

THE ROAD TO ROXHAM ROAD

\$10

# Quebec Heritage

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## News



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# Quebec Heritage News

**EDITOR**

RODERICK MACLEOD

**PRODUCTION**

DAN PINESE; MATTHEW FARFAN

**PUBLISHER**

QUEBEC ANGLOPHONE  
HERITAGE NETWORK  
3355 COLLEGE  
SHERBROOKE, QUEBEC  
J1M0B8

**PHONE**

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

**CORRESPONDENCE**

EDITOR@QAHN.ORG

**WEBSITES**

QAHN.ORG  
FACEBOOK.COM/QAHNCANADA

**PRESIDENT**

GRANT MYERS

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

MATTHEW FARFAN

**PROJECT & CONTRACT STAFF**

HEATHER DARCH;  
GLENN PATTERSON; DWANE WILKIN

**BOOKKEEPER**

MARION GREENLAY

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Cover: Roxham Elementary School Children, c.1935.  
Photo courtesy of Hemmingford Archives

## EDITOR'S DESK

# X-less Spots

by Rod MacLeod

We know very little about Noah Shaw, except that he died on September 24, 1836, at the age of sixteen and was buried in Montreal's Protestant Burial Ground, where his family presumably owned a plot. The Shaws lived in Griffintown, where Noah's father worked as a carpenter. They paid for a metal coffin for Noah, and would do so again for his brother, Edward, who died eight years later at the age of six. And that's about it – although that is a wealth of information compared to what we know about the thousands of people who lie buried all around Noah: nothing at all.

These nameless people were the poorest of Montreal's poor, who could not afford a cemetery plot and went under the radar of the various charities that provided free burials. These bodies had been found frozen in the street, or floating in the river or the canal, or slumped in railway carriages. Accounts of such discoveries appeared in newspapers throughout the nineteenth century, sometimes with a possible identification, most often not. As many as 200 such bodies were deposited every year in Mount Royal Cemetery's Free Ground from the time it opened in 1853. This spot is, in effect, a mass grave. It is also an unmarked grave – except that in recent years the cemetery has put up a plaque acknowledging the site's countless denizens, thereby giving this patch of ground a modicum of long-overdue dignity.

Another plaque on this site marks the occasion in December 1978 when Noah Shaw and "other unknown civilians" were buried here, having been disinterred from Dufferin Square after its expropriation for the new Guy Favreau government office complex in downtown Montreal. A century earlier, Dufferin Square had been laid out over

the old Protestant Burial Ground, which had closed in 1854 and from which most of the bodies had been removed and reburied in various family plots in Mount Royal Cemetery. Not all the bodies, however: Noah Shaw et al were discovered in 1978, and another 40 surfaced (metaphorically) in 2016 when new power lines were being installed in the boulevard in front of Guy Favreau. These individuals counted among the relative few whose families had been



unable to afford the cost of removal or were not around to do so by the time the burial ground was being transformed into a square. Noah and Edward Shaw's parents were no longer alive by then; it was the boys' names on their metal coffins that enabled authorities to commemorate them on the 1978 plaque. The rest of the bodies remain unknown.

The matter of unmarked graves has preoccupied us in recent years, notably in the wake of the discovery of potentially hundreds of children's bodies on the grounds of residential schools across the country. The suspicion that many more bodies are awaiting discovery has led to demands for excavations at other sites, including the grounds of the Allan Memorial Institute in Montreal. This summer we also saw the reinterment in Newfoundland soil of "the" Unknown Soldier, who had previously lain in an

unmarked grave in France along with hundreds of other Newfoundlanders who died fighting in the First World War. The driving force behind such disinterment campaigns is a desire to restore dignity to people hitherto denied it – an understandable and in many cases necessary objective. However, discourse around the question of disinterment reveals a great deal of confusion over what an "unmarked grave" is and how people end up in them. I am also not sure we

really understand what it means when a body is "unknown," especially given that we live in an age of surprisingly accurate DNA analysis. Much of this discourse becomes political. It also overlooks two grim realities. One: that for much of history a surprising number of people (those in the Free Ground at Mount Royal, for instance) ended up in unmarked graves. Two: for social and cultural reasons, or simply because of the relentless war of attrition waged against us by time, the

vast majority of people who have been buried in the earth are now unknown.

Today, we seem to feel that an unmarked grave is an affront to human dignity, akin to the increasingly popular notion that certain people get erased from history. A grave marker, whether it be a huge granite monument resplendent with text or a wooden cross with a few letters scratched across it, is a kind of arrow indicating that a loved one lies below – directly below, not merely in the general area. Furthermore, when we carve "here lies..." on a marker we assert a person's claim to have existed, we keep a small part of them alive, we write sorrow on the bosom of the earth (as Richard II encourages us to do). When we see a marker where the words have faded, this often makes us sadder than the thought that the bodies below have long since decomposed. We need



the marker as an aid to memory – and not just in a symbolic sense: without it we may well forget a grave’s precise location, especially in a large cemetery. A grave marker serves literally as a signpost to help us return, the way that in children’s stories treasure was always buried in a spot marked with an X. Without the X, the treasure is as good as lost.

Mind you, this attitude toward grave markers is a relatively recent one: like many things sentimental, it took concrete form during the Victorian age. Of course, the rich and famous have always had their remains entombed in conspicuous caskets or mighty mausolea so the rest of us can feel inadequate. For all his talk (according to Shakespeare) of being buried in “a little, little grave, an obscure grave,” Richard II lies not in the earth but under an ornately carved marble slab in Westminster Abbey that you can peer at, at least if you take the tour. On the other side of London, you don’t even need a tour if you seek Christopher Wren’s monument: you just have to look around. But most folks, alas, “live a hidden life and rest in unvisited tombs.” (Still with me? That’s George Elliot.) This reality was not lost on the founders of Mount Royal Cemetery, who conceived of a burial ground large enough, and far enough away from the pressures of urban real estate, to enable families not only to bury all their

members together, but to mark their dead in stone so that visitors could find them and commune. Even the smaller



monuments include names and dates and often pious epitaphs to bring a tear to the eye and sobering sentiments to the heart.

Land on the far side of Mount Royal may have been cheaper than in town, but acquiring a cemetery plot always amounted to a real estate transaction. People bought and owned land for the dead just as they did for the living. Moreover, such a purchase would have been a major preoccupation for everyone, irrespective of wealth and status, well into the twentieth century. We imagine people in the past budgeting for food, shelter, transportation, and potential medical expenses, but we rarely acknowledge the critical importance of having a place to put the dead. You

might be lucky and go for years without a family member dying, but sooner or later you would find yourself with a body on your hands. Most likely, it would be a child: statistically, half the burials at Mount Royal Cemetery until around the time of the First World War were of children. Buying a plot would have been a priority for newcomers to an area, urban or rural. Its size would depend on budget. As a last resort, there were charities: national societies (St. Andrew’s buried Scots, for instance), the Sailors’ Institute, St. Margaret’s Home for Incurables, the Last Post Fund for veterans. Even in the “charitable section” of Mount Royal Cemetery, the names of those interred is inscribed – if not

on the tomb itself, then at least in the cemetery’s records. Only the denizens of the Free Ground are nameless – with the exception of Noah and Edward Shaw, who ended up there in 1978 essentially because there was nowhere else to put them. Such is the importance of real estate.

Land was of course much less of a problem out west: settlers were given lots of it, and, although some begged (in song) not to be buried on the lone prairie, everyone was. Including the children of Indigenous families (people for whom there was apparently not enough room on the vast grasslands) who died while in the custody of residential schools mandated to break them of culture and tradition. This mandate was cruel enough, but that so many children died puts the project on another level of horror. Compounding these deaths was the failure of school administrators to inform the families, who were left with no knowledge of what became of their children. Burying them without marking the spot in any way was a final act of disregard and disrespect. Since ground penetrating radar began to suggest the possible presence of children’s bodies near residential schools, the phrase “unmarked graves” always comes up in expressions of outrage – but the phrase is essentially a euphemism: if you contemplate all the horrors inflicted on these children, especially the astonishing number of deaths (far more than can be accounted



Top: William Notman & Son, Colonel Hamilton’s plot in Mount Royal Cemetery, c.1905. McCord Museum, VIEW-8760

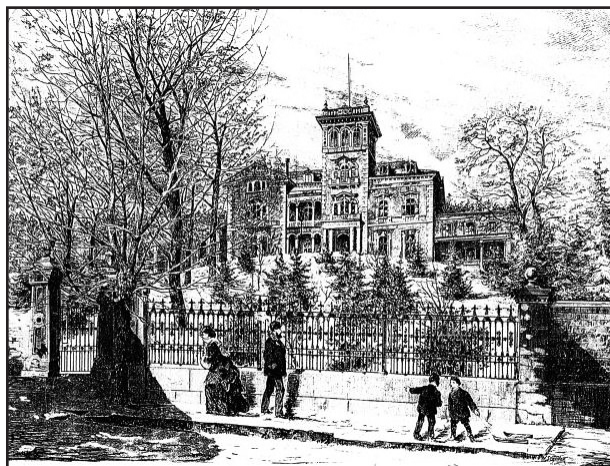
Bottom: Last Post Fund lot, Mount Royal Cemetery. Photo: Rod MacLeod



for through sickness or accident), burial without markers is surely the least shocking. We imagine the perpetrators of crimes sneakily trying to hide the evidence, but there is little to suggest that the administrators of residential schools saw what went on as criminal. They did find themselves with bodies that had to be put somewhere – like the ones fished out of the Lachine Canal. It is worth noting that, unlike those drowning victims, residential school children were, for the most part, buried in an orderly fashion, in rows, as in most cemeteries. We are hung up on the lack of markers – which is frustrating chiefly because it means that identification can only happen by analyzing DNA, and that means disinterment. Such analysis would perhaps bring closure. To their families, these children were very far from unknown: the discovery of bodies confirmed a scenario that many had always imagined in their darkest moments, although we are still a long way from positive identification.

A very different scenario is playing out at the Allan Memorial Institute, on Mount Royal's southern slopes. Since the opening of the new "super" hospital closer to town, the McGill University Health Centre has been working to find new purposes for its former institutions. The old Royal Victoria Hospital will become educational and research facilities, while various connecting pavilions will be used as student residences. (It is a project that heritage activists should be following closely, given the buildings' architectural value and social significance: my children, for instance, were born there.) This project has been delayed by the claim made by a group known as the Mohawk Mothers of Kahnawake that Indigenous children may have been buried on the Royal Victoria's grounds. This claim points to the psychiatric experiments conducted at "the Allan" from 1957 to 1964 funded by the CIA and the Canadian government – experiments that are known to have led to misery for hundreds of (mostly non-Indigenous) people of all ages. Unfortunately, today's discourse all but ignores the distinction between the Allan and the

Royal Victoria: the former was the estate donated to the latter in 1940 by the Allan family to be used as the hospital's



psychiatric department, but the two institutions are physically separate. Indeed, although it will also be repurposed, the Allan currently continues to serve as a psychiatric outpatient centre. Yet, it is the entire Royal Victoria site that has been subject to archeological excavations in search of those enigmatic and elusive unmarked graves.

Don't get me wrong. Given what went on at the Allan back in the day, it would not surprise me if there were bodies to be found outside its grim Victorian walls. The families of missing loved ones deserve answers. It is surprising, however, that such answers are so hard to come by, since we are not talking



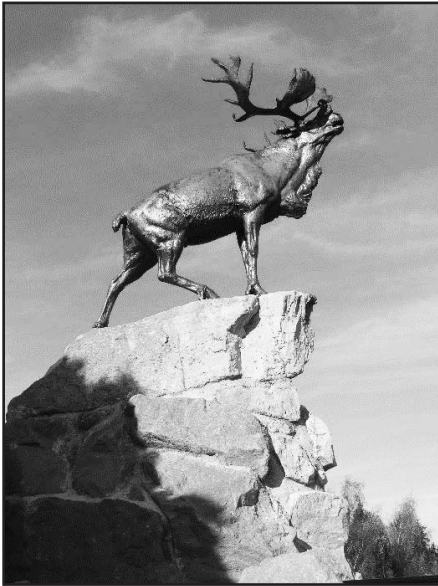
huge numbers of patients and hospitals keep records. In fact, it is not clear from the media coverage of this issue that there are known cases of Indigenous children who were sent to the Allan and

did not return. The argument seems to be based less on the need to solve specific disappearances than on a conviction that there must be bodies buried on the site. Evidence (again, according to recent media coverage) is the testimony of a non-Indigenous woman who had been subjected to horrendous treatment as a teenaged patient in the 1950s; she reported that a fellow inmate, an Indigenous girl, had disappeared one day, that she saw people with shovels, and that there were rumours of bodies buried on the grounds. It is a plausible story, but not much to go on when justifying major excavations. Another case cited is that of a boy taken from his home

in Kahnawake in 1963 and sent to the Allan, but since he ended up at Weredale House (a boys' home in Westmount) he would hardly have been buried at the Allan – unless one were prepared to see it as the dumping ground for the city's entire child welfare system. The insistence on there being Indigenous bodies in the ground around the Allan seems to be based on assumptions drawn from the stark realities of residential schools. What is lost amid the arguments over archeological thoroughness is any effort to explore the experiences of patients who suffered at the Allan, especially those who were Indigenous. We know a fair amount about the CIA experiments from the accounts of survivors and other witnesses, but we hear little about the impact on Indigenous children. I suspect that increasing awareness of these experiences would be far more useful than any discoveries of human remains on the Allan grounds, even if they could be identified.

Sometimes, of course, we would rather not identify human remains. There was a great deal of fuss recently over the disinterment of an "unknown" soldier from French soil and his reinterment in Newfoundland's National War Memorial on the occasion of its centenary. Everything about the coverage of this event was confusing. We were told that hundreds of Newfoundland soldiers, who were killed in horrific conditions on the first day of the Battle of the Somme, were





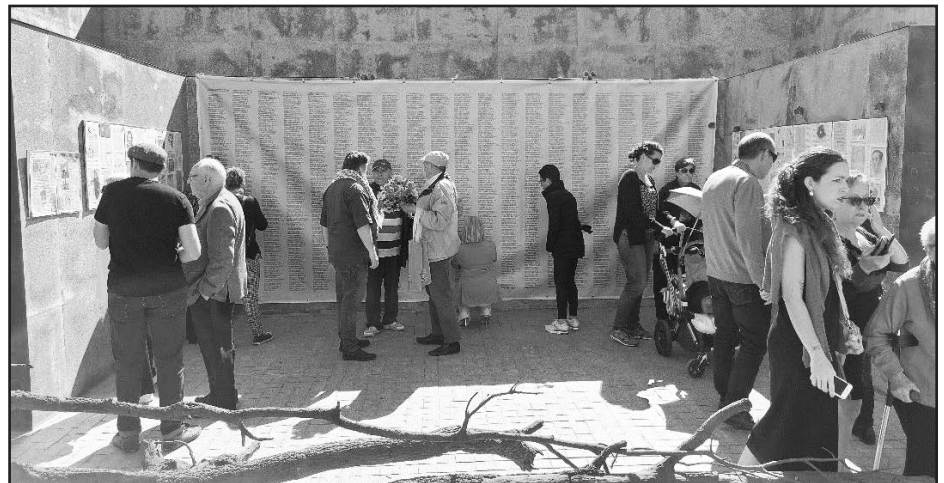
buried in an unmarked grave – which is an odd way to describe the very elaborate memorial site that the Imperial War Graves Commission created in 1924 by purchasing vast tracts of land and constructing a huge monument featuring a stately bronze caribou. This monument features three bronze tablets with the names of 820 Newfoundlanders who died. We know who they were, even if their bodies disintegrated in the mud; indeed, most of them came from the same regiment. Here, the phrase “unmarked grave” has served as misdirection by the media: although that caribou kept appearing in news reports (albeit without explanation), it was never stated that a soldier’s body had been removed from

an honoured and hallowed place where it had rested comfortably for 100 years. Prepped as we are to associate an “unmarked grave” with dishonour, we are unlikely to question the whole disinterment procedure. The body was presumably chosen at random, and was deliberately not subjected to any analysis – which assuredly would have given him a name and (assuming there are old photos) a face. It was a long time before I saw an official admit that the soldier needed to remain unknown so that he could stand symbolically for all the others. Which means that we have gone to considerable trouble and expense to unearth a body, and yet not done the additional work that would have provided some family somewhere with closure. To me, the whole notion of “the unknown soldier” is a relic of a jingoistic age that sought desperately to convince itself that ordering thousands of young men to be mown down by machine guns was somehow not insane. Why focus on real people dying when you can celebrate an imaginary one? Even so, a great many people appear to have found this procedure significant, even moving, and would probably argue that all the subterfuge was justified.

War, by its very nature, leads to the problem of having large numbers of bodies to bury. In the wake of the First World War’s terrible toll, the War Graves Commission worked to provide the next best thing to burial in a family plot: across northern France and Belgium there are countless cemeteries that both commemorate the battles (of both world wars) and honour the fallen soldiers, usually with names and dates (and, for Canadians, a maple leaf). Most

victims of war are not so lucky. Discoveries of mass graves almost always point to the existence not only of particularly savage fighting but of a determination to hide the evidence. Spain, a country dear to my heart, is still unearthing the victims of massacres from its Civil War eight decades ago – though excavation efforts are thwarted by the surprisingly active and influential apologists for the military dictatorship responsible for most of the massacres; their claim is that social peace depends on not digging up the past. That sentiment is all very well for those on the winning side, whose soldiers have been honoured in every town in the country with elaborate monuments listing the names of those who died for the glory of Spain. The losing side has only recently begun to promote the idea that it might be nice to commemorate those who died defending democracy. My family has been involved with a group that has been trying for some years to create a monument to the 3,000 individuals shot by the fascists in the years following the war – a cohort that includes two great-uncles-in-law. Last year, we were able to take part in a ceremony held every year in Madrid’s main cemetery, where the executions took place. For the occasion, volunteers put up banners featuring the names and faces of all the victims, and then took them down afterwards; the municipal government has outlawed inscribing the names in the wall, arguing that it would be partisan.

In the course of this visit I was reminded of how very different European cemeteries are from our own dear burial grounds. Instead of trees and grass and headstones, you get stark



Top: Beaumont-Hamel Newfoundland Memorial, 2017. Photo: Beniot.  
 Bottom left: Grave, Bény-sur-Mer Canadian War Cemetery, 2017. Photo: A. Montulé.

Bottom right: “Installation” monument, Cementerio del Este, Madrid, 2023. Photo: Elena Cerrolaza



gravel paths separating rows of raised stone slabs – or else brick walls crammed with cubby holes for the dead. Moreover, forget any promise of perpetual care; cemetery real estate in Spain is a matter of rental. A cousin who also attended the ceremony in Madrid's Cementerio del Este showed us the sealed niche where his grandparents' remains had been placed some years ago after their removal from the larger slab where they had first been interred; how long they have the niche for is unclear. The practice of recycling bodies may horrify those of us steeped in Victorian notions of solemn dignity after death, but it has been the norm across Europe for centuries. Perhaps the most famous example of casual disinterment is the "gravediggers" scene in *Hamlet*: the reason the prince iconically picks up Yorrick's skull and wonders if Alexander the Great "look'd a this fashion i' th' earth" is that the jester's body is being scooped out so that a new one (Ophelia's) can replace it. No sentimentality there.

But even an overgrown niche is better than ending up in the ossuary. Modern sensibilities have largely dispensed with the equivalent of Mount Royal's Free Ground (sometimes called a Potter's Field), at least outside of monasteries or catacombs – but ossuaries retain a mystique that can play out in interesting, often political, ways. Most of the 3,000 victims of Madrid's fascist firing squads were originally buried in plots about the Cementerio del Este, but were later transferred to the ossuary. That is certainly sad, but still you might expect to be able to visit a bare patch of ground or a vault of some sort. Not so. Unlike Mount Royal, the Madrid ceme-

tery does not mark its grave-of-last-resort in any way, largely because so many of the bodies dumped into it were politically undesirable. Its location is a mystery. We went to the cemetery office to ask about the two great uncles whom we know were buried there somewhere, but after a quick computer search the official told us there was no trace of them – even though we have the original burial plot receipt. Another family member did show up in their records, listed as having been moved to the ossuary sometime in the 1960s. Oh? And where was the ossuary, we asked? The official, who had clearly realized on which side of the Civil War the great-uncles had fought, gave us a dismissive shrug and sneered: "Who knows?" Fortunately (I guess), we had learned from friends of two possible locations for the ossuary, and went in search of them. One turned out to be a big patch of ground surrounded by a corrugated fence and piled high with trash. The other was a small rusty iron door set in a crumbling brick wall: clearly a pass-through for decomposing remains. No dignity here – indeed, no marker of any sort other than a faint cross painted next to the latch, which convinced us this was the spot.

The institution that has contributed most effectively to the discontinuation of free grounds and ossuaries is, of course, cremation. In the western world, cremation was the product of practical, Protestant, post-Victorian minds that sought to maximize cemetery space by reducing the quantity of what had to be buried. In Canada, it all started up at Mount Royal Cemetery, with the 1902 cremation of Alexander Walker Ogilvie – who, in keeping with his social status,

was interred in the family plot, his name inscribed on the side of the stately monument. However, large sections of the cemetery were subsequently set aside for the burial of cremated remains ("cremains" is apparently the in-house term) in small plots with simple stones. But cremation has also allowed us to keep loved ones in urns, at home, a practice that oddly recalls the ancestor worship of ancient cultures. We can also scatter ashes, typically in a symbolic place: a cousin of mine had her mother in a kind of large salt shaker, and shook a little at over a dozen sacred spots around the continent – including my back garden, where the lady had often visited. This sort of action can be immensely meaningful, but it does fly in the face of the tradition wherein we build monuments to mark the final resting places of the dead. By scattering ashes, we abandon the idea that treasure is marked with an X, and accept that it lies buried in our hearts and our memories.

At the end of the day (metaphorically speaking), what really matters is what we remember. For some, having a spot, ideally marked with name and dates, is a critical part of this process. And clearly there are people who deserve a marker – including the victims of residential schools, of the battlefields of Europe, of military dictatorship, and of drowning in the canal. But graves, marked or unmarked, are but placeholders in our collective memory of those who have left us. The dead themselves are long gone. I like to think they care more about how we remember them than what we do with their bodies. Sooner or later, we will all look like Yorrick in the earth.

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# LOST CORNERS

## *Where in the World is Roxham?*

by Heather Darch



*In the spirit of QAHN's popular "Raising Spirits" documentary film series that searches for cemeteries, crossroads and vanishing places in rural Quebec, a new series of articles called "Lost Corners" will explore disappearing locations across Quebec.*

*We invite any of our readers who happen to know of a "lost corner" in their region to let us know about it so that Heather can contact you for more information. Please make sure there are high resolution historic and modern-day photographs to share and a story of interest to tell. When was the "corner" founded? Who lived there? What happened there and why should we remember this location?*

*Please send your suggestion to [editor@qahn.org](mailto:editor@qahn.org).*

The name "Roxham Road" has recently been associated with an unofficial or "irregular" border crossing from the United States into Canada for asylum seekers hoping for refuge and a better life. The 2017 decision by the United States to drastically reduce the number of refugees it would accept had a major impact on the increase of migrants bypassing official ports of entry into Canada. The numbers of illegal entries jumped from roughly 2,000 to 20,000 in one year. Quebec alone saw over 18,000 people cross through Roxham Road in 2017. The crossing was a loophole in the *Safe Third Country Agreement* between the two countries. Established in 2004, the agreement allowed asylum seekers to request protection in the first safe country they arrived in. Those entering Canada from the United States at non-official ports of entry, however, could also claim asylum. This prevented Canadian border guards from turning back claimants and resulted in openings like Roxham Road.

Two hundred years before Roxham Road became a symbol of optimism for many and a political lightning rod in the House of Commons, it was actually a farming hamlet. Roxham is located in Quebec's Montérégie region, and stretches north and south for about three kilometres along Roxham Road. It also included several side roads named after early settlers.

The hamlet's history began in the French regime when the King of France granted the northern half of the Lacolle seigniorie to Louis Denys de La Ronde (1675-1741) and the southern section to Louis Liénard de Beaujeu (1683-1750). The southern half of the seigniorie was acquired in 1743 by Beaujeu's son, Daniel-Hyacinthe-Marie Liénard de Beaujeu (1711-1755). When he died, his son acquired the seigniorie, re-naming it Beaujeu. The two sections of the seigniorie later merged under the name of Lacolle.

Gabriel Christie (1722-1799) purchased the seigniorie from the Liénard de Beaujeu family in 1765, and opened the area for

settlement. The land policies that he put in place to draw English-speaking settlers to his seigniorie included survey before settlement, location tickets that guaranteed a land grant and safeguarded improvements, specified lot sizes, and the translation of printed deeds into English.

In 1797, settlers were granted lots on the west side of the Richelieu River and near Hemmingford on the 8th and 9th concessions south of the seigniorial domain. This area would become Roxham. While some Loyalists, like Joseph Odell, were pioneer settlers in the region, it was William Akester, a Yorkshire tailor from Beverley, England, who arrived in Roxham in 1827, who is regarded as the founder of the village. He was part of the wave of British immigrants who settled in Roxham, also called Roxham Corners, and the surrounding communities throughout the 1820s and 1830s. The origin of the name "Roxham" is ambiguous, however: there is a Wroxham in Norfolk, England, which is perhaps the namesake of the village.

By the time the community was at its height at the turn of the twentieth century, it had two churches, two schools, an Orange Lodge, a cemetery, a customs house and a post office. The cemetery and the wood-framed Roxham Methodist Church were established in the 1840s. The Roxham Episcopal (Anglican) Church was situated south of the Methodist chapel and was a similar looking structure, but made of brick. The one-room Protestant school was built next to it. A short-lived French-language Catholic School built in the 1930s, was located further south along the same road. The Orangemen's Lodge sat across from the Anglican Church and was also used as a community hall.

The commercial centre of the village, however, was actually located 10 kilometres south of the border in the villages of Champlain and Perry's Mills, New York. The families of Roxham went south to shop and socialize and to earn money in these American communities. Roxham farmers cut wood in the





winter, for example, and sold it to the lumber mill at Perry's Mills to augment their income. Milk from Roxham farms was also routinely transported across the line to a depot in Champlain.

While Roxham was similar in many ways to equally sized farming villages located along the border, its history was punctuated by political events that both involved and alarmed the community. The 1812 and 1814 skirmishes at neighbouring Lacolle Mills disrupted the quiet countryside as did the nearby battles of Lacolle and Odelltown in 1838 in the last clash of the Patriote Rebellion. When Fenians advanced on the border in 1866, and again in 1870, the Roxham Infantry Company joined the Hemmingford Rangers (51st Battalion) to protect the frontier.

When the railway passed Roxham by and the lure of urban centres for employment opportunities enticed youth away from farming, the village began to decline. The school closed its doors in 1945; while it was initially relocated to the yard of the Hemmingford Elementary School and used as an extra classroom, it was moved again and transformed into a residence. The Methodist (United) Church was sold in 1949 and was also moved to Hemmingford, Quebec, where it too was converted into a private home. The Anglican Church was dismantled; its beams and bricks were used to build a garage. After the post office and customs house closed, the hamlet ceased to exist officially.

On March 23, 2023, Canada and the United States reached a deal allowing Ottawa to shut the Roxham Road crossing. No one can request asylum in Canada if they arrive by land from the United States, whether they present themselves at official

Canadian ports of entry or irregular ones. One year on, Roxham has returned to its solitude. A steel cell phone tower now casts its shadow over the cemetery and what is left of this tiny community.

*Heather Darch* is a project director for QAHN and a former museum curator who has been wandering happily around abandoned cemeteries and hamlets for years looking for interesting stories and stones – fortunately not as an incorporeal being.



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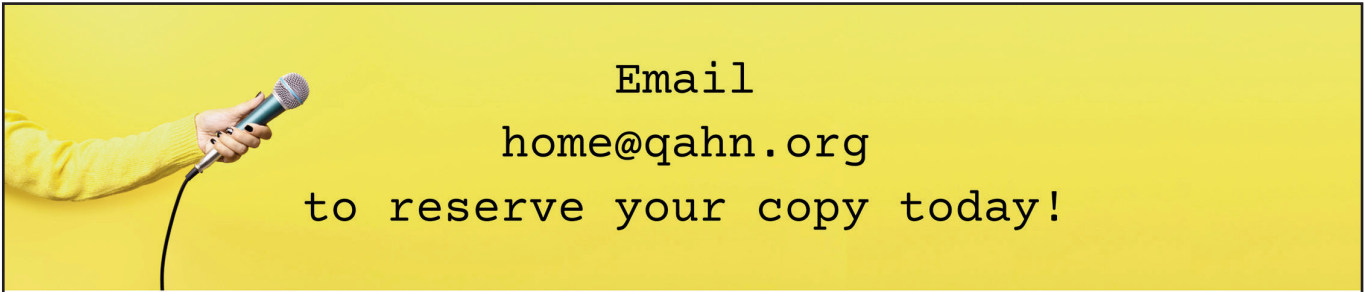
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Top left: House in Roxham, c.1900. Photo courtesy of Hemmingford Archives.  
Bottom: William Akester family stone, Roxham, 2024. Photo: Heather Darch.



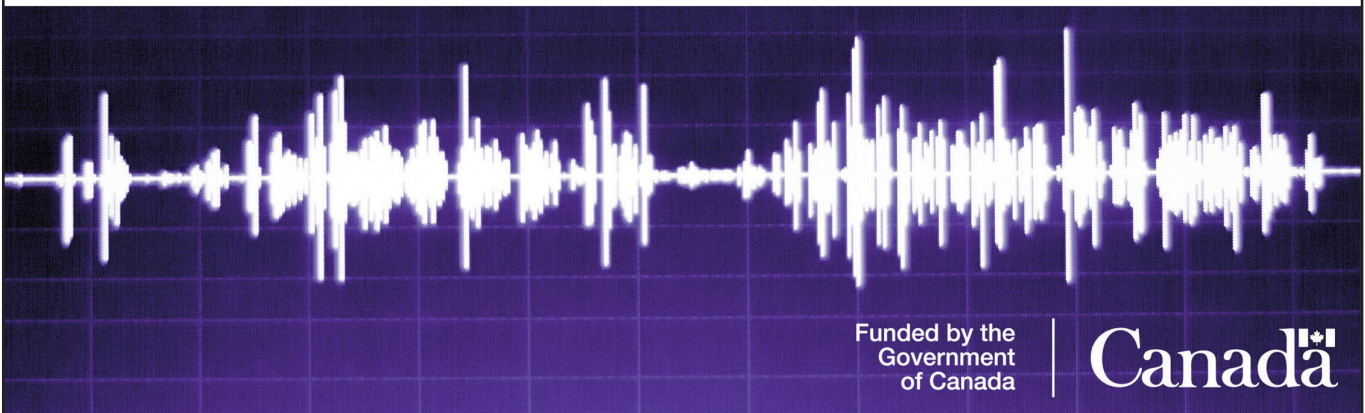
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# PUBLIC ART IN MONTREAL

*Messages from the Past and to the Future*

by Sandra Stock

**W**hy do we create public art? What is the purpose of a sculpture, a mural or even graffiti? What does it add to an urban landscape? Most interestingly, what does it say about a particular society at a particular historic period?

Montreal is especially rich in public art and has been adding to its collection for at least two hundred years. As this is a vast and somewhat amorphous area of works, we will only discuss those that are outside, not confined inside buildings of any sort.

All these examples involve art making a statement. There is always a message, always some group (rarely an individual) asserting themselves about something, generally related to issues of identity. As time goes by, and as cultural change takes its toll, that message is often either misinterpreted by later generations or even lost completely. The only exceptions to this can be community war memorials, where the original message is still very clear.

The first large and imposing public sculpture in Montreal is Nelson's Column, overlooking Jacques Cartier Square, erected in 1809. It is Montreal's oldest monument, and the oldest war memorial in Canada. The statue itself was designed by Robert Mitchell (c.1770-1812), a Scottish architect whose major works were manor houses and churches, one of which, Preston Hall, Midlothian 1791, is a Class I listed heritage site for Scotland. The Nelson monument was created entirely in London and then shipped to Montreal in sections to be assembled here. The

column is made of durable grey compact limestone and the decorative panels of a special composite of the firm Coade & Slade, called Coade stone. Although



there has been some weathering over the past 215 years, the bas relief illustrations around the four sides are still quite sharp and very good examples of this kind of work.

As the column itself is extremely high, we can hardly see Lord Nelson, up there on top peering out through his spyglass. The monument was installed in the midst of the Napoleonic Wars, which did not conclude until 1815. Obviously, the mainly British merchants who sponsored this, the first of Montreal's "statement" artworks, were optimistic that the British would emerge from the war victorious. However, the height of the column also makes us think that there might have been fears about some other parties wanting to knock Lord Nelson from his lofty perch. There is a kind of insecurity lurking here.

Funds for erecting the monument were collected from both English- and French-speaking Montreal residents. Among the latter group were the

Sulpicians (seigneurs of Montreal Island), the Beaubien family, and the Panet family; like many other French speakers at this time, they strongly disapproved of the French Revolution and the Napoleonic regime, and regarded the destruction of Napoleon's navy at Trafalgar as a "triumph of virtue." In later times, there have been a few (unsuccessful) rumblings to remove Nelson, or at least to move the monument to "an English-speaking area." Although the original Mitchell statue was eventually housed in the Montreal History Museum to protect it from time's wear and tear, an identical replica still sits on

top of its lofty column. The statue is now mainly seen as a quaint survivor from Montreal's rather distant past and hardly an affront to anyone.

There is a rather long gap before Montreal erected any more major works of public art in the city's outdoor spaces. This is probably due to the style of the times and the local economy that took some serious dips in the earlier part of the nineteenth century. Famines and epidemics had adverse effects as well, and likely curtailed any enthusiasm for decorative urban landscapes. During these years, Montreal also experienced serious civil unrest, notably the 1837 Rebellion and its difficult aftermath period.

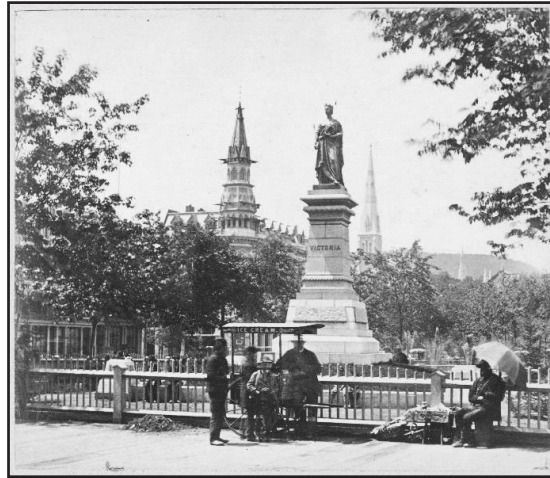
The one important monument – not a statue, nor a celebratory emplacement for colonial rule – was the Irish Commemorative Stone, usually called the Black Rock, which now sits in busy traffic near the Montreal harbour on Bridge Street. This large dark granite boulder was installed by the (mainly

Irish) workers on the Victoria Bridge in 1859 as a memorial to the thousands who died in the typhus epidemic that occurred during the Great Famine of the 1840s. It is estimated that around 6,000 typhus victims, mostly Irish emigrants, are buried in the Montreal harbour area, close to the Black Rock. This memorial is unusual for its time as it commemorates ordinary people who died tragically, not a military victory, a famous politician, or a member of the royal family.

By the 1860s, Montreal appears to have taken a spurt both culturally and economically. The calmer and more prosperous Victorian Era had arrived, with its belief in Progress and Development, especially for the newly created country of Canada. It was time to exalt this still very British colonial society in its public spaces.

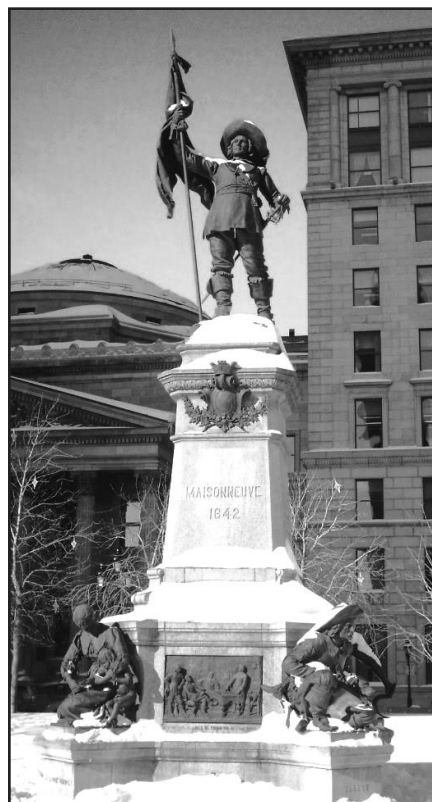
In 1869, a large and impressive monument to the widely popular Queen Victoria was made the centerpiece of a public square bearing her name, located in a prestigious residential and institutional neighbourhood in a newer section of Montreal. The sculptor was Marshall Wood (1820-1882), a competent if not exceptional artist of bronze figures who appears to have specialized in the royal family, especially the Queen. There are Victorias by Wood in Sydney, Melbourne, Calcutta, and Ottawa. The last three are identical – a kind of assembly line product. To be fair, everyone all over the Empire wanted one. These were a “statement,” of course, but as Victoria personally was viewed positively, a bit softened. A king might not have fared as well. Wood did his work in London, although he and his family did come to Canada for two years (1871-73), perhaps to oversee installing more Victorias at points west.

As the nineteenth century progressed, public art in Montreal increased in number and quality. This is especially the case for works celebrating Canada’s history, political identity, and growth. Two outstanding artists, both Quebec-born, were to create two of Montreal’s most visible and interesting public monuments: the 1893 Maisonneuve monument at Place d’Armes by Louis-Philippe Hébert, and the 1919 George-Étienne Cartier monument in Mount



Royal Park, designed by George William Hill. These works still speak to us of their time and its social values, but are also very exceptional public artworks – albeit for slightly different reasons. Both monuments have become part of the cultural landscape of Montreal.

The impressive monument to Maisonneuve (its official title: “Monument à Paul de Chomedey, Sieur de Maisonneuve”) has been the centerpiece of Place d’Armes since its installation in 1895. It sits facing the Gothic Revival Notre Dame Basilica and the river beyond, with its back to the Greek Revival Bank of Montreal building and

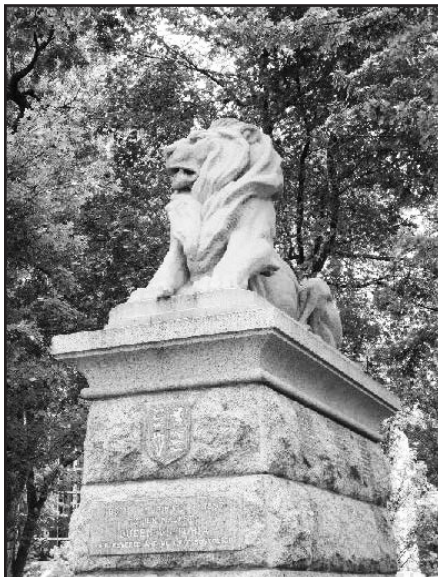


the mountain, and is surrounded by many other important heritage buildings. This totally over-the-top monument is easily the most successful in Montreal – it does what it meant to do. The sculptor of this large, multi-figured bronze monument with many bas-relief panels around its granite base was Louis-Philippe Hébert, who was born in Sainte-Sophie-de-Mégantic in 1850, one of 13 children, into what must have been an encouraging and fairly prosperous farm family. Hébert showed artistic ability early and, even though he worked in many jobs as a very young man, he eventually studied woodcarving and then expanded into stone and bronze sculpture. At that time, there was a long, thriving, tradition of carving in Quebec, mainly for religious institutions and churches. Hébert’s progress as an artist appears to have followed the traditional pattern of apprenticeship, giving him experience with several established carvers. He also had his first stay in Italy – a profound influence upon him – as part of the Pope’s guard, called the Zouaves. After returning to Mégantic, he left again to work in the United States and learn English.

By the time Hébert was commissioned to create the Maisonneuve monument, he had become the most renowned artist in any medium in Canada. He had done the exterior décor for the Quebec legislative building. His proposal for the area over the main entrance, entitled *Famille d’Abénaquis or Halte dans la forêt*, was submitted to the 1889 universal exhibition in Paris and won him the third prize medal of honour, a first for a Canadian artist. There are statues of Frontenac, Montcalm, Wolfe, plus two allegorical groups, still watching us from their prestigious posts on this building. Hébert had many stays in Paris during his career and eventually had another trip to Italy. The centre of all art was still Europe, although it is interesting to note that Hébert’s entire oeuvre consisted of historic figures and events of Canada, especially from the New France period, plus some contemporary or recent political and ecclesiastical persons of his own time.

The Maisonneuve monument reflects the Victorian taste for heroic



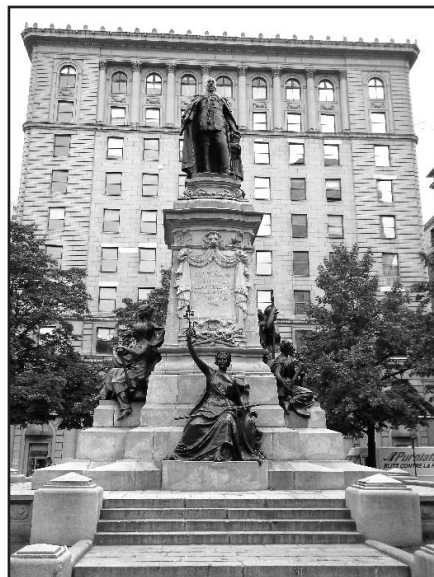


history with an inspiring narrative and a kind of energetic patriotism. Celebrating this so-called settler-colonial world has become very unpopular in certain circles now, but in Montreal in 1895, with Empire (now British, but that did not matter – it was European civilization triumphant) at its height, this was the perfect visual embodiment of a proud past and a foundation story for Canada, Quebec and of course Montreal. It is also extremely effective, artistically. The figures have movement and intelligence, and the whole installation is balanced and harmonious in shape and colour. It was made to inspire, and it does – although perhaps not in the way initially intended by the very religious world of 1890s Quebec.

Hébert was one of the few sculptors of his period commissioned to portray female historical figures. Female sculp-

tures were usually either angels, or mythological – actual women were almost entirely absent, other than reigning monarchs like Victoria. However, among Hébert’s most successful later works is the empathetic 1908 monument to Jeanne Mance at the Hôtel-Dieu, and, on a rather more history-as-triumph theme (like the Maisonneuve monument), his 20-foot-high bronze monument from 1913 to Marie-Madeleine Jarret (Madeleine de Verchères) at Verchères – not in Montreal itself but certainly a noteworthy addition to our wider area.

Hebert’s last commission was the statue to Edward VII in Phillip’s Square. He noted in his diary that, “This monument is the largest and last work I have done.” Hébert died in 1917, leaving us an enormous artistic legacy of civic art throughout Eastern Canada, especially



Montreal.

Perhaps the most striking work of public art in Montreal is the 1919 monument to Sir George-Étienne Cartier on the eastern lower slope of Mount Royal, overlooking Park Avenue. As with all real estate, location is nearly everything for civic emplacements and the Cartier monument certainly has one of the best imaginable: it is situated at a height and is surrounded by open parkland for some distance on all sides with no other major structures near. This large and impressive tribute to Cartier – one of the chief architects of Canadian Confederation and an important Quebec career lawyer and politician – is more than 100 feet high and comprises 18 figures cast in bronze. It was without equal in Quebec, and was conceived as one of the city’s beautification projects.

The designer of the Cartier monument was George William Hill, another Quebec-born sculptor (1861-1934) and an outstanding artist of the same period as Hébert, although he is somewhat more modern and has a more restrained but still essentially heroic, history oeuvre. One of Hill’s most notable works is the lion on the fountain erected in Dominion (now Dorchester) Square to commemorate Victoria’s Diamond Jubilee, commissioned in 1897 by the Sun Life Assurance Company. The lion that sits at the edge of the square, overlooked by Sun Life’s iconic building, was modeled on the Lion of Belfort, a memorial to a battle of the Franco-Prussian War. Also in Dorchester Square is Hill’s 1912 Strathcona and South





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Left: Lion, Dorchester Square, Montreal, 2011. Photo: Elena Cerrolaza.  
Centre: King Edward VII monument, Phillips Square. Photo: Jeangagnon.

Right : Jeanne Mance statue, Hotel Dieu.  
Photo: Jean Gagnon





African Soldiers Memorial, the only equestrian monument in Montreal. In that year, Hill won the competition for designing the Cartier Monument.

Hill was born in 1861 in Danville, in the Eastern Townships, an area with an active stone quarrying and masonry industry. Following his father, a stone mason, Hill worked for eight years as a marble cutter, and honed his work as a chief sculptor. He also studied at the school of the Council of Arts and Manufactures of Quebec in Montreal. Later, he was accepted at the École Nationale des Beaux-Arts in Paris. Like Hébert, the European (mainly Fench) influence on his work is evident, but, again like Hébert, the majority of Hill’s work, except for some war memorials, had Canadian themes or at least Canadian content.

Even though the Cartier monument is an important addition to Montreal’s most significant public space (the Mountain), it does have a few shortcomings artistically. The huge, looming figure on top – called Fame or Liberty (depending on the reference!) – is a kind of angel balancing on one foot, ready for take-off; it completely overshadows the realistic figure of Cartier himself standing at some distance underneath. The other figures, although well-executed, are symbolic – figures for the original four Canadian provinces, an enigmatic family group that is supposed to be “Legislation,” and another group with children intended to represent Cartier’s contributions to education. Although very

popular in its day, this mixture of the allegorical and the realistic somehow falls flat a hundred years later. As a city centrepiece, the Cartier monument still makes its statement: it is a popular recreation site for Montrealers and the focus of the “Tam Tam” drumming gathering every Sunday afternoon in the summer.

There has been another century of Montreal adding items to its now vast collection of public art. Of course, among these are more traditional works, war memorials and historic tributes – but also different styles of sculptures and of art forms in our landscape or cityscape. Many are abstract and/or reflective of the city itself rather than of

famous individuals or of groups making a “statement.” However, the statements are still here, but in different forms, such as murals and graffiti. The samples from the past we mentioned in this article led the way and must be valued and preserved.

*Sandra Stock has a background in Art History and has written extensively about people and institutions in Montreal and the Laurentians.*

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Top: Strathcona and South African Soldiers Memorial, Dorchester Square, Montreal. Photo: Sandra Stock.

Bottom: George Etienne Cartier Monument, Montreal, 2017. Photo: Kenneth C. Zerkel.



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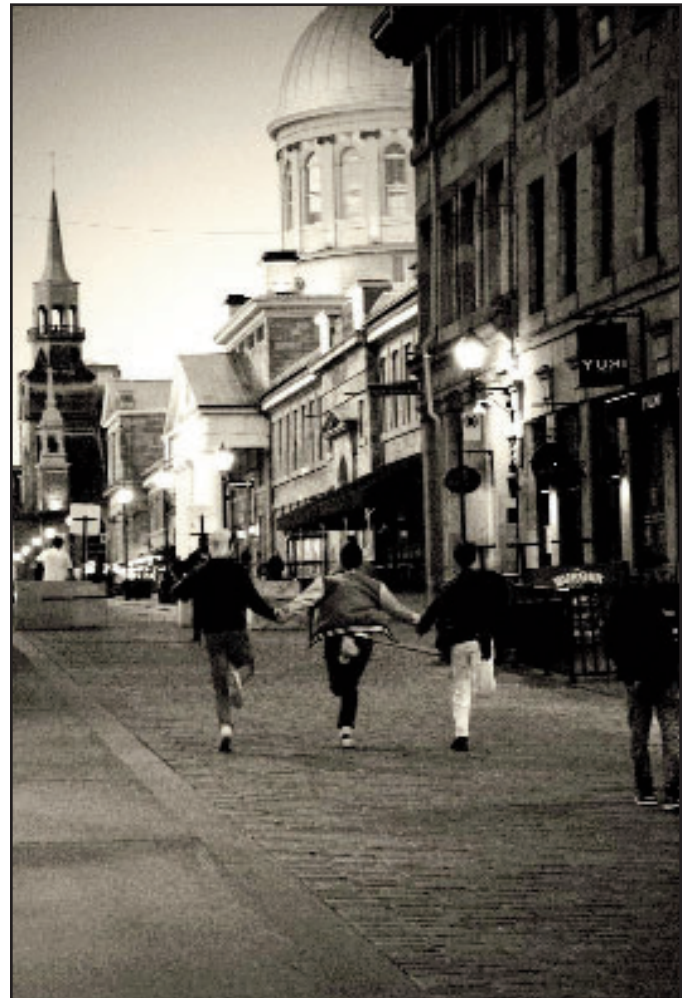


# 2024 HERITAGE PHOTO CONTEST WINNERS

## FIRST PRIZE

Maya Bisson  
 Secondary 5, Rosemere High School  
 Rosemère, Quebec  
 Title: "Stride of Brotherhood - Exploring Old Montreal with Laughter"

Capturing a timeless moment in the heart of Old Montreal, my camera lens focused on a scene that perfectly represents friendship and happiness. On the street of Jaques-Cartier, with the perfect lighting, old buildings and cracked pavement, three of my closest friends dashed through the cobblestone streets, their laughter echoing through the historic streets. In that quick moment, their carefree spirits connected as they ran hand in hand, united in a bond forged through shared experiences and cherished memories. Their laughter filled the air, bringing life to the old streets as if they were young kids again. As they raced through the streets, their joy illuminated the path ahead, casting aside any shadows of doubt or worry. Each step they took resonated with a sense of belonging, a celebration of friendship deeply rooted in the heritage of our Quebecois community. In their simple act of friendship, they honored our shared bond, showing us that even in busy times, friendships are strong and lasting. That's when I pulled my camera gently near my eye and clicked. Capturing this moment with my camera, preserving the memory forever.



## SECOND PRIZE

Nolan Waterhouse  
 Secondary 4, Massey-Vanier High School  
 Cowansville, Quebec  
 Title: "The Huge Rock"

Situated on the farm my family previously owned is a massive rock that stands as a marker to the generations that have come before us. This rock, along with other landmarks scattered on the farm, serves as a reminder of the lives and legacies of our ancestors who once called this place home.

My 5th great grandfather, Francis Hogel Cook, a pioneer, was the first settler on the Waterhouse farm that we know today. He was born on 20 November 1790 in Alburgh, Vermont, to Philip Cook Junior and Elizabeth Hogel. Both his father and his grandfathers were United Empire Loyalists. He was raised in Alburgh, Vermont, and came to Lower Canada around 1819. There, he settled on the 200-acre lot in the Township of Sutton that he inherited after his father died. His father was granted that land (Lot 13, Range 1) by Letters Patent on August 31, 1802.





When my ancestor settled on his inherited land, he built his log cabin against the huge rock I previously mentioned. The back side of the rock is almost straight up and down, measuring about three metres tall, where one of the walls of his cabin stood. Although the log cabin no longer stands, the indentation of where his fireplace used to be is still visible on the rock.

This landmark remains as a symbol of heritage, and the determination of our ancestors. It reminds us of the struggles and challenges that they overcame to make this rugged landscape their home.



### THIRD PRIZE

Angelina Rasponi  
Secondary 5, Rosemere High School  
Rosemère, Quebec  
Title: “Afternoon Treat”

Coffee and a biscotti is a perfect afternoon treat especially in Montreal. When I was younger my Nonno everyday at 11 a.m. would go take a coffee, preferably a latte and a biscotti. When he was living in Italy he would tell me about all the coffee shops that he went too and all the kinds of Biscottis he would get. When he came to Montreal, he told me that the only places he would go too to get the perfect coffee was Café Olimpico. He told me that the authenticity and cheap prices remind him of his time in Italy. The beans that were used to make the coffee has the rich yet subtle taste that brings u back every time. They say a picture can say 1000 words but when you eat something or drink something it can bring u back to the simplest yet important memory. So that is what drinking a coffee or maybe even an espresso meant to my grandfather. Whenever I go to Café Olimpico I feel my Nonno there with me, and I will forever appreciate the little things.

### HONOURABLE MENTION

Sophia Wagner-Vanamala  
Secondary 4, Vincent Massey Collegiate  
Montreal, Quebec  
Title: “Forget House in Winter”

Known as Louis-Joseph Forget House (Maison Forget), this elaborate family residence located at 1195 Sherbrooke Street West in Montreal’s Square Mile, was actually owned by his wife, Maria Raymond, who was born in 1859, married Louis in 1876, and died in 1925. Both were French-Canadian Catholics who lived in an Anglophone neighbourhood. Louis-Joseph Forget became a politician, financier and stockbroker.

The house was built in 1884. Its exterior is a mix of styles including a Second Empire style slate, false mansard roof with a cut limestone symmetrical facade and upper dormers. It is a four storey family house for entertaining, business and family-life. The interior design is believed to be influenced by Maria’s taste for luxury and her trips abroad including to Algeria, France and London. It was re-designed in 1902 by the Maxwell brothers and shows influences from Victorian-Orientalism styles including ornate carved pomegranates, fleur-de-lis, and vines. It has rich dark wood panelling, curved wood staircase, stained-glass windows, fancy fireplaces, and a skylight. The house also has an imposing exterior staircase.

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[msfoundation.org](http://msfoundation.org).



**HONOURABLE MENTION**

Saïa Wallis  
 Secondary 3, Marymount Academy International  
 Montreal, Quebec  
 Title: "Skiing On Forever"

Ten years ago, I first learned how to ski. I was six years old and it was my first winter in Canada. My grandfather brought me to Mont Bromont that day. Little did I know that I was being initiated into a long-time Wallis tradition.

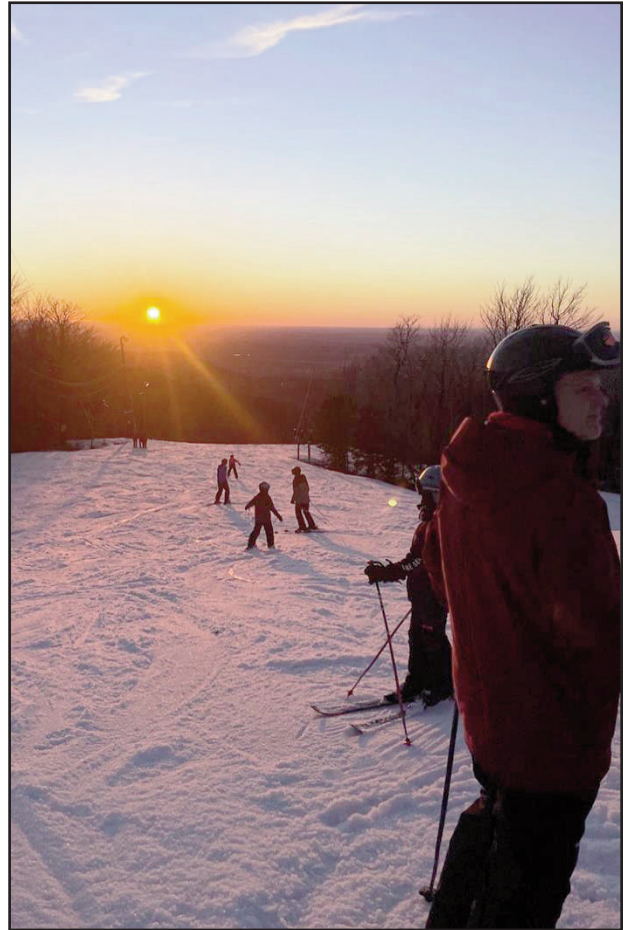
"Bend your knees."  
 "Keep your arms wide."

I spent hours with him calling out suggestions as we skied down the slopes over and over again. He was an amazingly patient teacher. My whole family was taught by my grandfather. One by one, from his own five children to his fourteen grandchildren, each of us learned the tricks and skills to be as good a skier as he is.

The rest of that winter, I followed my older cousins down the slopes, with the snow battering my face while I tried to catch up to them and practicing the new skills I had just learnt.

Flash forward ten years. Several times a year, our large family bombards a mountain and ski and snowboard together. It may only be a couple of hours, but these are memories that I will always cherish. They are the basis of what it means to be a family – being together and passing down skills and knowledge from one generation to the next.

I know my grandfather will not always be here. I am not worried. My own father or myself will be here to tell my children to bend their knees during a turn.



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# 2024 HERITAGE ESSAY CONTEST WINNERS



## FIRST PRIZE

Flying Minister  
by Reid Ransom  
Grade 5, Harrington Harbour School  
Harrington Harbour, Quebec

Before I begin telling you about the person who changed my community, I first must tell you a little about my hometown. I live on the remote island of Harrington Harbour located in the gulf of St. Lawrence, Quebec. Life here is much more different than in the city. First of all, there are no roads, instead we have boardwalks. If you need to leave the island you can either go by boat or by helicopter. Since the island is so remote little changes have occurred over the years.

To tell you about the person who changed my community I have to go back to the 1960s. It all started when a minister called Reverend Robert Bryan arrived in his float plane to offer his services as a minister. He quickly became much more than just a minister. The fact that he had a plane allowed him to transport people who needed medical care to a hospital. He saved countless lives. In addition to helping people in need he also recognized the lack of extracurricular activities available to the youth on the island. After seeing the need for sports equipment he reached out to charities for donations of equipment. Then he brought in volunteers to help teach the youth how to play sports such as hockey and baseball. The youth quickly became a fan of hockey but there was no rink to practice on. So he took the initiative of organizing local volunteers to help cut lumber for the rink. He was not a bystander; he worked side by side with the people. The icing on the cake was when he arranged to have the hockey star, Bobby Orr brought in for a visit. These are just a few of his accomplishments he achieved in his time here.

## SECOND PRIZE

Floating Houses  
by Liam Lemay  
Grade 6, Netagamiou School  
Chevery, Quebec

Back in the day people used to live on small islands close to the fishing grounds, but in the winter they didn't have any resources to live and survive. They needed wood and supplies, to hunt and trap in the winter; therefore, they took the decision to float their summer homes across the St. Lawrence River to what is known as present day Chevery, where I currently live. Floating houses started between 1950 to the 1960s. This became a trend during this time, people began floating summer homes to permanently settle villages along the coastline.

Chevery was an ideal location, so people could survive the summers and winters with ease because it was close to the fishing grounds and wood supplies. Trees were necessary so people could cut lumber to make a house or camp and burn in wood stoves.

The way they floated these houses was to tie empty barrels under the floor of the houses with ropes. First the houses were pulled close to the water with tractors. When the houses were on the water, they began the difficult task, towing the houses by boat. This could only be done at high tide for it to be successful.

Fun facts, today there is a street, Oliver 80, that is named after the tractor that helped bring the houses on land once they arrived in Chevery. Some of the houses that were floated to Chevery are still standing to this day, how cool is that.





**THIRD PRIZE**

Veterans Day  
 by Alexanne Bureau  
 Grade 5-6, Shawinigan High School  
 Shawinigan, Quebec

“What did you do?” is one of the questions that were asked before the ceremony. Each year all my school goes in the gym, and we celebrate veterans who fought for Canada. It was the eleventh of November, and all the building was sitting in the gym waiting to give to the retired soldiers what we made or prepared for them. We do that every year for all those people who fought for our freedom, and who without we would surely not be free.

It is part of our school’s heritage; it is important for my school’s community to celebrate it. Every year all the classes prepare something for them, some sing, some make paper poppies or drawings. This year, my class sang Fallen Soldier. They liked it. For us, it means a lot that retired soldiers come to our school, answer our questions, and look forward to the next ceremony the following year.

Of all the celebrations, this is one I value most. For this rare occasion, all the school is in the gym, in silence, listening to what adults and children have to say, sing, give. Everyone is respectful to all those veterans or active soldiers who take the time to come to our school for us.

This is one of the so many things my school celebrates, but this one, everyone looks forward to and starts preparing months before. For me, it is enough proof that that celebration is part of what my school was, is, and will be.

**HONOURABLE MENTION**

An uncle, a great uncle but most of all an idol  
 by Sebastian Mac Phail  
 Grade 6, Gardenvue Elementary School  
 Montreal, Quebec

Ben Faccone was born on May 23, 1961. To my mom, he’s an

uncle, to my brother, he’s a great uncle but to me he’s an idol. When he was young he didn’t speak much English because his parents mainly spoke Italian at home. On the first day of elementary school he was very nervous. Thankfully, he made friends easily so he was fine. Ben would go out on public ice rinks with a wooden stick and a dream. He would train all day and all night. Now he dominates on the ice, still playing hockey for over 50 years.

My uncle taught me how to skate, helped me understand the game of hockey and has inspired me to become a better player. He doesn’t just bring me to all my practices and games though, he’s also my coach. Don’t tell the other coaches but a

lot of kids say he’s the best coach! He might be really hard on me sometimes but that’s what makes me one of the best players on the team. When I first started the season, I thought hockey was just about getting the puck and scoring. Now I realize it’s much more than that, it’s about being there for your team and giving your best every time you’re on the ice. I really love and appreciate him, he’s my favorite person.

In conclusion, my uncle Ben is my hometown hero.

**HONOURABLE MENTION**

Chevery Carnival  
 by Jace Chislett  
 Grade 4, Netagamiou School  
 Chevery, Quebec

A festival that happens every year in my community is the Chevery carnival. Chevery is one of the many villages along the coast of the Lower North Shore.

The Chevery carnival is a competitive hockey tournament, but it is more than that. There is a potluck supper with lots of yummy food that is donated by each member of the community. There are also races, for example running races, crawling races, and more. These races are for all ages, whether you’re 2 years old or 60 years old, there is a race for you. The Chevery carnival allows everyone from along the coast or outside communities to gather, watch hockey and have fun.

The Chevery carnival has been going on ever since 1972, that’s 52 years! It started out on an outdoor rink and now we are lucky enough to have a covered rink. I think continuing to have the Chevery carnival is important to the community because Chevery is an isolated region and there are no movie theaters or shopping malls, so this is our main form of entertainment for the winter.

It is one of the best events in my community because it brings everyone together and we always help our neighboring communities. I travel to other communities along the coast to support their carnivals. It is so much fun. I think everybody should experience a winter carnival on the coast.



# CAPTAIN HOLMAN HUNTS FOR GOLD

by Michael Webb



*I have spent the past decade undertaking ancestral research, and it was while researching my great-great-grandfather, Josiah Holman (1821-93), that I discovered he had written a journal during one of his many mining ventures. While the information written in the journal is historically correct, in many instances I have triangulated dates and places to check for accuracy. Any assumptions are deduced from information sourced and gathered through research as an adjunct to create the narrative. Passages from Captain Holman's journal have, where appropriate, been added in italics to the story.*

*I am keen to make contact with publishers who might be interested in printing the full unedited version of this small, somewhat unknown piece of Canadian history.*

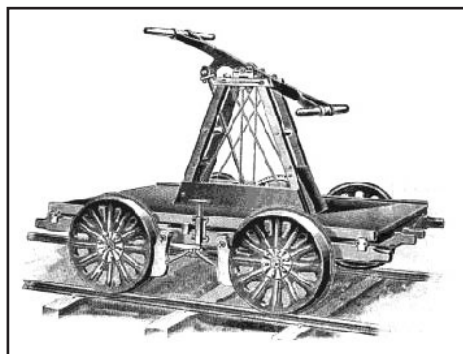
## THE EATON AND ETCHEMIN RIVERS

Having spent the latter half of July 1853 searching the Salmon River in the Eastern Townships for potential mining sites along, Josiah Holman and his team would devote the first part of August to exploring the Eaton River, another tributary of the St. Francis. Alexander Galt, secretary of the British American Land Company (BALC), arranged for Holman to use Colonel John Moore's farm, near the village of Eaton Corner, as a base from which to explore the Eaton River. Moore, a BALC agent, had represented Sherbrooke in the assemblies of both Lower Canada and the Province of Canada, and sat on the committee that Galt chaired promoting the rail link from Montreal to Boston through the Eastern Townships.

Before getting established with Moore, Holman wanted to check out one other area, however, so on August 5, he

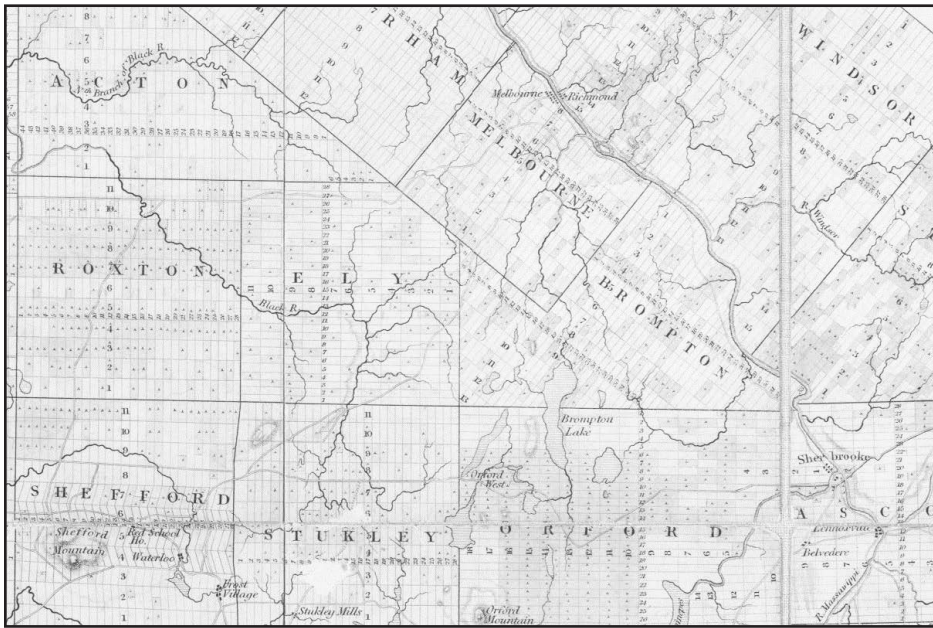
sent most of the men on ahead and returned to Sherbrooke with Skews and Treweek. At the Sherbrooke post office, Holman collected £50 from BALC: £30 of which was to cover his expenses and £20 was to be paid to BALC agent John Cummins. The 4 p.m. train took them to Acton, a village just beyond Richmond. Cummins and his family lived six miles away, at Roxton Falls, where they spent the night.

In the morning, Cummins took them



back to the station at Acton, where they met Whitford, another member of the team, who was staying in the village. Together, they "left this place by Hand Rail Car [and] travelled at the rate of 12 miles per hour" through heavily wooded countryside to the village of Upton. Collecting a horse and cart, Holman and company drove some two miles to an area Cummins had identified as promising. Here, after removing the surface foliage, they could see some yellow stones. By picking at the ledges, they found a large vein of green stones mixed with yellow ore about four feet wide, extending irregularly about 24 or 30 feet. Several small veins, from half an inch to two inches wide, produced good specimens similar to the large vein. This was the best mineral find Holman had seen so far in Lower Canada. A little further on, he came across a six-foot deep pit; after cautiously climbing down, Holman discovered some very





good specimens of yellow ore and green carbonate of copper. They continued fossicking around a small hill consisting mainly of a limestone, but could see no other likely mineral veins. They drove back to Acton, where Whitford returned to his hotel; the rest got to Roxton Falls in time for supper.

The next day, they travelled a mile east along a narrow, corrugated road that followed the railway line, and examined two small veins of yellow ore, one six feet long and the other twenty, each a couple of inches wide. They then walked half a mile north of the railway to the middle of a cornfield, where they explored a small hill with large quantities of quartz mixed with yellow and green ores on its surface.

From Acton, Holman and Whitford caught a train to Sherbrooke, the fare being \$1 each. Waiting for Holman at the hotel was a letter from his wife, Elizabeth, dated July 19, with reassuring news about the children and his parents.

Holman and Whitford travelled by stagecoach to the Union Hotel in Eaton Corner, where the rest of the men were staying. They had made no discoveries of note in the area, so the following morning they all headed to Colonel Moore's farm just east of the village. Holman introduced himself, and Moore showed him where they could set up camp.

At the Eaton River, a short distance away, the men found a few encouraging particles of gold in the pits near the riverbed. During the following week,

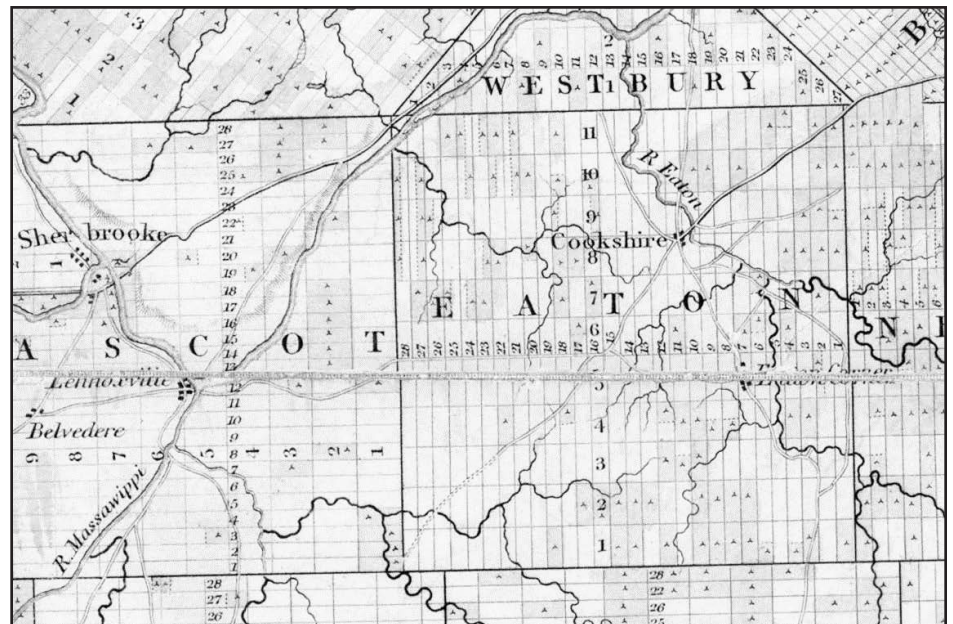
Holman selected places along the riverbed edge where the men could dig new pits and wash the sand and alluvial gravel. They did find large quantities of pyrites, but only a few contained very small amounts of gold. "Heavy rain during the early part of the morning. The tent leaked badly preventing the men from sleeping. They told it was too bad to keep a pig in such a place."

On Sunday, Holman would have liked to have found a church to attend, but instead spent the day writing a long letter to his old friend William Tregonning. So far, he wrote, prospects of finding gold in substantial quantities were not encouraging. Holman also wrote letters to Elizabeth and his father,

which he addressed and included in a separate envelope inside the one to Tregonning. In the morning, he drove to the post office to mail the letter, and also picked up a £20 postal note from the British American Mining Association for expenses.

After almost two weeks, Holman concluded that prospects of finding gold on the Eaton River were even less than on the Salmon River. "I believe half mile of the best Ledges seen today would not yield an ounce of Gold," he wrote. "The whole yield of Gold with 9 people today is not enough to weigh in our Scales." Holman instructed the men to gather up the tents and equipment and head further up the river about four miles to a farm owned by one Captain Hurd, who offered them dinner and a place to sleep.

Next morning, after travelling four miles upstream, Holman noted a number of ledges 30 to 40 yards long. The men broke some ten yards of the ledges' thin hollow layers. It was a perfect way to catch any gold that might have washed downstream: "A man could probably break and wash 15 yards of ledge in a day yielding near 1/2 grains worth, 3d at 4 per ounce after 8 hours hard toil," Holman reckoned. But they found no gold. Back at the Hurd farm, they learned that Bailey, who had been Holman's guide a few weeks earlier, had arrived with a barrel of biscuits from Eaton Corner. After a second night, Holman thanked Mrs. Hurd for her





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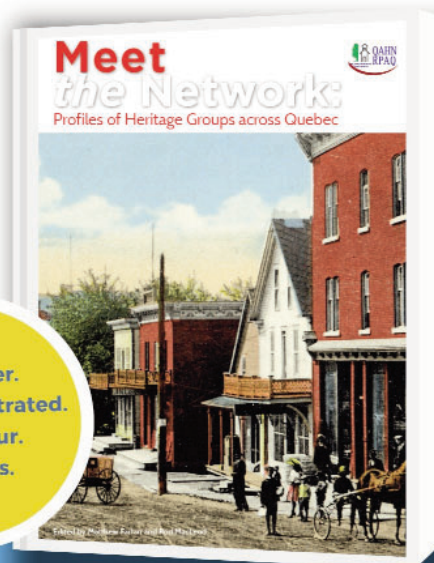
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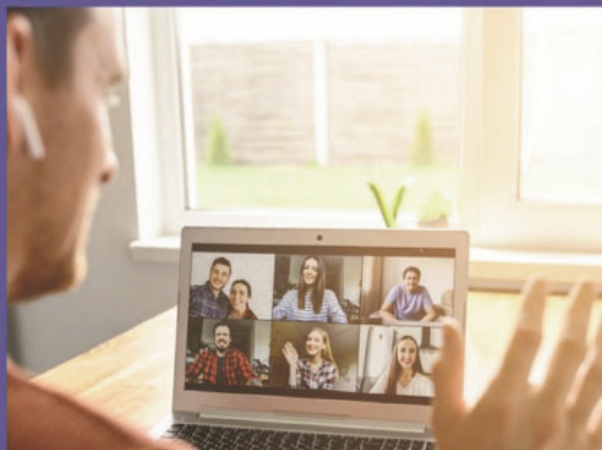
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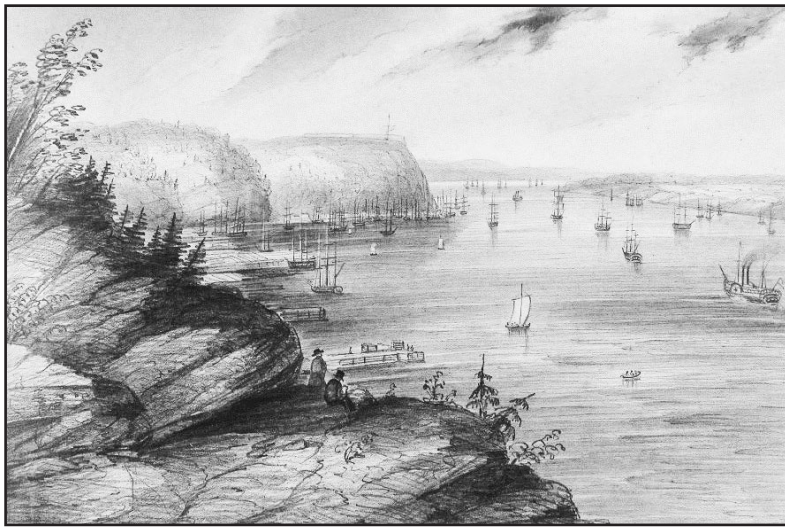


hospitality, and the miners headed east, towards the boundary line between Lower Canada and the United States.

It was hard going, through thick forest. "After slowly walking the woods, now and then climbing trees in search of our way we finally halted at 5 p.m.," Holman wrote. They travelled mostly on the west side of the Eaton River, occasionally crossing small tributaries, where Holman noticed quartz stones but saw no indication of any veins. They went about half a mile into New Hampshire and washed some gravel and coarse sand, but again found no gold, nor did they observe any ledges warranting further exploration. Holman had travelled as far east from Cookshire as he wanted. "In no instance from Cookshire to the Boundary Line have any Vein shown symptoms of Gold nor of the number of Quartz pebbles broken by us have we detected a single particle. The Veins are few in number and presenting no indications to warrant a trial of mining to be made on them." They returned to the Hurd farm.

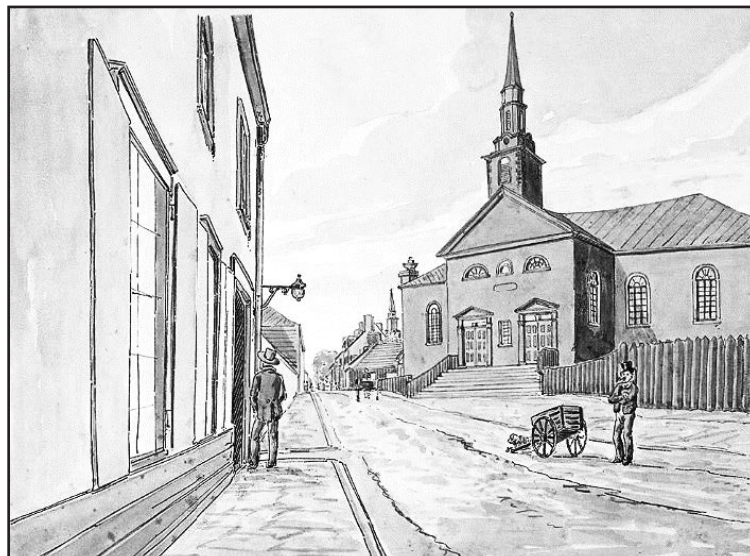
Enthusiasm was waning. "All hands complaining of heart burning from eating salt pork and hard biscuits," Homan wrote, perhaps referring to the provisions Bailey had brought. "Skews unwell from fatigue and poor fare," he added. For a change of pace the next day, Holman and Hurd headed into the nearby forest with rifles, and shot 13 partridges in about an hour. This would provide a useful supplement to the men's diet and, Holman hoped, lift their spirits.

Late in the afternoon, he received a letter from Galt instructing him to examine a copper mine near Quebec City. Early the following morning, after instructing the men to continue exploring the Eaton River downstream, Holman and Whitford headed back to Sherbrooke, where they



checked into the Magog House Hotel. At the BALC office, Holman collected an envelope containing £12/10 to cover expenses. He then went to the train station and bought two First Class tickets to Montreal, which cost \$2.50 each.

The two men arrived in Montreal the following morning at 10.30 a.m., promptly bought two tickets for the steamboat to Quebec. They ate dinner at a hotel before boarding at 7 p.m., and made themselves comfortable in their cabin for the evening. The steamboat arrived at the Quebec wharf just after 6 a.m., having covered over 180 miles down the St Lawrence River. From the wharf they caught a cab to the Macromis Hotel on St. Peter Street. After settling into his room, Holman took a cab to the Scotch Church for morning prayers. In the evening, he attended the very stylish Methodist chapel, where a collection was required.



With a letter of introduction from Galt, Holman and Whitford walked down the narrow but impressive St. Peter Street to No. 25: the offices of George Pemberton, a local timber merchant with an interest in mining. After formal introductions, Pemberton informed Holman that a Mr. Fisher would accompany him to a copper mine about 18 miles to the east, on the Etchemin River. Fisher arrived mid-morning, and

he, Holman and Whitford left in a covered Calash carriage, reaching the mine site at around 6 p.m. Lodging had been arranged for them at a French-Canadian house nearby.

In the morning, they inspected the site:

*Examined the Mine today showing a small portion of Native Copper. The Vein is not over 3/4 inch wide & not traceable above 3 feet long. It is a worthless spec.... A farmer having some land adjoining the same reported to Mr Fisher in my presence that he had picked up two pieces of Gold from the surface of his corn field, and produced one of the pieces of Gold. Mr F. commenced washing for Gold selecting samples of earth and shelf, labouring hard for 4 hrs without detecting a particle. I told Mr F. that I expected the man had got it from his son-in-law who had recently returned from California, but Mr. F. could not believe it until he had washed the whole day without finding a spec.*

The following day, Holman and company

*went up the River to St. Anselme village. The bed of the river is wide and shows a great deal of rock. It is variegated clay slate in alternate layers of red, blue and green. At some Mills a*



little beyond the village, there are some small falls of water and the rock is beautifully exposed. However it does not present anything of interest for mining purposes.

At four in the afternoon, Holman returned to Quebec by cart, leaving Whitford under Fisher's direction. Pemberton was of course disappointed to hear Holman's opinion on the likely future operation of the mine.

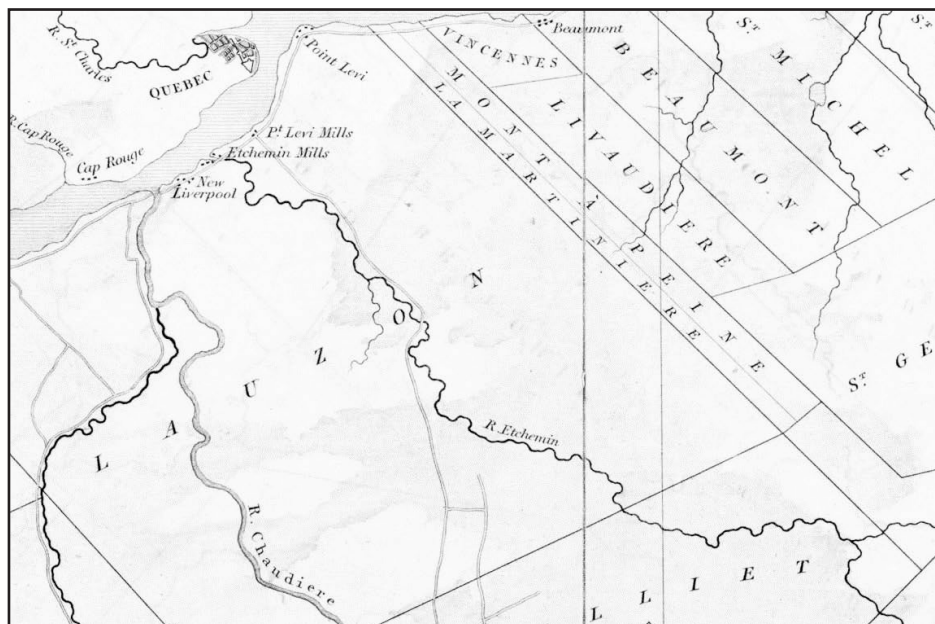
Holman did have time for some sightseeing.

*In the evening drove to the Marmorenci Falls where the stream falls over a precipice 260 feet deep. The sight is extremely impressive but I regret that one left so late as not to have time to go to the bottom of the falls to witness the change of scenery on the fall. The drive from Quebec, 9 miles to the Falls is very pleasant, passing over a good wood (turnpike) through some neat farms and good grazing land.*

Whitford eventually arrived from the site, reporting that the vein had tapered out from its initial three feet to almost six inches. He also said that Fisher was enthusiastic about the area's potential and would continue exploring for a further week. After checking out of



Top: Detail from Colton's Atlas of the World, Vol.1, 1855.



the hotel, Holman and Whitford headed for the docks and caught the 5 o'clock steamboat (the *Quebec*) for Montreal. The boat's 96 upper berths were all taken, so they slept in the lower saloon, where fortunately the accommodation was more than adequate. Holman caught a cab to Galt's office, only to find he was away on business in Upper Canada and it was not known when he might return. Not wishing to waste time, they took the train to Sherbrooke, arriving at 8.30 p.m.

Next morning, Holman caught up with local BALC agent Joseph Pennoyer and his wife, Nancy, and attended morning service with them at St. Peter's Church, on the corner of Commercial and Montreal Streets. An imposing brick building with impressive carved oak doors, St. Peter's was one of the most prominent structures in Sherbrooke.

In the afternoon, Holman completed most of his report on the Eaton River expedition undertaken for Galt and Pemberton. He also had time to write a letter to John Tregonning, as well as one to his father and a short note to Elizabeth. He spent the evening with Skews, who was staying with Whitford at Cameron's Hotel. After breakfast, Holman walked to the BALC office and presented Pennoyer with the completed mine report, which would be forwarded to Galt along with a note he had received earlier from Pemberton. At the post office, he collected £250 on account from the British American Mining Association.

At 3 o'clock, he travelled three miles to Lennoxville, where he had time to stroll around and admire the white-washed cottages and the fine educational facilities of Bishop's College and Grammar School by the river. While walking, he examined some areas of quartz veins he had seen earlier which displayed favourable looking "killas" (a Cornish mining term for the altered, usually bedded sedimentary rocks or clay-slates and siltstones that surround the granitic rocks of the peninsula).

Pennoyer arrived in the morning with horse and cart, and together they drove 30 miles to Cookshire, where they met the rest of the team. Using part of his £250, Holman paid off Bailey and the other guides, and secured a two-horse team to take the baggage, the mining equipment, and the men to Leeds. Holman was following up on an invitation he had received some weeks earlier from Thomas Mackie to help inspect this new corner of the Townships for signs of gold.

*Michael Webb began his career in the computer industry in the mid-1960s. Since his retirement, he has been re-searching the extraordinary life of his great-great-grandfather, Josiah Holman. Living in Sydney, Australia, Michael has travelled to many of the mine sites managed by Captain Holman as well as the church in Gwennap, Cornwall, where Josiah was married and baptized. This Canadian expedition in just one chapter in the book he is writing.*

Bottom: Alexander Henderson, Montmorency Falls, c.1870. McCord Museum, MP-1973.15.10

# A MATCH THAT WAS MEANT TO BE

by Joseph Graham

Six contiguous farms (lots 17 to 21 in the Sixth Range, Doncaster Township) were originally deeded to three families, the Labelles, the Duquettes and the Charrettes. Over the course of the early twentieth century, these farms became the property of three English-speaking families, each representing a different religion. To the west, the Labelle farms were given to Father Gerald McShane, the curate of St. Patrick's Basilica (the centre of Montreal's Irish-Catholic community) and in 1926 the founder of Camp Kincora. In the middle, the Duquette properties were purchased by Reverend Dr. Graham Orchard, an Anglican priest, intimate of the Archbishop of Canterbury and schoolmaster of Trinity College School in Port Hope, Ontario. The Charrettes' farms became the country property of an American evangelist and medical doctor named Charles Sibley. This article focuses on the Sibley family, who would hold on to their farm for a hundred and three years, finally donating it to a charity.

Charles Sibley began life in 1875 in Crewkerne, Somerset, England. He was considered an obstreperous six-year-old and was put out with the sheep, where he managed well. When he was in his teens, his parents moved to Massachusetts, chasing a chimerical opportunity, but it was the boy, Charles, who was the best suited to their new world and who managed to find the work that fed the family.

When Charles got older and saw that his younger siblings were carrying more of the load, he decided he wanted to go to school. He applied to Mount Hermon, a school run by evangelist Dwight Moody. (Although we did not

know this at the time, our sons attended that same school, now called Northfield Mount Hermon, about 100 years later.) Sibley graduated Mount Hermon in his twenties and decided to follow the founder's vocation, but he also went on to university and became a medical doctor.

Sibley met Ann Short, a Montreal nurse with as independent a spirit as his and they moved to a mission in the



Philippines, where their children, Margaret and Ann, were born.

After the war, in 1919, Sibley wanted to revisit his childhood as a shepherd, and so acquired the property in St. Lucie from a small investor who had repossessed it for unpaid debts. Sibley raised sheep there, preserving the old farmhouse more or less as he had found it. The family travelled to St. Lucie regularly from New York. Theirs was the first family to have a car on the Sixth Range Road. Devoutly religious, Sibley attempted to evangelize the very Catholic people of St. Lucie. His passion fulfilled, the property became a getaway, not just for his children but also for his nieces and nephews.

Sibley's daughter Margaret married

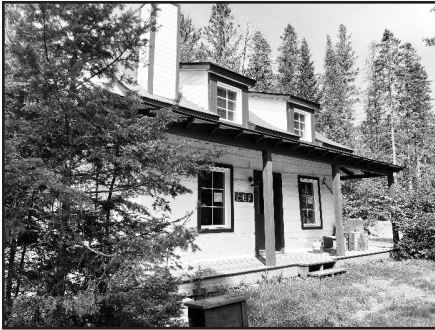
Peter Polovchik and had two children, Peter Sibley and Jean Short. Neither of them had children, nor did Margaret's sister, Ann. A school nurse who lost her husband when the children were in their teens, Margaret kept up the St. Lucie property as a summer retreat for herself and interested family members. Some of her many Sibley cousins drove out from Oradell, New Jersey, every summer in an old blue Chevrolet that aged into a bi-coloured blue and brown sedan.

Margaret's children inherited the old farm, and while Peter stayed in the background he encouraged his sister's desire to find a way of protecting the property after they were both gone. When Jean died in 2019, Peter took a much more active role, ultimately encouraging Maison Emmanuel in Val Morin to accept the property and protect its forests and wetlands as Jean had wished. (Maison Emmanuel is not unknown to

readers of the *QHN*. We interviewed its founder, Inge Sell, in the November-December 2007 issue of the magazine under the heading "A Higher Calling.")

Jean was an environmentalist who spent her last years teaching science and handicrafts to handicapped people at Crotchet Mountain School in New Hampshire. She never knew Maison Emmanuel, but she would have recognized it as being very similar to the Crotchet Mountain School. Founded by Inge Sell, a German Anthroposophist, Maison Emmanuel began in a square-log house on Chemin Beaulne in Val Morin. Its first home was almost identical to the Sibley-Polovchik farmhouse in St. Lucie. Sell's project grew to comprise many buildings, accommodating a large group of dependant children who





have grown into adulthood in its community. These residents, called the Villagers, make products in their own bakery, and Maison Emmanuel runs a café in Val David that also serves as an outlet for the Villagers' various handicrafts.

In 2001, Maison Emmanuel's original log house burned down. Mary Small, a Scot who had worked there as a seasonal volunteer, later returned from Scotland and became co-director of Maison Emmanuel upon Inge Sell's retirement.

It was one summer day during COVID that Mary Small first saw the doppelgänger home on the Sixth Range Road. Maison Emmanuel had been looking for a summer escape spot, a place to go for a visit to the lake, to get away, and for staff retreats. Mary and her team also lamented the intense development that had come to surround their holding in Val Morin. She knew her foundation was in a position to make a difference, protecting the environment around them, but the organization was not large, com-

prising the residential buildings and a big, productive garden. Examining their mission and vision, Small saw that the two properties could work together to protect the natural environment according to Jean's wishes and to act as the refuge for the Villagers and a place for staff to take respite.

We who were involved in this extraordinary development felt that it was happening before our eyes, and twice during this process different players had the eerie feeling that something had just occurred as though beyond our comprehension. The first occasion was when Mary Small saw the image of the home that had been lost. The second was when some of us who knew her felt that, although gone, Jean seemed to have found Maison Emmanuel – a place where she could have been working for her last years, since its vocation was so similar to the Crotchet Mountain School.

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

*Most of the research for this article comes from interviews and conversations with the family, but also includes the Registre foncier du Quebec and Histoire de Ste. Lucie des Laurentides, 1875-1975.*



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Photo courtesy of Joseph Graham

# THE CHURCH ON THE GREEN

*St. James, Hatley*

by Sam Borsman

If you visit the town of Hatley in the Eastern Townships, you might be forgiven for thinking that you have stepped into a lithograph by Currier and Ives. The main street is lined with stately maples, many of them planted in the nineteenth century by a company of soldiers named the Queen's Invincibles. In the centre of the village, you will see a grassy common, home to the picturesque Anglican Church of St. James and a community centre, formerly the Charleston Academy, a school for boys and girls.

St. James is designated a Class A heritage building by the *Conseil du patrimoine religieux du Québec*, the highest possible designation for historical buildings. It is the oldest Anglican church in the Townships, and the oldest wooden church in English Quebec. St. James has not functioned as a church for some seven to ten years, although elderly locals still reminisce about baptisms and marriages celebrated there. St. James' fascinating 200-year history is only part of its story; an ongoing restoration and fundraising project aims to make the church a venue for cultural and artistic events in the future.

## **Bishop Charles Stewart and St. James, Hatley**

The Reverend Charles Stewart (1775-1837), the first priest of St. James church, spent his early years on his father's estate in Galloway, Scotland. After earning degrees at Oxford, he came to Quebec as a missionary. His first posting was in the seigneurie of St. Armand, where he built a log parsonage and oversaw the construction of Trinity Church in Frelighsburg, the first regular place of Anglican worship in the Eastern Townships. Stewart travelled extensively throughout Upper and Lower Canada, eventually shifting his attention to Hatley, where he opened a church in 1819. Before Stewart's arrival in the area, Anglican religious services were led by members of the community in their homes. (The infamous American counterfeiter Stephen Burroughs gave preaching a go, but was forced to quit after he was overheard making plans for a Sunday fishing trip with some of the less devout men of Hatley).

Stewart was much-loved for his focus on education, his

cooperation with other denominations, and his love of hymns (he compiled the first Anglican hymnal in Canada). In 1815, Stewart wrote *A Short View of the Present State of the Eastern Townships*, in which he warned that the Townships "would degenerate into Barbarism" unless "the first principles of religion, morality, and loyalty to the King, should be early instilled into the rising generation." He also noted, perhaps with some preacherly concern, that "large quantities of Potatoes are raised,

from which a pretty good Whisky is distilled." Stewart was consecrated bishop of the Diocese of Quebec in 1826, taking responsibility for a huge area comprising of fifty parishes and sixty-three churches.

Stewart's first church in Hatley – known as the "old North Church" – became too small for the growing congregation. A larger church, St. James, was constructed on the Hatley common in 1827 and was consecrated by Stewart in 1833. St. James was built in the Palladian style, with a long, rectangular plan, notably used for Trinity Cathedral in Quebec City. Its exterior was of white clapboard. Stained glass windows and a neo-Gothic altar were added in 1882. Across the street from the common, a rectory was built in 1881 on the site of a post office and general store, where locals had exchanged pearl ash – a precursor of baking powder – for goods.

St. James was nearly destroyed by a passing tornado in 1871. Locals saw divine intervention in the storm, for the church had been locked up by the Reverend Henry Burrage (pastor of St. James at the time) due to a misunderstanding with the congregation. When the spire and western end of the church were destroyed by the tornado, parishioners rejoiced that "the minister closed the church, but the Lord opened it." St. James was repaired at a cost of \$300, and regular services continued until 2015.

## **The Common and Cemetery**

St. James church sits at the southwestern end of Hatley common, four acres of level ground in the centre of the village,







surrounded by shade trees. Village commons such as this, reminiscent of New England towns, are rare in Quebec. During the War of 1812, militias conducted drills on the common. In 1837, the common became the parade ground of a company of soldiers named The Queen's Invincibles. When the Invincibles left Hatley, they presented their flag to St. James church, where it remains to this day.

Since 1907, the common has been the site of Hatley's annual Canada Day (formerly Dominion Day) celebrations. Hatley's Canada Day parade is the largest in Quebec outside of Montreal, a lively affair featuring a marching band, floats, local vendors, and fireworks in the evening. A bandstand, built around the turn of the century, is still used by speakers to address the large, bilingual crowd.

Behind the common and the church lies St. James Cemetery, the resting place of many early settlers in the area. (Ebenezer Hovey, the first settler in the Township of Hatley, is buried in the older North Church cemetery). The bucolic cemetery, offering sweeping views of Mount Orford and the surrounding countryside, is still in use.

### Charleston Academy

To the right of St. James sits the Hatley community centre, a building with a past as storied as that of the church. The community centre began its life as the Charleston Academy, named after its founder, Charles Stewart. (The town of Hatley was also named Charleston in honour of the reverend, though the appellation was apparently not in widespread use). Construction began in 1830 at a cost of \$3,000, on land given by Wright Chamberlin. The ecumenical and bilingual board of

trustees included Stewart, Louis-Joseph Papineau, as well as Baptists and Methodists. The academy opened its doors to boys and girls in 1832. Subjects included higher mathematics, astronomy, philosophy, chemistry, classical languages, and the fine arts. Tuition ranged from seven to ten shillings per quarter.

Prior to the opening of the academy (and an earlier, smaller school which stood at the front of the common), the state of education in the area was primitive. Elizabeth Kezar was the first to teach regular classes in Hatley, operating a one-room school with no desks. A large slab of wood functioned as a blackboard. For pencils, students used fire-blackened sticks; they took turns bringing soap to school to scrub off the makeshift blackboard. Textbooks consisted of a Bible, a speller, and an arithmetic.

Charleston Academy was re-named Hatley Intermediate in 1942, and it closed as an educational institution in the 1960s. Today, the community centre is used for a variety of local events. Saint Nick used to make an annual visit by sleigh for a children's Christmas party. Hot chocolate was served by an open fire on the common, while revelers of all ages enjoyed skating on the common's ice rink well into the night.

### The Future of St. James

With a colorful history spanning some 200 years, St. James church remains a focal point for the preservation of the history of the village and township of Hatley. In 2000, a renovation campaign began with repairs to the church's foundation and bell tower. Currently, the Saint Francis Deanery Heritage Committee, headed by Alexandra Reid and Peter Provencher of North Hatley, is seeking to raise \$525,000 for final restorations, in





anticipation of a grand reopening of St. James on its bicentennial on July 1, 2027. The timing dovetails perfectly with federal government legacy programs, which tie government funding to historical events.

In addition to securing federal, provincial, and municipal



funding for the St. James restoration project, Reid and Provencher have organized creative benefits to bring in money from anyone with an interest in preserving this historic building. In 2023, a sold-out Bowser and Blue benefit at the Piggery Theatre in North Hatley raised \$13,000. In June 2024, a lunch and children’s fashion show was held in the nearby Massawippi community hall.

In consultation with *Écobâtiment*, specialists in finding imaginative ways to make use of heritage buildings, the Heritage Committee plans to transform St. James into a unique venue for cultural and artistic events, including concerts (St. James has excellent acoustics), poetry and book readings, and art installations. The original architecture of St. James will be preserved, reflecting its status as a Class A heritage building. It is the hope of everyone involved in this project that St. James’s future will be as colourful and important to the community as its past.

If you would like more information or would like to make a donation, please visit [stjameshatley.org](http://stjameshatley.org), or contact the Saint Francis Deanery Heritage Committee by email at: [stjameschurchhatley@gmail.com](mailto:stjameschurchhatley@gmail.com).

*The Reverend Sam Borsman is a Deacon with the Anglican Deanery of St. Francis.*

## CANADIAN FEDERATION OF FRIENDS OF MUSEUMS HONOURS GREENWOOD’S DARRYL SEAMAN

Volunteers are essential to the success of museums and heritage institutions across Canada, including Quebec. There are approximately 100,000 volunteers supporting 2,700 museums across our nation. Recognizing outstanding long term dedication in volunteerism in the cultural sector is one aspect of the national charity, the Canadian Federation of Friends of Museums (CFFM).

CFFM President Bruce Bolton and Executive Director Rosemary Wagner were pleased to present an Appreciation Certificate on June 15, 2024, to Darryl Seaman to mark his long-term dedication (25 years) to his community museum, the Greenwood Centre for Living History, located in Hudson, Quebec.

Seaman’s family was also in attendance to congratulate him, including his wife, Donna, who is also a longtime Greenwood volunteer.

Greenwood Associate Director Karen Molson noted in her nomination letter that “Darryl has been an outstanding volunteer. He has unfailingly been on hand to repair, build, fix and maintain any parts of the house and grounds, as well as appliances and machinery that have been in need of attention... We have in Darryl a volunteer who has never let us down.”

-Madeline Siaroff and Rosemary Wagner



L-R: Karen Molson (Associate Director, Greenwood Centre), Rosemary Wagner (Executive Director, CFFM), Bruce Bolton (CFFM President), Darryl Seaman, Donna Seaman.

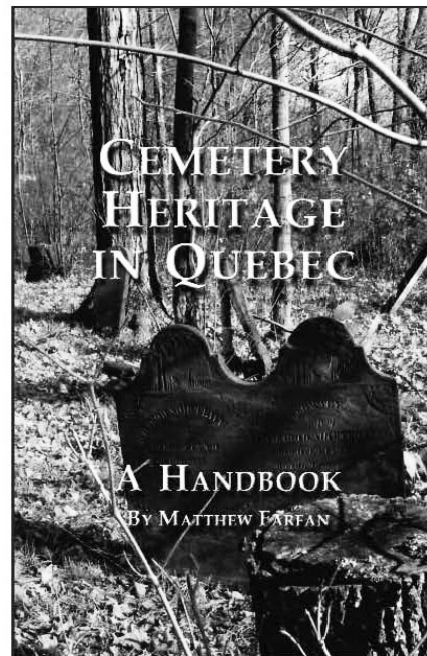




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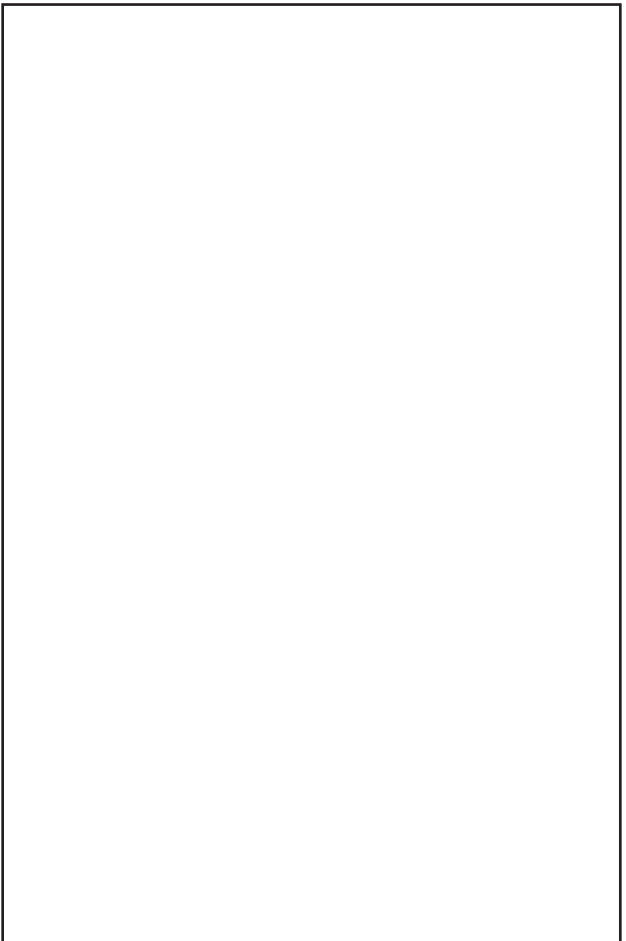
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