

REMEMBERING THE TRIP TO THE LAKE, 1950s LAURENTIANS

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The High Commissioner

A Brief Profile of Sir John Rose

Back to the Land

The Lawrence Colony

Diving for Historical Treasure

Salvaged Coins Tell the Richelieu River's History

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Cover: Francis MacDonald, "The Hill"(a scene on Lac Raymond, Val Morin, in the Laurentians). Stuart Graham collection. Photo: Joe Graham.

EDITOR'S DESK

Something Unique

by Rod MacLeod

Below me, right below me, the procession passes. So directly below me that I could drop a pebble and have it land on the crown of a passing man's head – that is, were that head bare, and not covered, as it is now, with a tall white conical hood. Behind this man stride several dozen others, identically hooded, all carrying torches, their vision restricted to the tiny circles in the cloth over their eyes. Behind them, a small uniformed band booms a mournful dirge. And behind the band lumbers a vast platform groaning with the weight of hundreds of candles, a flower-bedecked casket, and a crucified Christ oozing blood from ribs and temple.

I am in Cordoba, and it is Semana Santa. Holy Week. Holy Friday, in fact – what Anglo-Saxon innocents refer to as “Good” Friday, a nice day to start painting Easter eggs. Here in Spain, there are no eggs, no bunnies, no spirit of the goddess of spring (the affable Eostre) grafted onto the solemnity of the Christian calendar. Here, it is hardcore suffering.

I thought I had left the fanatical processions behind me in Seville, a city famed for its hooded penitents, but no. I had rented the room in Cordoba for its view over a charming square, and I am taken aback when crowds fill the square and adjoining street at nightfall and the ghoulish troops begin their two hours' traffic below my window. It is fascinating, but deeply unnerving – not least because of the unfortunate associations I have with white hoods. The Semana Santa literature takes pains to remind tourists that the penitents' costume has no connection with, in fact pre-dates, the Klan – but such reassurance only goes so far.

I don't know what is more striking, the religious fervour or the normalcy of it all. On the one hand, people seem to believe. The imagery is graphic. Spectators look on in awe. Children rush over

to the hooded figures and beg them to let a few drops of wax from their torches drip into special cups, which presumably form precious souvenirs for the kids. Each massive float is supported solely on the shoulders of forty or more penitent men who, hidden from view by its skirting, proceed in airless darkness.



They swelter under the float's vast weight, which they must set down every few yards to rest. It is a miracle of coordination and clearly the result of intense dedication and devotion. The same is true for those who wear the hoods, which are not at all intended to intimidate (as the association with the Klan might imply) but rather to show humility: the garb is a form of atonement, a

mark of tremendous shame for sins committed, with an obvious reference to the dunce cap. I found myself wondering whether the sense of shame might actually be lessened by the anonymity that the hoods provide, but there was no doubting the humility of some of the figures, who cap their self-inflicted misery by going barefoot along several kilometres of rubbly streets.

At the same time, Semana Santa is a social event. Each float is the property of one of the city's “brotherhoods,” which serve as neighbourhood social clubs, and there is much friendly rivalry over who has the best decorated display – much as in any neighbourhood festivity. Whole families take part in assembling these floats, morbid and (to me) child-inappropriate though the content might be. Families also dress up together, sporting gowns and hoods in an astonishing array of colours and textures: I saw parents in bright velvet green, looking incongruous with their hoods in their hands like off-duty Disney mascots, comforting two similarly garbed teenage daughters whose apparent wardrobe malfunctions were the stuff of tears. And for every person in full hooded regalia there are dozens who are just out for the spectacle, dressed in best bib and tucker, keen to show off their finery and eagerly anticipating a huge festive meal. It is the Easter Parade scene on steroids.

For a Quebecer, this level of religious celebration comes as something of a shock, accustomed as we are to proclamations of both *laïcité* and multiculturalism. Proponents of *laïcité* would no doubt claim that Spain's Semana Santa was multiculturalism run amok, but proponents of multiculturalism could counter by pointing out the total lack of any other culture on view in the congested streets of Cordoba on Holy Friday. Although to a great many Spaniards Semana Santa may be essen-

tially a grand excuse for revelry, it remains unrelentingly Catholic. There is no Diwali waiting its turn, nor a feel-good parade at which everyone can feel Irish for a Day. What is on display here is blood, tears, wounds, thorns.

Unrelenting Catholicism also comes as a shock because there is another Cordoba just around the corner – everywhere you turn, in fact. Cordoba’s touristic bread and butter is its status as the site of the Islamic Caliphate, one of the world’s prime centres of multicultural learning and religious tolerance over a thousand years ago. This truly remarkable place was eloquently described in 1962’s *Lawrence of Arabia* by Prince Faisal (a swarthed-up Alec Guinness, speaking words by Robert Bolt) who cites Cordoba’s “two miles of public lighting in the streets when London was a village.” The city was also the channel through which the rest of Europe eventually discovered the full wealth of Greek scientific knowledge. And here, for centuries, Christians and Jews were protected as dhimmi (“People of the Book”), followers of the one god, albeit via different prophets. Outside of Semana Santa, Cordoba promotes its Muslim heritage, and to a lesser extent its Jewish heritage.

The jewel in Cordoba’s crown is the mosque (or “Mezquita,” as it is generally known), whose hypnotic rows of red and white columns and arches stopped me in my tracks at first sight and very nearly produced tears – although equally at work was the wonder of finally entering a site I had dreamed of visiting for half a century. In any case, it is a magical place. The columns and arches give a house-of-mirrors sense of infinity, while the general horizontality serves as an enveloping invitation to contemplate one’s grounding in the universe. It is unlike any place I have ever entered – and I suspect unlike any place even most Muslims have ever entered, given its distinctive layout and impressive scope.

And yet, before long I became aware of something not quite right about it. Something disturbed the aesthetic effect that had initially struck me. I knew



that a Christian church had been injected smack in the middle of the mosque in the sixteenth century like a shot of Catholic cortisone, but I had assumed that the remaining 70 percent of the Mezquita was authentic to its eighth and ninth century Muslim roots. Not so – in fact, there are incongruous Christian traces everywhere: spaces between columns closed off to form chapels, funerary monuments blocking vistas, and alcoves bursting with ornate saints and crucifixions out of a Semana Santa procession. Stumbling into the church at the structure’s centre is bizarre: one’s gaze is yanked upwards at the saints and cherubs and barrel vaulting, and entirely away from the contemplative spirit of the red and white columns and arches.

The Mezquita’s history is politically charged. The Christians who conquered Cordoba in the thirteenth century (more an act of military strategy than of religious crusade) by and large retained the building’s Islamic features, although the mosque was consecrated as a Christian cathedral so the newcomers could worship there. They also, by and large,



retained Cordoba’s spirit of cultural diversity – a development that comes as a surprise, given the assumptions we make about “medieval” intolerance. It was only during the Age of Discovery (the “Golden Age”), three centuries later, that Spain turned inward even as it led the charge to colonize the world. Despite age-old promises of protection, Spanish Jews and Muslims were expelled, or forced to convert with the Inquisition breathing down their necks and checking if everyone had sufficiently “pure” blood. The new Spain celebrated one faith only, the “true”

faith, now restored to its rightful place, and the many centuries when most of Spain was Muslim were reimagined as a period of occupation by foreigners; the Christian victory was not conquest but “Reconquest.” In this climate (the 1520s), the Bishop of Cordoba decided to demolish the mosque and build a Christian church. Surprisingly, the plan was vigorously opposed by the city’s secular rulers; the compromise was the mishmash visible today. Famously, and probably apocryphally, the Spanish king saw the results and scornfully remarked: “You have destroyed something unique in order to build something commonplace.”

I agree. What rankled me, as I stumbled over commonplace Christianity in what would otherwise have been a unique celebration of Islam, was the baggage of oppression. For most of the past five hundred years, Spain has defined itself by Catholicism – an especially dour, even gruesome version of Catholicism with the Inquisition as its poster child and Blood Purity as its guiding spirit. The Church maintained its power by draining the wealth of Spain’s colonies, wealth that was also channelled into suppressing political independence and religious diversity across Europe. The nineteenth century saw a couple of failed attempts to limit the Church’s power and turn Spain into a modern liberal polity, and then in the 1930s a more famous attempt was overturned by a military dictatorship that gave the Catholic Church free reign to weed out any confession- al (to say nothing of political)

Top: Mezquita, Cordoba.

Bottom: Family group, Cordoba. Photos: Elena Cerrolaza.

deviance. The dictatorship is long gone – and yet today, as in many countries, democracy is under attack from reactionary forces eager to make Spain “great” again, and most of them pin Catholicism defiantly on their sleeves. For these reasons, the *Semana Santa* enthusiasm rings especially troublesome to viewers like me. Equally, the message announced every twenty minutes or so over a loudspeaker throughout the *Mezquita* reminding visitors that they are in a Catholic church and need to keep quiet and show respect provoked in me the urge to swear, loudly.

But then, as I stood in the *Mezquita* in the midst of all my righteous indignation, a more humbling thought occurred to me. My own views, on the excesses of *Semana Santa* and the nagging voice over the loudspeaker, were surely beside the point. I was letting them cloud my judgement regarding cultural change. There was, I reflected, nothing intrinsically wrong in Catholicism asserting its own values in a building that had been consecrated Catholic. One may feel it is a pity when something unique is turned into something commonplace, but that is all too often what happens over the course of the rise and fall of civilizations. In Cordoba, Christians replaced a mosque with a church, but the Muslims before them replaced a Visigothic church with a mosque, and before that the church replaced a pagan temple. It’s the circle of life. And besides, even in their Counter-Reformation zeal the Christians only replaced 30 percent of the *Mezquita*; they might just as easily have left nothing discernably Islamic, and there would be no discussion.

It also occurred to me that I might be guilty of hypocrisy. In some ways, my views on cultural change in Spain, if applied to Quebec history, sounded a lot like something I do not agree with. For a Quebec Anglo to come out criticizing cultural imperialism in the wake of conquest could be seen as an admission that we have imposed ourselves onto a world that ought by rights to be French Canadian. The argument has been made that French Canada was something unique, “an extraordinary experiment that started in 1608, when Samuel de Champlain founded a settlement that



would become Quebec City” – as journalist Lise Ravary put it in an article a few years back. What this argument implies is that generations of British rule turned French Canada into a commonplace part of the Empire, and by extension of English-speaking North America. Evidence can be marshalled to support this view. Early nineteenth-century visitors were struck by the stone churches and quaint *habitant* cottages they saw throughout the colony, but by the 1840s



such fascination had waned, replaced by a reverence for burgeoning industry and commerce. Victorian Montreal came to look a great deal like a British town, just as the Eastern Townships recalled New England. And sure, the dominant language of public signage throughout urban Quebec was English right into the 1960s. But the issue is not that French Canada became part of the British Empire, but rather whether the process was part of a deliberate policy of cultural eradication or merely what happens with the rise and fall of civilizations. I would say it is the latter. True, the pronouncements of Lord Durham do echo what the Bishop of Cordoba might have said in the 1520s about Muslims: that they had no cultural perch in the new society and so their institutions could be done away with. But politics aside, what happened in Quebec was steady, demographic change. Anglophones arrived, set down roots, and claimed, through force of numbers and the forging of infrastructure, a substantial piece of the cultural pie.

Of course, to describe demographic change uncritically is to ignore the importance of harmful ideologies such as “manifest destiny” – a concept that both spurred and rationalized the expansion of settler culture across North America. The real victims of this expansion were Indigenous nations – not French Canadians, nor any other European peoples who may have experienced their share of discrimination but who ultimately benefited from settlement. Canada’s history, unlike Spain’s, does not constitute a succession of waves of cultures that dominated for a period until another gained prominence; rather, it amounts to Old World culture running roughshod over everything that had been there before from time immemorial. The fate of almost any Indigenous nation one might select would prove a clear example of something unique being replaced by something commonplace. Britain, France, Spain, and many other states played critical roles in this destructive process.

Within the context of Quebec, the best comparison with the Spain of the Reconquest is the French Canadian experience. Historically, both societies applied Counter-Reformation fervour to the lands they took over, and both

doubled down on ultratraditional Catholicism when threatened by the forces of modernity. Although religious ceremonies in Quebec never reached *Semana Santa* levels of ostentation, traditional Francophone Catholic celebrations involved processions with saints and biblical figures; in her article, Ravary recalls the festivals of her childhood marking Saint-Jean-Baptiste (always with a blond boy posing as John, with a lamb at his side) and Fête-Dieu (Corpus Christi). Francophone Quebec has, moreover, undertaken its own Reconquest (Marc Levine called this spade a spade in his 1997 *La reconquête de Montréal*), passing legislation that strives to restore the power of a language whose vitality has presumably been under threat since 1763. This reading of history implies that the period between the British conquest and the Francophone Reconquest was one of foreign occupation, and that anyone associated with that occupation could not be considered a true Quebecer. The recent promotion of *laïcité* would seem to remove culture from the equation – meaning that it is the French language, not traditional French Canadian culture, that should be the common element in today’s Quebec. Even so, recent assertions by premier and pundits that Catholicism was important in the formation of modern Quebec society suggests that a narrow, culturally-specific notion of Quebec identity is widely understood despite lip service to *laïcité*. We may call it *la Fête nationale*, but it still takes place on June 24 – Saint-Jean-Baptiste Day.

Yet, when confronted by the pointed hoods in the Cordoba procession, I realize that my criticisms of Quebec cultural policy are essentially quibbles. Over the last few decades, Quebec has undergone a profound transformation with regard to its Catholic past. Although I may occasionally rant about some of the inherent inconsistencies of *laïcité*, I must acknowledge the giant steps that have been taken to counter the Church’s traditional social and cultural dominance and to recognize its often harmful impact. These are steps that Spain has clearly not taken, and indeed would presumably have difficulty taking given the growing politicization of the Church’s historic role. Quebec, moreover, is a multicultural society, even if the term is widely

rejected: that we debate whether *laïcité* discriminates against practicing Muslims, Jews, and other religious groups proves that these groups are conspicuous players within Quebec society – as are Protestants of various stripes. This is not the case in Spain – although I was impressed to see much evidence of (let’s call it) racial diversity compared to my last visits some decades ago, much of it due to immigration from Latin America and Asia.

Given its history, of course, it is not surprising that Quebec society should enjoy ethnic and religious diversity. By contrast, Spain’s dominance by one religion is the direct result of restrictive cultural policies that have been in effect for much of the last half millennium – and this presents a challenge today when trying to create a welcoming environment. Like other European countries, Spain has flirted with official multiculturalism for the past couple of decades. Although opinions on such policies vary widely, Spain seems to be much less concerned with issues of “integration” than Quebec is. Furthermore, despite its historic aversion to official secularism, today’s Spain does not come across as a society in the thrall of the Catholic Church. As in most modern states, including Quebec, the majority of people have either abandoned religious practices altogether or give it heed only on key holidays. When it came to *Semana Santa*, I heard some people say that, although they themselves had little use for its religious exuberance, they appreciated the cultural tradition. Others, learning that I had been in Cordoba and Seville during the thick of the processions, gave me wry grins and shook their heads sympathetically, almost apologetically. Like me, many seem to feel that all the blood, tears and thorns is a bit much.

In their next breath, however, the same people would envy me my chance to have visited the Mezquita – and they were not thinking of the Christian additions, of course, but of those mesmerizing Caliphal columns. These days, most Spaniards would be inclined to see the Mezquita not as a relic of a foreign culture but as the proud legacy of a time when much of Spain was Muslim. I am pretty sure that the reason the annoying voice over the loudspeaker insists on reminding visitors that they are in a

Catholic church is that the authorities fear that everyone will see the building for what it is: a mosque. Even more pathetic is the message’s call to be respectful of Christian worshippers – when in fact it is the loudspeaker voice that disrupts the experience of anyone contemplating the Mezquita’s wondrous interior. Confronted by near universal appreciation for something it does not understand, the Church is on the defensive. This stance is about as thin-skinned as much of the public posturing of Quebec politicians – and the demand for respect recalls the outrage over any questioning of Quebec values. Official insistence on respect can hide a multitude of sins.

As so much in our world becomes commonplace, we all need to embrace the unique, the quirky, the atypical – even if we don’t understand it, and even if it makes us uneasy. We need to acknowledge that different groups of people have had different histories, different habits and attitudes that make them tick. We need to explore different traditions, and try to learn from them. We need to listen to the wisdom of Indigenous elders regarding our fragile ecosystem. We need to accept that teachers and police officers may wear kippahs or hijabs, and that rooms can be set aside for prayer in public schools without civilization ending. And maybe we even need to accept that men may dress in pointy white hoods with holes for eyes and lead gloomy processions through the streets.

I have a little trouble with that last one. But I’m trying.

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Heritage and culture in our communities

Belonging and Identity in English-speaking Quebec

For a third consecutive year, the Quebec Anglophone Heritage Network (QAHN) partnered this year with heritage groups around the province to explore and share a broad range of stories and cultural traditions from English-speaking Quebec. Generously funded once again by Quebec's *Secrétariat aux relations avec les Québécois d'expression anglaise* (SQREA), the Belonging and Identity project supported initiatives led by member-organizations right across the province.

Presented here is the last in a series about creative and inspiring initiatives undertaken by local museums, historical societies and cultural organizations.

Heather Darch,
Project director

Secrétariat aux relations
avec les Québécois
d'expression anglaise

Québec 

A TRUE FEAT OF CONSERVATION

How Women Have Shaped Carrollcroft's Garden since 1859

by Samuel Gaudreau-Lalande and Julie-Ann Latulippe

In his book *Des jardins oubliés: 1860-1960*, historian Alexander Reford reveals the existence of a long tradition of garden design in Quebec. This history is doubly overlooked, since not only did “few of the old manors in Quebec have gardens,” but most of these gardens have sadly not survived the passage of time. The Colby-Curtis Museum is fortunate to have such a garden, established in the mid-nineteenth century by Harriet Child Colby (1838-1932) on her estate at Carrollcroft, the historic villa that houses the museum in Stanstead, Quebec.

Harriet Colby was renowned for her flower garden, grown mostly to get fresh cuts for bouquets she would put in every room. The whole family, and especially the women, valued the garden highly, as can be seen from the numerous references made in their correspondence. If Carrollcroft is an architectural space designed and practiced by women (Adams and Spampinato), so too has always been its garden. Shaped by Harriet for decades, the garden was subsequently maintained through the efforts of her daughter Jessie Maud Colby (1861-1958). In the early 1920s, British landscape architect Sadie Bond also contributed to designing the garden space, notably the two stone staircases of which one still remains today.

In the late twentieth century, Helen Lovat Colby (1907-1998), who was married to one of Jessie's nephews, decided to restore the splendour of the garden after a period of some neglect. Helen undertook this restoration in the wake of her efforts to donate Carrollcroft to the Colby-Curtis Museum. She was



supported in this endeavour by historian Monique Nadeau-Saumier. The current form of the garden is therefore a reshaping of Carrollcroft's Victorian garden designed by landscape architect Gina Fleet in 1995.

In keeping with this long tradition of care by women, the garden has been maintained for nearly 30 years by a large number of female volunteers and employees of the Colby-Curtis Museum. Already notable for its rarity as a Victorian garden, the Carrollcroft garden is all the more remarkable for its exceptional continuity over time. This great historical value has led the museum to consider it an integral part of its collections.

The exhibition “Cut Flowers / De la terre sous les ongles,” funded partially through QAHN's *Belonging & Identity* project, explores the connections between the garden, the women in the

family and the objects of the collection. These relationships are informed by artists Anne-Marie Proulx and Sara A. Tremblay's own experiences of the garden, as both a wild and a domesticated space. The dialogue between contemporary photographs and historical practices invites us to reflect on how we interact with plants, and how we are ourselves rooted in the land through the practice of gardening.

Samuel Gaudreau-Lalande and Julie-Ann Latulippe are two art historians who study vernacular photographic practices. They are co-curating the exhibition "Cut Flowers / De la terre sous les ongles," on display at the Colby-Curtis Museum from June 2023 to April 2024.

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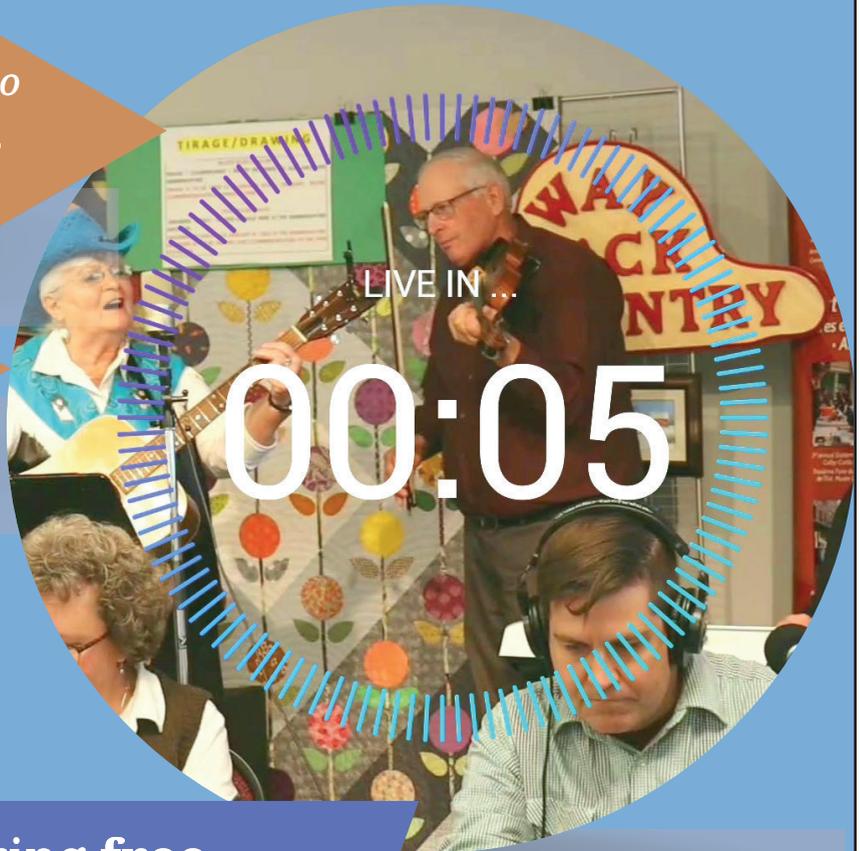
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QAHN'S OWN DOROTHY WILLIAMS WINS PRESTIGIOUS AWARD

The Library and Archives Canada Scholar Awards, co-presented by the LAC Foundation and Library and Archives Canada, with the generous support of Founding Sponsor Air Canada, recognize remarkable Canadians who have made an outstanding contribution to the creation and promotion of the country's culture, literary heritage and historical knowledge.

As the custodian of our distant past and of our recent history, Library and Archives Canada is an essential resource for all Canadians who wish to know themselves better, individually and collectively.

As such, it is essential for Library and Archives Canada and the Library and Archives Canada Foundation to recognize the exemplary work of those who support its fundamental mission which is to promote all aspects of Canadian culture, here and around the world.

This recognition also seeks to highlight the fact that the creation and dissemination of our heritage are increasingly democratic undertakings, no longer reserved to environments where knowledge has traditionally been developed.

Among the five 2023 recipients is Dr. Dorothy Williams, who is a member of QAHN's board of directors.

Dorothy's bio, as per the LAC website, reads as follows:

Dorothy Williams is a historian, author and researcher who specializes in the history of Black Canadians. Through her public presentations, her work with the National Film Board of Canada, and her efforts to make resources related to the historical presence of Black Canadians more widely available, she has ex-



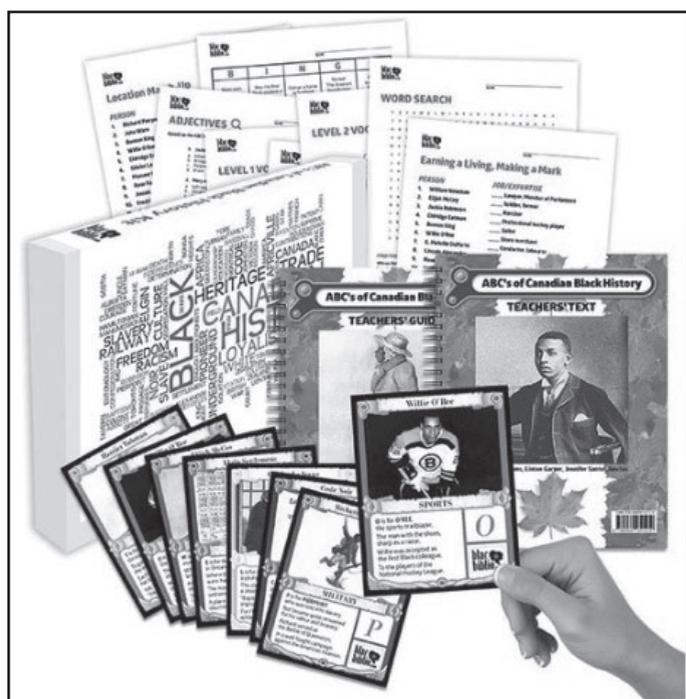
panded the cultural and historical heritage of our country.

Dr. Williams grew up in the historic Black community of Little Burgundy in Montreal. She published her first book, *Blacks in Montreal, 1628-1986: An Urban Demography*, at the behest of the Quebec Human Rights Commission in 1989 for their study on racism in Montreal's rental housing. Her second book, *The Road to Now: A History of Blacks in Montreal*, published in 1997, remains the only chronological study of Blacks on the Island of Montreal.

With the objective of making Black history accessible to all, in 1995 Dr. Williams founded the non-profit organization Ethnocultural Diffusions to collect the oral history of Blacks in Montreal. Eleven years later, she registered Blacbiblio.com Inc. to record Canada's Black history sources. Blacbiblio launched the ABC's of Canadian Black History kit in 2016 to promote the teaching of Black history in Canadian schools. Dr. Williams also teaches the extremely popular Concordia University course Black Montreal, which aims to dispel myths and misconceptions around Montreal's Black history.

Dr. Williams has been recognized with many awards, including the Mathieu da Costa Award, and she was the first Canadian to win the American Library Association's prestigious E. J. Josey Scholarship. In 2002, she was made a Quebec Laureate and received the Anne Greenup Award for the fight against racism and the promotion of civic participation. In 2022, she was given the John G. Dennison Award for her "research, scholarly publications, teaching and public speaking engagements showcasing Canada's Black History."

For revealing Quebec's Black history to the world, in 2022 Dr. Williams was honoured as the subject of the first exhibition in the Afromuseum, Quebec's first Black museum. She was also named as one of CBC Quebec's 2022 Black Changemakers.



Top: Dorothy Williams. library-archives.canada.ca. Photo: Mark Leslie.

Bottom: The ABC's of Canadian Black History kit. blacbiblio.com.

FROM HUNTINGDON TO HIGH COMMISSIONER

The Upward Path of Sir John Rose

by Steven Bright

The road to wealth, power and influence in nineteenth-century Quebec was well-travelled by many Anglophones, many of whom are still known decades (if not centuries) later. Along this proverbial way you would find beknighted and be-whiskered men such as Sir George Simpson, John Redpath, Sir Hugh Allan, George Stephen (Baron Mount Stephen), his cousin Donald Smith (Lord Strathcona), and a host of others. You would also find Sir John Rose.

Sir John who?

Rose is not a name that most people know. You won't find a CEGEP named after him. Or a football stadium, an imposing Mount Royal Cemetery mausoleum, or a university building with his name on it.

Yet, from the time he immigrated to Huntingdon, Quebec, from Aberdeen in 1836 through to his death back in Scotland more than 50 years later, Rose played important roles in virtually every major political event and economic development pertaining to Canada. For decades, he was intimately involved and highly trusted by powerful people to handle often-tricky details, taking an approach that blended legal experience, financial acumen, and political nous.

Rose's CV includes an almost-countless number of highlights. He was a rising young lawyer, a signatory to Annexation Manifesto of 1849, a director of the Bank of Montreal, a partner in Montreal's most prestigious law firm, a legal counsel (with John Abbott) in the founding of the Molson Bank in 1855, an increasingly affluent member of the business community, president of the St. Andrew's Society (1852-55), and host of the Prince of Wales when the dapper young royal opened the Victoria Bridge in 1860.

Impressive, indeed. But in some ways, Rose was just getting started. From the 1860s to 1888 he was integral in selling the Hudson's Bay Company

(and was Deputy Governor of the HBC from 1880 to 1883), negotiating cross-border deals with the Americans, representing Huntingdon as Member of Parliament in the new Dominion of Canada, developing (albeit unsuccessfully) banking legislation as Finance Minister under Sir John A. Macdonald, running a transatlantic private bank, and



helping finance the railroads.

The apogee of Rose's career came during the last 18 years of his life, from late 1869 to his passing in the summer of 1888, during which time he served as *de facto* High Commissioner for Canada in London. Firmly planting himself among the British aristocracy, political leaders and bureaucrats, Rose kept transatlantic channels open between his homeland and his adopted land. He was also rather handy in speaking earnestly with Americans, something his best friend, Macdonald, seemed unable and/or unwilling to do with any meaningful endurance.

So, how did Rose get to such heights of wealth, power and influence?

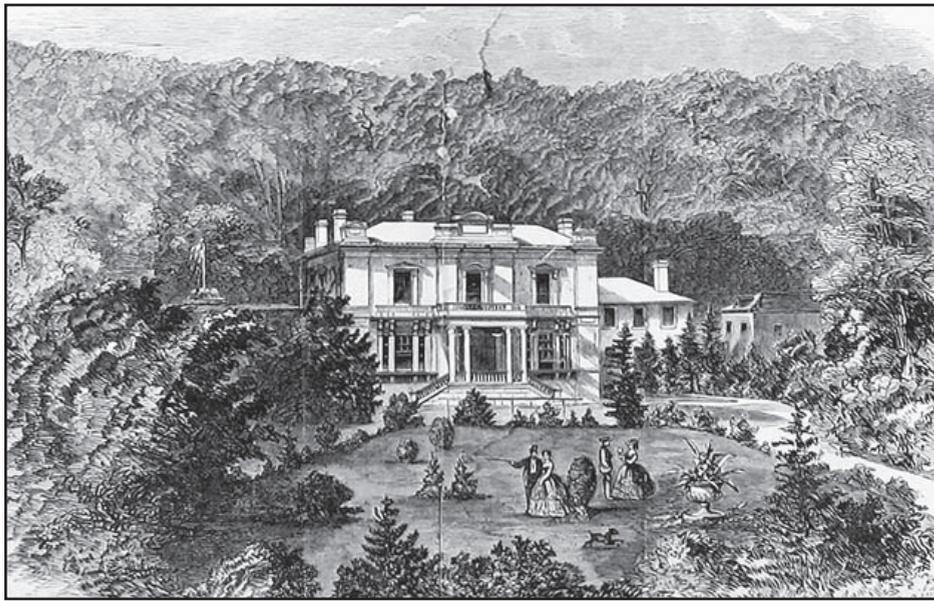
The upward path from Huntingdon to the High Commissioner for Rose is a long and fascinating one. He was born on August 2, 1820, in Turriff, Scotland, about 50 kilometres northwest of Aberdeen. At the age of 13, he was sent off to King's College at the University of Aberdeen but dropped out after a year. In 1836, he left Scotland for Lower Canada with his parents. They settled on a farm midway between Huntingdon and Athelstan on the Beauharnois seigneurie owned by Edward "Bear" Ellice, which was a popular settlement area for arriving Scots.

It was a quiet existence on the whole – perhaps a little too quiet for the young Rose. But it didn't take long for Rose to find some action. He served as a volunteer during the Rebellions of 1837–1838, and the pace and pulse of those heady times whetted his appetite for more. In late 1839, he headed out to Montreal to make his name in the world.

The art and value of networking within the rapidly expanding city were vital for a young man in a hurry. Rose mastered them both quickly. He was mentored in the legal profession by Adam Thom and Charles Dewey Day, both prominent judges, and was called to the bar in 1842. Things took off from there over the next several years. A trusted advisor to an ever-growing number and range of people, Rose joined the boards of the Bank of Montreal, the City Bank, the Montreal Telegraph Company, the Grand Trunk Railway, the New City Gas Company of Montreal, and the North British and Mercantile Insurance Company.

Rose's rapid – and highly profitable – ascent into Montreal's elite business world was aided by marriage: in 1843, he wed Vermont-born Charlotte Sweeney (née) Temple, who brought some money into the relationship. In

*William Notman, John Rose, Montreal, 1862.
McCord Museum, I-1672.*



1848, with Rose only 28 years old and Charlotte 33, the young power couple put down roots among the rich and up-and-coming by building their house, called “Rosemount,” on property purchased from Sir George Simpson. Located on the northwest fringes of what was latter called the Golden Square Mile, Rosemount became home to five Rose children. It also bolstered the Roses’ reputation as consummate hosts in a thriving city.

Ensclosed in the legislative and business affairs of his chosen hometown of Montreal, Rose was also a long-standing member of St. Gabriel Street Presbyterian Church. And when not advising the city’s business elite in boardrooms and among pews, Rose mingled with many of the same people in his capacity as president of the St. Andrew’s Society of Montreal.

Yet, where Rose found tremendous success in legal, financial, and societal matters, he was far less successful, in the end, in the messy world of nineteenth-century federal politics. Given that he was so highly sought after for his banking knowledge, it was ironic that this same sector brought about Rose’s political downfall.

Macdonald bookended Rose’s 12-year spell in elected politics. The two met in early 1852 and quickly warmed to each other’s intellect and demeanour. An excerpt from one letter, written in 1852 by

Macdonald to his Sherbrooke-based colleague Alexander Galt, illustrates the point. “I have told Rose today that if he has any desire for professional advancement he had better come into Parl’t ... Quebec is too tawdry.” Thus began a tight relationship between Rose and Macdonald, the latter being 15 years older. The two worked together in various capacities at the centre of political power for more than three decades.

In 1857, Rose followed Macdonald’s advice and successfully ran for one of the Montreal City seats, promptly becoming Solicitor General for Canada East. He was a pragmatic Scot and not prone to hyperbole, insobriety or drama, rather unlike his friend from Kingston. That is perhaps why Macdonald came to rely on Rose so much – the latter balanced out the former.

Rose’s no-nonsense approach was



on full display one frosty morning in Ottawa. On Tuesday December 20, 1859, Rose, as Commissioner for Public Works, presided over a groundbreaking ceremony for what would become Centre Block on Parliament Hill. A crowd had gathered (or huddled, more likely) to mark the birth of a signature building and the global ambitions it represented. Excitement and expectations were equally high. It was so cold, however, and Rose’s speech was so long, that their sod-turning plans were scrubbed in favour of dashing to nearby Doran’s Hotel “for refreshments.” A year later, and presumably thawed out by then, Rose was elected to the Montreal Centre riding, and re-elected in that riding in 1863.

Illness prevented Rose from making much of a mark during the first several years of the 1860s. But on February 22, 1865, during the Confederation debates, he tried to grasp the thorny nettle of minority rights with words that might still resonate with Anglophones almost 160 years later. “We, the English Protestant minority in Lower Canada, cannot forget that whatever right of separate education we have was accorded to us in the most unrestricted way before the union of the provinces, when we were in a minority and entirely in the hands of the French population” (Waite, 99).

Encouraged by Macdonald to run again in 1867, Rose went back to Huntingdon to stand for MP in the Dominion’s first federal election. He was still popular there, but had to campaign nonetheless. Rose won handily, beating his opponent William Kerr by 1,280 votes to 468.

Getting into Macdonald’s inner political circle was natural, but not immediate. The first post-Confederation finance minister was Alexander Galt, who, like Rose, was born in Scotland and rose to prominence in Lower Canada and Montreal. (Galt also married into money, in his case through the wealthy Torrance family.) But Galt resigned in November 1867, shortly after a bank failure. It was Macdonald’s first post-Confederation government crisis, and to steady the choppy waters he turned to

Top: Rosemount.
Frank Leslie’s Illustrated Newspaper, September 8, 1860.

Bottom: John Smeaton, Rosemount.
McCord Museum, MP-0000.857.95.

his trusted chum.

Rose was sworn in as Minister of Finance on November 18. However, obliged by a law that forced MPs to run again if they were being promoted to cabinet, he returned to Huntingdon looking for votes. Announcing the inauguration of daily mail service between Huntingdon and Hemmingford was his sweetener to voters. But it was a moot promise. Rose won by acclamation on November 28, and swiftly headed back to Ottawa. It was the last that Huntingdon voters would see of Rose in the riding throughout his 731 days in federal elected office.

Despite having operated so effortlessly and effectively in so many ways for so many years, Rose quickly ran headlong into trouble, as Finance Minister, in the form of a debate about banks and currency. It was a rare misstep in an otherwise highly accomplished career.

The full story of Rose's lamentable tenure in that job is a long and rather complex one. In brief, he ran afoul of parochial concerns in 1869 when trying to create Canada's first banking act by supporting the views of the Bank of Montreal, the country's largest bank at the time. The reputational pounding he took did not sit well with Rose, a man who did his best work behind the scenes. Even Macdonald, a passionate Rose supporter,



knew the end was nigh.

The man from Huntingdon soon resigned, and headed off to London in October 1869. But not before being fêted on September 28 by a 200-person "who's who" gala dinner of Montreal's elite. A glowing newspaper article a few days later reported how, in Rose's "address of considerable length," the man "returning home" had "described in a most graphic manner the vast changes, material, social and political, which Canada had undergone since he came to this country" (*Quebec Mercury*, September 30, 1869).

(Rose wasn't the only Finance Minister from that part of Chateauguay. Huntingdon-born Liberal MP James Robb held the job in 1925 and from 1926 to 1929 in cabinets of William Lyon Mackenzie King. Robb's secretary in these latter years was Robert

Sellar, son of the famous editor of the *Huntingdon Gleaner*, also named Robert.)

Rose's time as Finance Minister ended in failure, yet it was only a brief stumble. Within a few months, Macdonald appointed him as Canada's first *de facto* High Commissioner to the United Kingdom, a perch from which Rose confidently – and often confidentially – helped guide all those other well-known Scottish-Canadian names mentioned earlier, and many more.

A letter from Rose – almost always well written, timed and targeted – could open doors and change minds. Within the holdings of Library and Archives Canada in Ottawa, for example, you can find several letters that Rose penned to his successors in the Finance portfolio. Advice on how to secure new Canadian coinage with the Royal Mint and how to float loans in London for Canada's railways are among the many topics of his transatlantic written exchange. Rose also helped the man who replaced him as High Commissioner, the one and only Alexander Galt.

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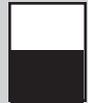
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the banking boardrooms and private clubs of London was clearly much easier for Rose, not to mention much more lucrative, than suffering the slings and arrows of cloying politics back in Ottawa. He was knighted in 1870 and created a baronet in 1872, the latter for his services to Britain's imperial interests during protracted negotiations with the United States that ended with the Washington Treaty of 1871.

Rose lived his final few years in England with his second wife, Julia Mackenzie, Marchioness of Tweeddale, widow of the 9th Marquis. (Charlotte, his first wife, had died in 1883.) A few years later, Rose died in a scene that could have been in a Victorian version of "Downton Abbey." In August 1888, the 6th Duke of Portland invited Rose to join a shooting party on the former's substantial estate at Langwell in northern Scotland. The trip up from London – to a location not far from where Rose was born 68 years earlier, but a world away socially from his humble upbringing – proved to be fatal for more than just the local fauna. Rose's obituary in *The Times* ("Death of Sir John Rose," August 27, 1888) painted the scene: "Rose was engaged in deer-stalking at the moment of his death. He had fired at a stag once or twice, and was in the act of firing again when he fell, and died almost immediately." Rose's entry in the *Dictionary of Canadian Biography* is even more dramatic: "He died in the excitement."

John and Charlotte Rose are buried together in Guildford, near Loseley Park, the sixteenth-century house they had rented since moving to London in 1870. Sir Julian Rose, 5th Baronet of Montreal, a direct descendent, today lives in Whitchurch-on-Thames, in Oxfordshire, England. Rosemount, the Roses' Montreal mansion, was sold after the family moved to England; in 1944 the last owner donated the land to the city for a park, but the house was demolished. A commemorative plaque on the iconic Bank of Montreal building in Montreal's Place d'Armes is just about the only physical trace you will find on this side of the Atlantic of a man



whose story is little-known but highly consequential.

Steven Bright, an independent researcher and writer, lives in Oakville, Ontario, with his Quebec-born wife and their two teenaged daughters. Steven holds degrees from McGill, Western and the RMC. And he's the only Habs fan on his suburban street.

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COLONIZATION EFFORTS OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

Lawrence Colony Revisited
by Jody Robinson

In the summer and fall of 1936, in the middle of the Great Depression, 26 families from around the Eastern Townships set out for the forests of Newport Township with hope in their eyes for a better future where they would own their land and be able to provide for their families without the aid of government relief. By 1939, 49 families had settled in the area that would become known as Lawrence Colony.

This particular colonization community was part of a larger provincial and federal government initiative to draw the unemployed from urban slums to unsettled lands around the country. This initiative fit into a “back to the land” movement that the government conceived of in the early 1930s. At the outset, the initiative was directed toward matching potential farmers with available land. It was later expanded to provide subsidies to help families on relief settle on land which they could eventually buy for a nominal sum. In the 1930s, much faith was placed in colonization and what it could do for the province and its people in the face of the huge economic and social struggles of the Depression. In a report outlining the possibilities of colonization, the president of the Eastern Townships Protestant Colonization Association espoused this approach, declaring that they “may look forward with confidence to the final success of the Newport settlement.”

Thirty years later, in 1969, only 17 of the original 49 families were still on their lots in Lawrence. Of these 17, only seven held deeds to their land. That same year, a report appeared in the *Sherbrooke Record* about the plight of many of those in Lawrence Colony. The journalist, Ivy Pankovitch, published a

petition signed by 26 Colonists, which is accompanied by an article on the hardships, poverty, and broken government promises experienced by those in the colony. At the time, the petition garnered strong reactions – both positive and negative – from colonists, ranging from



demands of retraction to expressions of appreciation for bringing attention to the situation. The report was followed in 1970 by a Master's thesis on Lawrence Colony by Nora McCardell, where she calls out the failure of the colonization efforts in Lawrence.

How did Lawrence Colony go from a beacon of hope for those fallen on hard times during the Depression to a community where, thirty years on, the hard times and poverty were still part of the everyday existence for many? While this article is not a definitive history of Lawrence, it will explore some of the contexts that led to the creation of the colony and why it ultimately failed as a colonization initiative.

The early part of the twentieth century had seen a large shift in the population from rural to urban, which brought with it new obstacles that had never previously been faced during times of economic depression and recession. The

loss of jobs during the Great Depression meant that there were growing numbers of unemployed people in the cities with no way of supporting themselves. In times past, relief support – or welfare – was the responsibility of the municipality, and aid came through charitable organizations rather than through the federal or provincial governments. However, as the Depression deepened and the numbers of those seeking help grew to unprecedented numbers, municipalities were feeling the strain.

To help deal with the growing crisis, the federal government passed annual unemployment relief acts from 1930 until the beginning of World War II. A lot of this money went to public works and direct welfare, but some of it also went to settlement efforts.

The rationale for taking people out of the cities and putting them onto unsettled land was to reduce the strain on urban municipal budgets by reducing their dependence and, in turn, to reduce those dependent on government relief by turning them into self-sufficient farmers.

A 1932 article appearing in *McLean's* profiled the back-to-the-land movement and highlighted a success story: “[Bill] is hopeful, ambitious. His wife likes the farm, and the children were never happier or healthier. His whole outlook is changed. Instead of looking forward to the time when savings would be gone, to the bread line, or to living with his father, Bill is started on a life work—farming.”

This quote represents the rhetoric at the time surrounding the hope and promise of the back-to-the-land movement. The message being that farm life is bucolic and thoroughly satisfying, and that hard work and dedication will unfailingly be rewarded with success.

Lawrence Colony was born out of this hope and promise.

A significant limitation to the government's back-to-the-land movement, however, was that it provided no financial assistance to those wanting to go back to the land. It was not long before they realized that some sort of financial assistance was going to be necessary and, consequently, the Act to Promote the Return to the Land was passed in 1932. The Act focused on the Crown's acquisition of land for colonization purposes that would also permit the settlement of colonists on these lands without a location ticket. This would allow for the faster placement of settlers on land by removing some of the paperwork, but would also bear unforeseen consequences, such as leading to land rights disputes. This Act also worked in conjunction with part of the 1932 Federal Relief Act, which adopted plans to provide financial incentives and assistance for families placed on colonization land.

In addition to these acts, there were a series of plans specific to colonization efforts, starting with the Gordon Plan in 1932, followed by the Roger-Auger Plan in 1936 and, specific to Quebec, the Vautrin Plan in 1935. Among the main funding points, these plans were to provide subsidies for purchasing building materials, equipment, and livestock; set prices per acre; and a monthly stipend for five years; and allocate grants to colonization societies.

Throughout Canada, 12,000 families were placed on the land from 1932 to 1940. In Quebec, through the Vautrin Plan alone, close to 7,500 families were placed on colonization lots.

In Quebec, the placement of families for colonization was primarily orchestrated through the existing settlement societies and the church (Catholic and Anglican). These societies were not new entities in the province, having existed in various forms throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, but they experienced a resurgence in the 1920s through Quebec's passing of the Colonization Societies Act in 1925.

With the enactment of the Vautrin Plan, we see in particular at least four Anglican colonization societies founded in 1935, consisting of the Eastern Town-



ships Protestant Colonization Association, the Bonaventure and Gaspé District Protestant Association for Colonization and Land Settlement, the Colonization and Land Settlement Society for the District of Montreal, and the Quebec District Protestant Colonization Society.

Under the umbrella of the Anglican Diocese of Quebec, the Eastern Townships Protestant Colonization Association (ETPCA) set out to find colonists

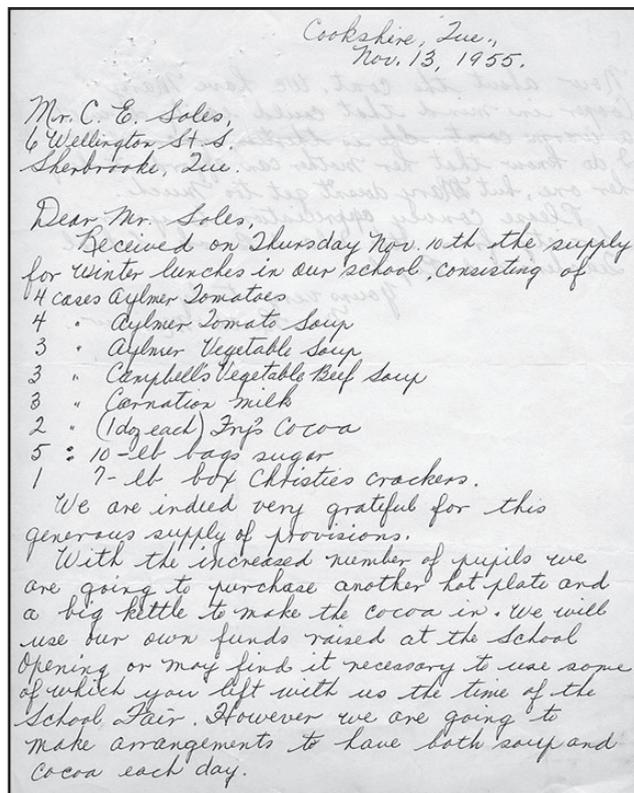
colonists were on their way to Newport. They came almost entirely from other areas of the Townships: Stanstead, Beebe, Sawyerville, Thetford Mines, Cookshire, Hatley, Richmond, Bromptonville, and Fitch Bay. The men went first, leaving their families behind while they worked building a road into the colony and houses to live in.

Just months into the endeavour, in October 1936, the *Sherbrooke Daily Record* was already reporting on the early struggles, noting that the men had neither received any money for their road work nor any supplies to build their homes, both of which had been promised to them. The president of the ETPCA claimed that the funding contracts from the government were cancelled and petitions to have them reinstated had not led anywhere.

In a public reply, a local MLA, P. A. Sherman, claimed the delays were caused by the recent election. Moreover, Sherman also states that he was informed on "good authority" that some of the colonists were only in it to get what they could off the land and out of the assistance program and then planned to abandon the lots.

The Newport colonists published their own letter to the editor as a reply a week later, concluding with the following statement: "We do not understand why we are being held back, but believe that owners of vacant farms and lumber companies interested in the lumber on these lots are using their influence to hold back our pay and lumber to discourage and starve us out. However, we wish to assure the responsible parties that, although very discouraged, we will not be starved out. Most of the married settlers here are returned men, and the same spirit that carried us through the War will see us through the present trying time."

Despite the rough start, a number of the colonists' houses had been completed by the spring of 1937 and the families of the colonists had started to join them. As winter began to close in, however, more challenges came to light. Road construction had continued throughout the summer of 1937 but still only one third of it was



for the 40 lots, each 100 acres, that they were given in Newport Township, in the Eastern Townships, which would become Lawrence Colony. Out of 90 applicants, 43 were selected for the Newport colony. By July 1936, the first groups of



passable for motorized vehicles and over four kilometres were not even passable for teams of horses. This roadwork would continue in some measure into the 1940s. In these early years, reports oscillated between calls for support for the colonists in extreme need and articles praising the achievements of Lawrence in comparison to other colonies in the province; declaring again and again that this initiative would be a success.

As the years rolled into the 1940s, the people of Lawrence Colony were able to earn money from the timber on their lots, largely as a result of the demand created by World War II. Despite some successes, a number of colonists continued to struggle. To help bridge some of the gaps, the ETPCA, aided by various charitable organizations and church denominations, continued to support the colonists in various ways – in particular through the (occasional) payment of property and school taxes on behalf of colonists, payment of emergency bills, subsidization of the local teacher's salary, and providing goods for school lunches.

By late 1940s and into the 1950s, however, eking out a living off the land continued to be a challenge and community support began to wane. While many of the colonists were able to have the basics – enough food to eat, a roof over their heads – they were unable to make much, if any, money off of their land. Over half of the original colonists from the 1930s had left and been replaced, sometimes many times over. In fact, the first person in the colony to receive their land deed only did so in 1952. This colonist had worked the land 15 years before acquiring legal title to the land!

Among the factors contributing to the long property transfer delays were unmet land clearing requirements and ineffective and confusing management of the land titles.

By the time of McCardell's 1970 study, only two of the 17 original colonists were earning money through farming and the majority were receiving some manner of public assistance. Considering the foundational objectives of Lawrence Colony, it is clear that the colony did not succeed in establishing a community of self-sufficient farmers as originally hoped.

In looking back at Lawrence Colony as a back-to-the-land experiment, there are a number of factors that contributed to its shortcomings. Changes in the economy and agriculture made self-sufficient farming unworkable and the location of Lawrence, away from developed roadways and railways, increased the challenge of turning products into profit. There does not seem to have been clear guidance and direction for colonists when navigating the process to acquire land titles,

creating almost insurmountable hurdles. It also appears that the people of Lawrence Colony never benefited to the fullest from the available government colonization funds, making one wonder if it would have turned out differently had the government contributed the full amount that was originally budgeted for each colonization lot.

Jody Robinson holds a Master's degree in History from the Université de Sherbrooke and has worked for the Eastern Townships Resource Centre, an organization committed to the preservation of the heritage of the Eastern Townships, since 2006, first as archivist and more recently as executive director. Always interested in the history of the Eastern Townships, Jody has worked with many heritage organizations in the Eastern Townships and is presently vice-president of QAHN.

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Top and Bottom: Lawrence Colony, 2013.
Photos: Mario Hains.

THE GRANDEST TOWN RESIDENCE

David Ross's House, St. Gabriel Street

by Mark Meredith

The house built in 1813-1815 for David Ross (1770-1837) K.C., and his wife, Jane Davidson (1789-1866), overlooking Montreal's Champ de Mars stood near the impressive Maison Beaubien and the St. Gabriel Street Church. At the time of completion, the Ross home was perhaps the grandest townhouse in British North America. Its octagonal summer house in the garden was considered the most beautiful in the country. The mansion's stucco interiors were created by the man who had served as principal ornamental plasterer on the Massachusetts State House. And yet, although the mansion on St Gabriel Street delighted David Ross, it was something of an embarrassment to his more Presbyterian wife and children.

The Ross house stood as a Montreal landmark for over 140 years before being erased.

Some of the furnishings are now on display at the McCord Museum by virtue of its founder, Ross' grandson, David Ross McCord.

David Ross's father left Tain in Ross-shire with the 78th Fraser Highlanders and fought at the Battle of Quebec in 1759. Six years later, he bought a house near Palace Gate in Quebec City where David grew up. Having studied law, David came to Montreal, where he married a daughter of Judge Arthur Davidson. His father-in-law died just four years later and he took over his legal practice, as well as inheriting Davidson's seigneurie at St. Gilles de Beaurivage. Not before long, Ross was appointed a King's Counsel and successfully invested in property in Montreal before taking office as Attorney General

for the Province in 1820.

Begun in 1813, his new home on St. Gabriel Street took two years to complete. It was built in the fashionable Neoclassical style: "Standing three storeys high, it had an ashlar (cut-stone) facade enriched by Palladian features – a frieze carved in an acanthus motif and six shallow pilasters crowned by Corinthian capitals above a rusticated



ground floor. In each bay a plain, rectangular panel was inset between the second and third floors." According to historians A. J. H. Richardson and Stephen Otto, "it may very well have been (then) the grandest town residence in British North America." It was not the largest, but in detail it certainly rivalled the Chateau de Vaudreuil and predated the Bingham Mansion.

The Ross house was built by English master carpenter and contractor John Try, who was also busy between 1812 and 1814 finishing the interior of the original Christ Church on Notre Dame Street. Try was then considered "the principal master builder in Montreal," and, although the architect of the Ross house is not recorded, he is regarded as the most likely candidate.

However, the language used by Ross and his lead stucco-worker may point to another contender.

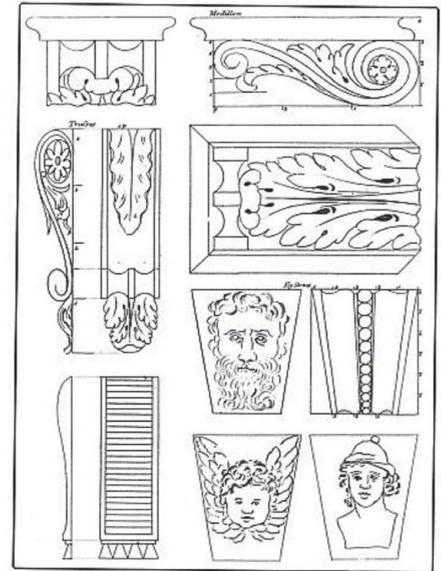
Skilled plasterers were scarce in Montreal at this time, and Ross had to look south of the border despite restrictions on American immigration during the War of 1812. In 1814, Ross got special permission to bring Daniel Reynerd ("Architect and Stucco Worker") and Henry Roots ("Plasterer and Stucco Worker") to work on the project. Reynerd had learned his craft in England and was certainly no ordinary tradesman: having established himself in Boston, he was the principal ornamental plasterer to Charles Bulfinch ("America's first native-born architect"), notably during the construction of the Massachusetts State House, "the most ambitious and costly building project undertaken in Boston at the close of the

18th century." Reynerd had also co-published *The American Builder's Companion* with architect Asher Benjamin in 1806, which is still considered one of the most influential books of its era on American architecture.

The Ross house would have been finished in considerably less time were it not for Canada then being at war with the United States. This caused Reynerd severe headaches. In August 1814, he wrote to the Governor's secretary: "I have experienced the greatest delays, distress and disappointment in finishing a house I have erected – near the Champ-de-Mars, owing to the scarcity of Plasterers insomuch that I am nearly stoped [sic] – John Try my head carpenter informs me that there are two most excellent workmen in Boston, that he



would have fitted seamlessly within Edinburgh's famed "New Town." In fact, the Ross house bears a distinct similarity to one such mansion on the corner of Moray Place and Forres Street – recently used as a filming location for "Belgravia," the follow-up series to "Downton Abbey." Moray Place was designed by Scottish architect James Gillespie Graham on behalf of Lord Moray in 1822 – a decade after Ross built his home. The house in Montreal was superior in its external detail, but despite their similarities there were two distinct architectural differences that set them apart: the front entrance of the house in



thinks would be very glad to come into this province were they permitted to do so... In my present embarrassed situation I should be willing to go to the trouble and expense of getting them to come here... [It would be] a temporary advantage to myself and a permanent one to this city."

Now, I am not an architectural historian, nor do I have access to records that might help more clearly define Reynerd's role in the Ross project, but certainly the language used in that letter ("a house I have erected" and "my head carpenter") coupled with Ross' referral to him as "Architect & Stucco Worker" rather than just "Stucco Worker" might imply that Reynerd was more than just the skilled craftsman worker brought in towards the end of the project.

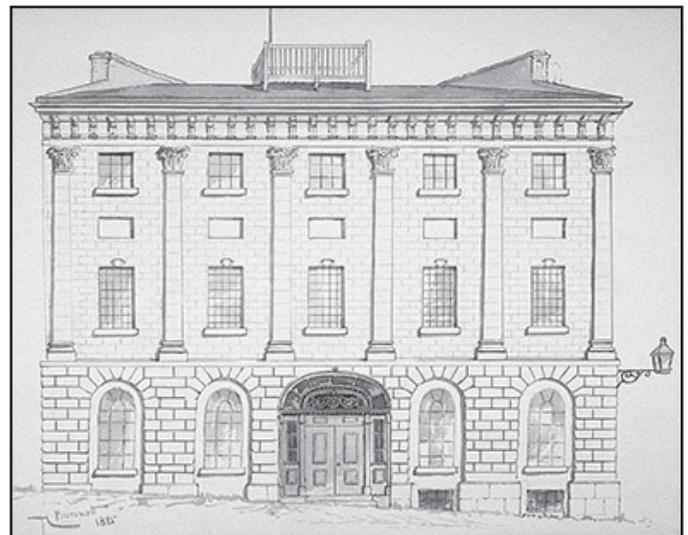
Although built by an Englishman, the house was designed for a Scotsman, and Ross would have been unquestionably gratified by the fact that his house



Montreal took its inspiration from Georgian Dublin, with perhaps a hint of Paris; and, although not an original feature, the "widow's walk" seen in the picture on the crest of the roof in Montreal gave it a distinctly colonial feel. It was added sometime between 1830 and 1866, though the addition was most likely made in the 1840s when these features became popular.

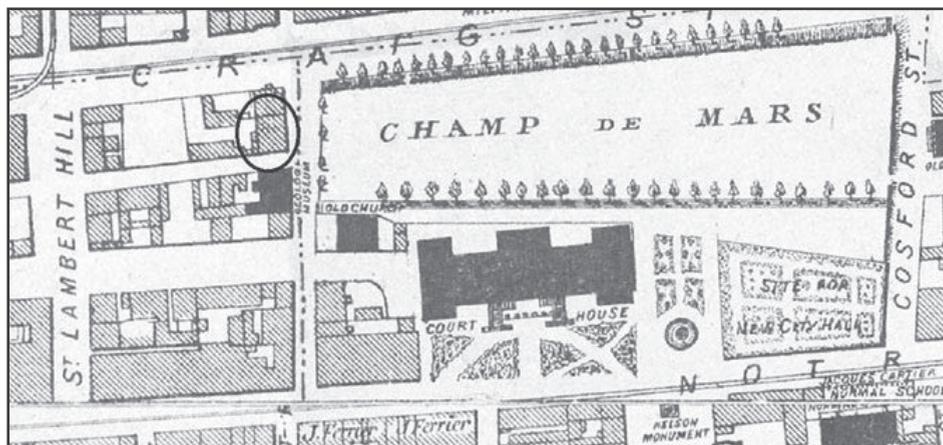
The house itself cost £1,007 to build, but the ornate decor insisted upon by Ross also cost him something of a marital headache, resulting in the only recorded rift in his marriage. David and Jane were both Scottish and Presbyterian, and as it transpired their new home stood adjacent to the St. Gabriel Street Church, "the mother church of Presbyterianism in Canada."

The church had been built a few years before with the help of a handsome donation from David Ross; however, it was Jane who took more seriously the religion that preached simple living and plain tastes. The house alone (excluding interiors and furnishings) had cost just £43 less than the entire church that could sit a congregation of 650. And, although this was where all the fur barons worshipped (a group famous for "living in lordly and hospitable style"),



Top left: David Ross, c.1805, McCord Museum, M9504.
Top right: *The American Builder's Companion* (1806), Plate 31.

Centre: Jane Ross, 1830-1840, McCord Museum, M9556. Bottom left: Moray Place, Edinburgh. Photo: B. McNeil. Bottom right: H. R. Bunnett, the Ross house, 1885, McCord Museum, M3286.



maker and upholsterer.

In 1820, a traveller from England, John Bigsby, remarked: “I found, but did not expect to find, at Montreal a pleasing transcript of the best form of London life... Some of the show-shops rival those of London in their plate-glass windows.” It was from those same shops that Ross acquired his own silver, plate, glass, and furnishings, plus those he had purchased from his late father-in-law which had once filled the Davidson home on St. James Street. Ross was most likely among those that Jacob Mountain had in mind when he observed in 1794 that, “people here (in Montreal) are fond of good living and take care to want no luxury.”

A minimum of four servants were required to run the household. Even so, although “relatives, friends, and colleagues came regularly to dinner, tea, and cards,” the merriment here would have been on a decidedly lesser scale than in the likes of the Bingham family’s mansion on the other side of the Champ de Mars.

In 1840, from the northwest corner of the Champ de Mars that looked directly towards the Ross house, there was “a fine view of the grounds, beautiful orchards and country houses towards the Mountain.” Among the fruits grown in the gardens at the Ross house was the famous Montreal melon, which was gathered in clothes baskets.

In 1898, *The Canadian Horticultural Magazine* described the summer house that had stood in the Ross gardens as “a delicately modelled octagon of about 16-feet in diameter, which had cost one hundred guineas (£105).” The author boldly deemed it

to be “certainly the most beautiful in Canada, and perhaps on the continent.”

The summer house certainly would not have looked out of place on an estate such as Blithewood in New York’s Hudson Valley. It was later moved to “Temple Grove,” the McCord family’s country idyll off Côte-des-Neiges Road.

David Ross McCord was named for his maternal grandfather and is remembered today as the founder of the McCord Museum of Canadian History (now the McCord-Stewart Museum).

In 1871, McCord commissioned photographer Alexander Henderson to take photos of the house on St. Gabriel Street, along with his country home, Temple Grove – in detail, within and without. In 1885, he commissioned Henry Bunnett to draw illustrations of the same. These pictures are all preserved in the McCord Museum – fortunately, since the house was demolished in 1952 to make way for a gas station and parking lot.

Mark Meredith has always been passionate about history, particularly the history behind houses and the stories and people that shape them. Having worked for twenty years in the building industry, he is now a recognized writer and lecturer in both the United States and Europe. In 2019, Mark founded HouseHistree (househistree.com), a website that explores “genealogy through houses.”

Top left: F. W. Lock, “Mrs. John Samuel McCord” (Anne Ross), 1851. McCord Museum, M8413. Top right: Plunkett & Brady, Map of Montreal (detail), 1872.

Centre left: H. R. Bunnett, the staircase in the Ross house, 1886. McCord Museum, M3288.

ODD OBJECTS

OLD FASHIONED ANESTHESIA MASK

Musée d'histoire de Sherbrooke, Sherbrooke

by Emma McCully

“Sherbrooke’s Memories,” a permanent exhibition at the Musée d’histoire de Sherbrooke (MHist), features hundreds of photographs and dozens of artefacts from the museum’s collection, all from the Sherbrooke region. The exhibition encourages visitors to walk through a timeline that showcases different facets of life in the city over the past two centuries. Displays highlight the place of women within Sherbrooke society, the city’s religious affiliations, and technological advancements of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. They are all interesting, but one section stands out, and one object in particular is sure to grab the attention of visitors.

When asked what their favorite part of the exhibit was, a member of the museum staff answered: the section on medicine. “Public Health and Hygiene” draws us in with a display featuring a manikin dressed in a skirt covered in photographs of nurses and other medical staff from the Sherbrooke area.

In this section, visitors discover plenty of interesting objects, including medical equipment that is almost guaranteed to make one squirm at least a little, considering that medical knowledge of the time was not nearly as advanced as it is today.

One item in particular that is sure to draw attention is the anesthesia mask. This object was once used at Sherbrooke’s Hôtel-Dieu Hospital, which continues to treat patients today. At the time the object would have been in use, the head physician at the hospital was Dr. Réal Lafond, whose foundation donated the mask to the museum.

The drop-shaped Yankauer anesthesia mask, as it is known, is made of a mesh material, as opposed to the more modern plastic; there is also gauze embedded in the mask structure. As the exhibition explains, “drops of anesthetics such as ether or chloroform had to be added to the gauze affixed to the mask’s mesh to anesthetize the patient.” The



process by which anesthesia is administered has seen radical change, especially

when it comes to ether, since modern-day surgery makes the use of this particular chemical unsustainable. There are many reasons for this, one being ether’s unpleasant side effects for patients; another is its combustibility, making the use of a surgical cautery tool impossible (Rahardjo, 54). Chloroform was not necessarily much better; in fact, it may even be more dangerous according to modern medical standards. Chloroform is a potent compound and is “seven or eight times more powerful as an anesthetic than ether” (Burge, 618). That these anesthetics were in frequent use despite their potential health detriments demonstrates the transformation in medical technology in the relatively short period of about a century.

The anesthesia mask is on display along with other medical instruments used in the early twentieth century. While the exhibition’s “Public Health and Hygiene” section is definitely worth a look, the entire exhibit “Sherbrooke Memories” holds a great deal of interest, as does the Musée d’histoire de Sherbrooke as a whole.

Here’s wishing you good health!

Bishop’s University student Emma McCully interned for QAHN in 2023.

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DRIVING “UP NORTH” IN THE 1950s

by Joseph Graham

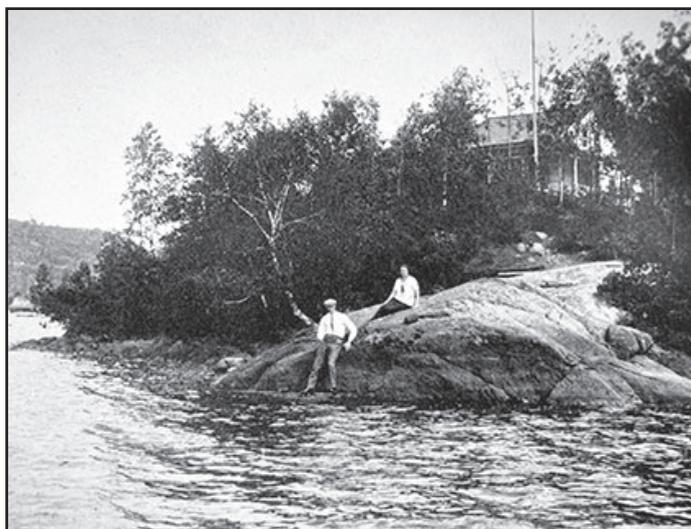
Travelling from Montreal to the Laurentians was romantic and exciting in the days of the old steam-driven passenger trains. Those were the days when everything ran on time and you received what you ordered when you were told you would. As a child, when I heard the 7:00 a.m. train release its first steam, I knew it was exactly 7:00 a.m. That first release was followed by another after a short delay, and then another, and another, with each delay being shorter than the previous one. The train was starting to move. Once its forward motion began to accelerate, there was enough steam still in the boiler to blow the train whistle and... I was off to school on foot, listening to the train receding.

A lot has been written about those trains, but when I was at that age we went to the country by car.

Taking a drive up to the country for the summer holidays was just as exciting. Family cars were still novel enough to anticipate adventure, especially for us kids. Also, we didn't even have to be on our best behaviour because – no one was watching. Who were we likely to meet on the way? Packing the car was exciting, too. It was like a gigantic picnic basket that we could throw what we wanted into. Except that there were five of us, soon six, plus two parents, and those parents had some irrational ideas about space, organization and what we could actually bring north for the summer.

I must have been five or six when I had a meltdown as we reached the final packing and my mother refused to allow my best friend to come with me. My best friend was a rock that was just the right size and density to hold in my hand and crush other rocks so I could examine

their insides. She was unsympathetic. The trunk was still open and I was standing there with my chin and shoulders hanging down around the bottom of my ribcage, my rock evicted as though he were just a thing. There was no way I was leaving without my buddy. A standoff.



My older brother came to the rescue, encouraging me to see things from my friend the rock's point of view. He lived here and might even get lost in the country. My brother suggested I hide my buddy under the porch with some smaller rocks for company so that he could wait there for me until I returned.

I climbed into the back seat of our old car, probably a Packard, a huge, round-backed heavy vehicle, and we set off, four boys and my lone sister who was born between the two sets of us boys. She got to sit on the front bench seat where she could climb onto my mother's lap for a better view of the road. The rest of us jostled for space in the back and if we bounced too much, my father's arm could come flying over the seat back and whack whichever of us happened to be in its path.

The Orange Julep existed even then, and of course there were ice cream

stands hollering offers all along the route. Big signs and garbage thrown from car windows decorated the sides of the road. As we moved north, catching Route 11, the first great attractions were Belmont Park and the green Cartierville bridge. We always had time to look longingly at Belmont Park, because by then the road was crowded with cars full of families all going north, a huge slow-moving caravan passing through fields and past farms. It took half the day to get to our destination in Val Morin.

It didn't matter how open the road was or how crowded. My dad was used to flying planes and when he chose a speed, the speedometer needle stayed fixed at that number. I suspect he was guided by the steady noise of the motor, but it wasn't always possible. He had to live with all those other people on the road.

That was how I came to leave my mark on that old car.

Back then, the seats were benches, like sofas, one in the front and one in the back. Our car had a silver band of a soft, shiny metal running along the back of the front seat. We were all playing, bouncing, and fighting for our space, the sun pounding down on the black car, the windows open. There were no seatbelts or air conditioning back then. Seatbelts were for airplanes. The traffic was moving, and a long line of drivers' feet were shifting, hopefully in unison, from the brake to the gas, to the brake, all trying to maximize our caravan-like speed. I don't know if the car had a clutch or not, but the gearshifts were generally on the steering column to leave more space for the front bench seat. I remember my father saying "brace yourself" as the car came to a sudden stop and my teeth collided with that shiny silver band, leaving a permanent imprint of my teeth in it.



My sister flew from my mother's arms and hit the windshield. It broke. There was a lot of crying.

Somehow my sister was alright, and so was I. The rest of the trip, that time, must have taken the rest of the day. A very long line of cars had all collided. Of course, it could have been much worse, and it was for others. Ambulances arrived, and policemen – all men back then.

Most of the time, though, our drives up to Val Morin, to our magical summer house on the lake, were routine. We came over the side of Mont Sauvage, and suddenly below us was the lake, bordered by green fields, and further on, a golf course. Then we turned into the mile-long, sandy single-track road through a farmer's field and then along the lakeshore past other cottages, the beaches just outside the door of the car, the waves rolling in along the sand. You could see right across the lake from there, to a steep mountain with a cliff, and at the bottom of it ran the railroad track.

Naturally, our place was our favourite. It was on a good-sized parcel, part of a family compound, overlooking a landmark, a rather dangerous rock that jugged out into the water and was known as Moosehead Point. We just called it "The Rock." It really did look like a moose head from across a bay on our way there, and sometimes during the summer people would stop by the Rock in their rowboats or canoes, visiting a place known to them, but in the car, we had to climb over a hill and

go down the other side to get there. On the way down the hill, the moose's head was visible and made a strong silhouette in the last rays of the sun.

Getting up the hill was a challenge and could be done by taking a pretty good run, as though it were winter, because the cars were not really designed for climbing. Not only did they have no seatbelts nor air conditioning, they also had no gas pumps – or at least not ones that could furnish the motor going up too long a hill. Would we make it? If not, we might have to back slowly down, turn the car around and this time go backwards up the hill so the gas could flow down to the motor.

The 1950s was the golden age of cars. We young boys grew up knowing every model on the road, and with a dad like ours, we also had to know how they worked. I used to know the models, but the real pro was my elder sister. She had died, though, by the time I started re-



searching this story, so I sent a quick email to my younger brother, asking him if he remembered that sporty convertible

that my mother had acquired – a second car! It was around 1958. He emailed right back to tell me it was an Austin Somerset. He was only six back then, but he also knew the year of manufacture of the old car: 1949. My own search revealed that it was probably a Packard.

As an aviation mechanic and pilot who had flown during the war, my father trusted only himself to make sure the cars were properly put together. He approached it the way they tell me parachute jumpers do. If you don't fold it yourself for the jump, well... In September 1957, when we were all back in school after the summer in the country, Dad drove home with a brand new 1956 Ford Meteor, the one that had the thunderbolt on the sides. What decided him on the Meteor, though, was that he appreciated a good engine, and this one had a Thunderbird engine. His interest had less to do with the extra power than with the reputation of quality that came with the Thunderbird engine.

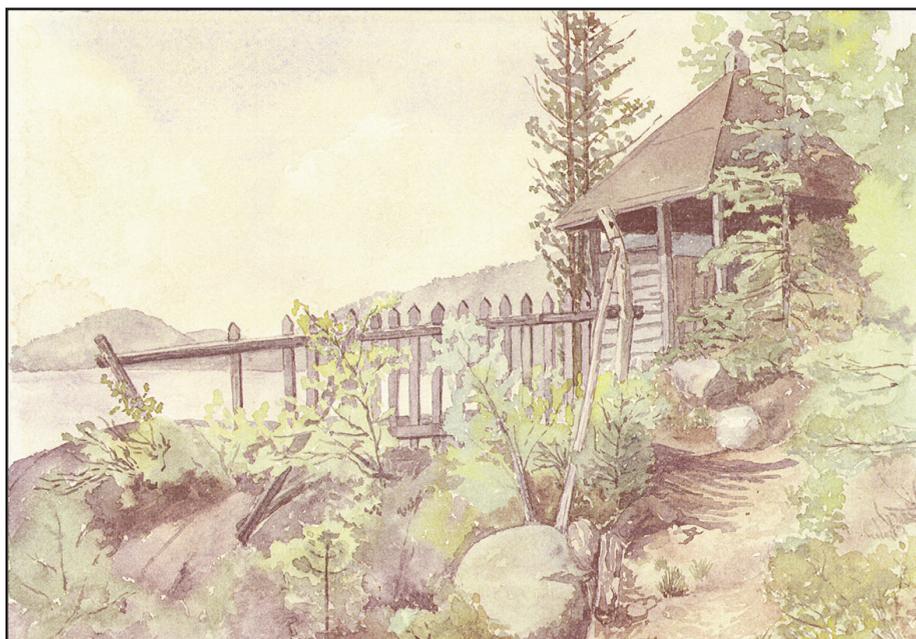
The first thing he did was take the engine apart – back to your parachute. Was it properly folded? Needless to say, he voided the warranty, but he wanted to make sure the new motor assembly met with his approval.

Thinking back on those times, that senior generation had lived through World War II, and most of them would have been diagnosed with PTSD today. They were still in the military in their minds. He served four years on active duty and taught young pilots for a year before that. How many of his students didn't make it? He also flew rescue missions and was a test pilot. The concept of taking something for granted could prove fatal in an environment like that. And he was not alone. His whole generation dealt, each in their own way, with those things.

A cousin told me a story about coming up from the city to that compound on the lake in Val Morin. His father was a doctor, and they were alone in the car. My uncle, his father, had also served during the war in his capacity as a doctor. That day, coming north, they witnessed an accident on the highway. My uncle pulled off the road to see if he could help. A man was injured and needed immediate attention. The ambulance had not arrived, but it had been

called. The man was also in shock and bleeding. The doctor sent his son, my cousin, to the car to fetch a blanket he knew was there. He took care of the injury while his son returned with the blanket, and he covered the man, to keep him a bit warmer. Soon, the ambulance arrived, and he signalled to his son that it was time to leave. Back in the car, he told his son that what they had just witnessed was not to be repeated. Just decide it didn't happen. The next day his no-nonsense mother, my aunt, was looking for a blanket that she had packed carefully in the trunk of that car. Where had it gone? She asked his father. A blanket? He had a reputation for being absent-minded, and his son watched him play on that. The women had also been through the war. She did not insist, probably knowing from his answer that there was a reason.

The first thing the men did when they opened the summer cottages was set a golf ball on each floor, then they jacked each house back to level, shimmed it up and started up the water pump. We weren't allowed in the houses until they told us.



I went over to the lake side and looked out across the water. The train was going north towards St. Agathe, chugging out its little steam clouds like smoke signals. Three forty-five. It would be right on time.

Now when I think back on that generation, I do not wonder why the

trains ran on time and parcels were delivered when they were expected.

Joseph Graham's new book, Insatiable Hunger, reinterprets our historic understanding of the colonial period, here and in New England. It tells some of the stories that we were not taught in school.

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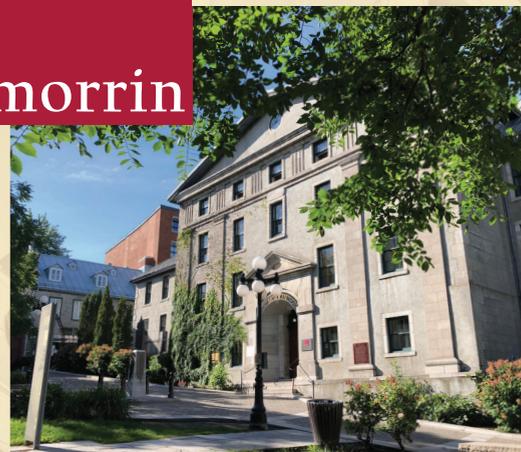


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MONEY TALKS

A Scuba Diver's Finds from the Richelieu River

by Derek Grout

For many years my dive partner and I have searched the Richelieu River, a strategic body of water linking New York's Lake Champlain to the St. Lawrence. Despite being only a hundred-odd kilometres in length, the waterway played a critical role in the military, political and economic history of Quebec and the adjacent United States. For more than two centuries the Richelieu served as a war corridor for invading armies and navies, and as a critical shipping route for sailing vessels and, later, steamboats. With the construction of canals on the Richelieu in the 1840s, along with an 1823 canal linking Lake Champlain to the Hudson, an unbroken waterway existed between Montreal and New York City, greatly spurring trade on both sides of the border.

Explored by Samuel de Champlain in 1609, the river was a



battleground between the French and Iroquois for almost a hundred years. Afterward, it became a battleground between the French and British and, later, between the British and Americans, first during the Revolution of 1776-1783 and again in 1812-1814. As a result, a number of forts line the banks of the Richelieu, erected at various periods to protect the waterway.

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Top: "Fort Chambly," an engraving by William Henry Bartlett. Canadian Scenery Illustrated, by N. P. Willis, 1842.



Figure 1



Figure 2

Today, many – like Fort Chambly, Saint Jean and Ile-aux-Noix – are historic sites, and can be visited by tourists who seek to understand what a soldier’s life was like on the frontier.

For more than two centuries, the armies of France, Britain and the United States contested the Richelieu. In 1760, a British force of some 3,300 men under William Haviland moved north from Lake Champlain and down the Richelieu, part of a three-pronged force whose intention was to seize Montreal and finally conquer New France. Haviland’s force besieged the 800 French troops holding Ile-aux-Noix and forced them to retreat. Fifteen

years later, during the American Revolution, 1,300 Continental troops invaded Quebec via the Richelieu in an attempt to bring Canada over to the American side. In 1777, British general John Burgoyne led a force of some 8,000 men south on the Richelieu and Lake Champlain, hoping to link up with a British force coming up the Hudson River from New York. Burgoyne’s



Figure 3

campaign failed and his army was defeated at Saratoga. When war broke out again in 1812, the Richelieu was an important shipbuilding centre for the British naval campaign on Lake Champlain.

During the course of many dives, we have been fortunate to find an impressive variety of coins, which shed light on the several types of money used in the period from 1700 to the 1850s.



Figure 4



Figure 5

Some of these are discussed below.

French coins are not often found in Quebec. Every year during the French regime, shipments of currency arrived in Quebec with the first vessels of the new shipping season. However, little of this remained in New France. Most returned to the mother country with the last ships of the season, in order to settle the colony’s debts. For reference, a French soldier in 1749 was paid 5 sols (Figure 1) per day. One écu (Figure 2) was equal to 60 sols.

Some Spanish silver currency, mainly from the Mexico City mint, also found its way into New France. This silver was usually obtained by illegally trading canoe loads of furs to Albany merchants, by the Richelieu water route. Smugglers thus bypassed Montreal merchants and were able to obtain higher prices in Albany, paid in cash. Cash in New France was in short supply, and in 1685 playing card money was first issued as an emergency measure to pay the troops, although this was intended only as a temporary expedient. The colony’s economy, chronically short of coins, depended almost entirely on locally produced paper money for the next seventy-five years.



Figure 6

With an embargo on the export of British gold and silver coins to colonial North America, Spanish coins became the accepted currency in the Thirteen Colonies,



Figure 7

obtained in trade for commodities such as rum and tobacco, and raw materials like timber. The large (40 mm diameter) Spanish dollar or Piece of Eight *reales* (Figure 3) (along with its various silver fractions of 4, 2, 1 and ½ *real*) (Figures 4 and 5), remained in wide circulation and were legal tender in the United States and Canada until the 1850s.

Once the United States began minting its own silver dollars in 1794, its now-decimalized dollar was based on the Spanish standards of weight and purity. Silver coins from this period are often found pierced so they could be sewn into the owner’s pocket to avoid being lost. Figure 6 shows a 2-*real* piece cut in half, for use when small change was in short supply.

A British soldier in 1759 was paid 8d (8 pence) per day, from which various deductions were made. One Spanish dollar thus represented about a month’s wages for a British soldier at the time of the Revolution.

In the late eighteenth century, only low-denomination British copper coins circulated in the Thirteen Colonies and Quebec. The shortage of small change in North America was



Figure 8



Figure 9

exacerbated as Britain struck no halfpennies between 1755 and 1799 except for the years 1770-1775. As a result, any copper halfpennies of George II and George III remained in circulation for long periods, many becoming so worn that their designs were almost obliterated. Although most of the Richelieu halfpennies from this period are found in this condition, Figure 7 shows a George III halfpenny of 1775, in better than average condition.



Figure 10

Forgers of the period in Britain, despite harsh penalties for counterfeiting, were busy trying to make up the shortage with underweight copper. Such forgeries are also found in the Richelieu. It is estimated that by 1775 some 60 per cent of the copper coins then in circulation were forgeries.



Figure 11

The scarcity of official small change meant that copper coins from various European nations like

Portugal (Figure 8) and Sweden (Figure 9), Austria and France, found their way to North America and found ready acceptance in the cash-starved colonies. In the aftermath of the American Revolution, various newly independent states, such as Vermont, Connecticut, New Jersey, New York and Massachusetts, all produced their own



Figure 12

small change, some of which found its way into Canada. Figure 10 shows a copper issued by Connecticut in 1787. To gain wider acceptance, it imitated the British halfpenny, with the reverse depicting a seated personification of Liberty, closely resembling the figure of Britannia, and the legend "IND: ET. LIB:" to proclaim the state's new independence and freedom.

By 1805, the shortage of government-issued copper coins had become serious in British North America. As a result, private tokens were imported from England and Ireland, and these circulated widely.

One halfpenny token from 1813 shows a ship sailing under topsails. Expressing a popular sentiment, the reverse bears the legend "PURE COPPER PREFERABLE TO PAPER."

Figure 11 shows another halfpenny token of the same period, with Britannia on one side and an American-style eagle on the reverse.

The so-called Wellington token (Figure 12), of which there are many varieties, was a common halfpenny of the same era. Produced in the 1830s, these were often ante-dated to circumvent an 1825 law banning private tokens. The reverse showed the familiar device of Britannia seated.

A halfpenny token, or one *sou* (Figures 13 and 14), was struck in England in 1837 for four Montreal banks. This example of a "Habitant Token," struck for the Banque du Peuple, depicts a Canadian habitant dressed in traditional winter clothing.

By the mid-1830s, Canadians of Upper and Lower Canada were accustomed to dealing with a variety of overlapping currencies in everyday circulation: Spanish, British, American, and even French. To make things easier, newspapers of the day often printed the equivalent values of a range of currencies, e.g. one half-dollar = 2s 6d (half-crown) = 4 reales = 1 écu = 3 francs.

By mid-century, such a chaotic situation could not long continue for, in the rapidly growing colony of Canada, the lack of a unified currency was seen as an economic damper. Montreal, then the largest city in Canada, was an important banking and manufacturing centre.

On the Richelieu, St. Johns, with a population of 4,700, had become the province's fourth largest port and the most important inland port, in addition to being a critical rail and shipping junction. The widespread circulation of and familiarity with American currency (Figure 15)



Figure 13



Figure 14

led, ultimately, after a series of false starts, to the long-overdue arrival in 1858 of Canadian decimal currency (Figure 16).



Figure 15



Figure 16

Derek Grout began writing freelance magazine articles in the 1980s, dealing with shipwrecks and dive sites in north-eastern Canada and the United States. His first book, Empress of Ireland: The Story of an Edwardian Liner, was published in England in 2001 and was nominated for the McAuslan First Book Prize by the Quebec Writers' Federation in 2002. A native of Montreal, Derek holds an MBA from McGill University. In 1977, he discovered the historically important schooner Water Witch in Lake Champlain, an intact wreck from 1866.

Figure 6. Spain 2 reales, silver, Ferdinand VI. Mint: Mexico City.

Figure 7. Great Britain, halfpenny, copper, 1775, George III (1760-1820).

Figure 8. Portugal, 40 reis, copper, 1799, Maria I (1777-1816).

Figure 9. Sweden, ¼ skilling, copper, 1803, Gustav Adolph IV (1796-1809).

Figure 10. Connecticut copper, 1787.

Figure 11. Halfpenny token, copper, antedated to 1813.

Figure 12. Wellington halfpenny token, copper, antedated to 1814.

Figure 13 and 14. Province du Bas Canada, un sou/halfpenny token, copper, 1837 .

Figure 15. United States, one cent, copper, 1843.

Figure 16. Canada, one cent, copper, 1893, Victoria (1837-1901).

All photographs by Danielle Grout, except Figure 2 by Rick Tomalty.

List of Coins and Tokens Illustrated

Figure 1. France sol, copper, undated, Louis XV.

Figure 2. France écu, silver, 1736, Louis XV.

Figure 3. Spain 8 reales, silver, 1771, Charles III (1759-1788). Mint: Mexico City.

Figure 4 and 5. Spain 4 reales, silver, 1747, Ferdinand VI (1746-1759). Mint: Mexico City.





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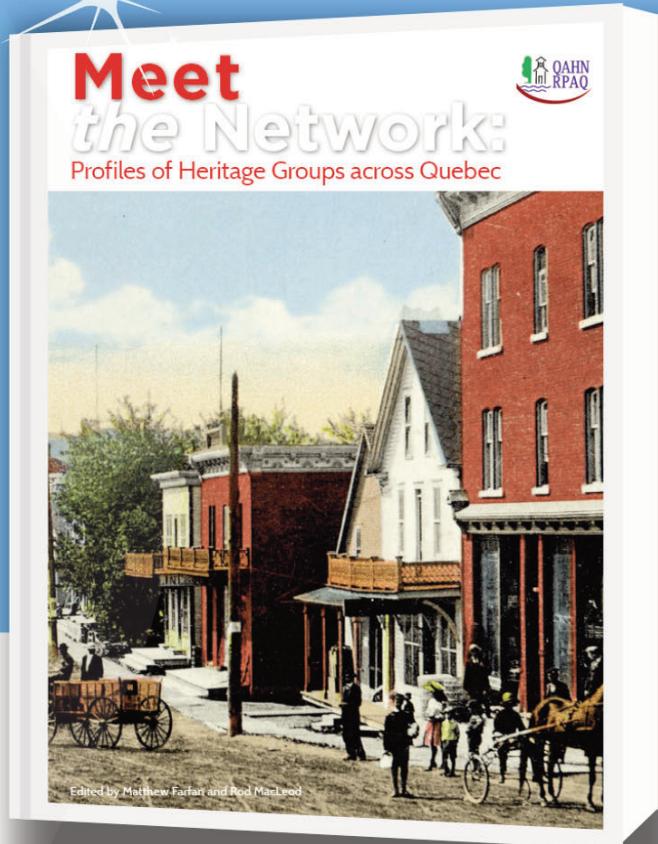
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REVIEW

ON THE ROAD AGAIN

Gaspé the Romantique “Revisited”

by Walter Willett

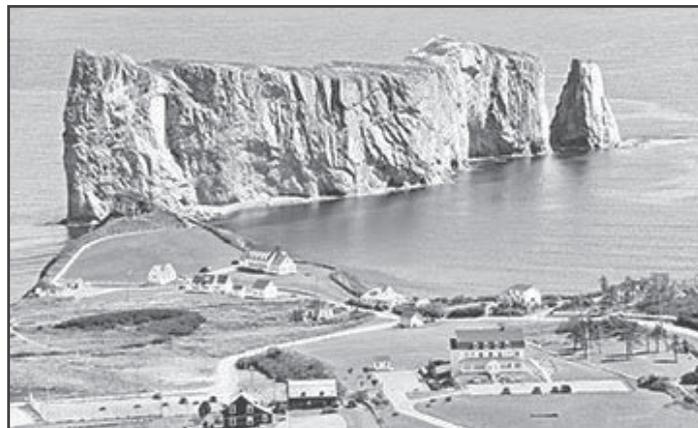
Independently published, 2022

Walter Willett has recently written and published a comprehensive travel book based on his family’s tour of the Gaspé peninsula in the summer of 2022. Although essentially a day-by-day progress around the coasts – with a few incursions into the interior – this memoir is a unique and unusual production in that it combines his extensive knowledge of local histories and local historians of the area with comparisons and references to a much earlier work, called “Gaspé the Romantique,” written in 1934 by his aunt, Olive Willett Smith. Her tour of the Gaspé peninsula was of a much different, and much more isolated, world, when roads first made the Gaspé accessible to automobile traffic and the region saw its first considerable tourist presence.

In spite of being perceived as remote and challenging to travelers, the Gaspé is one of the oldest and in some ways most important locations in the history of Quebec and all of Canada. Its aboriginal history is perhaps 9,000 years old; it is that of the Mi’kmaq, Maliseet, Algonquin and Iroquois peoples who occupied, and in some cases still occupy, lands within the peninsula. It is also possible that the Norse briefly came to the Gaspé in the eleventh century, and certain that Basque and other European fishermen were seasonal visitors along the shores more or less consistently. History credits the “first” real trader/settler contact to Jacques Cartier in 1534. There has been almost 500 years of recorded Gaspesian annals ever since.

However, Gaspé was, until recently, seen mainly as a source for raw materials – fishing, pulp and paper, mining and other primary industry, all of which centred on natural resources. It was never densely populated and even now there are no large urban centres. With the collapse of the cod fishery from severe over-fishing and the end of clear-cut forestry, the Gaspé economy has had to reinvent itself. Walter Willett recounts these economic changes very clearly. Luckily, the growing tourist trade and greater environmental awareness of the past few decades has helped. The stunning scenery, especially in the mountainous areas and along the dramatic coastline has attracted people from all over, especially in the summer season, although recently developed winter sports facilities are thriving in the Chic Choc Mountains.

Willet brings in the local history, folklore and legends of all the regions and peoples of the Gaspé in his book. We meet a vast variety of characters, from the pirates of Bonaventure Island – now an important bird sanctuary, opposite the iconic Percé Rock – to celebrities of the past like the singer Mary Travers, called “La Bolduc,” to important scientists like the geologist Sir William Logan, who began the geological survey of Canada starting at Percé Rock in the mid-nineteenth century.



This is an excellent work showing both travel entertainment possibilities and historic depth of content. It is well written, has good old and new illustrations, a clear timeline page at the end, and an extensive listing of sources.

Walter Willett can be reached through his website www.GaspeRoadTrip.com for further information and to order a copy of this book.

-Reviewed by Sandra Stock

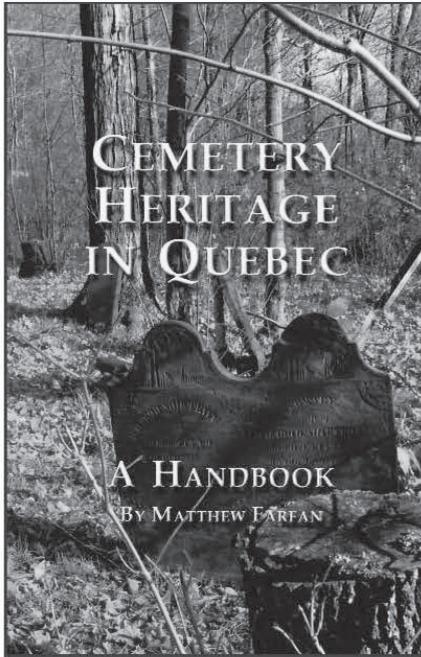


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CONTACT FOR MORE INFO
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