at Sorel. The inclusion of many Germans in the garrison of regular troops at the time may be considered to have been providential. The German soldiers got along well with the French-Canadian population and most of their officers understood French better than English. Their administrative correspondence was usually written in French or German. One of them wrote that the Canadians were “very good people, serious, attractive and very upright. Once won over, their friendship was boundless.... No nation could support so much effort, work and fatigue with such patience.”

The Canadians, for their part, appreciated the order and discipline of the German troops. At Kamouraska, for example, the excellent deportment of a detachment of the Anhalt-Zerbst Regiment won the full approval of the militia captains. The Germans consisted primarily of Brunswick regiments and battalions under the command of General Riedesel, part of which remained in garrison during the 1777 campaign. The following year, the German soldiers captured by the Americans were exchanged and returned to Canada.

With the exception of the Prinz Friedrich Regiment, all German infantrymen, dragoons and light infantrymen were incorporated into the Ehrenbrook Battalion and the von Barner Regiment in the fall of 1778, for a total of 2,000 men, excluding the approximately 800 Hesse-Hanau in-

fantrymen, light infantrymen and artillerymen.

In addition, the 600- to 700-strong Anhalt-Zerbst Regiment arrived in May 1778 to be assigned the task of guarding Quebec and its surroundings. Instead of the usual blue German soldier's uniform, the guards stationed on the ramparts at Quebec wore an attractive white uniform with scarlet lapels, cuffs and collar. The German regiments totalled 3,200 men at the time, half the regular troops stationed in the St. Lawrence Valley. In the years that followed, the British increased this German presence. In May 1780 the number of German soldiers went from 3,600 to 4,300 with the arrival of troops from Hesse-Cassel, and at the end of 1782 their number reached approximately 5,000. The reinforcements from Brunswick made it possible to re-establish the dragoons and grenadiers, and to increase the number of infantry regiments to five.

When peace was restored, the troops returned home, but many German soldiers chose to settle in Canada. The German names that many Quebecers bear today go back to these ancestors. The Wilhelmys, for example, are descendants of a soldier in the Hesse-Hanau Chasseurs. In addition, many hard-to-pronounce German names were gallicized: Maher became Maheu, Beyer became Payeur, and Schumpff became Jomphre.

From Canadian Military Heritage, Vol. 2 (1755-1871), Chapter 2, Revolt of Pontiac and the American Invasion. See www.cmhg.gc.ca.

BRIDGE TO SUBURBIA

Vanished English towns are part of South Shore's past

by Kevin Erskine-Henry

Often when one talks of Montreal's English-speaking community, eyes turn toward the island's western end. However, just beyond the bridges leading to the south shore of the St. Lawrence River, in the shade of the city skyline you will find a dozen towns and cities that comprise the second-largest English-language community in Quebec.

The South Shore English-speaking community makes its home mainly within 20 kilometres of the Island of Montreal. And despite battling rush hour traffic gridlock, residents here live closer to the city's "downtown" than people in the West-Island or Laval.

Along with the core cities of Brossard, Greenfield Park, Saint-Lambert, Saint-Hubert, Longueuil and Candiac, you also find English Community pockets in the Richelieu Valley towns of Otterburn Park, Saint-Bruno and Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu.

Today we may look at the ever-expanding South Shore region as an extension of suburban Montreal. However, only 60 years ago, dozens of small towns dotted a landscape that was largely rural. Moving from Montreal to the South Shore was thought of as getting away from the city. Montrealers escaped by taking a day trip out to the countryside, or owning a weekend cottage here.

The expanded roots of the English-community on the South Shore began with the completion of the Victoria Bridge in 1860 by the Grand Trunk Railway. With the opening of the bridge's passenger lanes, people who wanted to get away from the noise and grime of the city soon began to settle along the rail line.

The better-off folk settled in the towns of Saint-Lambert and Montreal South, a mainly English-speaking town located near the base of the Jacques Cartier Bridge that today forms part of the City of Longueuil. They built fine brick homes similar to those found in NDG. Further down the rail line, Greenfield Park and Mackayville became home to the trades people. Between 1920 and 1956 South Shore residents could travel to work in the city each day aboard South-

ern Country Tramway electric commuter cars.

Soldiers returning from overseas through veteran housing programs brought great growth to the South Shore English-speaking Community in the 1950s. By 1956 the end of the tramway line led to tiny makeshift villages named Croyden, East Greenfield, and Brookline, home to hundreds of anglophone families whose breadwinners worked in the Point St. Charles rail yards.

During this time East Greenfield became part of Saint Hubert while the City of Jacques Cartier was merged into Longueuil.

The opening of the Champlain Bridge and new massive housing programs saw the birth of Brossard and Candiac in the 1960s. Expansion was everywhere. The opening of the Longueuil Metro line allowed for quick access to downtown Montreal. Canada's first two shopping centres were opened on the South Shore during these boom times.

Political change, including legislation restricting English and the exodus of anglophones from Quebec that followed after the election of the first Parti-Québécois government in 1976 contributed to the decline in the number of local English schools, churches and community groups. Greenfield Park and Otterburn Park are currently the only South Shore cities granted official bilingual status under Quebec's French Language Charter.

The English-speaking South Shore community today proudly belongs to one of the most bilingual multicultural communities in Quebec. Old divisions that once separated communities have fallen by the wayside as churches, schools and community groups share resources. And wherever you travel you will meet people who will tell you of the great times they had growing up here.

The author is a member of the South Shore Community Partners Network, which promotes and helps develop English language community services on the South Shore. Email for more information: community-partners@sympatico.ca

Heritage Minute Video Contest

Students, Tell us
your story!

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

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

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

Send your entries to:

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

Deadline for
submissions is
April 30, 2007

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

LAND OF SHRUGS AND STRANGERS

Guesswork, trade and conflict obscure Canada's etymology
by Joseph Graham

At the time of Confederation in 1867, Canada was only one of many names proposed for the new country. The word existed but referred to only the two old colonies of Upper and Lower Canada, or Canada-West and Canada-East, as they were then called, not to the four colonies that initially formed our country. Names proposed included Acadia, the name associated with the French settlements in the Maritimes; Tupona, an acronym for The United Provinces of North America; Efigsa, for English, French, Irish, Scots, German and Aboriginal lands; Borealia to evoke the North; Hochelaga, the name of the original Iroquois village on Montreal Island; and Laurentia, from the then recently named mountains.

During the debate in the Legislative Assembly on February 9th, 1865, Thomas D'Arcy McGee, one of the Fathers of Confederation, said, "I read in one newspaper not less than a dozen attempts to derive a new name. One individual chooses Tuponia and another, Hochelaga as a suitable name for the new nationality. Now I ask any honourable member of this house how he would feel if he woke up some fine morning and found himself instead of a Canadian, a Tuponian or a Hochelagander." There were surely lobbyists for each different name, and had they had television in the 1860s, it would likely have become the most important single issue that the politicians had to deal with. We might have ended up with a much simpler name such as Britannica or Albertoria (for the Prince Regent), which were also proposed.

The origin of the name Canada had been a subject of debate for years before Confederation. One story credits the Portuguese. It suggests that they were among the earliest Europeans to see our coast, and they dismissed it with the words *Aca Nada*, or "here is nothing." In P.G. Roy's 1906 publication, *Les Noms Géographiques de la Prov. de Québec*, he lists arguments that credit the Portuguese and the Spanish, who used the word "canada" for road. The French and Danish, he reports, could have a claim because of a military encampment that once belonged to Caesar in the lower Seine valley called *Bas-de-Canada*. The name had been shortened from *Castra Danorum* (camp of the Danes).

The Germans also had a claim because of a French translation of a German study of reed-filled flatlands in the Amazon they called *Canadas*. This argument involved Spanish as well, because the Spanish word for reed is *canna* and if *ada* is added to it, the new word means clearing. It is hard to see how this applies to our country, but then Roy was only reporting all the different explanations. Narrowing it down, he concluded that despite the similarities to words in other European languages, the most likely sources were either the Cree and Montagnais (Innu), or the Iroquois of the St. Lawrence. That is where the controversy really started.

The French under Champlain had allied themselves origi-

nally with the Algonquin and Montagnais, but in the 1530s, almost a century earlier, Jacques Cartier had met what appeared to be a different people on the shores of the St. Lawrence. They were Iroquoian and were subsequently displaced, perhaps as a result of diseases brought on by their interaction with Cartier. He took their term for a village, *canada*, or *kanata*, and applied it to the countryside along the shore of the St. Lawrence River below the native settlement of Stadaconé, site of present-day Quebec City. The argument as to whether Canada comes from there or from the Montagnais has been going on since the colony was first created, and depending upon who is right, the word Canada could mean quite different things.

According to Father Albert Lacombe, writing in 1874, if the Montagnais were the people who gave us the name Canada, it came from their word for foreigner—someone coming from afar: *Kannatats*. It is possible that the early settlers accepted the name they were called as a way of having an identity to the Montagnais, who were the majority at the time. Over time, the argument goes, they became *Canadiens*, or more probably *Canayans*. Certainly the Montagnais and Algonquin were the ones they interacted with the most. If this is in fact the origin of the name Canada, it seems appropriate. After all, we have been told many times that we are a nation of immigrants. Wouldn't it be fitting if the name of our country actually means "foreigner"?

But do we want to celebrate a name that excludes those first residents who coined it? Most of the arguments and records of names were presented by clergy, and in 1857 Monsignor Lafleche wrote that the name came from the phrase, *P'Konata*, used both by the Cree and the Montagnais. The expression means "without a plan" and seems to have been the verbal equivalent of a shrug, perhaps reflecting Lafleche's opinion of the government of the time. He said if you were to ask a Cree what he wants, and he had no ready response, he might say "*P'Konata*." Today, if you ask a Canadian what he wants, his equivalent answer would be, "I dunno!" or "Je l'sais-tu?" Mgr. Lafleche's interpretation contributed to the risk that Thomas D'Arcy McGee might wake up one morning as a *Hochelagander*.

Thankfully for our self-image, P.G. Roy in 1906 argued persuasively that the name Canada had come from the Iroquois. He presented pages of arguments from Father J.A. Cuoq who, back at the time of Confederation, was the authority on the Iroquois language. Cuoq sets out his proof that, based upon the words that Cartier recorded at Stadaconé and Hochelaga, he met the Iroquois, not the Montagnais. This turns out to have been fortunate, because in Iroquois, *Canada* means village, or agglomeration of tents—a more attractive meaning than a shrug or a foreigner, even if one of the other contenders has a more convincing argument. Cartier, according to Cuoq, took the word

to be the name of the place itself, and so it became.

Stadaconé, beyond the western extreme of Cartier's Canada, was peopled with Montagnais when Champlain arrived some seven decades after Cartier. Stadaconé in Algonquian means "wing" and a similar word in Montagnais means "place where one crosses on pieces of wood as on a bridge." While Stadaconé was located on the north shore of the St. Lawrence, a map credited to Champlain from 1613 shows the word "Québec" at the edge of the river on the south shore. This is not surprising because the word meant narrowing, obstructed or blocked, indicating the place where the river narrows, as is the case at the location of Quebec City on the St. Lawrence River. It had the same meaning in Algonquin, Cree and Mi'kmaq, and while Champlain also spelled it Québecq, other early French explorers spelled it Kébec, Kébec, Képak, Kebbek, and other variations. It can be thought of as onomatopoeic, or a word that evokes a sound, if one thinks of the echo that would rebound in a narrow passage, and it is likely that the word existed to describe such narrow places before it was applied to 'the quebec' on the river. As with the word Canada, historians invoke many arguments over its origins. Some suggest that it could have been influenced by the Norman rule of adding the suffix 'bec' to indicate a promontory at the junction of two rivers, even though the Algonquin word Kebh means 'blocked' and the suffix 'ek' means 'here.'

The names Canada and Quebec, existing since before the first Europeans arrived in the Americas, come from two different peoples—the Iroquoian and Algonquian—who fought as much as they traded, and pushed each other back and forth along their frontiers. Even after contact with the Europeans, one group allied itself with the English, while the other went with the French. Today that duality is commemorated in our two levels of government who often seem to fight as much as they trade. Thanks to Cartier, the territory entered via the St. Lawrence became known as Canada, but New France was not Canada. It was simply located in a frontier named Canada, a word that was synonymous with all of

the territory accessed through the St. Lawrence. Quebec, the name for the place, soon replaced Stadaconé, the name of the village.

In Champlain's map of 1613, the south shore of the St. Lawrence is called Nouvelle France and the north shore is called Nouvelle Biscaye. Neither region is called either Quebec or Canada. Champlain dealt with the Algonquin and Montagnais. What happened to the Iroquoian peoples that Cartier met seven decades earlier is a matter of speculation, but Champlain would have had little reason to call a specific part of the colony Canada. The Montagnais use of the word Kannatats to describe foreigners may have given rise to the first French colonists calling themselves Canayens, a word considered a colloquial form of Canadiens. Perhaps the word Canayens commemorates a different naming from that of the territory Cartier identified as Canada (or Kanata). In such a case, the word Canayens descends from the Montagnais, while the word Canadian comes from the Iroquoian.

The French designated New France as the Diocese of Quebec in 1674. It comprised all French holdings in Canada from Acadia to Louisiana, and was administered from Quebec City. In 1763, when the French colony became a British one, the British proclaimed the Government of the Province of Quebec, not of Canada. Canada replaced Quebec only in 1791, 28 years after that proclamation, when the colony was divided into Upper and Lower Canada. Until then, Canada was a colloquial name for our part of the New World rather than the name of a political entity or a colony. The people who lived there may have called themselves Canadiens, or as likely, Canayens—something like "foreigners" in the Montagnais language. Later, in 1840, the two colonies were reunited as the colony of Canada until they became the Canadian provinces of Quebec and Ontario at Confederation, and its citizens became Canadians, or Canadien(ne)s. It was not until the Quiet Revolution in the 1960s that the Canadiens, or Canayens, began to call themselves Québécois.

Adapted from the book Naming the Laurentians, by Joseph Graham Contact him at Joseph@doncaster.ca.

The Eastern Townships: In Town and Village / Les Cantons-de-l'Est: villes et villages

by Matthew Farfan



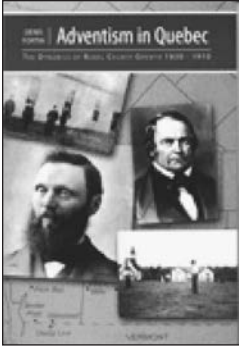
A visual journey back in time through a fascinating corner of Quebec.

Featuring nearly 200 rare photographs of village life from the 1860s to the 1940s.

Bilingual. 205 pages. Soft-cover.

To order:
call (819) 876-5047, or
email mf@qahn.org.

BOOK REVIEWS



Adventism in Quebec: The Dynamics of Rural Church Growth, 1830-1910

By Denis Fortin
Andrews University Press.
202 pages, \$19.99.

Fortin, a professor of theology at this small Christian university in Michigan, traces the rise and decline of the Adventist religious sect in its various forms as it appeared across southern Quebec in the 19th century. Stemming from the Millerite, or Second Advent, movement in the 1840s New England, the Sabbatarian form of Adventism that later developed into the Seventh-Day Adventist Church flourished for several decades in the Eastern Townships.

Adventism in Quebec is the account of a religious movement that reached its zenith well over a century ago, and which declined dramatically in a relatively short time. The book is organized by chapter, with several chapters devoted to the rise of American preacher William Miller and his teachings, and to

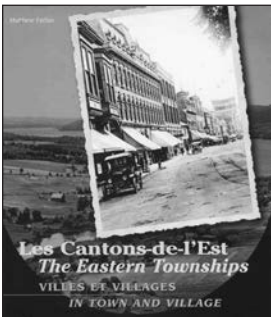
the eventual schism that rocked the Advent movement, resulting in the evolution of two distinct branches of Adventists—the Seventh-Day Adventist and the Advent Christians. Central to Miller’s apocalyptic belief was his prediction, based on selective readings of biblical passages, that the Second Coming of Christ would occur on or before 1843. These early chapters are particularly interesting. Later chapters focus upon the various congregations and conferences operating in the region. The book is well-written, informative and easy to read. It contains several appendices and numerous archival photographs that complement the narrative nicely.

Though Adventism in Quebec focuses essentially on the Seventh-Day Adventists, given its more general title,

it should have devoted more space to the Advent Christians, who still maintain a couple of churches and a youth camp in the Township. Readers would have also benefited from a clearer explanation of the differences between these two distinct movements that sprang from common roots and which are often confused in people’s minds.

A criticism of a purely technical type is that the printing program used by the publishers was obviously not equipped to handle French accents. The result is that in many of the French names that appear in the book there are bizarre gaps (i.e., blank spaces) where a letter with an accent should be. Other than that, the book is an excellent addition to anyone’s collection of Eastern Townships historical material.

Reviewed by Matthew Farfan



The Eastern Townships: In Town and Village / Les Cantons-de-l'Est: villes et village

By Matthew Farfan
Les Éditions GID,
Quebec City, 207 pages. \$34.95.

This is a book of photographs with enough scope and variety to satisfy both the casual reader and the history enthusiast looking for more details on his or her favourite Townships topic. It includes a couple of the oldest existing photographs of the region, dating from the 1860s, when photography was still in its infancy.

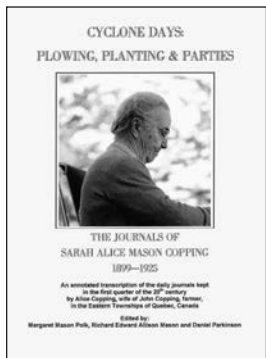
About 200 early photographs are presented. Author-collector Farfan has done his homework. The pictures are or-

ganized by subject: Towns and Villages; Doing Business; Making a Living; Having Fun; Getting Around; Schooldays; Going to Church; Special Occasions; Disasters; Life on the Line; and In Uniform. Each photo is briefly explained although Farfan seems somewhat frustrated by the tight spaces given for captions in the format of the GID series.

This book is a pleasure to consume and would make a fine gift to anyone interested in the Eastern Townships or anyone who likes old pictures. It is

available at bookstore across Quebec, or directly from the author for \$37.05, tax included. If ordering by mail, please add \$8.50 for shipping within Quebec, Ontario and the U.S.; or \$12 for shipping to Western and Atlantic Canada). Payment should be addressed to: Matthew Farfan, 531 Dufferin, Stanstead, Quebec, J0B 3E0. Tel.: (819) 876-5047; email mf@qahn.org.

Reviewed by Charles Bury



Cyclone Days: Plowing, Planting and Parties

Edited by Margaret Polk, Richard Mason and Daniel Parkinson

Self-published.

370 pages, including illustrations, map and appendices.

CD-ROM copy. \$12

Ontario descendants of an Eastern Townships family who farmed near Lennoxville at the turn of the 20th Century have transcribed and assembled a remarkable collection of journal entries and letters kept by their ancestor, Alice Mason Copping (1873-1960), a great grand-daughter of Rawdon pioneer and journal-keeper in his own right, George Copping.

The journal collection, titled *Cyclone Days: Plowing, Planting and Parties*, covers a period of more than 25 years and offers a straightforward account of daily farm life in Quebec from the rare perspective of the woman her editors knew simply as 'Aunt Alice.'

In their foreword to the collection Daniel Parkinson from Toronto and his co-editors Margaret Mason Polk of Kingston, and Richard Mason of Missis-sauga note that a reading of the journals provides a first-hand account of the many changes taking place in countryside be-

tween 1899 and 1925, from the expansion of railways and the impact of the first telephones, to the coming of movie-houses and streetcars. The annotated collection constitutes a valuable primary documentary source for genealogists and researchers interested in the social history of rural Quebec.

A limited number of printed copies of the Copping journal collection are available for consultation at select archives, including the Quebec Anglophone Heritage Network library and the Eastern Townships Research Centre in Sherbrooke (Lennoxville), the Compton County Historical and Museum Society in Eaton Corner, the Quebec Family History Society in Dorval, and the Montreal branch of the Quebec National Archives. Persons interested in perusing the collection at home may purchase a full text version in electronic format

To order, send email to reason@ican.net.

A MEETING OF THE PEOPLE

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

**by Roderick Macleod
and Mary Anne Poutanen**



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

Winner:

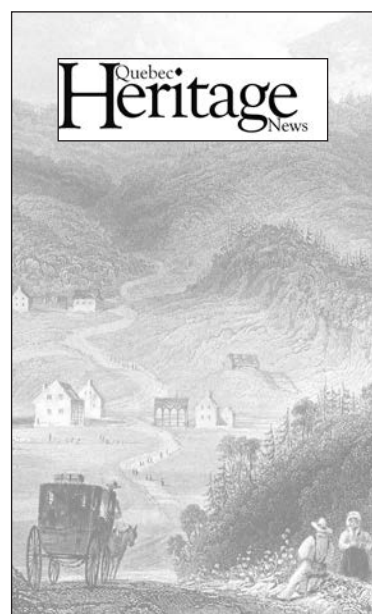
**Canadian Association of
Foundations of Education
Book Award (2006)**

**McGill-Queens University
Press.**

505 pages. \$32.95

Order online at

www.mcup.mcgill.ca



YES, Sign me up!

6 issues per year for \$20

**New subscriber? Ask for your FREE gift of
20 pocket guides to Quebec's historic regions!**

.....
Name _____

.....
Address _____

.....
City _____

.....
Prov. _____

.....
Postal Code _____

.....
Cheque enclosed

.....
Bill me

HINDSIGHT

Luck of the potted frog
by Joseph Graham

We are a Nordic people, and when all is said and done, our cold, severe winters force us to get along and to solve our social problems, to look after each other.

While travelling through rural Kenya last year, for one brief instant I looked into the pained and anxious eyes of a woman through the window of our air-conditioned van. She was trying to convince the road crew to fill her container with water as it spilled from their truck onto the dusty surface of the broken asphalt. She was not alone but with other women, competing for the same opportunity, children clinging or playing around them.

We were driving in the ditch, as we had been for miles. The road exists on the map, to satisfy foreign organizations that donated to have it modernized, but it hasn't really changed. It's still the pot-holed moonscape that it was before, more of a guide than a road. We cling to the flattest part of the surface, often straying into the dry fields to avoid obstructions. In the distance, over the parched ground, a dust devil, ten or fifteen storeys high, drifted lazily in the hot air. The African sun bakes all that is exposed.

I know that she sees me as plainly as I, her. Were she my sister, I think... How lucky I am to be visiting only, to have all that I have back home.

Not far down the road lies the carcass of a cow, the famous cattle of the Maasai people, abandoned to the vultures for lack of water. There is a sense that the whole countryside is turning into a desert, but this is only a drought.

Arriving at Dorval Airport some days later, it is winter and there has been a storm. Snow is banked, piled up on every available space, a nuisance to the important cars and trucks that ply their way between rejected mountains of water. How quickly they would melt and turn her world into a garden.

What accident of birth made her, her and me, me? How few people, born without awareness or consent, share Canadians' good fortune? What makes us so lucky? We

It is not healthy to live in a society where people have nothing to lose.

congratulate ourselves shamelessly for the quality of our political system and for the maturity of our society, but it wasn't really us. Any one of us could have been the child of this woman standing in the dust of a broken-down road in Africa, begging for water. We congratulate ourselves, but we did not really build it, we just inherited it, and it is working, at least for now. Most of us take our luck for granted, having no idea how fragile our whole infrastructure really is.

The money for that road in Africa came through donations from societies like ours, and giving it bought us a modicum of satisfaction. Halfheartedly, we sent off foreign aid, soothing our sense of guilt, feeling that we were making a difference, but most of it ended up in the private accounts of a thousand middlemen who claimed to understand our intentions. The road was illustrated brilliantly on the map.

Societies break down and a good number of the people soon

have nothing to lose. It is not healthy to live in a society where people have nothing to lose. In our society, we complain endlessly about corruption and the declining quality of services that we have. We resent paying taxes, scold our politicians and spend our resources on comforts without regard for who is supplying them at what cost to our world. As we wait longer in line for services in hospitals, as we hit more bumps driving down deteriorating roads and consume irreplaceable resources that contaminate the very air we breathe, we calculate that if we just had a bit more money, we could buy our way out of all this deterioration.

Like the proverbial frog in the pot of heating water, we don't feel our environment changing.

Once, salmon swam up the St. Lawrence and the Ottawa rivers to spawn in their tributaries. Where are they now? Once, rainwater was considered the defining element of purity, landing on the extended tongues of children during a downpour. Have you tasted it lately? Our lakes once teemed with fish, huge, migrating flocks of birds crowded our soundscapes and the evening air was filled with the voices of crickets and frogs. Each season was perfumed distinctly, flowers and the smell of a fresh rain after the sun comes back. Most of us have to pay hard-earned money to experience these things now. Will one of our grandchildren have to stand on a dusty road begging for water?

We are a Nordic people though, and when all is said and done, our cold, severe winters force us to get along and to solve our social problems, to look after each other. We have a lot to be thankful for—and we have a lot to share.

EVENT LISTINGS

Outaouais, January & February

Jan. 15, 7:30 p.m.

Chelsea Community Centre

Writer and historian Victor Suthren recounts the early Canadian years of explorer Captain James Cook.

Gatineau Valley Historical Society

(GVHS). Information: (819) 827-4432

Feb. 19, 7:30 p.m.

Chelsea Community Centre

Annual general meeting of the Gatineau Valley Historical Society (GVHS).

Jan. 20, 10:30 a.m.

Upper Ottawa Valley Genealogical

Group Inc. (UOVGG), 222 Dickson, Pembroke ON

Show and Tell and Problem Solving—No problem to solve or an item to show needed.

Montreal to January 27

McCord Museum

Growing Up in Montreal, an exhibition exploring the daily lives of young urban-dwellers. A remarkable collection of clothing, toys and photographs.

Open Tues. to Fri., 10a.m. to 6 p.m.

Saturday and Sunday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Information (514) 398-7100

Montreal, until January 2007

Stewart Museum

50 years of arms collecting. Visit this unique collection of more than 1,400 individual pieces, tracing weaponry development from the 16th to the 20th centuries.

Open Wednesday through Monday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Information: (514) 861-6701.

Stanstead, January 3, 7 p.m.

Stanstead College and The Vermont Humanities Council offer this lecture: *The Enduring Appeal of Arthur*

Where: John C. Colby Library at Colby House, Stanstead College

Information: Please visit our website at: www.vermonthumanities.org

Stanbridge East, February 1 to 28

Missisquoi Museum proudly presents its exhibit, *The Mystery of the Ruitter Ledgers 1799-1811: Were Thomas, Morris and Joel Slaves?*

Feb. 1, 7 p.m.

Exhibit vernissage with guest speaker Robert Galbraith.

The Ruitter ledgers will be on display at Missisquoi Museum each Thursday to Sunday afternoon throughout the month of February, from 1 to 4:30 p.m.

Information: (450) 248-3153 or visit online at: www.missisquiomuseum.ca

Gatineau, to Sept. 3, 2007

Canadian Museum of Civilization

Masters of the Plains: Ancient Nomads of Russia and Canada

This exhibit compares the ancient histories of two northern grassland regions—the Russian Steppes and the Northern Great Plains of North America. Info online: www.civilization.ca

Quebec City, Winter 2007

La Maison Henry Stuart

82, Grand Allé, corner of Cartier Ave.

Come visit this splendid 19th century bourgeois home on Quebec's prestigious Grand Allé Boulevard. Authentic decor surrounded by an old-fashioned English garden. Learn about the Stuart family that lived here between 1918 and 1988.

By reservation only for groups of six and more.

Information: (418) 647-4347

Westmount, December 21, 7 p.m.

Westmount Public Library, 4574 Sherbrooke West. Conference: *Démystifier la rénovation : Comment rénover d'anciennes résidences à un moindre coût*.

Edouard El Kaim, homeowner and antiques dealer, will talk about his experience restoring the Yellow Brick House, one of two houses built by Cajetan Dufort in 1905. Restoring historic homes needn't cost a fortune. Free for members; \$5 for non-members. Info: (514) 925-1404.

Does your group have a heritage or cultural event you'd like to advertise on this page?

Email us at editor@qahn.org with all the details.

Free for
QAHN
members

Quebec
Heritage
News

THERE'S A WORLD OF DIFFERENCE IN OUR ROOTS
COME SOAK IT IN.

LEARN, SHARE AND CELEBRATE OUR MULTICULTURAL HISTORY
MONTREAL, APRIL 2007

KEEP READING *QUEBEC HERITAGE*
NEWS MAGAZINE FOR DETAILS.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON
PARTICIPATING, CONTACT
QAHN AT (819) 564-9595



Sponsored by
the Quebec Anglophone
Heritage Network

Canada