HOMEFRONT HEROINES WIN THE WAR WITH HOME COOKING AND SAVED SCRAPS

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# Quebec Heritage News

VOL 10, NO. 1 WINTER 2016


## 237 Years of Local News

An Interview with *Gazette* Editor-in-chief Lucinda Chodan

## Fairyland to Estérel

Greeks and Belgians Develop the Laurentians

## Martello Towers and Polish Princesses

"Memoirs" of the First Montreal-born Engineer

Quebec Heritage News

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Cover: Detail from "Waste not – Want not: Prepare for Winter." Artwork published by the Canada Food Board. Rare Books and Special Collections, McGill University.

## EDITOR'S DESK

# *Cane's Traf*

by Rod MacLeod

During the summer of 1846, Frederick Barnard Matthews had an unusual job and a curious place to live.

It was probably Frederick's older brother George who got him this gig, or at least put in a good word for him within his social networks. George Matthews, one of Montreal's leading lithographers, was doing well. A growing middle class throughout Canada was showing an interest in owning etchings and lithographs – typically landscapes or local scenes by popular artists such as James Pattison Cockburn, William Henry Bartlett, or James Duncan – or books containing printed illustrations. Many of these, especially Newton Bosworth's *Hochelaga Depicta* (1839), with illustrations by Duncan, are crucial sources for the period. George Matthews was a careful businessman, but his brother Frederick was impatiently reckless. A book-keeper by training, Frederick had made an unsuccessful attempt to set himself up as an importer of straw goods in the early 1840s, but the business soon floundered. He had also been quick to purchase one of the new building lots on the side of Mount Royal and had begun to construct a sprawling house for himself there, but despite selling half the land to his brother George to raise funds he was unable to complete the project and eventually had to sell the rest of his land to pay his debts. By 1846, Frederick Barnard Matthews was not doing well.

It was an age of ambition. The political tensions of the 1830s were over, the Canadas were united, Montreal was newly incorporated, and business was starting to boom. The Lachine Canal was deepened and widened to accommodate larger boats and to create hydro power for the city's burgeoning industries. The island's first train route was laid out for the Montreal and Lachine Railroad Company, whose president and key promoter, hardware merchant James Ferrier, had joined the new municipal council in part to ensure the smooth implementation of his railway project. To supervise construction, he invited back William Casey, an American engineer who a decade earlier had built Canada's first train line, between LaPrairie and St. John on the Richelieu. Also on the Montreal municipal council were building contractors John Redpath and Thomas Phillips, who presided over the city's new planning and public works department. As major landowners, these men used their official positions to facilitate their own private real estate schemes. They also ensured the appointment of architect and surveyor John Ostell as City Surveyor, the man in charge of coordinating all building projects. Ostell had prepared the plans for Redpath's own mountainside subdivision, whose lots had gone on sale in 1842 and been snapped up by people like Frederick Barnard Matthews.


*James Duncan, "Trafalgar," marginal drawing for James Cane's* Topographical and pictorial map of the city of Montreal*, Robert W. S. Mackay, 1846.*

It became evident to the councillors that a detailed city plan had to be created to document urban expansion. The task naturally fell to Ostell, who began compiling information but soon found himself overwhelmed with other municipal responsibilities, to say nothing of architectural commissions such as the McGill Arts Building, and survey work for the Sulpician seminary. The job of actually drawing the plan would have to be given to someone else. Architects and surveyors were not scarce in early 1840s Montreal, but Ostell was impressed by the credentials of James Cane, a young civil engineer from Toronto who had recently prepared a detailed "Topographical Plan" of that city. In 1843, Cane moved to Montreal, signed a contract with the city, and put down roots of sorts by joining the architectural firm of Macfarlane and Brown, located on St. François Xavier Street just along from George Mathews' lithography shop.

Unfortunately, James Cane proved a disappointment. Ostell ended up having to send back numerous versions of the map for corrections, and even then, there were errors that made their way into the final product. Despite Cane's incompetence, the *Topographical and Pictorial Map of the City of Montreal* of 1846, the most famous source of information on the city's layout at mid-century, is informally known as "Cane's map" even though it was really a collaboration between many specialists. The man at the helm of the entire project was writer and publisher Robert Stuart Mackay, who positioned himself prominently, if deferentially, in an inset box at the top of the map: "Dedicated by Special Permission to the Mayor and Corporation of the

City by their obliged fellow citizen Robert W. S. Mackay, publisher." The mayor to whom Mackay felt obliged was no doubt James Ferrier, who had been elected to that office the previous year, and then again in March 1846, as a promoter of urban expansion as well as railways. It is true that by the time the map was published, the courts had overturned his re-election after a vote recount, but Ferrier's successor, John Easton Mills, had not been so involved in planning. In another of the map's inset boxes, Mackay courteously acknowledged the draughtsman's work: "Surveyed and Drawn by James Cane, Civil Engineer," although there is no mention of Ostell's preliminary work. In the finer print, Mackay acknowledged the contribution of George Matthews, the map's lithographer, and of James Duncan, the artist who drew a number of scenes positioned around the map's borders. These last two men also contributed more covertly to the map's overall message.

Cane's map is a complex historical document, with more going on than the mere "plan" at its centre – that is, the streets, buildings, and other topographical features that Cane had drawn. In taking on its publication, Robert Mackay saw an opportunity to showcase the city's status as Canada's emerging metropolis. A consummate collector of information and, since 1842, the author of the annual *Montreal City Directory*, Mackay was keen to provide population statistics, which appear in one corner of the map. According to his figures, French Canadians counted for only 19,000 of the city's 44,000 people, along with nearly 9,000 "British Canadians," over 15,000 "English, Irish & Scotch" (meaning those of British origin not born in the colony), and 700 born in the "United States & other Places." It is clear that over half Montreal's population was Anglophone and, leaving aside the Irish, well over a third Protestant – although in 1846 the boom years of Irish immigration were still to come.


Montreal's civic and commercial prominence, as well as its fundamentally Anglophone and Protestant character, is also reflected in Duncan's drawings. Across the map's base is a panoramic view of Montreal from the water, giving much prominence to the port and the recently-built Bonsecours Market. Eight other ornately framed images depict key institutions about town. The choice of what to depict is telling. Notre Dame Church was a nod to Francophone Catholics, and St. Patrick's a nod to their Anglophone counterparts. Three other Protestant churches are featured: St. Paul's Presbyterian, the Methodist chapel, and Christ Church. A sixth scene shows the Customs House, an important building but also John Ostell's first major architectural commission, from 1836, and so a tribute to the real creative and scientific talent behind Cane's map. But the last two drawings seem incongruous on a document purporting to showcase the city's top landmarks: a structure marked "Odd Fellows Hall" and a pastoral scene labelled "Trafalgar."

The Odd Fellows Hall would seem a bizarre choice, given a plethora of significant civic buildings: court house, prison, Sulpician college, McGill College, News Room, Theatre Royal, Rasco's Hotel, and McTavish monument, just to name a few that had featured in *Hochelaga Depicta*. The Odd Fellows was a comparatively obscure organization in 1846, the first lodge in Canada having been founded just three years earlier, and it lacked the social gravitas of the Masons and other social and philanthropic organizations to which leading citizens belonged. But the Montreal lodge's founder was none other than lithographer George Matthews, who was also current head of the flagship Prince of Wales Lodge No.1. Robert Mackay had also joined the order, along with Frederick Barnard Matthews and such prominent businessmen as Luther Hamilton Holton and John Young. James Cane may well have had a hand in the lodge's design, as it was his firm, Macfarlane and Brown, that had been given the commission. Far from an odd choice, the depiction of the lodge on Cane's map was a deliberate attempt by


*Top: James Cane's* Topographical and pictorial map of the city of Montreal, *Robert W. S. Mackay, 1846.*

*Bottom: James Duncan, "Odd Fellows Hall," marginal drawing for Cane's* Topographical and pictorial map.

key members to situate this up-and-coming association among the city's great institutions.

But what of Trafalgar? Duncan's drawing shows a mountain estate with two buildings, rolling grounds, and a superb view of the city below. Trafalgar lay on the side of the western spur of Mount Royal ("West Mount," it would later be called), at the point, marked at that time by a tollbooth, where Côte des Neiges Road stops climbing and begins its steady descent northwards. The estate had originally belonged to John Ogilvy, a Scottish fur trader whose enthusiasm for Horatio Nelson extended not only to naming his property after the famous battle but to spearheading a campaign to erect a statue of the admiral in Jacques Cartier Square long before anyone thought to do so in London. He also christened the old farmhouse on the estate "Trafalgar Cottage" – which is presumably the larger of the two buildings shown in Duncan's drawing. Ogilvy never actually lived on this estate, however, preferring the comforts of a much larger farm to the north (called Airlie, after the ancestral home of the Ogilvy family in Scotland), where he died in 1819, leaving no heirs. Trafalgar remained unoccupied for much of the following quarter century, and fell into a state of disrepair.

It became the stuff of legends. Wild stories in particular focused on an ephemeral structure located somewhere on the estate – nobody can quite remember where, just as nobody can quite remember when it was demolished, although plenty of people even into the twentieth century have claimed to remember seeing it, and it has been the subject of drawings and even photographs. It is known as the Trafalgar Tower. Often described as "Gothic" (probably in the late eighteenth century sense of "Gothick," à la Mary Shelley), the tower had six sides with long narrow windows and a crenellated roof that at some point (or some artist thought) was covered with a pagoda-style top. Ogilvy, who may have built the tower (although it may also have been there when he purchased the property), supposedly installed a canon on the roof, which he fired every year on the anniversary of the battle, but how it got up there and how (and when) it was taken down is unclear. In 1835, budding Canadian author Georges Boucher de Boucherville brought the tower a degree of notoriety by publishing a story called "La tour de Trafalgar," a tale that either drew heavily on local legend or invented it. Boucherville describes what seem to be his own adventures getting lost during a sudden storm while he was hunting on the mountain (it was still a rocky and forested wilderness in those days), although this may have been a case of an "unreliable" narrator. At any rate, many generations of Montrealers have since reported having had supernatural encounters near the Trafalgar Tower. That the tower itself has mysteriously disappeared merely adds to the legend.

Boucherville's story is the kind of thing that Frederick Barnard Matthews would have been well advised not to read, by candle light, alone in Trafalgar Cottage during the summer of 1846. The narrator (who does seem older than Boucherville was at the time of writing) and his dog take shelter from the storm in this abandoned tower, which is so dilapidated that rain sprays in through the broken windows and the floorboards threaten to give way to some snake-infested cavity below. As night falls, he finds a dry corner to stretch out, but is just nodding off when he feels something cold pass over his face – something that might have been a snake or a thief, but might also have been a ghostly hand. At any rate, the narrator experiences the kind of indescribable thrill of horror that one expects from c.1835 literature. But because his dog seems not to be picking up on anything untoward (as dogs, of course, always do), he is inclined to try settling down again, until a flash of lightning illuminates splashes of blood on several walls and the back of the door – whereupon he flees the tower and stumbles across the mountain until dawn, the storm eventually lessening. In the wee hours, he finds an isolated hut with an old hermit sitting on a tree stump sharpening an axe that looks as if it had blood on it. Far from finding this prospect unnerving (although readers were presumably expected to draw certain conclusions), the narrator recounts his adventure. In return, the hermit tells the tale of Léocadie and Joseph, two young lovers who were walking on the mountain one Sunday after mass when they, too, discovered this mysterious

*Bottom left: "Tour de Trafalgar," c.1920. BANQ, P600, S6, D4, P60.*



*Top right: Edgar Gariépy, "Tour de Trafalgar," 1926. Photo: BANQ: P600, S6, D4, P61. Bottom right: Georges de Boucherville. LAC, MIKAN 4169282.*

tower. They were inspired to kiss (presumably the tower was in better shape then) – at which point an uncouth young man who had been sweet on Léocadie jumped out, stabbed her to death, and strangled Joseph.

Apart from these two incidents (which may have both been invented by Boucherville), the "real" haunting of the Trafalgar Tower took the form of a ghost, usually identified as that of a hermit, presumably the young couple's murderer and possibly that story's axe-sharpening raconteur. The ghost manifested itself to anyone visiting the tower by walking about, audible but invisible. One visitor (this also happened on a Sunday, presumably after church) climbed up to look through one of the tower's windows and distinctly heard footsteps approaching him, but when he turned around there was no one there. Anne Molson, a practical-minded advocate of girls' education, also remembered having heard the footsteps while visiting the tower in her youth, although her conclusion was that the sound was the result of an echo caused by geological irregularities. Subsequent owners of the Trafalgar estate also reported hearing these footsteps. As late as 1925, archivist and local historian E. Z. Massicotte went to see for himself, accompanied by a photographer, and while they were setting up the camera both men distinctly heard the footsteps. The last date at which locals remember at least some traces of the tower is 1937.

It is not clear how much of this sinister legend troubled Albert Furniss, manager of the Montreal Light Gas Company, who bought the estate in 1845 with some intention of living there. Nor does it seem that Luther Hamilton Holton, John Young, and their partners gave much thought to ghosts when they approached Furniss with the proposal to turn part of the estate into a cemetery. Furniss seems to have been game, and the following spring these gentlemen formed a "proprietary association" that would manage the proposed Trafalgar Mount Cemetery. Montreal was already served by burial grounds, including the extensive Catholic St. Antoine cemetery (on what is now Dorchester Square and Place du Canada) and the Protestant Burial Ground off Lagauchetière Street. By 1846, Protestants were starting to find their burial grounds a tad overcrowded and would soon begin searching for a new location outside of town. Holton et al were hoping to jump the gun on this project by establishing Trafalgar Mount. What distinguished these men from the trustees of the Protestant Burial Ground, a clubby group representing the city's main Protestant churches, was that they were Unitarians, members of a new, religiously liberal congregation. Significantly, they were also Odd Fellows. George Matthews, both an Odd Fellow and a Unitarian, helped the cause by getting James Duncan to draw the Trafalgar estate for inclusion on Cane's map, printed just as Trafalgar Mount was underway.

The Trafalgar Mount proprietors were well-versed in the contemporary aesthetic of the "rural cemetery," whereby burials would take place in a natural setting that could also serve as a public park. This view was inspired by Romantic landscape architects such as New York's Andrew Jackson Downing, whose pupil Frederick Law Olmsted would later design Mount Royal Park. The prospectus for Trafalgar Mount, issued in June 1846, lauded the "modern practice of burial on the outskirts of cities" for its "obvious" advantages. Anticipating major landscaping to begin shortly, the proprietors promised visitors "every opportunity of promenading" in what they clearly envisaged as recreational space. Potential clients would also be able to follow "serpentine walks" to burial sites "without profanely treading upon circumjacent graves." The Trafalgar Tower was also happily described as "peering from the summit of the Mount clothed with luxuriant arbors." Clearly, the proprietors saw this obscure structure as an asset to a Romantic landscape, rather than a macabre blot on the cemetery's potential appeal. The prospectus refers to the two buildings shown in Duncan's drawing, stating that one would serve as the resident superintendent's house, while the other would be converted into a chapel and vault. The superintendent would be "in constant attendance" to "ensure order and decorum" and "preserve the grounds from violation." This last represents a rare dark note within the proprietors' enthusiastic language, reflecting the widespread concern for the dangers inherent in secluded places. But properly maintained, the new cemetery would be "a source of attraction, usefulness and celebrity" to the city of Montreal.

The man appointed to the position of superintendent was the 27-year-old Fredrick Barnard Matthews, selected more for his bookkeeping skills than for his almost non-existent experience managing estates. While the proprietors began setting rates for burial lots and establishing transport services for mourners to and from town, Matthews settled into an idyllic existence in Trafalgar Cottage. After having fruitlessly expended much energy advancing his social ambitions by purchasing a lot on the mountainside and struggling to build a house there, Matthews suddenly found himself occupying one of the mountain's oldest and best situated properties, without much else to do but enjoy it.

It was here that railway supervisor William Casey spotted him when he passed by one day. Casey was apparently so enchanted by the old house and its grounds that he wanted to die there. Suffering from advanced tuberculosis, Casey had been staying at Sword's Hotel in the village of Côte des Neiges to escape the worst of the summer heat, but after seeing the Trafalgar estate he sent his sister, who was caring for him, to ask Matthews if he could spend his last days there. Not having many other distractions, Matthews acceded to this somewhat bizarre request, and soon he and the sister installed Casey in Trafalgar Cottage. Casey died on August 6, and became the first person buried in Trafalgar Mount Cemetery, his grave a shady spot near the path up to the Trafalgar Tower. Matthews called in the new Unitarian minister, John Cordner, to preside over the modest ceremony.

William Casey was also the last person to be buried on this part of the mountain. By the autumn of 1846, the proprietors still faced the task of actually converting Trafalgar Mount into a burial ground, which was no easy prospect given the unevenness of the terrain. The factors that made the Trafalgar estate ideal, according to rural cemetery theory, proved a drawback in practice: sloping ground did allow for good drainage, but it made it hard to bury bodies without installing a system of terracing, and even though the prospectus had boasted

of the site's "natural terraces" this did not mean that bodies could be accommodated as easily as plants. (Mount Royal Cemetery, which the Protestant Burial Ground trustees would open six years later, would go to great pains to address this challenge, with much success.) Besides, Trafalgar Mount was too small: a mere sixteen acres. For a city of Montreal's size, a much larger property was needed to bring any kind of relief to the congested inner-city burial grounds. The project was abandoned. Casey's body was never removed, and presumably lies on the mountainside still, the grave site lost to posterity along with the Tower itself. Curiously, no sinister connection ever seems to have been made between Casey and whatever lay behind the ghostly footsteps.

In 1848, Furniss built himself a sprawling new house on his portion of the original estate, which he called Trafalgar Lodge. This multi-gabled brick structure was one of the first Neo-Gothic buildings in the city; today, it is one of Montreal's oldest extant houses, and sits rather glumly off Côte des Neiges Road, surrounded by Trafalgar Avenue and other more recent subdivisions. Furniss turned Trafalgar Cottage into a shed and stables; this building survived until Côtes des Neiges Road was widened in the 1950s and the bulldozer called in. The adjacent site of Trafalgar Mount Cemetery was eventually purchased by auctioneer Donald Ross, who lived across Côte des Neiges Road from it as of the 1850s, and fancied it would make an appropriate location for the girls' school he hoped to create. Even apart from its sinister past, the site was really too isolated for this sort of institution, and the school bearing the name Trafalgar was built further east on what is now Simpson Street – as readers of "Spem Successus Alit" (*QHN*, Fall 2012) will recall.

Having lost his job and his home, Frederick Barnard Matthews went to live with his brother George, who had built his own house on the Mountain Street lot he had purchased from Frederick. This house was so new it did not appear on Cane's map, but the lithographer had the spot marked with the initials "G. M." so the public would know his intentions. Frederick returned to bookkeeping and accounting, apparently having abandoned his earlier social ambitions. George, by contrast, diversified his business by investing in a profitable glass factory near the village of Cavagnal, along the Ottawa River. In 1864, he started his own factory in the area, the Canada Glass Company, and soon he and his wife, Eliza Hudson, and their younger children left Montreal to relocate in the village, which was eventually named Hudson, after Eliza. The sprawling Mount Victoria Farm would be their home together until George's death in 1870. Years later, the farm would be owned by Sun Life president Thomas Bassett Macaulay, who would breed prizewinning Holstein cattle there.

Robert Mackay continued to publish his *Directories* until his death in 1854, at which point his widow Christina continued the work, in partnership with the printer, John Lovell, whose name is more commonly associated with these volumes. James Cane, who had also inherited a project that brought fame to his name, did not meet with success after completing (at least as far as he was concerned) his work on the *Topographical and Pictorial Map of the City of Montreal*. John Ostell, who stepped away from the project, went on to even greater achievements in surveying, architecture, and industry, but Cane's career dried up. Aside from a few bits of surveying work in the late 1840s, there is no record of his activities. The author of Montreal's first comprehensive urban development plan disappeared off the map.

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*Top: Alexander Henderson, "Trafalgar," c.1872.*
*Photo: McCord Museum, MP-1984.107.62.*



*Bottom: George Matthews, 1860.*
*Photo: courtesy of Hudson Historical Society.*

# Mystery Object

This object came from a dig at an old fur trade area. QAHN vice-president Jim Caputo writes, "Honestly, you might as well give up. You could guess until the cows came home." If you do know, send your answer to: editor@qahn.org.

Blanchard Ad


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*- Henry James*

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Curator's Handbook

# Handle with Care

## Pointers for working mindfully in heritage collections

## by Heather Darch

The sound of tearing picture canvas is never soothing to a curator's ear. And the volunteer who peered *through* the canvas was not a sight I'd ever hoped to see. But there it was. A careless move made in haste had left a nail in the forehead of a serenely smiling nineteenth-century politician and, yes, the wound was significant.

Moving objects around storage areas and elsewhere in a museum setting is serious business. Volunteers and staff who help to set up exhibits and who are tasked with the day-to-day handling of artefacts play an important role in their protection and care. It pays to keep conservation in mind at all times and to make a habit of a few basic practices.

For starters, handle artefacts as little as possible, only when necessary and then, only with a defined and clear purpose. Always examine an object before touching it, keeping an eye out for loose, moving and removable parts. And pay special attention to hairline cracks, lids, handles and decorative accessories, which are particularly hazardous. Ceramic and glass objects are most often damaged simply by dropping them.

Never lift an object in your collection by the rim or handles. Use both hands to support the object uniformly. An item may appear stable to the naked eye, but many objects have received repairs in the past and these areas are never as strong as the original.

Be aware of the impact your activity can have on the artefact. Your clothing should be free of buttons and belts and avoid wearing bracelets, rings, and watches that could scratch, snag or tear fragile materials.

Don't chew gum when handling an artefact, don't hang costumes on wire hangers, and don't fold textiles. Don't leave objects on the floor: you might remember they are there but don't assume someone else will see them. Never lean or sit on artefacts or use them to write on, and don't place anything on them like a cup of coffee that could pose a risk.

Moving an irreplaceable object becomes more complicated when the object is surrounded by other fragile objects on a shelf, or in a cabinet or display case. Avoid carrying dissimilar materials together, like metal and glass. Some items can even be designated as "no move" objects. Keep a record of recommendations for certain objects in the event the object needs to be relocated quickly.

Assess the complexity of the move and consider the object's size, weight and weaknesses. Remind yourself and others not to rush, identify your route to its destination, and determine the tools and adequate materials you will need ahead of time, such as padded carrying trays and a trolley cart. Make sure you have the assistance you need from others; an object may be heavy and should never be dragged.

As for wearing gloves – cotton gloves should always be worn when handling metals, organic materials, delicate textiles, unglazed pottery, marble and other porous materials. These surfaces are highly susceptible to deterioration caused by the oily and acidic secretions on our skin. Latex gloves are the preferred choice for objects with unstable surfaces like brittle pages in books or smooth surfaces such as glass and glazed ceramics. Generally, though, clean hands are the way to go.

When we enter a collection we introduce risk to the objects. The goal in every museum, regardless of its size, is to have practices that promote safe, secure and successful interactions with objects. The opportunity to touch any of the unique and irreplaceable artefacts in a collection really is a privilege that carries with it considerable responsibility.

With careful habits you will be better equipped to have a successful experience working with the objects in your collection.

*Careful moving and handling of this plaster cast sculpture in museum storage would have ensured that Sir John A. Macdonald kept his head.*

***Heather Darch** is curator of the Missisquoi Museum, a past director of the Quebec Anglophone Heritage Network, and a heritage consultant whose recent assignments have included co-managing QAHN's Security for Heritage Initiative (SHOWI), and now the FOREVER project.*



*J. D. Perry, Plaster cast sculpture of Sir John A. Macdonald, 1874. Missisquoi Museum Collections. Photo: Heather Darch.*

# Genealogy, You Say?

## The preacher and his young parishioner

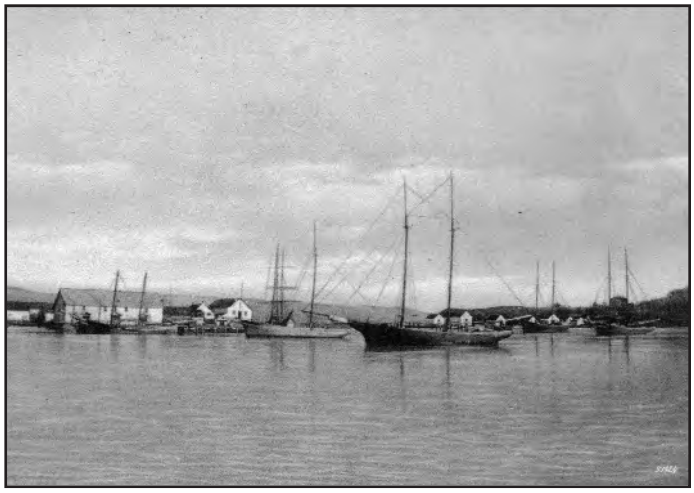
## by Jim Caputo

Many people imagine the study of genealogy to be a dry, boring enterprise full of dates, names, and useless information – the task of someone who has nothing else to take up their time and efforts. Not so – it can be a delightful quest, full of stories of intrigue, mishaps, and skullduggery and, in this case, a love story.

For many years, I have been conducting research on my mother's family, the Boyles, early pioneers of Gaspé Basin, Quebec. The Boyle family came to Gaspé in 1798, from – well, no one knows for sure. Quite a few researches indicate that they originally came from Scotland, with perhaps a stopover in the Boston area of Massachusetts. What we do know for certain is that, once in Gaspé, the family became involved in the whaling industry, the first Gaspé family to do so. They may have learned the trade from a member of the Coffin family from Nantucket Island, Massachusetts, a major New England whaling centre. ("They be whalers…" but this is another delightful tale to tell – forgive the pun.)

So, what of the preacher and the young parishioner? William Arnold was the second permanent Anglican minister of what is now Gaspé City proper – at the time a small outpost of settlers, many of European stock or United Empire Loyalists from the former British colonies to the south. William Arnold had been previously married to Maria Charlotte O'Hara, a member of a prominent Gaspé family. The O'Haras were considered Gaspé aristocracy, since Felix O'Hara was a government functionary, land surveyor, entrepreneur and a major land holder in this area. Unfortunately, Arnold's wife died, leaving him with four daughters to take care of. One of Arnold's parishioners was young Ellen Boyle of what was known then as Gaspé Bay South, Lower Canada – present-day Wakeham of the City of Gaspé. The two eventually married, much to the chagrin of the O'Haras, who thought that young Ellen was not of the same social class. The age difference – William was 37 to her 19 – may have also been an issue. One would like to think that they fell in love, married and lived happily ever after, but this was not the case. Arnold was the spiritual leader of a large area and spent large amounts of time away from home, often in inclement weather, travelling on horseback, tending to the needs of his flock. Returning home from one such occasion, he became ill with pneumonia and passed away shortly after, at the age of 53.

Arnold left his young wife in charge of the children and their large stone house, Spring Grove, situated on a bluff overlooking the harbor. Not being a person of means and having the expense of a large property, home and children, Ellen had to sell parcels of land, and eventually her home, to survive. Ellen's life at this point became somewhat of a mystery. Indications are that she lived for a time in Gaspé, perhaps with her family in Wakeham. She then moved to Quebec City in 1863 and possibly lived with one of her stepdaughters. She was joined there in 1864 by her daughter Edith B. Arnold.



After Quebec City, the trail then goes cold – for a while. Recently, I found a cemetery record indicating that Ellen died in the Albany area of New York and was buried in a very historic cemetery near the city. I know this information is correct, as the document includes the name of Edith Mills, her daughter with Rev. Arnold. Of interest, Edith married Frederick Mills, an organist at a Quebec City Anglican Church. I would suggest that she probably met him when she and her mother lived with the O'Hara stepdaughter. Also of interest is that Edith spent her last days living in Portland, Oregon, where she authored her "Reminiscences of Gaspé," the recollections of a young woman growing up in Gaspé of yesteryear, an excellent historical source as well a very nice read.

I hope that this story indicates that genealogical information does not have to be boring, as it can portray the life and times of a pioneer ancestor and her adventures in life.

If this discourse has generated interest among our readers, I suggest that you may wish to tell your own stories in future issues of *Quebec Heritage News*. I would also suggest that our readers check out "Genealogy Ensemble," which is a collaborative blog and Facebook page about family history, whose goals are for readers to share their experiences doing family history research and to help others with their research: http://genealogyensemble.com. Another valuable resource is noted Quebec genealogist Mr. Jacques Gagne, who will guide you on how you should conduct your family lineage searches: gagne.jacques@sympa- tico.ca.

Genealogy, you say? It can be interesting!

***Jim Caputo*** *is the vice-president of QAHN, president of Heritage Gaspé, and a board member of the Vankleek Hill and District Historical Society and the Maison Macdonnell-Williamson House Historic Site.*

*The Inner Harbour, Gaspé: Ellen Boyle's view from Spring Grove. Photo: courtesy of Jim Caputo.*

OVERLOOKED QUEBEC CHURCHES

# Windows of the Past

## Trenholm United Church

## by Mark W. Gallop

On a sunny Sunday in August, we made a pilgrimage from Quebec, Ontario, New Brunswick and New England to honour the efforts of our ancestors and to celebrate the dynamic community that continues their legacy. The occasion was the 175th anniversary of the United Church in the hamlet of Trenholm (formerly Trenholmville) in the St. Francis River Valley, not far from Richmond.

The church was a community effort from its start. On April 12, 1839, the Trenholm family donated one acre of land, which was accepted on behalf of the Wesleyan Methodist Society. William Trenholm had arrived in the area in 1819 from Yorkshire with one son, and the remainder of his family had followed the next year. He was a school teacher and surveyor who died in 1826 when a tree fell on his tent in the night while he was surveying on Melbourne Ridge, but his local legacy carried on through his widow, Ann, four sons and a daughter.

The Armatage family immigrated in 1839, also from Yorkshire, bringing their trade of brick making to the community. The bricks for the church were supplied by the Armatage brickyard across the road from the acre of land donated by the Trenholms. Armatage bricks were also used in many local buildings, including a school, several mills (grist, saw and woollen) and homes.

The Armatage bricks of 1840 have stood the test of time, with the continual care of the faithful. In 1869, a vestry was added to the back of the church and is still being used for meetings, after service "cookie hours," and pot luck suppers. In 1926, this former Methodist chapel became part of the United Church of Canada. The building itself appears to be in excellent shape, well cared for with a fresh and clean interior. Services continue monthly, except in the depth of the winter.

The 175th anniversary celebration started with an 11 a.m. church service led by the Rev. Reg Jennings of the United Church, who is responsible for the pastoral care of churches in Ulverton, South Durham and Trenholm. The service was followed by a corn roast, a hamburger and hotdog barbeque and a magnificent spread of desserts ("bring your own lawn chair").

Tucked behind the church is a building that would be unlikely to attract the attention of anyone other than historians and architects. It is the horse shed, built to shelter the horses during church services. It dates from about 1849 and the survival of such a building in its original form and context is rare. (Another similar surviving church stable is the open L-shaped structure dating from about 1845, behind the Odelltown United Church near Lacolle.)

The horse shed became a centre of activity during the anniversary celebrations as the result of the work of a local committee which encouraged others to lend artefacts, photos and stories for a large display, bringing the history of Trenholm, its church and its residents to life. Photos, maps, newspaper clippings and other ephemera were artfully displayed in old window frames, with the theme "Windows of the Past."

The last hymn of the church service summed up the event and the community: "How firm a foundation."

*Trenholm United Church, exterior and interior. Photos: Mark Gallop.*

***Mark Gallop** spent three decades in the investment and financial services sector, and now devotes his time to historical research and writing. He is a Trustee of the Mount Royal Cemetery and a past president of the Atwater Library.*

WALKING BLACK MONTREAL

# Railways in Montreal

by Ashlie Bienvenu

The high-pitched whistles and the sounds of metal upon metal could be heard from every corner of Montreal's industrial South-West. In St. Henri, Little Burgundy, Point St. Charles, and Griffintown, transportation infrastructure played a key role in defining the character of the area. One portion of Montreal's infrastructure, the Grand Trunk and Canadian Pacific railways, was a direct cause of the emergence of the predominantly English-speaking Black community that came to characterize Little Burgundy.

As early as the 1880s, many Black immigrants, coming from the United States, did not have many job opportunities in Montreal due to overt discrimination. One job opportunity they did have, however, was as railway porters. Black employees were not allowed to become waiters or to attain any other position above porter. The porters did not even get a salary at first, relying solely on their tips. It was tough. Unable to get employment elsewhere, they stuck close to the St. Antoine district. Sometimes called St. Henri or St. Cunegogne, the area, later known as Little Burgundy, became the heart of the English-speaking Black community simply due to its proximity to the railway tracks. The strong railroad connection lasted for over 60 years in that neighborhood.

Railway porters were put in charge of making beds in their cars, cleaning shoes that were left out, and cleaning their respective rail cars. They were always supposed to present themselves as spotless and trustworthy, so that passengers could feel comfortable leaving their valuables and children under their care when in the dining car. Their work was laden with racialized expectations and behaviours. They could not defend themselves against demeaning insults, accusations or slurs from the public or from their bosses.

Black porters were a hardy breed. They were required to work hundreds of hours a month or go thousands of miles before they were given their pay, which amounted to much less than the white men's salary. They would also have to endure tough conditions while on long trips, working for five or more days with only three hours of sleep allowed each day, with layovers of two days.

The men wanted something better. Starting in the late 1880s, they established unions, such as the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters and the Order of Sleeping Car Porters. These were segregated labour collectives because they were unable to join the company-sanctioned unions. Nonetheless, the men who joined agitated to improve the working conditions and to get bargaining recognition. They eventually did bring about labour change in the city. Railway unions became the first in Canada to desegregate.

These unions also had an impact on other social activist organizations in Montreal. One of these organizations was the Union United Church, which started in 1907 as a church for the porters and their families. Therefore, the very make-up of the Church came to be to give support for the families of the porters who were left on their own for days at a time. In fact, after the First World War, "the congregation stabilized and grew. Union Church became a catalyst for social action and a resource for a host of new organizations growing out of Union."

The railways have had a great impact on the landscape as well as the history of social activism within Montreal's Black community. They have shaped the character of Little Burgundy due to its close proximity to the rail lines that run parallel to the Lachine Canal. Railways have also shaped the nature of unions and social activist groups within the community, such as Union United Church and unions for employment rights.

***Ashlie Bienvenu**, a student in public history and anthropology at Concordia University, interned for QAHN in 2014-2015, in collaboration with Montreal's Black Community Resource Centre.*

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*Railway line near the Lachine Canal. Photo: Ashlie Bienvenu.*

# The Engineers of 1812

## *A first-person account*

## by Jean-Pierre Raymond

*This is a first-person account of the career of Ralph-Henry Bruyères, as recounted at a conference in New Orleans by the retired professional engineer Jean-Pierre Raymond, in his uniform of a Royal Engineer of 1812.*

I am Colonel Ralph-Henry Bruyères, chief engineer of Upper and Lower Canada during the War of 1812. Since I was born in Montreal, in 1765, I am the first Montreal-born engineer.

My father is John Bruyères, a British officer who fought in America during the Seven Years' War. At the capitulation of Montreal in 1760, since he spoke French, he was appointed secretary to the governor of Trois Rivières, Ralph Burton, who is my godfather, and his wife, my aunt Marguerite Bruyères. In Montreal, my father met my mother, Catherine-Élisabeth Pommereau de Montesson et de Croisillon, co-seigneuresse of Bécancour. She would show my father that you can be quite comfortable in Canada during the winter if you use properly what engineers call a bi-energy central heating system – that is, you have to be two in the same bed to have it work. Consequently, I was born in October. If you do your calculations, you will see that it works.

Because my father was Protestant, I was accepted at the Royal Military Academy of Woolwich in London, where I received training as an engineer. When I got back to Montreal in 1790, I married a nice lady, also born in Montreal, Janet Dunbar. Her father is Captain William Dunbar of the British infantry and her mother is Thérèse-Josephte Fleury de la Gorgandière Deschambault, another nice French-Canadian noble lady. Consequently, we are both bridges between nations, which is appropriate for an engineer.

My wife's mother's aunt is Jeanne-Charlotte Fleury de la Gorgandière Deschambault. In 1746, she married Pierre de Rigaud, Marquis de Vaudreuil de Cavagnial, then the governor of Louisiana and later the first governor general of New France born in Canada. He was a cousin of the first Quebec-born engineer, Michel Chartier de Lotbinière, who built Fort Carillon, now known as Fort Ticonderoga, where he would help Montcalm win a brilliant victory. De

Lotbinière married Louise-Magdeleine Chaussegros de Léry, daughter of the chief engineer of New France, Colonel Gaspard-Joseph Chaussegros de Léry, who built the fortifications of Quebec that I would later improve by adding the Martello towers on the Abraham Heights. This kind of fortification had been proposed by Lotbinière in 1759 but were refused by Montcalm – to his great misfortune.

Chaussegros de Léry also built Fort Niagara, which I inspected in 1790 before we ceded the fort to the Americans. Years later, in 1813, when I learned that we had taken it back from the Americans by surprise, I rushed to Niagara from Quebec in spite of my bad health. I then began to direct the construction of Fort Mississauga, but my worsening health forced me to return to Quebec. I would still have enough time in Quebec to write my report before dying in the arms of my wife. Duty to the king first, and then to my wife. I know, it sounds terrible, but in time of war there are even worse ways to die.

When he returned to Quebec, Chaussegros de Léry married Marie-Louise Martel de Brouage. This couple would meet King George III, and so were the first Canadians who voluntarily became "Quebecers." On that occasion, seeing Marie-Louise, the king would declare that "if all the ladies of Canada are as handsome as you are, I have indeed made a nice conquest." The couple would have 18 children (it is very cold in Quebec!), five of whom were officers in 1812.

In 1793, I was transferred to Flanders with the Duke of York's army to fight the French republican army, whose chief engineer was François-Joseph Chaussegros de Léry, born in Quebec in 1754. To my knowledge, this was the first playoff series between Quebec and Montreal. On one side you had the Canadian of Quebec and facing him you had me, the Quebecker of Montreal. If you are mixed up with your identity, it is normal; we have forgotten that the Canadian identity is French while the Quebecker identity is British.

François-Joseph had been refused an education at the Royal Military Academy of Woolwich because he was Catholic, which greatly upset our Governor Guy Carleton, who wanted him on our side – an act of reasonable accommodation. Instead, four Chaussegros de Léry brothers ended up in France and learned engineering in a program much more stringent than the British one. At the beginning of the French Revolution,



*Col. Ralph-Henry Bruyère (J.-P. Raymond) and Janet Dunbar, Mrs. Bruyère (Andrée Aubut) in Queenston Heights, 2012. Photo: an obliging tourist.*

two brothers remained faithful to the monarchy and followed the king's brothers into the Prussian army. I call them sovereignists. The other two joined the Republican army, Alexandre-André-Victor serving as aide-de-camp to his brother François-Joseph before being appointed chief engineer of Guadeloupe.

After the royalists' defeat at Valmy, Gaspard-Roch-George Chaussegros de Léry accepted the offer of the Polish princess Czetwertynska to educate her two daughters. To my knowledge, they are the first two women to receive engineering training. One of the two, Maria Antonovna Naryshkina Svyatopolk-Czetwertynskaya, would become the mistress of the future tsar of Russia, Alexander I. She was trained to take citadels. And that was how a Canadian engineer came to be the preceptor of the tsar's son.

Gaspard-Roch-George was in St. Petersburg in 1812 when the Grande Armée invaded Russia. His older brother François-Joseph, who had covered himself in glory through seventy military campaigns under Napoléon Bonaparte (he was no longer a republican but a Baron of the Empire), was now division general and chief engineer of the Grande Armée. A second confrontation between the two brothers ensued. This time, the French suffered a terrible defeat, but François-Joseph saved the French army at the Battle of Berezina. In 1814, he was promoted chief engineer of France. In that year, Napoléon was sent to Elba to take a rest, although Louis XVIII kept François-Joseph on as chief engineer – with the title of Viscount, not Baron, of the Empire. The following year, Napoléon returned, but kept François-Joseph on, assigning him the task of building fortifications for Paris and Lyon. (Those of Lyon are still used today, as the command post for the nuclear strike force of France – with some engineering improvement, mostly electronic.) Alas, to no avail. As François-Joseph wrote in his final report, "the emperor has rendered useless all my work by precipitating his army in front of my defences to have it destroyed in one shot at Waterloo." François-Joseph then returned to the service of Louis XVIII, who showed no resentment. The engineer even managed to have his brother in Russia, Gaspard-Roch-George, awarded the Croix-de-St-Louis for services rendered to the French monarchy – basically for having fought him twice. Nice family spirit between Canadians!

The other royalist brother, Louis-René Chaussegros de Léry, was exiled to Britain after Valmy, and from there moved back to Canada to replace his father as land owner. When war was declared in 1812, he was one of the most experienced officers in North America. This time, he was not rejected because he was Catholic. He served as a colonel in the British army and was later joined by his young brother Charles-Étienne.

Charles-Étienne Chaussegros de Léry, unlike his four brothers, was neither a career military man nor an engineer, but a lawyer, and never left Quebec. He married Josephte Fraser, the daughter of Judge John Fraser of the King's Bench who had served as an officer of the 78th Foot Fraser Highlander Regiment during the sieges of Louisbourg and Quebec. Josephte's mother was Marie-Claire Fleury de la Gorgandière Deschambault, the sister of my mother-in-law. Charles-Étienne would serve as deputy adjutant quartermaster general and later as adjutant general with the rank of lieutenant colonel. (An adjutant general is responsible for the provost, or military police, and for human resources.)

For my part, I was defending Holland in 1799, and in 1802, I was transferred to Canada where I surveyed all the defences of Upper Canada with General Isaac Brook. I wrote a report about the inadequacy of the fortifications and suggested some work to correct the situation, but my report was shelved for lack of funds. I was then transferred to Quebec to become the chief engineer of the two Canadas. In 1806, Governor James Craig ordered me to construct the Martello towers on the Abraham Heights – before we got approval from Parliament in London. When they found out, he was recalled and replaced by General Provost.

My Martello towers were almost like the more than 200 others built around the world, the main difference being that I added a roof over the gun platform at the top of the tower. This way, it avoided the defect of Chaussegros de Léry fortifications, that the water infiltrates into the masonry and with freezing and melting creates vertical potholes ten feet in diameter. Since it was impossible to shoot guns with the roof in place, it was designed to be removed – and put back, if we won. If we lost, our guns on the ramparts could destroy the towers, which were much thinner on the back than on the

*Top: "François-Joseph Chaussegros de Léry, 1754-1824." Benjamin Sulte, Histoire des Canadiens-Français, 1608-1880, Montreal, 1882-84.*

*Bottom: Salvatore Tonci, "Maria Antonovna Naryshkina." vivatfomenko.narod.ru.*
*Right: "Martello Tower, Quebec, 1898." Photo: McCord Museum, MP-1977.76.67.*

front.

In this project, I was assisted by James Thompson, the overseer of masonry work in the engineering department who had previously served as a sergeant in the grenadier company of the 78th Foot Fraser Highlander Regiment with the promise by his recruiting officer to have an officer's commission as soon as an opportunity presented itself. Unfortunately, his recruiting officer had been killed right next to him in the landing boat assaulting the beach of Louisbourg. Thompson became a good friend of General Wolfe, who also promised him a commission – only to be killed in the siege of Quebec. After the Montreal capitulation, Thompson was still without commission and so not entitled to half-pay when his regiment disbanded. He offered to work for the engineering department in Quebec, and was involved in the reconstruction of the devastated city.

Thompson told us of his many adventures. In November 1759, he was required to cross the St. Lawrence River to fetch the company pay. Trying to get in the boat, he missed his step and fell in the water, wearing a kilt. Two strong Canadians pulled him out, and a Canadian lady, seeing his bare legs, moved next to him in the canoe and covered them with her skirt. He swore that, when they reached the other side and she stood up, his legs were steaming as if coming out of boiling water. This story proves again how warm a Canadian lady can be.

Thompson began his engineering work five years before my birth. He fought the American invasion of 1775-1776 and was with the group of soldiers that killed General Montgomery. He buried the general along the Quebec ramparts and later buried his French-Canadian wife next to him because she was refused in the Catholic cemetery. In 1822, when the Canadian government agreed to return the general's body to the United States, they had to ask Thompson where it was. Thompson replied that Montgomery rested beside his wife.

I met Thompson as a young engineer and he initiated me into the secrets of the Quebec fortifications,


knowledge that I would apply as chief engineer. At my death in 1814, he was still working for the engineering department and took care of my funeral. After 65 years of faithful service to the king, he would finally retire in 1825, at the venerable age of 92, and died five years later.

I finished building the Martello towers just in time to be ready for the war of 1812. I then rushed west to improve Canada's defenses; this time, budget was not a concern. I supervised the fortification of Coteau-du-Lac and Prescott (Fort Wellington), and then stopped in Kingston, where the shipyard was not defended; I built Fort Frederick, today the site of the Royal Military College of Canada. I proposed attacking the American shipyard of Sackets Harbour to delay their ship construction. In the beginning of 1813, I moved west again to reach the Niagara peninsula, which I knew needed some defensive work. My first priority was to prepare a new defensive position behind Fort George, which was dominated by Fort Niagara, so well located by Chaussegros de Léry. The key element of that defensive position was Fort Mississauga and the Colour Corps was used in that construction. The Colour Corps was made up of about fifty free men of colour led by Richard Pierpoint, who fought alongside his owner who freed him for that. They had fought eagerly during the battle of Queenston Heights and were ready to avoid being "liberated" by the Americans. It was while working on this project that I started to see my health decline.

After my death, the war would continue for several more months. In September 1814, General Provost would attack Plattsburgh with the support of a small squadron of the Royal Navy, but they would be stopped cold by two American engineers and the American squadron of the United States Navy on Lake Champlain. The American forces were under the command of Brigadier General Alexander Macomb, who received engineering training in France, assisted by Major Joseph Guilbert Totten, one of the first engineers to graduate from the United States Military Academy at West Point.

*Top: Richard Short, "A View of the Church of Notre Dame de la Victoire," 1761. McCord Museum, M2492.*



*Bottom: William Armstrong, "Fort Mississauga, 1870." LAC, C-010509.*

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# Grosse Île on the Compulsory Provincial Exam

by Leo Delaney

The Jeanie Johnston Educational Foundation is pleased to note that the Quebec Ministry of Education has included Grosse Île in the compulsory exam for this year, 2015. Students must pass this exam to graduate. This achievement ensures that Quebec teachers continue to include Grosse Île in their history teaching.

The Irish Community has talked about Grosse Île for years and years and years, wondering at how the provincial government has failed to recognize the importance of this entry port in the history of Quebec and how the federal government has failed to understand its importance in the history of Quebec and Canada.

Why is it that this historic island through which 4.5 million immigrants passed into Canada and the United States, of which 2.5 million were Irish, was never given proper accreditation?

In the 1970s it was proposed to make the island an amusement park. This dreadful idea was scrapped after 300 Irish societies objected. We have supported Grosse Île strongly as a memorial to the thousands of immigrants who are buried on the island. We were involved in having those 300 briefs submitted to Parks Canada in the 1980s and to the development of the island as a historic tribute to the memory of those buried there.

In 2005, the Jeanie Johnston Educational Foundation financed a two-day visit of prominent historians, both local and international, including the late Marianna O'Gallagher, Ben Walsh (historian, advisor to the British Educational & Communication Agency and to the European History Agency), and Noel Burke (then Assistant Deputy Minister of Education, now Dean of Continuing Education at Concordia University). Unfortunately, Parks Canada was unable to provide staff as guides for this distinguished group.

The Foundation works closely with the Callery family, owners of the Famine Museum in Roscommon, Ireland. This Irish family, who understand the importance of the Grosse Île site, contributed generously to the historic value of the Irish immigration by financing a memorial cross, erected in Quebec City.

The recognition, at last, of the importance of Grosse Île by both Quebec and the federal government is one of the greatest steps in the history of the Irish in Canada. The Irish community can now bring together all the projects regarding the history of immigration and the influence that the Irish brought to Canada, the Montreal Black Stone project as well as Grosse Île. Funding can take a more substantive direction, garnering a greater national and international interest. Now that finally both governments have woken up, it is time the Irish community focused on the tremendous educational value that this offers. Imagine a research centre on Grosse Île that tourists could access to investigate their family histories; it would increase the number of visitors to Quebec.

*D. A. McLaughlin, "Quarantine Station Building, Grosse Île."*
*Photo: LAC, MIKAN 3623686.*

The federal government has pledged $5,000,000 to help restore the buildings on the site and to address the potential tourism benefits. This, coupled with the educational initiative of the provincial government, presents an unprecedented opportunity for the Irish community and its supporters.

In 2008, the Jeanie Johnston Educational Foundation worked with the Ancient Order of Hibernians in their tremendous efforts to bring American visitors to Grosse Île. Unfortunately, due to a downturn in the economy, this was not the hoped-for success, and the Hibernians suffered a large financial loss. Now, however, things seem to be turning around. The combined efforts of the Jeanie Johnston Foundation, LEARN, Heritage Grosse Île and the Ancient Order of Hibernians have succeeded in their quest for recognition of the role of this site in the history curriculum.

The education that students acquire will influence the future of this country.

***Leo Delaney** is chair of the Jeanie Johnston Educational Foundation.*

# Salamis of Samos

## *A Laurentian family*

by Joseph Graham

Montreal's Griffintown was a tough place in the 1930s and 40s.

Back in 1908, the Sperdakos brothers started projecting films onto the wall of their ice cream and tobacco shop on Notre Dame Street, hoping to draw in passersby. When they saw how many clients came in to see the projections, they built a nickelodeon, an early cinema whose name came from a combination of the price of entry and the Greek word for a theatre housed under a roof. By the end of that first year they had expanded it to 750 seats and named it the Fairyland Theatre. As the city grew, though, the character of the neighbourhood began to change and the name of the theatre evoked a bygone era. During the Depression things got really tight, but the upside for the Sperdakos family was that they could hire competent people for very little money.

Their bookkeeper, another Greek, was an engineer. Basil Salamis couldn't find much work in his own field during the Depression and so he took on whatever job he could find. He had left home at 17 in 1910, headed for the United States from Samos, a Greek island off the coast of Turkey south of Izmir. Once the home of Pythagoras, Aristarchus and Theodorus of Greek antiquity, Samos was hard-pressed economically by the meltdown of the 500-year-old Ottoman Empire centred in nearby Constantinople (now Istanbul). But Basil had a sunny disposition and the confidence inspired by the knowledge that the people of Samos had been among the greatest scientists and thinkers in history. Pythagoras was familiar to musicians and mathematicians while Aristarchus had determined, a millennium before Copernicus was born, that the Earth revolved around the sun. Theodorus invented the level, the lathe and the lock. Given the grinding poverty of the island, his future was either South Africa or America. With the flip of a coin, and his grandfather's guitar and blessing, he set off to find a way of supporting his widowed mother and younger sister and brother, confident that, as a Samiot, he could deal with whatever came his way.

Sick with typhoid fever, Basil found himself quarantined when he arrived in Wheeling, West Virginia. He didn't know a soul and his natural optimism was put to the test. This new world, with its foreign language, was very demanding for him. Even his familiar name, Vasili, too unusual for the locals, became Basil for simplicity. Still, he pursued his goal, sending what money he could spare home to his mother as he worked in restaurants and hotels in Cleveland, Chicago and Minneapolis. Four years later, he saw an opportunity with the beginning of the Great War and headed for Canada to fight for the British. Refused by the military, Basil worked his way from Winnipeg to Vancouver where, at 21, he wrote the entrance exams and was accepted at McGill University in Montreal.

His life changed in Montreal. He became the first Greek to graduate in engineering at McGill and he went to work for General Electric for a number of years. It was during this time that he encouraged his younger brother, Nicholas, to come to Montreal. Nicholas became the most sought-after bookkeeper for many among the 500 Greek businesses.

Basil met Pota Kalfas and her father George, a Greek distillery owner. Basil began working for the distillery and soon married Pota. By 1927, they had a daughter, Marika. In 1932, Nicholas returned to Greece, having discovered he had a vocation for the priesthood. He came back to Toronto and served as a Greek Orthodox priest there, working for the community during the difficult war years. At the end of the war he transferred to Montreal, where he served as the religious foundation of the community for the balance of his career.

The Kalfas distillery was not fated to survive the Great Depression and soon Basil was looking for work to provide for his family. That was how he came to be the bookkeeper for the Sperdakos family at the Fairyland Theatre in Griffintown. His sunny disposition could not hide the state of the books from the Sperdakos family, though, and one fateful day in 1933, after a meeting that can only be imagined, the Sperdakos family solved one of their financial problems by simply turning the keys and ownership of the theatre over to him. That was the same year Basil's son Constantine was born

By early 1934, the sun was beginning to rise from behind the clouds of the Depression. Belgium's Baron Louis-Jean Empain, the son of Edouard-Louis-Joseph Empain and heir to half of the family fortune, had decided to smile upon Canada. His father had founded the Empain Bank and was obsessed with public transport. He had built train tracks across France, Belgium and Holland. He experimented with electric trams, supplying a long list of cities with

*"Fairyland Theatre, Notre Dame Street, Montreal," 1915. Photo: McCord Museum, MP-0000.2327.403.5.*

their first public transit systems. He built the Paris metro, the Cairo transit system and a railway through China. He built a railway in the Belgian Congo and was involved in hydroelectric projects and many other industrial developments. His great accomplishments, particularly in the Congo, led King Leopold II of Belgium to recognize him with the title of Baron in 1907. When he passed away in 1929, he left an estate estimated to be worth six billion French francs to his two sons. Clearly the Empains had as much self-confidence as a Samiot like Basil, even if Belgium could not boast of scholarly breakthroughs from antiquity.

Young Baron Louis-Jean Empain established himself in Canada in 1934. He proved to be not only the financial salvation of the Sulpicians and of the University of Montreal, but he also conceived and built a Laurentian vacation resort in Sainte-Marguerite-du-lac-Masson, calling it the Domaine d'Estérel.

The positive, sunny disposition that drove Basil's life and outlook made it inevitable that his and the baron's paths would cross.

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It was in Basil Salamis's nature to make things work. Having taken over the Fairyland Theatre in Griffintown in the depths of the Depression, he had to make it feed his family. Working together, Basil, his wife, Pota, and the rest of the family made the theatre viable, but the conversations around their kitchen table focused more on academics and sporting events than on the theatre. As Basil's son Constantine (Con) grew up, he wasn't encouraged to join the family business. Basil sorely missed his earlier profession of electrical engineering and wanted his son to follow into the applied sciences. In the meantime, Basil and Pota saw new opportunities for their children, Marika and Con. Baron Jean-Louis Empain had gone to take care of his responsibilities in Brussels and his managers here needed someone to look after their new cinema in his Domaine d'Estérel. When Basil heard about their search, he jumped on the opportunity. It would allow his family to enjoy the Laurentians and, he reasoned, there were sure to be other opportunities with the baron. In the meantime, there were the lakes in summer and skiing in winter. His whole family would benefit while he developed a strong relationship with the young baron.

Greek has two words for time, the familiar chronos, time as it is measured, and the less-known word, kyros, the time at which things happen. Unknown to them all, one of those things that changes everything was just about to happen.

On May 10, 1940, the German army invaded Belgium. The young Baron Empain had moved from the peace of Canada into the vortex of war as the Belgian government called up all available young men. Reporting for duty, he participated in the heroic "Campaign of 18 Days," a series of battles that slowed the German advance, giving the surprised Allied troops precious extra time to evacuate Dunkirk. The baron was captured and taken prisoner by the Germans. The war came into everyone's lives and the dream of the opportunities Basil would have working with the baron became clouded and distant. The family still had responsibility for both cinemas, but they would have to wait for the end of the war to learn the fate of the baron.

The Canadian government reacted very poorly to the situation, sequestering Baron Empain's Canadian holdings because of his status as a prisoner and subsequently as a citizen of an occupied country. Empain had married a Montrealer and was committed to his new country. He had been approached to effectively bail out the Sulpicians, who had over-extended themselves trying to establish the University of Montreal and who needed to liquidate their Lake of Two Mountains holdings. He obliged by buying the extensive property, hoping to encourage Belgian emigration to it. Somehow, the Canadian government saw only the benefits of grabbing and sequestering his property and assets as though he, himself, had become an enemy. Not surprisingly, he never forgave the Canadian government and ultimately abandoned his projects in Canada, but Basil, loyal to the project the baron had created, maintained the Laurentian theatre for many years, affording his family some escape from the city. Pota loved the Laurentians and they maintained a year-round vacation residence close to Lac Masson. They were one of the first Greek families to take up skiing in the thirties.

Later, in high school in Montreal, Con worked occasionally at the Fairyland candy counter making popcorn and serving customers. He recalls how rough the crowds were and how they hired Marcel "Rocky" Brisebois to act as a bouncer. Rocky was one of those Griffintown French Canadians who was so tough he was adopted by the local Irish gangs. Even his English had an Irish lilt. About five years older than Con, his career as welterweight boxing champion had not yet begun though he was still a teenager when boxing took him away from the theatre.

In the early hours of October 28, 1940, five months after the collapse and surrender of Belgium, the Italian ambassador rudely awoke Greek Prime Minister Ioannis Metaxas and demanded strategic access to Greek soil and some ports. Metaxas, a dictator who had modelled his government on Benito Mussolini's Italian regime, knew Greece was at a crossroads. To maintain his authority, he was dependent upon the Greek king (George II) as well as the military, both of whom were favourable to the British-French alliance. Acceding to the ultimatum on that early morning in October would have made Greece a part of the Axis and his government would have become a puppet of Mussolini. He is purported to have answered the Italian ambassador with the French words "Alors, c'est la guerre," but his official response was "Ohi!" (Greek for "No!" – reminiscent of more recent events in Greece, opposing the intensive austerity of the European Community.) Metaxas' statement also served as a battle cry and, within hours, the Italians invaded

*"Hotel de la Pointe Bleue, Domaine d'Estérel, 1937."*
*Photo: BANQ, E57, S44, SS1, PY-1287.*

through Albania.

At home, the Salamis family read and listened to the news as the poorly equipped and outnumbered Hellenic army pushed the Italians 60 kilometres back into Axis territory in Albania. Metaxas was a dictator who had a reputation for ruthlessness inside Greece and had taken complete control of the media, burning and prohibiting books – including Plato's Republic. Even so, Greeks everywhere, including Basil and his family, were proud of the repulsion of the Axis forces that winter, and when Metaxas died suddenly in late January of 1941 the defensive line the Hellenic Army had established was named in his honour. A week before what would have been the prime minister's 70th birthday, in early April, the powerful German army broke through the Metaxas Line and another Axis power, the Bulgarians, also crossed into Greece as occupiers.

Once the German, Italian and Bulgarian occupation was complete, Greek resistance kept their occupiers busy, while Greek nationals elsewhere helped any way they could. From the moment of the invasion, all food had been requisitioned for the occupation forces and death was the penalty for anyone hiding supplies. It wasn't until 1942 that the British accepted to lift their Mediterranean blockade, allowing neutral Swedish and Turkish ships through with aid. Not able to stand idly by, Basil, together with four other Greek Canadians, co-founded the Greek War Relief Fund in Canada, eventually succeeding in sending Canadian wheat on neutral Swedish ships through the British blockade. Forty thousand people died in the German-occupied greater Athens area alone and the country was pillaged, leaving Greece impoverished and split among occupiers as well as among contending resistance groups. By the end of the war, fully a third of the country was dependent upon aid.

From the beginning of the war, Pota also worked diligently for Greece, becoming president of the Greek section of the Canadian Red Cross. After the war, some 100,000 Greeks immigrated to Canada. Both she and her father, George Kalfas, dedicated themselves to helping Greek immigrants establish themselves in Canada. Even her daughter Marika worked as a volunteer.

At the end of the war, Basil Salamis was honoured by the Greek government, who named him Commander of the Greek Order of the Phoenix. He was also recognized with the highest decoration from the Hellenic Red Cross Society, the Golden Cross with Laurels.

During the war, Basil's mother and his sister, who remained in Greece, experienced serious deprivation and one can only imagine the concerns Greek Canadians would have had for family members in the occupied country. The population of Greece, just one of the many countries destroyed by the war, declined by three million people.

Well after the war had ended, Basil's whole family remained involved with and concerned for Greece and the Greek immigrants who had found their way to Canada. It was well after the war, too, that the young Con, a graduate in engineering from McGill, met Katherine Schoolarinos, daughter of a family that had immigrated to Canada from Sparta, Greece, in 1912.

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After the war, the Salamis family maintained their presence in the Laurentians. It had become, as it has for so many of us, an important, even central, part of their lives. Basil Salamis undertook to investigate the mineral potential of the lower Laurentians. Titanium, named for the Titans of Greek mythology, was present in the area between Ivry and Saint-Hippolyte. Viscount Ogier d'Ivry had tried to mine it before the Great War, but it wasn't economically viable because the techniques to separate it from its ore had not yet been developed. After World War II, though, the Soviets were said to be developing titanium for military applications, so, of course, the United States military did the same, encouraging its mining and development. Basil created the Laurentian Titanium Mines Company. It was Con, in his early university years, who discovered the highest grade prospect in the Lac Pin Rouge area of Saint-Hippolyte. That event persuaded him to pursue a degree in Mining Engineering at McGill, which he obtained in 1956.

Sometime after graduation, Con fell in love with another member of the Montreal Greek community, Katherine, the daughter of Constantine and Helen Schoolarinos. In her early years, Kathy, reputed for her beauty, worked the cash at the family business, the Diana Restaurant on St. Catherine Street. Her father was a great supporter of the Greek community and normally could not refuse a request from its spiritual leader, Basil's brother, Reverend Salamis. But one day when Schoolarinos was sick in bed, the priest came to see him to ask that Katherine participate in a Greek community beauty contest. Schoolarinos was adamantly opposed, and Katherine, respecting her father's wishes, did not participate. The Schoolarinos family owned two restaurants, the Diana, and the Cadillac on Peel Street, which were among the earliest Greek restaurateurs in the city. Anyone familiar with Montreal cuisine today knows how much our Greek restaurant owners have influenced our tastes.

Con and Kathy married in July 1960. By then, Con had moved to Val d'Or, where he was involved in a geophysical consulting partnership. A city girl, Kathy adapted, giving birth to their daughter, Alexandra, in their new, rural community. Soon, though, Con was working on world-wide assignments that led to the discovery of two significant gold mines in Burkina Faso (formerly Upper Volta), Africa. How different could that be? Kathy prepared to adapt once more. Then, when they moved to Nicaragua in the mid-sixties, she had great difficulties living in its frontier environment. Political enemies of the Somoza regime disappeared with alarming frequency. The young Salamis family lived in what we would now call a gated community that

*"Dragons' Teeth on the Metaxas Line, 1941. Photo: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Metaxas_Line#.*

included a guard at the entrance who was regularly beaten up even though he was heavily armed. Added to Kathy's concerns was the safety of their now three-year-old daughter, Alexandra. A young mother of twenty-three, it was not what she had anticipated when she imagined the bliss of married life. It was too colourful for her, and often for Con, as well.

One midweek evening in Managua, Con went with a colleague to a steak house just outside of town. Parked outside the restaurant was a hefty looking station wagon adorned with the national flag and equipped with thick bulletproof glass. Clearly some important event was taking place inside. Upon entering they noted that only four tables were occupied and the patrons were nervous-looking heavily armed young men. In the centre General Somoza, the Nicaraguan dictator, sat with what appeared to be a young girlfriend. All the men, including the general, wore bulletproof vests. In retrospect, it mystifies Con why he and his colleague were even allowed into the restaurant. Somoza's father had been assassinated during the early thirties while lunching in a restaurant under similar circumstances. As Con and his colleague sat, they became aware that their every move startled the heavily armed youths protecting the general. If their hands dropped under the level of the table top, the tension became almost palpable. The quiet lunch they had imagined was turning into a nerve-wracking mistake. Suddenly, the general rose and his party fell into protective positions around him and his girlfriend as they walked out.

At another time, while looking for rock outcroppings in the rain forest in eastern Nicaragua, Con was struggling through an overgrown bush trail when he felt his right leg start moving to the right on its own. Glancing into the brush, he saw that his foot was firmly planted on the back of a large snake, a boa constrictor. Startled, he jumped back only to watch the huge snake continue on like a moving sidewalk, indifferent to the occasional preoccupied prospector. After that, Con determined to ensure that someone more familiar with the fauna walked ahead.

Kathy returned several times to Montreal, happy to get away from Nicaragua. On one of these vacations home, she discovered she was pregnant. It was early 1966, a few months before Con's two-year contract was due to expire, but Kathy was distressed to discover he had accepted a further one year assignment in Kenya and she had difficulty imagining having her baby in a primitive maternity ward in Africa.

Close friends living in Nairobi, Kenya, did their best to reassure them that it was a much different place, one not to be missed. In spite of all the previous hardships, Kathy consented to join Con there two months after his arrival in Kenya. When she arrived six months pregnant, his first words were "Welcome to paradise," as indeed it was at that time. George was delivered at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital with the help of a midwife, much to the surprise of family in Canada. They spent a delightful year in newly independent Kenya with its huge parks teeming with game, much of which has since disappeared.

Upon their return to Canada, Con worked in Quebec City and Montreal but had no desire to live in a metropolis, and Kathy was comfortable with her capacity to adapt, so they looked outside the city. That was when Con's strong relationship with the Laurentians directed him to come and look here. Even though his father's dream of a titanium mine in the Laurentians ended with his death, and Baron Empain's Laurentian dream had ended with his self-imposed exile from Canada and the Domaine d'Estérel, Con's connection to the Laurentians is a part of the legacy of both those men.

After a thorough search, Con and Kathy settled in Morin Heights, where young George attended school before following in his father's career footsteps. Kathy threw herself into local projects, co-founding Theatre Morin Heights and later becoming a local actress.

Today, George, a mining engineer, lives in Vancouver and works on a gold project in Val d'Or. Alexandra is director of her own company through which she provides leadership and management consulting and coaching services to the Government of Canada. Both return regularly to visit their parents in Morin Heights.

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*Special thanks to Con and Kathy Salamis for their patience and encouragement.*

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*Lac Masson, 1937. Photo: BANQ, E57, S44, SS1, PY-1288.*

# Food Will Win the War

## *Home cooks in Montreal, 1939-1945*

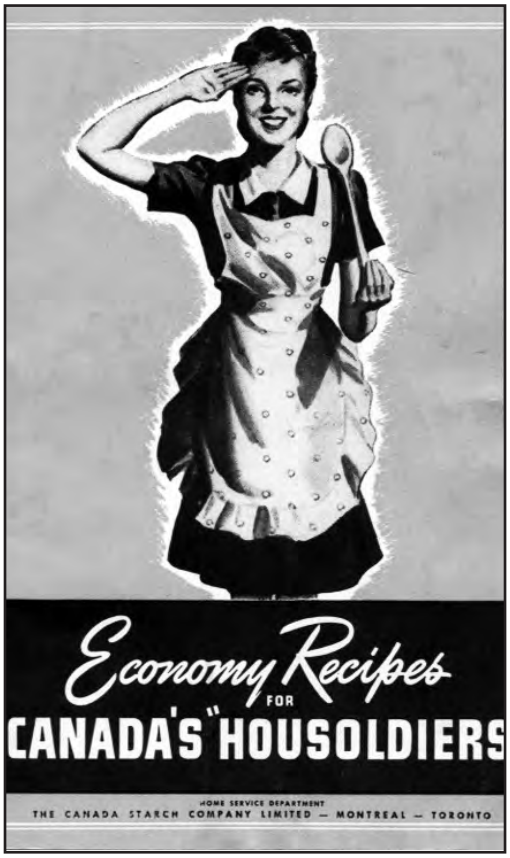
by Sandra Stock

*This article was written in connection with QAHN's project, Housewife Heroines: Anglophone Women at Home in Montreal during World War II, which has been funded through the Department of Canadian Heritage's World War Commemorations Community Fund.*

One of the main issues for any country involved in warfare is feeding both its troops and its civilians. The production, harvesting, processing and especially the transportation and delivery of foodstuffs becomes an essential undertaking. During the Second World War, Canada was (as it still is today) a major exporter of surplus foods – grains, meat and dairy, in particular – and war, of course, disrupts this important aspect of trade. During the war as never before, women in Montreal households were faced with obtaining and preparing healthy and, if possible, appealing meals for their families.

In many ways, the 1930s were a transition period for domestic life. By this decade, Montreal, Canada's largest city and industrial centre, had a greater variety of food available than previously. There were now refrigerator cars on trains and the iceman delivered regularly (although the ice box did not to give way to home refrigerators until after the war). There were also regular deliveries of bread and milk, which freed up the housewife from daily shopping. The local milkman with his horse would remain a neighbourhood fixture in residential areas such as Notre Dame de Grâce well into the 1950s.

Most shopping was done either at large markets like Atwater or Jacques Cartier Square, with farmers bringing in produce from the countryside, as had been done for centuries and, in some cases, on the same locations as markets of the French regime. There were also small stores that specialized in meat, fish, or fruit and vegetables. These were positioned on commercial streets close to residential districts. Sherbrooke Street West, between Girouard and Grand, was an example of this. The stores were close together but nothing like the supermarkets that would follow after the war and, sadly, put most of them out of business.




The housewife headed out at least two days a week (Tuesdays and Fridays seemed to be favoured), and she usually dressed up for the occasion: a dress, hat and, except in very hot weather, gloves. All of these stores delivered; the housewife would scan the goods and place her order. This routine was nearly universal, since by then even the very rich had few servants and most people did their own shopping. The act of getting out of the house probably added to a growing sense of freedom among women, and it certainly had a strong social side, meeting the neighbours and chatting with the grocer. This system hung on into the 1950s, along with the milkman and his horse.

A note on fish: Montreal was thoroughly Roman Catholic, so the government push to have Montrealers eat more fish, at least on Fridays, was not a problem here. Surprisingly, lobster was not considered the gourmet item it is now. It was seen as a "junk fish" and not eaten much until the Canadian Department of Agriculture started promoting it with such statements as "It's Patriotic and Pleasant to Eat Canadian Lobster." Apples were also touted as patriotic food.

This emphasis on local products was part of the war effort: "Early in the war, Canadians were asked to contribute voluntarily to Canada's food export commitments by avoiding foods that were needed in Britain and by consuming more Canadian foods whose European export markets had disappeared, therefore threatening farmers and fishermen with unused surpluses." (Mosby) So, lobster cocktail, lobster à la king and lobster sandwiches became the choice dishes.

Recipes and recipe books became prevalent as never before during the war years. Food production, nutrition and conservation were hot topics both on the radio and in print. Kate Aitken was the best known of the media's home economists, appearing in *The Montreal Standard* and on Montreal radio stations; another food expert was *Chatelaine* magazine's Helen Campbell. Some experts, like the *Vancouver Sun*'s "Edith Adams," were fictional. These wartime avatars all had attractive alliterative names of British origin and comforting personas like a favourite aunt. As dated

*"Economy Recipes for Canada's 'Housoldiers' 1943." McCord Museum, M2002.123.3.*

as they may seem to us now, these female food and home economy experts were a great help to Canadian housewives dealing with shortages, ration books and absent family members. They also, somewhat unintentionally, opened the non-print media world to women.

The rationing of food products is perhaps the most frequently mentioned memory that older Montrealers have of the Second World War. Everyone has to eat, so changes to the availability of food affect everyone. This was also a time before pre-packaged, ready to serve, foods were seen in grocery stores. Everything had to be chopped, sliced, mashed, and whatever else it took to make food edible.

### Wartime Recipe
## The Woolton Pie

A vegetable pie with a potato pastry that uses very little fat. The potato makes the pastry moist and crumbly, however, work with it quickly or the pastry turns grey. The pie contains seasonal vegetables. This British-origin pie was a recipe encouraged by the government in their "Dig for Victory" campaign.

### The filling:

One pound of turnips, one pound of carrots, one pound of cauliflower, one pound of spring onions (or leeks), one pound of potatoes, one teaspoon of vegetable extract – a kind of concentrated vegetable stock, like the cubes we use for soups. Oatmeal – 3 or 4 tablespoons – used to thicken. Boil up all together to soften in a large pot, having covered the vegetables with water.

### The pastry:

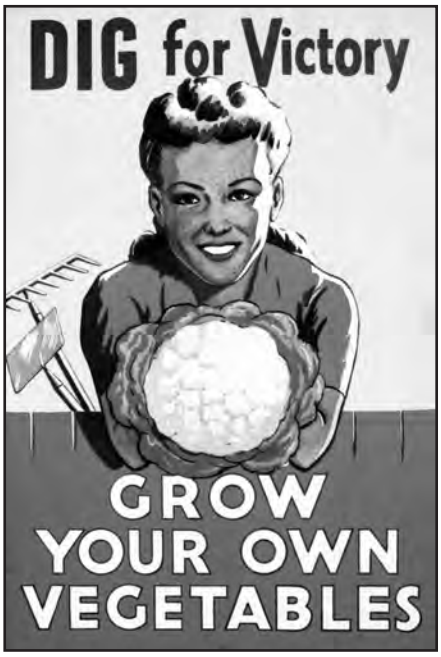
Six ounces of flour, one and a half ounces of butter, one and half ounces of lard, two ounces of raw potatoes, grated. This makes a top crust – no bottom crust is needed. Brush the surface with milk. Bake in a moderate oven (about 350 degrees F.) for half an hour.

www.cookit.e2bn.org/historycookbook/1157-woolton-pie.

Country people were slightly better off as they already had gardens and grain fields, and in wilder areas they could fish and hunt. Montreal was still an agricultural island, at least in part, and districts such as Cote St. Luc, Montreal North and the West Island had many functioning farms. Canada, however, was shipping tons of foodstuffs to Britain, especially after the fall of France in 1940 when the continent became closed to exports. Canada was also feeding the growing military forces, as well as the influx of munitions workers and others working in military support capacities, many of whom had been agricultural workers before the war. The military now lived in barracks (Longue Pointe, east of Montreal harbour, for example) and civilians crowded into rental housing. Many people were forced to live with relatives, especially the wives and mothers of men in the forces.

The Wartime Prices and Trade Board ensured that scarce commodities were not wasted. Government advertisements reminded citizens that economy was a patriotic duty. (Burns, 121) The weekly ration for one adult was one cup of sugar, two ounces of tea or eight ounces of coffee, a quarter-pound of butter, and less than five ounces of meat per day. Beer, spirits and wine were also rationed, with the amounts differing depending upon the province. Recipe books and pamphlets were issued in great numbers. The government feared that Canadians might suffer from malnutrition with all the restrictions, so in 1942 the *Canada Food Guide* (still with us) tackled this problem. Looking at the recipes and reading about food preparation at this time, we see a diet that was low on proteins but high on vegetable content. Vegetables are excellent for vitamins and minerals, and high in fibre, but in bulk, make for a rather starchy and dull cuisine. Imagination was required for a cook to present appetizing fare.

In spite of restrictions, it was found that the health of the country actually improved during the war. "The language of sacrifice, austerity and thrift... contradicted the reality of many Canadians' wartime diets: that they were typically eating more, and better, than they had for over a decade. This was particularly true for the more than one million Canadians who saw military service." (Mosby) Obesity and type-two diabetes were nearly unknown in those days before sugar-infused fast-foods.




*"Dig for Victory." Imperial War Museum, London, England, Art.IWM PST 16807.*

Of course, many Montrealers tackled the food shortage quite literally at the root by growing their own vegetables in what were called "victory gardens." Surpluses could also be sold, or more likely bartered, for other goods and services. At first, the government did not take to what they called "unskilled cityfolk" growing their own turnips, and tried to discourage this practice. Canadians ignored this, and by 1943, agricultural officials had reversed this policy. In 1944, "over 209,200 victory gardens were in operation nationwide producing a total of 57,000 tons of vegetables." (Mosby) Some residential districts also had fruit trees (Montreal was long noted for its apples), beehives, and even urban hens and the odd cow. Front lawns, vacant lots and even parks were turned into gardens. Since Montreal is situated in the midst of a highly fertile agricultural zone, city residents produced a wide variety of foods, with the emphasis on potatoes, turnips, cabbages, cauliflowers, Brussels sprouts, carrots, onions, pumpkins and melons.

In wartime, a Montreal home cook always had to plan ahead and consider that there might be days when she could not go out to the stores. Severe winters, added to the general apprehension about what the future could hold during the war, forced cooks to find ways to pre-

serve food. All those carrots, cucumbers, tomatoes, apples and peaches from our ubiquitous victory gardens had to last through the winter to supplement what was available through rationing.

Potatoes and root vegetables, and apples, could be kept in cool, dry cellars, often packed in clean sand, or even in cooler cupboards or unused rooms against exterior walls. Houses were not as airtight as they are now; most were rather draughty and heated unevenly by radiators with hot water from coal furnaces. Some homes relied on wood stoves, especially in the older or poorer parts of Montreal. Small upright wood-burning stoves were called Quebec heaters. A house could have several of these, placed in pretty well any room and attached to a stovepipe. Fireplaces were quite small in most Montreal houses of the period and not used for heating except in emergencies. After the war, many Quebec heaters left Montreal for second-home country houses as affluence and travel returned to middle class families. Apartment dwellers relied on larger hot-water heating systems that originated in basement coal furnaces.

Canning was by far the most popular method of food preservation during World War II. The Department of Agriculture "promoted home canning through public demonstrations by staff home economists as well as through a range of pamphlets and brochures." (Mosby)


Canadians also responded enthusiastically to the Department of National War Services' campaign to collect fats and bones, used in the manufacturing of munitions: the bones provided material for use in industrial glue and fats supplied glycerin for making bullets and cannon shells. Millions of pounds of fats and bones were collected across Canada. At that time, meat products were generally much fattier than what we are used to now. Fat was not seen as an enemy to health but rather fancied. Lard was used in cooking and baking rather than the vegetable shortening and even the butter which took over in our diets in the 1950s.

Scrap metal, rubber, glass and other items we would now call recyclables were also collected and re-adapted for use by wartime industries. There were more of these articles around then as, for example, glass jars and metal tins (tin!) were used rather than the ever- present plastics of today. Housewives kept busy "responding to the demands of frequent salvage drives. Household waste of every kind was wanted to feed the war machine. Old pots and pans could be melted down to make tanks and guns." (Weintraub, 54) Youth groups like the Boy Scouts would go from house to house collecting. Everything from old fur coats, to used toothpaste tubes, to old hot water bottles was gathered up and re-purposed. Although some of these items may in reality have had little actual re-use value, the morale building and community cohesiveness brought about by the collecting drives themselves probably had a positive effect on the population.

***Sandra Stock**'s article about the Quebec home front during World War One, "A Century-Long Impact," appeared in* QHN*, Spring 2014.*

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### Recipe
## Baked Cereal Pudding and Left-over Porridge

This is from the very popular *Five Roses: A Guide to Good Cooking*, published in 1938, when war loomed. This Canadian cookbook was produced "under the supervision of Jean Brodie," another of the home economics ladies who presided over Canadian households at the time.

Two cups of cooked Five Roses Cereal (porridge/oatmeal), one teaspoon of vanilla, two cups of milk, half a cup of sugar, two eggs, one can of sliced peaches, and one cup of puffed raisins.

Add vanilla and milk to the hot cooking cereal. Beat the egg yolks slightly with the sugar and combine with cereal mixture. Drain peaches and reserve the juice for sauce. Place peaches and raisins in greased baking dish, cover with the cereal and egg mixture. Bake in a moderate oven at 350 degrees F. for about 40 minutes. Make a meringue of the two egg whites and three tablespoons of sugar. Pile it on the pudding and return to oven until slightly brown.

Left-over porridge may be added to muffin or pancake batters, to steamed pudding mixtures, and to yeast bread doughs and quick bread batters. If the left over porridge is stiff, add a little hot water to it and beat well with a fork. It can also be added to the soup kettle. It thickens the soup and adds to the nutriment of the dish.

*Five Roses: A Guide to Good Cooking, complied by the makers of Five Roses Flour, Lake of the Woods Publishing Company Limited, Montreal & Winnipeg, 1938.*



*John Gilroy, "We want your kitchen waste," 1939-46. National Archives, London, England, INF3/224.*

# World War II and the Montreal Home Front

*A literature review*

by Patrick Donovan

A 1942 poll asked Canadians whether their greatest contribution to the war effort was food, men, or munitions. "Food" trumped the two other choices at 38%, followed by munitions. In other words, Canadians considered that efforts on the home front had more impact on the war than soldiers sent abroad. Despite this, the glory and tragedy of the battlefront has long been the main focus of historians. But this has changed in the past thirty years. There is now a wealth of material about experiences in Montreal during World War II. What follows is a brief tour through some of the publications that deal with the home front.

Patricia Burns' *Life on the Home Front* (Véhicule Press, 2012) is a great introduction for a general audience. This is a highly readable account of Montreal during the war years with plenty of contextual information about life in what many considered to be Canada's "sin city." Much of it is based on original research drawn from interviews. Among these, the testimonials from Japanese, German and Italian so-called "enemy aliens" living in Montreal are particularly interesting.

Out of all these groups, Italians were by far the most numerous and have received the most attention. There were over 28,000 Italians in Quebec at the start of the war compared to only 6,000 Germans and fewer than 50 Japanese. Many were part of what we now call the English-speaking community in that they spoke English as their first official language. Hundreds of reputed fascists were sent to internment camps, few of whom were actually a threat to Canada. The rest of the community was given "enemy alien" IDs and its members had to regularly report to the RCMP. Their stories form the basis of several studies, namely Filippo Salvatore's *Fascism and the Italians of Montreal: An Oral History* (Guernica, 1998). The topic has also been explored through a virtual exhibit: http://www.italiancanadianww2.ca.

Other ethnic minorities experienced the war as a period of positive change. For instance, in *The Road to Now* (Véhicule Press, 1997), author Dorothy Williams says that "many Montreal Blacks thanked God for World War II." At the start of the war, about half of all Black men worked as porters and most of the working Black women were domestics. Labor shortages meant that certain sectors had to put aside their traditional racism to recruit workers from new labour pools, including the Black community. Hospitals finally accepted Black nurses as trainees, CPR porters were unionized in 1942, and the Black population had generally entered into a wider range of occupations by war's end. This upward mobility was true not only for Blacks, but also for working class people of all origins who had experienced hardship during the Depression.


Serge Marc Durflinger looks at the war's effects on the working-class city of Verdun (now a Montreal borough) in *Fighting from Home* (UBC Press, 2006). Nearly a third of Verdun's residents were born in Britain, making it the most British city in Canada. It is therefore no surprise that the city had the highest voluntary enlistment rate in Canada for a municipality of its size. Durflinger looks at the wide range of home front efforts in which women engaged. The Mayor's Cigarette Fund stands out as one of the more popular causes. Imperial tobacco set up collection boxes in movie theatres, women sold cigarette fund "tags," and children ran lemonade stands to raise money for this cause. This allowed Verdunites overseas to receive bi-annual shipments of cartons. Soldiers wrote that this gift allowed them to indulge in some inter-city rivalry on the front: "Whenever I receive cigarettes from you I show and share with the boys, and say, 'Now there's the kind of town you should come from.' And that always calls for an argument. But they always admit Verdun must have something." Overall, a staggering 3.7 million cigarettes were sent to soldiers through this Verdun fund (if the war didn't kill them, lung cancer eventually might).

Wealthier parts of the island, like Montreal's Golden Square Mile and Westmount, experienced the war differently. In *Remembrance of Grandeur* (Libre Expression, 1990), Margaret Westley argues that WWII signaled a massive decline in the privileged way of life of the Anglo-Protestant elite. Because of high salaries and plentiful work in the war industries, it became harder for the upper



*Conrad Poirier, "Children gather rubber for salvage, Rosemount," 1942. BANQ, P48, S1, P7495. (Cover design for* Life on the Home Front *by J. W. Stewart.)*

classes to retain servants and cooks, not to mention the cheap labour that at least some of their fortunes had been built on. Many had to learn to boil their own eggs. Moreover, taxes were raised to support the wartime economy and new social programs; these taxes did not go down after the war, putting a check on the "robber barons" of yore and their limitless fortunes.

Ian Mosby's *Food Will Win the War* (UBC Press, 2014) won the Canadian Historical Association's 2015 Best Book in Canadian Political History award. Mosby provides a scholarly Canada-wide overview of the politics of food during wartime, looking at rationing, victory gardens, salvaging efforts, wartime recipes, and nutrition campaigns. High military rejection rates signaled that young Canadian men were unfit and not receiving adequate nutrition at home. Mothers were labeled "Housoldiers" and given the "patriotic duty" and "sacred responsibility" of raising healthy men for the front (or, should we say, of fattening them up for the kill). Boys were told to "eat their carrots" so they would have the night vision necessary to be good fighter pilots. This new role signaled that women's work in the kitchen received unprecedented recognition during the war.

World War II also provided an opportunity for Canada's three million adult women to go beyond their traditional domestic roles, through both volunteer and paid labour, but what were the long-term effects of the war on women's emancipation? Ruth Roach Pierson's *They're Still Women After All* (McClelland and Stewart, 1986) is a pioneering feminist study that examines this question. She concludes that the "relatively minor breakthroughs" that took place during wartime were temporary. Values soon reverted back to those that had existed before the war. That's how we ended up with the "Father Knows Best" fifties.

More recent studies have challenged Pierson's argument. Jeff Keshen's *Saints, Sinners, and Soldiers* (UBC Press, 2004) argues that the war represented "two steps forward, one step back" for women. While it is true that traditional gender roles were actively promoted after the war, women had gained enhanced recognition and self-confidence during wartime that proved crucial to their personal development. The number of employed married women quadrupled between 1941 and 1951. The rest of Keshen's pan-Canadian study examines some of the negative behaviours bred by wartime conditions on the home front: black market profiteers, greedy landlords, and the supposed moral breakdown of women and children.

Both wartime propaganda and some of the more traditional writing about World War II tend to promote simplified narratives focussing on patriotic duty and dramas on the front. In contrast, the studies discussed above reveal a multiplicity of narratives that show how social class, ethnicity, and changing gender roles led to different experiences of war. They provide critical perspectives and a more nuanced view on the old heroic narrative of the "good war." Moreover, these studies assert the important role played on the home front that is too often upstaged by the more dramatic and gripping stories of battles overseas.

***Patrick Donovan*** *is a PhD candidate in History at Université de Laval. He is a former executive director of the Morrin Centre in Quebec City and a former vice-president of QAHN. He studies ethnic relations within the social service sector in Quebec.*


*"Advertisement for the Verdun Boardwalk Dance Pavilion, 1939."*
*Photo: courtesy of Rohinton Ghandhi.*

## Classic Montreal: Revisiting Anglo Institutions

# The Centaur Theatre

by Flora Juma

*This interview series examines some of Montreal's iconic Anglophone institutions and their ability to engage with the city's Francophone community, as well as their success in adapting to the city's changing demographics and modern community needs.*

Founded in 1778 by Fleury Mesplet, the *Montreal Gazette* (formerly *La Gazette du commerce et litteraire, pour la ville et district de Montreal*) was, at its inception, Canada's first entirely French newspaper. Over the next few years, Mesplet evolved his *Gazette* to be more inclusive of different forms of writing (philosophical, anecdotal, etc.) and, most notably, adopted the *Quebec Gazette*'s model of bilingualism. Eventually, by 1822, the paper became exclusively English-language. Throughout its existence, *The Gazette* competed with many other English-language Montreal newspapers, such as *The Montreal Star* and *The Montreal Daily News*. Since 1989, following the end of *The Daily News*' publication, The *Gazette* has been the sole English-language newspaper of its size, with 69% of the English market reading the paper throughout the week. However, in recent years, the paper has sought ways to broaden its audience to reach the Francophone community, similar to Mesplet's own bilingual aspirations to reach out to Anglophone Montreal over two centuries ago. As publisher Larry Smith has stated: "*The Gazette* is Montreal… anyone who can read some English is a potential customer." (Aubin)

**Lucinda Chodan** is the current Editor-in-chief of *The Montreal Gazette*. With 20 years' experience as a *Gazette* reporter, Chodan served as editor-in-chief of *The Victoria Times* and *The Edmonton Journal* before returning to Montreal in 2013. *The Gazette* soon launched "a new look and visual identity." (Garcia) Coupled with multi-platform digital content, the emphasis of news reporting will "focus on local news" more relevant and close to *The Gazette*'s readers, Francophone and Anglophone alike. "We are storytellers," Chodan says, "and giving people permission to dream of different kinds of narratives has been a boost to morale. That is heightened when they see how audiences can be engaged on our revamped platforms, especially the new iPad app. So it's all good."

**Which factors have best contributed to *The Gazette*'s resilience and survival within a French-dominated news culture?**

Well, there's a significant amount of people who still live their lives and read information in English. People often forget that this is a fairly large English-speaking city, in the broader context of Canada, although Anglophones are outnumbered by Francophone readers. Our commitment is to the community. We're one of North America's oldest newspapers, dating back to the late eighteenth century, which is a very long history for a young continent. I also think that our long standing reputation of accurate and reliable information gathering and volume of dissemination mean that people come to us for news and information whether it's in print or online, or in various other ways.

**What difficulties arise when the needs and wants of the established readership diverge from those of a newer, untapped customer base and how are these difficulties mitigated?**

*The Gazette*, like all other print-based media organizations has had to adapt to the fact that different people are reading different things in print and online. We know the demographics: people who read the print version tend to be fifty plus, while online demographics tend to be younger; people who use smart phones are primarily under fifty. We've done research on what kinds of content people who are reading in print, on mobile devices, and other technologies, are looking for. Their information habits are very different, but we've found that news is a big overlap in all those areas. Whether people are reading you in print or digitally, they want their local news, followed by national, followed by international news. No matter what platform they use, people are interested in the news. Of course, there are differences. People who are reading print are more interested in listings, announcements (births and deaths, for instance), whereas people on smart phones don't actually care if you have listings at all. For us, the key has been to understand what audiences are consuming and to provide different content in print and non-print platforms.



*John Seward Johnson, "Catching Up," 1985, Westmount, Qc.*
*Photo: Sandra Cohen-Rose and Colin Rose.*

**How does *The Gazette* stay relevant and stand out for the bilingual consumer when compared to Montreal's French-language newspapers?**

There's a pretty clear difference between the *Journal de Montreal*, which has a lot of the characteristics we attribute to tabloid magazines: provocative stories, shock and awe. There's a lot of human interest in that kind of news. For people seeking that kind of information, a bilingual reader would go there. *Le Devoir* has a small audience, many academics, people coming at things from a particular intellectual point of view. It tends to have more Eurocentric content. *La Presse* is the broadsheet news organization in print and it aims to be the national newspaper for Francophones Canada-wide, kind of like a *Globe and Mail* type of audience. It provides news for Francophones in the broadest spectrum: local, provincial, national, international.

*The Gazette* does the best job of covering local Montreal news. We don't have the resources outside of Montreal to cover those kinds of stories; we are a Montreal-based newspaper and our focus is local news, particularly city administration and municipal affairs. We've been breaking stories for months about the McGill University Health Centre. We have the most in-depth reporting on areas that are largely populated by Anglophones, so we tend to cover the West Island and off-island to a much greater degree than anywhere else. We have a separate off-island print edition that comes out once a week and a microsite within our website for the West Island and off-island.

There's nothing exclusive about news anymore. If we put a breaking story online by 6 a.m., by 6:30 or 7:00, CBC radio is reading our story and they're not crediting us. We have the ability to get the ball rolling, but the other media do not necessarily acknowledge it and it's not obvious to our readers. Among English media, we have by far the largest news-gathering force.

**What challenges lie ahead for *The Gazette* in terms of staying competitive in an increasingly digital age, and how do you hope to rise to these challenges?**

The challenges facing *The Gazette* are those facing every traditional media organization: there are more sources of information than ever before. The revenue model we've always used – that the majority comes from print ads – isn't necessarily valid, not when print ad rates are a thousand times what you'd pay for online advertising. We are a unionized organization, and we're fine with that. You need to pay journalists a decent wage to get good journalism. On the other hand, that revenue model doesn't sustain the pay for those unionized and reasonably paid journalists.

**Digitized news is often presented in a compact, flashy manner to accommodate the needs, trends and abilities of technology and those who wield it. How does *The Gazette* navigate this balance between accessibility and quality?**

Our unique selling position is local news. It's hard and expensive to get local news, so we pay people and we exercise curatorial and editorial practices. We make sure we're out there where readers are. We offer them specific information and news in ways they want to get them. I think you build your brand around marquee personalities and columnists. You have to get out there and make sure people are reading this. Facebook has been an increasing source of traffic. You have to be fast and better than everybody else.

**How has *The Gazette*'s readership and popularity been affected during times of heightened political events within and outside of Montreal?**

Some of our highest numbers ever in digital platforms came in the run-up to the provincial election in the spring of 2014. People were reading every word. We live-blogged the French/English debates. It was a huge traffic driver. Overall though, politics and bad weather are huge traffic drivers for us.

**Of *The Gazette*'s more recent stories, which have stood out to you as memorable or controversial?**

Well, we've done a lot of work on Lac-Mégantic, but one of the most powerful and moving stories for me was the 25th anniversary of the Polytechnique killings. I was working at *The Gazette* when we first reported on that story and on the reflections of the journalists who were there on-scene as we began to realize what was going on. That somebody had actually gone through the U de M and separated men and women and killed the women is still unbelievable to me. Allan McInnis, our photographer on the scene, captured that infamous and chilling photo of a slain student that was widely used. We donated all of the money we received for reselling the photo to organizations working to end violence against women. I have to say that the morning of December 6, I looked at our tablet edition, I looked at our print edition, and I read all of the stories with tears streaming down my cheeks. It was such a significant event for women around the world and for women who lived in Montreal at the time. I was very proud of how *The Gazette* covered it at the time and how we remembered it.

**Would *The Gazette* ever consider going fully digital. Why? Or why not?**

We still make about 70 percent of our revenue from the print edition, so no [laughs].

**Where do you see *The Gazette* 20 years from now?**

I would like to see *The Gazette* continue to thrive as a news organization with relevance, integrity and a healthy balance sheet.

***Flora Juma**, a third-year honours student in history and political science at Concordia University, interned for QAHN in 2015.*

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Review

# Many threads, same cloth

## *Les juifs de Québec: quatre cents ans d'histoire*

## Pierre Anctil, Simon Jacobs, editors
## Presses de l'Université de Québec, 2015

*Les juifs de Québec* is a unique look at a very small but enduring population that continues to reflect the experiences of cultural minorities within an increasingly diverse Quebec. The structure of this book is interesting in itself, as it includes historical pieces by several different authors, with about two-thirds written in French and one-third in English.

The core information (about a third of the content) is covered by Anctil, a professor of history at the University of Ottawa and an author of many works on the history of Jews in Quebec. Here we read a more or less chronological account of Quebec City's Jewish population with examples of various prominent characters, events and challenges. Anctil is an outstanding writer of history, always lively and understanding of his material. This is especially remarkable for a writer who takes on a religion and culture different from his own background. The chapters by Ira Robinson, professor of Jewish Studies at Concordia University, are well written (in English) and clearly describe twentieth century life in this small Jewish community.

The work of these two historians is supplemented by numerous chapters by other authors. For example, Franklin Toker's family history story is serious, yet with amusing undertones as he traces two large clans from Eastern Europe with many marriages and ups and downs of fortune in Quebec City and beyond. The shameful anti-Semitism of Quebec society caused very serious problems for this community in the 1920s and 30s and even after the Second World War. The 1944 arson attack on the synagogue in the Upper Town, while congregants were still inside, is a sad comment on the disagreeable attitude towards those not "de souche" that still plagues Quebec.

Outsiders might not realize that, like most groups, Quebec City's Jews are not a monolith of origins, religious beliefs or practices. This was, and is, a difficulty for a small, yet mixed, community. The first Jewish residents of Quebec came with the British colonial takeover in the 1760s. These families, Sephardic and of Iberian origin, had been expelled from Spain after the fall of the Moorish kingdom there in the fifteenth century. These were the Harts, the Josephs, the Judahs, who by this time had become well integrated into British society, and who were well educated and usually in the upper middle class professions and businesses. In 1832, well ahead of Britain, Jews were granted equal civil rights in the Canadian colonies. Several achieved high positions in Quebec. Their numbers were few and, for most religious purposes, they had to journey to the larger Jewish community in Montreal.

In the nineteenth century, Quebec City's Jewish community grew, but slowly. New members came, most from German-speaking areas and Alsace in France. These people, for example, the electrical engineer Sigismund Mohr, were educated, emancipated individuals from the newly organized and then very progressive German states. They spoke several languages – French more likely than English at that time – and fitted in seamlessly (more or less) in Quebec. Mohr, one of our forgotten benefactors of history, was important in bringing electricity to Quebec City: his electrical launch of thirty-four street lamps on Dufferin Terrace in 1888 must have been one of the greatest spectacles of our history.

At the turn of the twentieth century, due to pogroms and generally poor conditions in the Russian Empire, thousands of people emigrated to North America. Many Jewish families from this area – especially Rumania and Moldova – came to Quebec City. These people were poorer, far less sophisticated than previous Jews, and they spoke Yiddish. Their form of Judaism is called Ashkenazy – and within that, there are different levels of observance and ritual. They were quite different from the by now totally assimilated English- and German-origin Jews by whom they were welcomed but with whom they had little in common. These divisions and variations still persist, of course, along with the general falling off of religious life among everybody of all religions in our society, and do still create some challenges for this community.

This is a book that offers endless insights into both the Jews of Quebec City and the wider Quebec cultural milieu. Education, language, economic fluctuations – it's all here, and clearly explained. The many photos and illustrations are excellent, although perhaps a map of Quebec City showing the relevant sites would have been helpful.

In 2008, to celebrate the 400th anniversary of Quebec City, co-editor Simon Jacobs (also the current president of QAHN) organized a major exhibition of the Jewish history of the city. This led to this terrific book that testifies to the survival and even the flourishing of this small minority that has managed to adapt to changing conditions without losing its identity.

*–Reviewed by Sandra Stock*

*Top: William James Topley, "Russian Jews arriving at Pointe-á-Carcy, 1911." LAC, PA-010400.*

*Bottom: Simon Jacobs, co-editor. Photo: Kathy Teasdale.*

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