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News



A Fanciful Mind

Jonathan Barber's curious odyssey in the realm of the self-help brain

Taming of the Oligarchs

Louis-Hippolyte La Fontaine and the origins of Canadian democracy

Borderlands

Reflections on a shared geography and history

Quebec Heritage News

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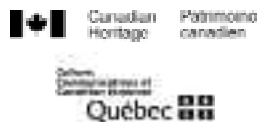
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Cover: Composite illustration showing image entitled "Symbolical Head", from Samuel Wells' *How to Read Character*, New York: Wells Publishing, 1870; illustration on the use of the craniometer, from Thomas Sewall's 1837 lectures on phrenology; and note-paper designed for the Mechanic's Institute, 19th century, by John Henry Walker (McCord Museum M930.51.1.197).

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

True Confessions

by Kevin O'Donnell

*O fat white woman whom nobody loves...
O why do you walk through the fields in
gloves
Missing so much and so much?*

— Lines from “To a Fat Lady Seen from the Train” by Frances Cornford

Confession, they say, is good for the soul. Here is my confession: I’m related to one of the devil figures in Quebec history. Not to General James Wolfe of Plains of Abraham fame. Not to Lord Durham, and not, except in a general Darwinian way, to the parrot in the pet shop who spoke only English. I am, however, related to “the damned fat English lady” who worked at Eaton’s.

For younger readers, Eaton’s was what this downtown Montreal department store was called before it became *Eaton* and then disappeared altogether.

The reference to the fat lady dates from 1989, when Pierre MacDonald, Minister of Industry & Commerce in Robert Bourassa’s Liberal government, complained that when francophones shopped at Eaton’s they had to deal with “la maudite grosse anglaise” who couldn’t serve them in their language.

Though coined by a Liberal, and a West Island MNA to boot, this symbol of linguistic injustice was readily taken up by nationalists of all stripes. For former PQ party leader André Boisclair the Eaton’s fat lady epitomized the struggle his parents’ generation had to fight. At a speech to university students in Trois-Rivières during the the 2007 election, Boisclair reminded students of victories won on the linguistic front. “The English sales ladies at Eaton’s . . . you didn’t live through that,” he told them.

The Damned Fat English Lady was my Aunt Mae. How do I know? Well, as the picture attests, Aunt Mae was fairly hefty. She worked at Eaton’s—the picture was taken when she retired from the store. And

here’s the clincher: she had an MBE. Not the hotshot business degree—Mrs. George V. Thompson was a Member of the Order of the British Empire. It all adds up, doesn’t it?

The Order of the British Empire was created by King George V in 1917 to reward non-combatants, including women, for war

division was never more than a crude demarcation, as a string of English-language churches and schools of all denominations in the East End can attest.

St. Dominic’s parish, covering a good portion of what today is the trendy Plateau District, was established in 1912, its church slated to be built on Delorimier Avenue near Gilford Street. A 1913 *La Presse* newspaper illustration shows ambitious plans for a structure that would have stood out even in this city of churches. But finances dictated that only the basement level would ever be built. Schools for boys and girls (separate but joined buildings), a tennis court that doubled as a skating rink in the winter, a presbytery for the priests and a residence for the Christian Brothers who taught in the boys’ school made up the building stock of the parish.

For the thousands of parishioners (over 2,600 in 1934), the parish was the centre of all kinds of spiritual and secular activities: Sunday mass, school for the kids (1,000 in parish schools in 1935 according to a newspaper article), Cubs and Scouts, a credit union, bazaars, a St. Patrick’s Day concert and walk in the parade, men’s and women’s organizations, and athletic teams famous throughout the city. Their mixed bowling league was reputed to be one of the oldest in Quebec.

Mae and her husband George moved into this bustling community in the 1920s and lived in a flat on des Érables Street, one block east of the church. While she honed her leadership skills as president of the parish’s Catholic Women’s League, their children attended the schools. The Thompsons’ three daughters were excellent students, married local boys and moved with them to Oshawa and senior executive lifestyles.

Their brother Kenneth was not so fortunate. He had had a difficult birth, my mother told me. Today he might be diagnosed with a learning disability and appropriate remedial action taken. But in those days even with outside tutoring he had a hard time at school. Be-



services. Mae became a Member at the end of WWII for her “wholehearted devotion to a number of causes,” as a newspaper clipping of the day put it. She was president of the East-End Red Cross division, co-chairman (sic) of her district Red Cross and Federated Charities campaigns, supervisor of the Ration Board, East End Division, and chairman of the National Clothing Drive in her community.

Her community: Mae lived in Montreal since she had finished high school and left Ontario farm life behind at the turn of the century. Equally—maybe more—important, she was a member of St. Dominic’s Roman Catholic parish in the city’s East End.

For more than a century we have tended to divide Montreal into two linguistic areas separated by St. Lawrence Main, with the English-speakers living on the west side and French-speakers in the east. But this

sides, he later told me, he would rather be outside playing with his friends. Fluently bilingual, he would play with both the English and French kids in the neighbourhood. His friend Bobby was one of them. "What did you play with Bobby?" I asked him. "Ball games, Kick the Can, things like that," he replied.

When George died unexpectedly of blood poisoning in 1952, Mae went to work at Eaton's in the women's foundation garment department. Her clients were women who needed special brassieres, corsets and girdles after surgery.

As they grew older, Ken and Bobby's paths diverged. Ken ended up in the pest control business. For years he worked on the docks exterminating rats in the holds of ships. Bobby went on to represent the provincial riding of his childhood in the Legislative (later National) Assembly. In 1970 he became premier of Quebec.

Ken and Robert Bourassa met for the last time on September 21, 1975, at the closing ceremonies of the basement church. Membership had fallen severely as parishioners moved to the West Island and, like the Thompson girls and their husbands, to points beyond. Repair costs to the church became too burdensome for those who remained behind.

I asked Ken if he had actually spoken to Bourassa that day. He nodded. "What did you two talk about?" "Not much," Ken replied. "He spotted me and said, 'Hi Ken, how are you?' and I said 'Fine, Bobby, how 'bout you?' and then he moved on."

Shortly after, the church, presbytery, brothers' house and schools were torn down.

The land the church had stood on became a community garden, Jardin communautaire Delorimier. A new building on the school site houses a CLSC and CSSS.

But St. Dominic's was not over, at least not yet. With a smaller core of active parishioners, the church moved into a former pharmacy on Mount Royal Avenue. This new location was more easily maintained as the congregation continued to dwindle. Still, joyous parishioners marked their place in the St. Patrick's parade, on a bus instead of on foot as in the old days.

The decline in the number of active participants continued until even the storefront church became too burdensome. In 1990 the parish closed the Mount Royal premises and accepted the offer of the Lithuanian St. Casimir's Church to celebrate a mass there on Sunday.

A September 9, 2008 article in *The Gazette* announced the end. St. Dominic's final mass would be celebrated on September 21. Lay administrator and lifelong parishioner Malcolm MacKenzie had passed away and the handful of elderly parishioners could no longer sustain its corporate structure. The article by Alan Hustak noted that parishioners would have liked to see the city change the name of the community garden to St. Dominic's Gardens.

Edna-May MacKenzie said, "We'd like to see a plaque or have some kind of historical recognition. We want future generations to know that there was an Irish-Scots Catholic parish in the Plateau, so at least something remains behind."

On September 21 more than 200 former

parishioners joined the stalwart few to bid the parish a final goodbye. Walking down the aisle after mass we sang "When Irish Eyes Are Smiling," though I suspect many eyes were flecked with tears as well.

In February I visited the sites of Jardin communautaire Delorimier and the schools. I could see no plaques. A search of the Montreal archives turned up scant information. However, the dynamic local historical society, Société d'histoire et de généalogie du Plateau Mont-Royal, has posted a number of images and reminiscences on its website, including a brief history by Edna-May MacKenzie. The Jardin communautaire page tells visitors that an anglophone church once stood on the site. You can check it out at www.histoireplateau.org.

Like others, I left the parish many years ago. Aunt Mae and Ken have passed away. When we at the Quebec Anglophone Heritage Network (QAHN) began developing our new five-year strategic plan a while back, I started thinking about my own roots and heritage. Whether we live in urban centres or rural villages we have all kinds of reasons for wanting to preserve our heritage, or at least to make sure its existence will not be obliterated, lost to neglect or to abstract stereotypes.

I like how Mordechai Richler expressed the urge that many of us share. "That was my time, my place, and I have elected myself to get it right," he wrote about his beloved St. Urbain Street.

That sounds like the vision behind much of what we do here at QAHN. Let's remember our time and our place. And let's get it right.

Letter

Give peace a chance

Rod MacLeod's recent review of a book on a raid in Vermont during the American Civil War ["Raise the Flag," page 24, Jan-Feb issue] distressed and disappointed me. First off, in case you haven't noticed, the current president of the United States, Barack Obama, is "black" because his father was an intellectual from Kenya where evolution has given people dark skins. He is definitely not a descendant of plantation slaves unlike many Americans, including Jesse Jackson and Martin L. King, whom we all admire very much.

Secondly, you very strongly suggest that the war was necessary to end slav-

ery, that without it, there would have been no liberation. Yet, the Confederate states in the South would have most certainly liberated the slaves within twenty-five years. Brazil did, with no war. Abraham Lincoln admitted that the war was to maintain Washington's rule over all the states—to save the Union.

Avoiding war, in addition to sparing the lives of more than 600,000 people, many of them blacks, probably would have eventually done more to advance the civil rights and well-being of African-Americans. Attitudes and conditions in the North where slavery had been democratically abolished were much better than in the South where the North imposed emancipation, destroying so much property and causing so much

bloodshed. I've spoken to southerners who still resent the conflict and maintain that slavery would have been abolished peacefully. It's possible that, because of the war, civil rights for black Americans took longer to attain.

We live in the era of "humanitarian" wars. Even World War II was called a "war to make the world safe for democracy." And now the war in Afghanistan is presented as a good war, with women and girls taking the place of black slaves in the Southern states during the 1860s. I enjoy *Quebec Heritage News* and salute Mr. MacLeod's important contribution, but must oppose you on this one.

Richard Piper
St-Michel-de-Bellechasse, QC

Trolley line villages

Remembering the railway that spawned South Shore settlement

by Kevin Erskine-Henry

News headlines recount the woes currently facing Montreal train commuters, but we forget that just over fifty years ago the Montreal Southern Counties Railway, the South Shore's first streetcar link to the city, officially ended its run. Inaugurated in 1909, this electric trolley line took commuters from the bottom of Montreal's McGill Street across the Victoria Bridge into St. Lambert and Montreal South (now Longueuil). By 1916 the M&SCR took passages far as Chambly and later reached all the way to Granby.

As the streetcar line extended, small communities formed, and their names—East Greenfield, Brookline, PineHurst, Croyden, Castle Gardens—indicate that these early South Shore settlers were English-speaking. Many were immigrants from Great Britain who had located in Point Saint-Charles to work in the Glen Yards or in the many factories that lined the Lachine Canal. The new railway meant that they could purchase cheap land in the countryside far away from smoky industries and yet be able to commute to their jobs in less than an hour.

Two-dollar monthly train passes must have been a real bargain to draw these pioneers away from the comforts of city life. With no infrastructure or electricity, these early suburbs truly were “the sticks.” Most of the earliest homes were built from lumber collected from old dismantled train boxcars. Home builders would share their skills to the benefit of all. It would be several years before they would enjoy the luxury of electricity and indoor plumbing. But still they came, drawn by the dream of homeownership and country living. Soon each small village stop was equipped with a general store, a community hall and a station house which doubled as the local school.

However, hardships remained, such as the lack of electricity and spring runoff, which made walking difficult. Morning commuters would wear rubber boots to the little station houses and leave them there until their return from work for the walk home. “When daylight hours grew short,” Sarah-Ann Milligan recalled from her childhood days in 1930s Brookline, “I and my sister would go each evening with a lantern to meet our father as he returned from work at the rail-

way platform and light the way home along the often muddy paths.” After several years of frequent pestering by residents, electric cables were passed under the railway tracks. Slowly electricity was added to each village station stop; one of the last places was Brookline, which only received electricity in 1949.

These communities continued to develop with the opening of local Protestant churches and a fully-equipped six-room English school, Royal Charles. Many local boys served overseas during the war and returned home with war brides.

These little communities were places of fond memories of country life, church picnics and strong community values, all within a hour's commute from Montreal.

In the 1950s, with the opening of South Shore bridge and improvements to roads, passenger service along the M&SCR line was reduced. On October 13, 1956, the M&SCR had its last run and was soon replaced by commuter bus lines. With the closing of the trolley line the little station villages were merged into greater Saint Hubert. With increasing development, church closings, followed by

the anglophone exodus of the late 1970s and early 1980s, the area's original English character faded away. However, the streets of Saint Hubert in this sector along the rail lines still bear the names of their early British founders: Kensington, Cornwall, Glenn, Brookline, Davis, Forester, Robertson, and Pinehurst serve as a lasting reminder of a unique link to a small Montreal commuter train line that once was the gateway to the South Shore.

The South Shore Community Partners Network is grouping of Montreal South Shore English-speaking community groups and individuals who work on community issues. In the coming year through a grant from the Department of Canadian Heritage we will be publishing a collection of historical photographs and stories about the former communities that once dotted the Southern County Railway from 1909 to 1956. Should you have photos and stories to share, please email SSCPN at communitypartners@sympatico.ca or call 450-466-1325.



The Caduceus of 93 Queen

Lennoxville archivists solve mystery of the serpent symbol

by Michael Bilodeau



After having followed the walking tour of Lennoxville produced with the help of the Lennoxville-Ascot Historical & Museum Society (LAHMS), a group of Champlain College students and their teacher returned to Uplands with an inquiry: Had the CIBC bank on Queen Street previously served as a medical centre? They pointed out that the building's facade features a carved relief of serpents coiled around a staff, a familiar symbol in the medical profession.

The LAHMS archives team got to work. We searched our photo archives and special library (not to mention the internet), went on site to collect data, and contacted bank personnel. In the end, this is what we found:

The symbol of two intertwining serpents is traditionally referred to as a *caduceus* and was used in Roman iconography to represent peace or equilibrium. It was the rod and standard of Mercury the messenger deity. His talents were commerce, communication, and speed. In fact, it is from Mercury that we derive the term "mercantile."

But it is also true that the caduceus has been associated with the medical profession. How could this be, when the mythology does not hint at any medical connection whatever?

Before Mercury inherited the caduceus, it belonged to Hermes, his Greek equivalent. At this same time, the son of Apollo was worshipped as a hero and practitioner of medicine. His name was Asklepios and

he was often depicted with a snake entwined about a rod: the Rod of Asklepios.

And so it is the similarity of the caduceus of Mercury (or Hermes) to the rod of Asklepius that has traditionally been the cause of confusion, though in recent times the situation has been aggravated by North American medical institutions, which have perpetuated the error by adopting the caduceus as their emblem.

In 1905, the Lennoxville branch of the Eastern Township Bank was inaugurated at the present site of the CIBC. It remained a branch of the Eastern Township Bank until 1912 when it was acquired by the Canadian Bank of Commerce. With the merger of the Bank of Commerce with the Imperial Bank of Canada in 1961, it became a branch of the Canadian



Imperial Bank of Commerce.

Thus enters the caduceus, the chosen logo of the Bank of Commerce.

"The rod represents power, the serpents represent wisdom, and the two wings represent diligence and activity," according to information published on the present CIBC website. (www.cibc.com/ca/inside-cibc/history/logos-seals.html)

If the CIBC building once served as a medical centre, there are no records of this and much evidence to the contrary.

Michael Bilodeau worked as a summer student with the Lennoxville-Ascot Historical and Museum Society.

HARRY NORRIS

Ode to Montreal West's wandering minstrel

by Rod MacLeod



Harry Norris fell in love with Canada when he toured the country with the D'Oyly Carte Opera Company in the winter and spring of 1927. It was the first time that the London company had gone on an international tour, part of a larger strategy by the new owner to give the 52-year-old troupe a fresh image, and Norris, as musical director, was responsible for impressing the colonies. His reception was overwhelming, so much so that the company returned for a second tour the following year. By 1929 Norris left D'Oyly Carte and settled in Montreal, where he lived for 34 years teaching music at McGill and spreading the gospel of Gilbert and Sullivan.

Norris had arrived in England from his native New Zealand around 1910, just after the golden age of D'Oyly Carte.

The partnership formed in the 1870s between composer Arthur Sullivan, playwright and librettist William S Gilbert, and theatrical manager Richard D'Oyly Carte, had resulted in 14 operettas, most of which had been popular hits on the London stage, especially at the Savoy Theatre, which Carte built for his company. Even before the partnership broke up in 1889, many of the "Savoy Operas" enjoyed frequent revivals, not only in London but across the country where Carte made additional profit by selling the performing rights and musical scores to amateur theatrical societies. Carte had died in 1901, but the tradition of performing Gilbert and Sullivan (or "G&S") in communities far and wide had taken firm root.

Norris would probably have been familiar with G&S songs—the pop standards of their day—from his childhood,

particularly coming from a musical family where sheet music was a window on a wider world. He is unlikely to have seen a performance before coming to England, however, and there were no real opportunities to do so in London after 1908 when the much-reduced D'Oyly Carte Company were concentrating on the provinces. But by 1913, Carte's son Rupert was attempting to revive the main London company and approached Norris, who had graduated from the Royal Academy of Music, to be principal violinist and music coach.

The Great War intervened, but in 1919 the D'Oyly Carte Opera Company was reborn under Rupert Carte, who hired innovative stage and costume designers and a new musical director: Harry Norris. Although he had to turn over his baton to more famous conductors such as Malcolm Sargent during the ac-

tual London performances, it was Norris who prepared the singers and orchestra, occasionally even making changes to Sullivan's score to accommodate twentieth-century taste. Under Norris's direction, many of the operettas were recorded for the first time, enabling G&S to reach an even broader audience.

In the mid-1920s, Norris married Doris Hemmingway, a soprano with the D'Oyly Carte Company who also worked as rehearsal pianist. By the time the couple left for Montreal they had a son, Peter.

They settled on Hampton Avenue in NDG; a decade later they moved to Madison Avenue, a few blocks to the west. Both addresses were close to the streetcar on Sherbrooke Street which could take Harry to McGill, where he not only taught at the Faculty of Music but helped form the McGill String Quartet in 1930, in which he played viola.

There were few vehicles for classical musical talent in Montreal during the Depression years, the one closest to Norris's own experience being the Montreal Orchestra, founded in 1930 by a group of musicians who had been employed in cinemas until the "talkies" put them out of business.

The Orchestra performed regular concerts at His Majesty's Theatre on Guy Street throughout the 1930s, although in 1934 a breakaway group formed the Société de concerts symphoniques de Montréal (later renamed the Orchestre Symphonique de Montréal / Montreal Symphony Orchestra) with Wilfrid Pelletier as its director. Pelletier had also been involved in the 1931 formation of the Canadian Opera Company in Montreal, which performed a number of classical operas with local and imported stars before folding three years later. Another company, the French-language Société canadienne d'opérette, had existed under various names since 1921, and would be revived as les Variétés lyriques in 1936.

Montreal's theatre world was, by contrast to classical music, rich and varied, if modest in scale. Communities

everywhere in Canada enjoyed a long tradition of "amateur theatrics," and travelling shows came regularly to Montreal and other larger centres. By the time of Norris's arrival, Montreal sported several theatre companies—the Community Players, Trinity Players, St Lambert Players, the Weredale Dramatic Group, the Little Theatre at the YMHA, the McGill Players, and most famously the Montreal Repertory Theatre—which



performed new plays alongside the classics. None of these were professional companies *per se*, although most featured performers who would go on to be well-known actors and for whom a stint in community theatre meant much-needed exposure. Home-grown professional theatre would not really emerge in Montreal until the 1960s, but long before that enthusiastic amateurs and would-be career stage artists occupied a very creative grey area between the parlour dramas of the nineteenth century and the classical rep and chorus lines of visiting Broadway and West End productions. This quasi-professional world would have been familiar to Harry Norris from

the many G&S societies operating across England since before the turn of the century.

Here and there in the Montreal area, the Norrises encountered groups of singers with not only good voices but a distinct flair for performance. One of these was in St Lambert (home to one of the community theatre companies) and Harry and Doris were eager to take part in the formation of Canada's first operatic society, even though its focus was not specifically on G&S. The Norrises became much more active in Montreal West—a very short streetcar journey away—where Harry was director of the choir at the United Church. Several members, including the town's mayor, warmed to the challenge of staging an actual G&S operetta, with Harry as musical director and Doris doing the staging and blocking. In the autumn of 1939, work began on a production of *The Pirates of Penzance*, which had been the D'Oyly Carte Company's first big success. The Montreal West Operatic Society was born.

Although rooted in Montreal West, the operatic society ("MWOS") soon involved a much wider community. For over a decade performances were held at the Montreal West High School auditorium, and rehearsals took place there as well (until the 1980s when they were relocated to the Montreal West United Church hall), but in the 1950s productions grew more elaborate and audiences larger and so West Hill High School in NDG became the new venue. MWOS drew performers mainly from the West End: a core group from the town itself, others from NDG, Côte Saint-Luc and Westmount. In time, the high quality of MWOS shows brought members in from further afield; one even came from Huntingdon and stayed with the Norrises on rehearsal nights.

Harry and Doris had big shoes to fill, representing as they did the grand D'Oyly Carte tradition. Having had considerable experience adapting Sullivan's music to new audiences, Harry was careful to strike the right note, so to speak, with Montrealers of the 1930s

and 40s. Although the G&S shows are not grand opera, they aren't Broadway either and often demand more of singers than do contemporary musicals, especially the chorus which typically must master four-part harmony. At the same time, the songs themselves are often light-hearted or mock-serious in tone, and frequently very funny, with tricky patter and outrageous rhymes which can take a lot out of anyone used mainly to hymns or oratorio. Harry Norris was a strict taskmaster but understood and imparted the need for a light style.

As stage director, Doris had the even more intimidating ghost of WS Gilbert looming over her. Gilbert directed the original operas himself and, as viewers of Mike Leigh's *Topsy Turvey* will recall, drilled his performers to the letter, allowing almost no deviation from his vision. However, the few occasions when he did permit changes were enough to cause his actors to propose new ideas constantly—despite the risk of a caustic rejoinder—and for the ones that met with Gilbert's grudging approval to go down in the records. Gilbert was particularly loathe to allow slapstick for its own sake, and at one point George Grosmith, the company's patter-song man, tried out a pratfall claiming it would bring a laugh—to which Gilbert replied: "So you would if you sat on a pork pie!" Ever since, productions have wrestled with how much "pork pie" to include in a performance, and although it became much easier to slip it in after Gilbert's death the laugh obtained is often a cheap one. Doris Norris was not inclined to allow it at all, believing that it interfered with, rather than added to, Gilbert's original brilliant comedy.

In the post-war period as people moved or as the next generation took its own roots, MWOS alumni spread the G&S bug throughout the Montreal area

and beyond. By the 1950s, Town of Mount Royal, Westmount and Lachine had acquired their own operatic societies, the latter known first as St Paul's (after the church choir out of which it sprang) and then as the Lakeshore Light Opera, which along with MWOS and the McGill Savoy Society (founded in 1964) survives to this day. Doris Norris was stage director for LLO for eight seasons before she and Harry retired in 1963, and even then they both came back five years later to direct a performance of *HMS Pinafore*. Former MWOSers continued to expand the world of G&S, starting or helping to start operatic societies in Ottawa, Toronto, and even Nova



Scotia.

In their seventies, Harry and Doris decided to return to England where their son had settled. As they boarded their ship in the Montreal harbour, a small army of former MWOS members and others they had trained gathered around a piano that had been brought on deck and serenaded Harry and Doris with a long selection from *Pinafore*. It was an appropriate tribute to a couple that had brought so much music to so many. The Norrises lived into their nineties in Bournemouth, a resort town on the seaside where no doubt they heard many a barrel organ churning out G&S melodies on the pier, above all:

*A wandering minstrel I,
A thing of shreds and patches
Of ballads, songs and snatches,
And dreamy lullaby!*

The Montreal West Operatic Society continues to thrive, even as it draws members from further and further afield as fewer people remain in Quebec for whom G&S is a familiar tradition – even as an increasingly diverse population discovers the delights of these operettas. Francophones and those of many other linguistic backgrounds find new challenges in getting their tongues around the often absurd lyrics even as they embrace the beautiful tunes. More pork pie has also crept into productions, although never so much as to take away from the basic humour or to have Gilbert churning in his grave. As ever, the company works hard to please, from dialogue and blocking to sets, costumes and props, largely put together by the members themselves, many of whom truly strain the definition of "amateur."

The Montreal West Operatic Society is celebrating its 70th anniversary this spring by staging *Princess Ida*, one of the less-often produced operettas owing to its having three acts and consequently three changes of sets and costume. The company is pulling out all the stops with a pseudo-Medieval

setting (read *Sleeping Beauty* with more than a touch of Monty Python) for *Castle Adamant*, a woman's university where men are not allowed but which men nevertheless strive to enter. It is a tale involving arranged marriages, militant feminism, very abstract logic, striptease, transvestism and bondage.

Harry Norris would be amused. We hope he would be impressed.

Princess Ida will show on April 23, 24 & 25 at 7:30 p.m.; on May 1 & 2 at 7:30 p.m. and May 3 at 1:30 p.m. at the Parkhaven Auditorium, 5785 Parkhaven, Cote Saint Luc. Will also run May 17 at 7:30 p.m. at the Haskell Opera House, 1 Church Street, Stanstead. Tickets: (514) 486-5918 or tickets@mwos.org or at the door.

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

TAMING OF THE OLIGARCHS

Louis-Hippolyte La Fontaine and the origins of Canadian democracy

by Joseph Graham



This is the second in a two-part series devoted to the life and times of Louis-Hippolyte La Fontaine, widely regarded as Canada's most astute and successful political leader of the pre-Confederation period. At the close of the first instalment, La Fontaine and his prominent English-speaking counterpart, Robert Baldwin, were striving to build a political alliance of French and English reformers able to reach across the linguistic divide and together wrest control of the newly united Province of Canada from the hands of Britain's Colonial Office.

In 1842, almost a year after Lord Sydenham, the governor of the Province of Canada, died of lockjaw, a new governor, Sir Charles Bagot, took over the governorship and the first Parliament of the new Province of Canada—a union of the former colonies of Lower Canada and Upper Canada—met in Kingston.

Sir Charles Bagot was a much different governor from his predecessor. Having been a popular

ambassador to the United States, he had been chosen to repair serious damage that Sydenham had exacerbated in Anglo-American relations. Bagot's abilities to govern the colony were a secondary consideration. He inherited an Assembly in disarray. At issue was the risk that the Rouges and certain Tories would propose a motion of opposition to Union, putting the credibility of the Assembly into question.

Over a period of five days, from Saturday, September 10 to Wednesday, September 14, the government teetered as Bagot, backed by a handful of loyal Tories, negotiated with Louis-Hippolyte La Fontaine and Robert Baldwin, the Reform leaders. Ironically, only the Reformers—Sydenham's nemesis—could salvage all that Sydenham had accomplished; only their presence on the Executive Council would be enough to avoid the confrontation that threatened Sydenham's legacy, the united Assembly. While private and public negotiations were being held to include four Reform members in the Executive Council, La Fontaine, who was opposed to the proposal, addressed the Assembly—in French. One

The House of Assembly, c. 1848, by James Duncan. National Gallery of Canada No 28066.

of the Tory members heckled him, calling upon him to speak English. After a measured pause, La Fontaine responded: "I distrust my ability to speak the English language. But . . . even if I knew English as well as French, I would still make my first speech in the language of my French-Canadian countrymen, if only to protest solemnly the cruel injustice of that part of the Act of Union which aims to proscribe the mother tongue of half the population of Canada. I owe it to my countrymen, I owe it to myself." He was expressing his own views, but also the sentiments of his party, whose members stood behind him, French and English alike, from the two Canadas.

In the meantime, Bagot was soliciting support from La Fontaine's own people, forcing La Fontaine and Baldwin, through democratic pressures, to accept the Executive Council appointments on Bagot's terms. On September 14, pressured by their own members, the Reform leaders capitulated, accepting appointment to the Governor's Executive Council instead of their option: forming their own Executive Council.

Bagot succeeded in his first intended goal, calming the Assembly and making it work, even if he did so through compromise with the Reformers. In the coming months, though, he developed such confidence in La Fontaine and Baldwin that, had he continued as governor, self-government may have come to Canada much earlier than it did. Sadly, he had one major problem in common with his predecessor: he fell ill and died in office, early in 1843.

Between 1841 and 1848 the British North American colonies saw a succession of five governors. The only constant on the political scene was La Fontaine and Baldwin's alliance of members in the Assembly. This period of changing governors also gave Montreal many of its important street names: the Colonial Secretary Lord Stanley in the British Conservative government of Sir Robert Peel appointed Sir Charles Metcalfe to succeed Bagot—to be followed in turn by the Earl of Cathcart.

Metcalfe was determined to stop the steady progress that reform members were making towards becoming a viable political party. He felt that Bagot had made serious mistakes in accepting La Fontaine and Baldwin in his Executive Council and in allowing them to make patronage appointments. The Reformers had gained way too much power. He care-

fully orchestrated confrontations to weaken them, undermining their support with irresistible promises to both their members and their opponents. He moved Parliament to Montreal and offered to suspend the Anglicization of the colony, a promise that he did not keep. He even offered to pardon certain popular exiles, all in an attempt to undermine the Reformers. He hoped to bring about a confrontation, and it finally came in early December 1843. The week before, the Executive Council resigned *en masse* in protest over appointments Metcalfe made without consulting it. On December 1, the Assembly voted two-to-one in favour of the resignations, thereby condemning the governor's unilateral appointments. In order to regain control, the governor prorogued the Assembly on December 9, 1843.

Over the next nine months, Metcalfe cajoled and prodded until he had created a new Executive Council that did not include the key Reformers, but

was led by the aging William Henry Draper, the only high profile Tory who would accept the task. Instead of calling the Assembly back, though, and risking another confrontation, he dissolved parliament and called an election.

Of course, he won the election, was lauded back in England for his success and was even conferred a barony, but then a predictable thing happened: he fell very ill and had to retire. Nine months later he was dead from a cancer that ate through his cheek.

His replacement, Charles Murray, Earl of Cathcart, was chosen for his military prowess because, once again, Anglo-American relations were deteriorating. He had little understanding and patience for politics, so while discussions proceeded over border disputes with the United States, the new assembly, a bare majority in favour of the Tories, proceeded to govern as Cathcart dictated, while he demanded more military support from Peel's Conservative government back in Britain. When Peel's government fell in June, 1846, the new Whig administration demonstrated a much more progressive view of the developments in the colonies. Making peace with the United States, the British government recalled Cathcart and the new Colonial Secretary, Lord Grey, turned the governorship over to a man who had proposed electoral reform in Britain itself.

James Bruce, Earl of Elgin, arrived in North America on January 30, 1847. The son-in-law of Lord Durham, the earlier governor who had proposed merging the two Canadas, Elgin believed that



the colonists should govern themselves, at least in matters of local concern. Solicitor General Draper expected Lord Elgin to take over the reins of power, but Elgin remained aloof, effectively telling Draper to get on with his job—that Elgin was happy to watch. This put the solicitor general in a difficult position. Until that time, his role was to do the bidding of the governor. His authority came from the governor. Draper could not govern without this authority.

Faced with Elgin's passive style, Draper could not control the Assembly without support from at least some of these Reform members. Lord Elgin, watching as things unfolded, tried to sway the influential Augustin-Norbert Morin and some of his followers to join with Draper. Morin was considered a conservative, and Elgin and Draper felt that they would be able to work together, but they underestimated Morin's loyalty to La Fontaine and the vision of bilingual, responsible government. Morin turned down their offer, leaving Elgin the choice of taking back the dictatorial powers of the governor, or of calling an election that La Fontaine and Baldwin would very likely win.

Were Elgin to take back the reins of power, he could slowly pick a good slate of ministers from the Assembly and business community, much as Metcalfe had done, and no-one would really be surprised. Were he to choose instead to declare that the Assembly was not working and that the members should sort things out through an election, he would be demonstrating an unprecedented respect for the role of the Assembly. He accepted the need for an election. It would be much different from the one that Lord Sydenham had manipulated six years earlier or that Metcalfe had sprung after his long prorogation of Parliament. There would be no army raiding the polling stations, no governor with a special interest in controlling the outcome. In fact, the Reformers had passed a bill that Bagot had approved, assuring that the location of polling stations remain in populated districts, thereby reducing the risk of goons and troops interfering with the results. This time, the colonists would be on their own to choose their own representatives.

La Fontaine and Baldwin won a landslide victory. Their party took 33 of 42 seats in Canada East and 23 of 42 seats in Canada West. They had a strong party that dominated the Assembly, but the governor still named the Executive Council. It was a governing body independent of the Assembly, still answerable only to the governor. When government reconvened on February 25, 1848, Draper was still the Solicitor General. He wrote the Speech from the Throne, outlining the priorities of government, but the new Reform Party proposed significant changes

to it and the Assembly voted 54 to 20 in favour of the changes. There would be no cooperation from the Assembly unless its authority were extended. The entire Executive Council resigned, throwing another dilemma into the lap of the governor. He convoked a meeting with La Fontaine and Baldwin at which they called upon the governor to turn the responsibility for naming the Executive Council over to their party, an unprecedented development in Canada. For the first time in Canadian history, a political party took control of government, and for the first time, the majority in the elected assembly would have absolute power to name the Executive Council. It would, in fact, become the Cabinet. Also, because of the large proportion of the population that owned land, and therefore had the right to vote, the colony became a self-governing province with a broader franchise than Britain itself.

On March 11, 1848, Lord Elgin read a new Speech from the Throne, this time written by La Fontaine, and he read it in French. To the residents of Canada, this was as much of a shock to their expectations as the election of the first Parti Québécois government would be to Quebecers in 1976. Especially in Montreal, where the parliament had been relocated in 1843, the English business elite was not about to accept a prime minister who had the powers that only yesterday had belonged to the governor—certainly not a French one to boot. Even though the new government had essential support from Canada West and was fully representative, they called it “the French Party.” The problems for the Province of Canada's first responsible government were just beginning.

Among the issues outlined in the Speech from the Throne on March 11, 1848, the new government of Louis-Hippolyte La Fontaine committed itself to a law called the Rebellion Losses Bill. After the rebellions of 1837-38, the colonial governments in Lower and Upper Canada had been petitioned to compensate the ‘innocent bystanders’ who lost property in the various battles. While the bill passed without too much fuss in Upper Canada, it was anathema to the Tories in Lower Canada. The French, in their minds, were the rebels. Compensating them was tantamount to paying the defeated party for having lost. To make matters worse, the economy was in the throes of a long recession and there were few funds available.

As the law slowly made its way through Parliament, support for it was secured from Reform members in both Canadas. This was not a given. In the early days of our parliamentary system, there was no party whip making sure all members voted the party line. The Cabinet had to sell its decisions to



*Sir Louis-Hippolyte La Fontaine, about 1880
McCord Museum. M981.207.4*

its own party and also looked for support among the other members. Worse still, even though the bill was set to pass with a vote of two-to-one in favour, there was no guarantee that it would be approved when it reached the governor, who could still reject it, bringing into question the authority of the government itself. The powerful Montreal Tories took recourse in this option and petitioned Governor Lord Elgin, asking him to block the bill.

Elgin was determined to stay out of matters that he deemed of a local nature. The compensation described in the bill would be paid from the coffers of the Colonial government—not from his budget, nor from the Crown's, and the English of Canada West supported it. If the new government, which demonstrably represented the majority of both the French and English in the province, chose to spend its money compensating people for collateral damage from an incident twelve years in the past, he was not going to oppose them. He was so firm in this position that his personal notes describe the Montreal Tories' appeals to him as an invitation to head a coup d'état.

Elgin gave assent to the Rebellion Losses Bill on April 25, 1849, setting off a chain reaction of resentment and violence that would last throughout that hot summer. Riding away from the Parliament Building on Ste Anne's Market, on the western end of Place d'Youville in Montreal, his carriage was pelted by rocks as a Tory mob reacted in horror to the decision.

The Gazette published a flyer that same afternoon that read, in part, "Anglo-Saxons you must live for the future. Your blood and your race will now be supreme (...) A Mass Meeting will be held on the Place d'Armes this evening at 8 o'clock." That evening, the assembled crowd turned ugly, making its way the short distance to the Parliament, which was still in session, guarded by only two security officers. Given the overwhelming support that the Rebellion Losses Bill had received in the vote, and the Governor's royal assent, it was felt that the Tories would accept the decision. Any further security, the government reasoned, would only provoke a reaction from the opponents of the bill. In any case, the only other security available was the Montreal police or the army.

When the crowd, made up of the wealthy English families of Montreal, reached Ste. Anne's Market, they began throwing rocks through the windows of the Parliament Building. Soon, braver members entered the building, penetrating into the Assembly Room where Parliament was still sitting. A young man entered the Assembly and called out "I hereby dissolve Parliament!" Simultaneously, others opened the gas mains and set them on fire. Almost immediately the curtains were in flames. As smoke filled the room and the nervous Members, representing the furthest reaches of the Province of Canada, began to rise

from their seats, Augustin-Norbert Morin, the Speaker, interjected with his powerful voice, insisting on a formal motion of adjournment.

The lovely two-storey Parliament Building that ran for 350 feet along one side of the market square and housed the assembly, the legislature, two libraries and the government archives was a total loss. In the following days the rioters also attacked the private houses of La Fontaine and Robert Baldwin and ran rampant through the city.

For the whole summer, Montreal was rocked with acts of violence. La Fontaine was attacked twice in the streets, and subsequent to the government's condemnation of the instigators, friends of La Fontaine learned that his house would be the target of more attacks. They holed up in the dark in La Fontaine's house on an August night. As anticipated, the house was attacked and the defenders fired. The radicals hunkered down and fired back, but they had lost their courage and soon fled. When the dust settled, six of them were injured and one was dead.

The press began again to stir hatred, claiming that the honour of the British was at stake. A Frenchman had killed an Englishman. When La Fontaine appeared to testify at the public hearing looking into the death, the hotel where the hearing was being held was set ablaze. He and his government were doing their best to keep the French from reacting, trying to keep the provocations from turning into a racial war. Canada, a fragile new democracy not yet six months old was on the verge of falling into sectarian violence that could have divided the Montreal English and French into warring factions and set the stage for generations of confrontation and guerrilla warfare. They determined to move Parliament to Toronto, in the heart of the English reform territory, determining that Montreal was just too unstable to be the capital of the newly independent country. As the summer advanced into autumn, though, the international market began to recover and the instigators began once again looking towards their profits. The Tory business community was adapting to the new reality and moving on.

Canada was born amid shoot-outs, riots and fires. La Fontaine and Baldwin had created a balanced, fair government and knew that the change to a democracy would be a difficult process for the old oligarchy of Tories and businessmen to accept. Ever since, Canada has seesawed between the powers of that ancient oligarchy and those of the people, slowly tempered into a shell game of political parties, each claiming to represent the spirit of the country. Confederation, dominated by the old Tory elite making the same claims, helped to perpetuate an illusion that Canada began in 1867, but place names survive, waiting for us to wonder why they were chosen, and in the process, to rediscover our past and learn of the real struggles our ancestors endured in order to make Canada the first colony to secede from the British Empire in a civil manner—without war.

BEING IRISH O'QUEBEC

by Lorraine O'Donnell

Not just once but twice lately have recent Irish immigrants asked me how and why it was that native-born Quebecers could call themselves Irish. As one of them remarked, a bit exasperated, “they’ve usually never even been to Ireland!”

It is a good question. *Being Irish O'Québec*, a McCord Museum exhibit I curated, may go some way towards answering it.

The exhibit was the idea of two Montreal community groups whose members, no doubt, stand guilty of calling themselves Irish: the Irish Protestant Benevolent Society and the St. Patrick's Society. They formed a joint committee to come up with ideas on how to celebrate the latter's 175th anniversary. The result was a project to work in concert with the McCord Museum to create a historical exhibit. This in itself was nothing short of historic. How many places can boast collaboration between Irish Catholics and Protestants, not to mention between grassroots organizations and a major public institution?

To their credit, from the start the

partners agreed that the exhibit should go beyond the history of the two Montreal-based Irish Societies, to cover the broader story of the Irish influence on Quebec from its earliest days and across the province. The challenge I faced, along with my colleagues, including cocurator Pierre Wilson, the McCord staff and an external advisory committee, was how to address this vast subject in interesting and meaningful ways.

Our solution was to divide the exhibit into sections that, considered together, should give visitors a sense of the rich complexity and wonderful singularities of the Irish Quebec story. The biography section tells about ten Irish Quebecers, men and women, Catholic and Protestant, from all walks of life, starting some 350 years ago with Tadhg O'Brennan, fur trader, settler and husband of a fille du roy. The Story Station section looks at meaningful spaces including Grosse Île, St. Colomban and Griffintown. There is also a lighthearted look at the Montreal parade and a short introductory film featuring Quebec City-born Marianna O'Gallagher, a historian, and Benjamin O'Donnell, my twelve-

year old son, discussing that mysterious quality of “being Irish.”

The exhibit puts some wonderful objects on display. This is your chance to see a magnificent life-sized Théophile Hamel portrait of community founder Father Patrick McMahon, rare Famine-era relics from Grosse Île and private objects treasured by Griffintown families.

I warmly invite you to visit the exhibit and I'd welcome your comments about this innovative community-institutional joint history and heritage project.

Lorraine O'Donnell, Ph.D., is coordinator-researcher of the Quebec English-Speaking Communities Research Network at Concordia University. Prior to that, she worked as a consultant and coordinator of community development projects, focusing on heritage and history projects. She worked as guest curator for the McCord Museum's Being Irish O'Québec exhibit from 2007 until 2009.

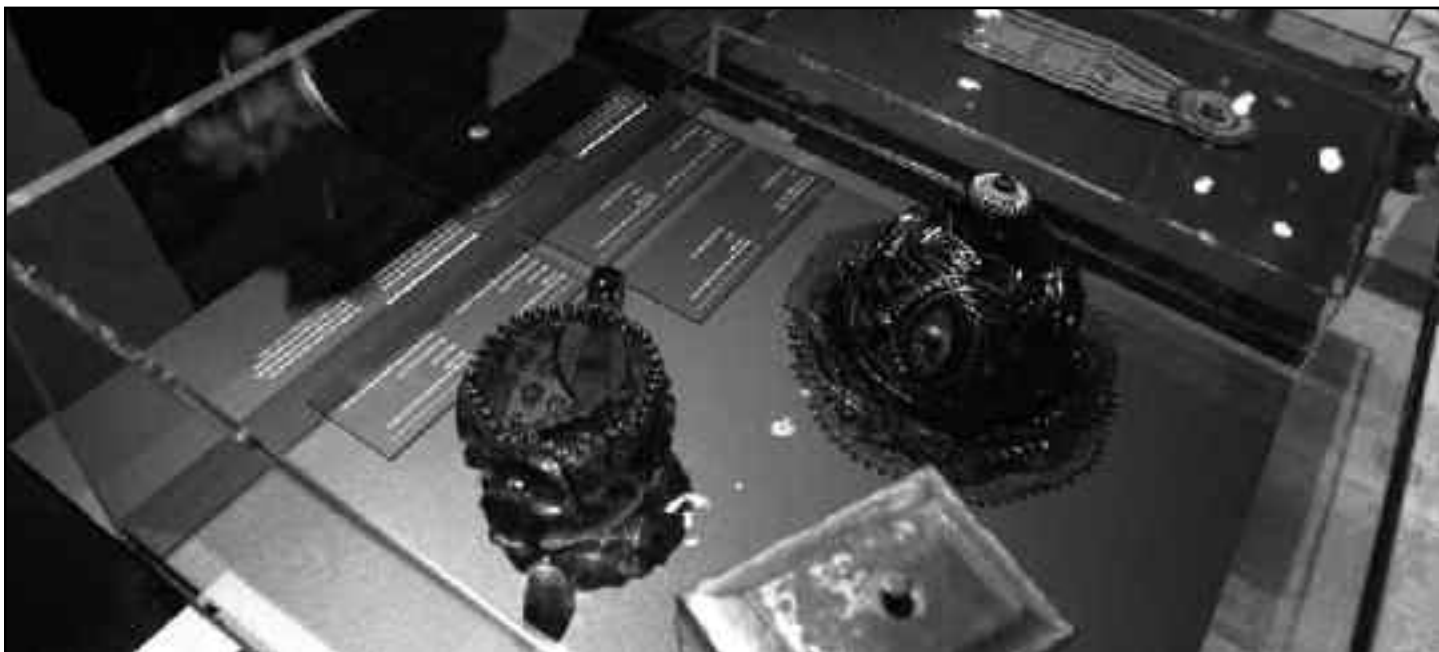
Being Irish O'Québec shows at the McCord Museum in Montreal until April 4, 2010.





Clockwise from top left:

The Johnson brothers Pierre-Marc & Daniel; St Patrick's Society & Irish Protestant Benevolent Society presidents Mary McDaid & Brian Mitchell; exhibit featuring La Bolduc (Mary Travers); the St. Columban settlement exhibit; and guests gathered for the March 19 vernissage at McCord Museum of Canadian History in Montreal.



CELTIC ADAPTATIONS

From the stone boat to the jaunting cart, Laurentians Irish left their mark on the land

by Sandra Stock

Usually what comes to mind when referring to Quebec's Irish history—more than 250 years' presence in Quebec—is Montreal and, to a lesser extent, Quebec City, where people of Irish origin have been, and have remained prominent in large numbers consistently for over two centuries. However, less known but equally important is the Irish rural heritage in Quebec. One area, first occupied by Irish settlers, was the vast tract of unsettled wilderness, to the north of the St. Lawrence. In the Laurentians, this Irish influx stretched from Rawdon in the east to Grenville and Carillon at the confluence of the North and the Ottawa Rivers in the west.

Contrary to the general belief that nearly all Irish emigration to North America began only with the Great Famine of 1847, Irish settlement started long before that time and predates by 150 years the existence of Lower Canada/Quebec. The first significant exodus from Ireland was in the 1720s, and mainly by what were later called "Scotch-Irish" from Ulster. These people settled first in the Appalachian regions of what later became the United States and have left a lasting cultural imprint, especially in music and popular images of frontier life. This early emigration most likely set the tone for later departures when conditions again became hard in Ireland.

The next large out-migration followed after the Napoleonic Wars, due to various economic and political tensions throughout the British Isles. Also, this period saw the increase of British colonial expansion. The British government encouraged occupation of newly acquired territories. With this emigration, we see the start of the settlement of the Laurentians.

In a remarkable chronicle of pioneer times, *History of the Counties of Argenteuil, Quebec & Prescott, Ontario*, by Cyrus Thomas, published in 1896, we find that well over half the people living in the western Laurentians in his time were of Irish origin, of them about one third had been born in Ireland and the rest were second or third generation descended from Irish emigrants. Other than the names of the towns, and sometimes just the counties, of their Irish ori-



gin, next to nothing was recounted to Thomas about their lives before coming to Canada or their Irish roots. It is as if all these people had closed one life and entered another, choosing to forget what had gone before. This is characteristic of both the well off, and the poor, the educated and the illiterate, Catholic and Protestant, men, women, all stations of life. Only a few meager references to Ireland appear, for example, we read that "William Watchorn...who settled in Morin, came to this country from Ardoin, County of Wicklow...in 1852... Before leaving Ireland, he joined a regiment called the Carlow Rifles and was with it Sergeant five years...and saw service in the Russian War."

The modern reader does wonder about Thomas' lack of further curiosity about this Crimean veteran whose life took him into the bush of Lower Canada.

References to early Irish settlement are also vague to the east. Irish emigrants occupied Rawdon Township in the early part of the nineteenth century. The first mention of them comes from Joseph Bouchette's great mapping survey of 1824 in which he reported that there were about 200 Irish origin people living in Rawdon. These were "unofficial" settlers, sometimes unkindly referred to as squatters. As the lands were open and uninhabited and there was little or no civic organization prior to the 1840's, most of these so-called squatters were actually honest pioneers who eventually received official grants for the lands they had occupied.

Irish Protestants, who seem to have been an organized group, settled the township of Kilkenny, just west of Rawdon, slightly later. This kind of settlement appeared to be more common along the southern reaches of the Laurentians, with the relatively better farmland on the banks of the L'Achigan and North Rivers. Often these more serene Irish farming groups had known each other in Ireland and sometimes came with clergy.

The best known of these, and perhaps the earliest known organized Irish farming settlement was St. Columban, just across the North River from St. Jerome. These Roman Catholic Irish had first come to Montreal before 1820 to "escape difficult economic times coupled with religious and political persecution... Father Patrick Phelan convinced the Sulpicians to grant land...to these Irish settlers. The area was made up of dense forest and land that was rocky with very little top soil which made farming difficult... By 1835 the Parish of St.Columban was officially founded." (*Remembering St.Columban*, Kenneth Neil, 2007.)

All throughout the Laurentian settlements, farming was supplemented by potash making, lumbering and, around St. Columban, a granite quarry. The pioneers used what was available and became fairly prosperous. However, the second and third generations of Irish started to leave the Laurentians for points west, or for education and work in Montreal.

Was Ireland altogether forgotten? Did these people retain no traces of their origins? Was the traumatic break, via dangerous sailing ships, often from poverty, disease and a society where, at that time, ordinary people had no hopes of owning land or advancing themselves, complete?

Of course, even the wealthier Irish emigrants couldn't bring much with them in the way of goods on a cramped ship, so there aren't many pre-1900 antiques or artifacts of Irish provenance in existence in the Laurentians. Some obvious cultural remnants of Ireland remained and persisted, even thrived into the mid-twentieth century. The traditional music and dance continued and were an element of social cohesion in all the small communities. Even in the 1950s, old time Irish dances were held in Morin Heights and Mille Isles. Sadly, with the increased contact with general North American culture, the coming of television, and the deaths of the old musicians, this faded away, as did the speech of the local people, which had preserved the rhythms and accents of Ireland. The end of over one hundred years of isolation of these communities and the sudden spread of a more urban society erased Ireland from their voices.

Some creative writing has been produced on the theme of Irish settlement in pioneer times. In 1969, the late Margaret Cook wrote a historical novel called *Land Possessed*. The plot and characters were based on real events and people who had come from Ireland to live in the then thriving agricultural community of Shrewsbury, part of the Township of Gore between Lachute and Mille Isles. Cook's descriptions of daily life are probably very accurate and based on her extensive interviews with several elderly residents of this area who were, mostly, grandchildren of the original settlers. The storyline is a romance thwarted by

religious prejudices, leading to violence, still common among some of the Irish at that time. In 2005, Cook's novel was (very loosely) adapted to the theatre by Don Stewart, past president of the Morin Heights Historical Association. This play, titled *Nature's Victory*, updated the conflict and the romance into a linguistic confrontation—more attuned to our period when language seems to have replaced religion as a source of misunderstanding. However, Stewart's play, produced by Theatre Morin Heights, all amateurs, was sensationally successful, especially among local people whose historic background it illustrated. By the 1930s, Shrewsbury as a community had become depopulated, its residents moving on and leaving their stony farms for more prosperous Laurentian towns, Montreal, or points West. Today, only St. John's Anglican Church remains, with its cemetery, among the trees that have come back, almost erasing all traces of this settlement.

One other aspect of daily life in which an Irish cultural inheritance was maintained among the Laurentian communities was surprisingly, in the sphere of transportation. The rough, hilly, rock-strewn terrain didn't lend itself to ordinary wheeled vehicles, especially before the coming of paved roads. Well into the 1950s and even 1960s, moving around was limited and difficult. In the winter many secondary roads (all dirt still) were closed except to sleighs. The horse was still king, both in agriculture and as transport. In the early days of settlement even the horse could not penetrate the dense bush in this mountainous region and most trails were footpaths only. By the 1860s with more cleared land for growing forage crops, more horses and wheels finally start to appear. The first means of carrying goods, other than on one's back, had been what the Irish (in Ireland) called a "side car"—two long sticks that a man or animal could drag behind—what already existed in the Americas in the form of the aboriginal travois.

Also, the Irish turf sledge, used in Ireland for hauling peat from the wet slippery bogs, was adapted to the Laurentians as the stone boat—used for clearing rocks and other debris, from fields. This is a very low, light sled on runners, not exactly a sleigh (too low to the ground for use in snow) that could

move well on wet muddy ground. As it was fairly light, one horse or even manpower could easily pull it along. On steep hills, these runner based vehicles worked better than wheels.

Another Irish vehicle that was popular as private transport in the Laurentians was the jaunting cart. This was a very light and fast small two-wheeled carriage that, again, one horse could easily manage. This jaunting cart was the direct humble descendant of the very ancient Celtic war chariot, used in battle by the tribes that ruled Ireland from about 600 BCE. As Ireland was comparatively isolated from the rest of Europe, some vestiges of this ancient society seem to have persisted longer. The jaunting cart was also well suited to hilly country and the type of horse (Standard breed) favored by the Laurentian settlers. In Ireland these carts evolved into public taxis and became more sophisticated, but the basket shape—with one driver up front and room for only one or two (if small) passengers in the "basket"—prevailed in rural Quebec. For more information about Irish vehicles, visit the website of the National Museum of Northern Ireland www.magni.org.uk

There has been a recent renewal of interest in the Irish roots of the Laurentians, especially since the growth of genealogical research helped by the spread of Internet access. Looking for ancestors usually leads to looking for information about their society as well. Although most concrete traces of the Irish pioneer society have disappeared and the generation that overtly demonstrated an Irish origin has long gone, this renewed interest has contributed to the activities of local historical societies, has raised concern about the preservation of Laurentian cemeteries and heritage buildings and has, for many individuals, given them a pride in their ancestral origin.

Sandra Stock is president of the Morin Heights Historical Association and serves as QAHN director for the Laurentians and Lanaudière regions. She is a retired high school teacher and has an academic background in English literature and Art History. Pertinent to this article, Sandra is of very mixed ancestry but mainly Irish.

ROAD TO EXILE

Rebel clashes with loyalists spelled E.B. O'Callaghan's last days in Canada

by Marjorie A. Fitzpatrick



This is the last in a four-part series of articles chronicling the story of Edmund Bailey O'Callaghan, an Irish-born doctor-turned-newspaperman who was among several prominent anglophones in Lower Canada to side with the Patriote struggle for parliamentary reform in the early 19th century. At the close of the previous installment, which appeared in the Jan-Feb 2009 issue, political tensions had reached the breaking point on October 23, 1837 when Papineau, O'Callaghan and other Patriotes gathered in Saint Charles to state their demands for a popular government in opposition to the colonial state.

The first physical confrontation occurred on the 6th of November when members of the Doric Club and the Sons of Liberty clashed in the streets of Montreal. The rebellion was on. Following stone-throwing and shooting by both sides, the Sons of Liberty, who seemed to be getting the best of it, dispersed northwards towards Saint-Laurent when word went out that the magistrates had read the Riot Act and called out the Royal Regiment and Artillery, which was now fast approaching. The Dorics then surrounded Papineau's house and were driven off by troops, only after what Papineau's son Amédée later called an unconscionable delay.

From there, the Dorics proceeded to Sainte-Thérèse Street, where they broke into and plundered O'Callaghan's *Vindicator* newspaper office, destroying its presses and dumping the remains in the street below.

On the same eventful day, Lord Gosford wrote to the Secretary of State about the alarming spread of "the poison that the agitators have been scattering" notably at Saint-Charles, and predicted worse to come. Colborne wrote that day to Upper Canada's Sir Francis Bond Head that "in fact the counties between Longueil [sic] and the upper part of the Richelieu are in a state of revolt." Three days later he would move his own headquarters from Sorel to Montreal. Still on the sixth of November, the curé of Saint-Charles dispatched an urgent letter to Gosford pleading that the government make at once any concessions it ever planned to. He further warned Gosford not to count any longer on the local pastors to rein in their flocks, who, he wrote, would soon form a single voice demanding reparation of the Canadians' grievances.

In Montreal, some Sons of Liberty were rounded up, then released on bond. On the 8th of November, Papineau sent his younger son and daughter to safe haven with relatives in Verchères. In Quebec arrest warrants charging the advocating of sedition were is-

sued against several members of that city's pro-Patriote Permanent and Central Committee. Étienne Parent published another of his agonized editorials in the *Canadien* on the thirteenth, urging all moderates to stage big public demonstrations calling for reconciliation, which he now saw as the sole alternative to watching his people get caught up in a revolt in which they would be crushed. The biggest question on everyone's mind was, what would Papineau do now? He alone had the stature to make a pronouncement, for or against open rebellion, likely to be heeded by all patriots.

On the 13th of November, Lord Gosford suddenly replaced all moderate Montreal magistrates and other officials with hard-line loyalists and announced imminent arrests. The same night Papineau, to his family's relief, at last left Montreal slipping out in disguise under the noses of patrolling troops. From accounts in Amédée Papineau's *Journal* and other sources, we know he joined up late that evening with O'Callaghan, also in disguise, and the two spent the whole next day making their way by back roads to the home of a sympathetic farmer in Saint-Marc on the Richelieu. O'Callaghan insisted forever after that he and Papineau had sneaked out of Montreal that night not to unleash an uprising but to prevent one.



Years later, in a letter responding to François-Xavier Garneau's request for information, he placed the blame for the uprising squarely on Gosford and the Tories, still convinced that they had deliberately provoked the violence so they would have an excuse to crush the Patriote movement and destroy civil liberties in Lower Canada once and for all.

As quoted in Garneau's *Histoire du Canada*, O'Callaghan wrote: "We, my friend, were the victims, not the conspirators; and were I on my death bed, I could declare before Heaven that I had no more idea of a movement of resistance, when I left Montreal and went to the Richelieu River with Mr. Papineau, than I have now of being Bishop of Quebec."

The two friends had in fact escaped just in time. On the sixteenth of November Gosford, at Colborne's urging, issued arrest warrants on charges of high treason for 26 Montreal-area patriots, including Papineau, O'Callaghan, and Thomas Storrow Brown.

Many young Patriotes were soon arrested, but none of the movement's top leaders. Two were hunted down and captured at Saint-Jean but were rescued by fellow militants in an ambush near Longueuil, leaving wounded on both sides. Thomas Storrow Brown, the "general" of the Sons of Liberty, was drafted at a secret meeting of the Patriote leaders to play the same role at Saint-Charles, where he installed his headquarters in

the now-abandoned mansion of the honourable P.-D. Debartzch.

Colborne, enraged by the Longueuil incident, decided to attack the patriots at two of their strongest points, Saint-Denis and Saint-Charles. At his orders, a reinforced regiment in Sorel set out on the night of the 22nd of November for Saint-Denis, little knowing that the two most wanted men in the province—Papineau and O'Callaghan—were spending the night there with Wolfred Nelson, and would escape on horseback just before the anticipated arrival of the attacking troops late the next morning.

What actually happened at Saint-Denis on the 23rd of November has been disputed by historians ever since. Sworn depositions given later by at least two persons physically present that day gave directly contradictory accounts. One said that Nelson went out after breakfast to make sure all his militia's arrangements were in place, then returned and begged a reluctant Papineau to leave, arguing that his leadership would be desperately needed later, whatever the outcome of the battle soon to start. In the other version—the one supported by Nelson himself—Nelson never came back home that morning, but during his absence Papineau and O'Callaghan fled to Saint-Hyacinthe to avoid capture, leaving Nelson, Saint-Denis and the whole

Patriote movement to their fate. Whatever the truth, everyone agreed that Wolfred Nelson and his militiamen fought with extreme bravery that day. The only sour note was the stabbing of a captured advance British scout, a Lieutenant Weir, by one of the patriots, who brandished his bloody sword before the invading troops.

A few weeks later Saint-Denis would pay dearly for that tasteless act of braggadocio. By the end of the battle on the 23rd, the British troops, surprised and in disarray, were forced to retreat, leaving behind 30 of their dead to the Patriotes' 13. A jubilant Nelson dispatched word to Saint-Charles and Saint-Eustache: the patriots have won at Saint-Denis!

Papineau and O'Callaghan, meanwhile, successfully hid out for several days in Saint-Hyacinthe, awaiting developments, but all the subsequent news was bad. Greatly outnumbered and inadequately supplied, Brown and his militia in Saint-Charles were routed by the British troops, who burned many of the town's buildings after their successful attack. Just a month and two days after the triumphant creation there of the Confederation of the Six Counties, the victorious government troops seized the rally's Liberty Pole, still bearing the now poignant inscription, "À Papineau, ses compatriotes reconnaissants," which the troops paraded scornfully through the streets of Montreal.

On the 1st of December, Gosford issued fugitive warrants for the eleven top leaders still at large, offering £1,000 reward for Papineau's capture and £500 each for O'Callaghan, Nelson, Brown and the others. Like hundreds of other patriots, these men would grope their way towards the American border as best they could, avoiding Tories, troops, and now bounty hunters. Meanwhile, the troops who had been humiliated at Saint-Denis in November returned there with reinforcements on the 2nd of December to attack the town once more. Finding the body of Lieutenant Weir, they immediately put the town to the torch as its inhabitants tried frantically to surrender. In a final gesture of vengeance, the troops reduced to rubble the monument that Wolfred Nelson had defiantly erected in the town square the year before in memory of Sorel's slain Patriote martyr, Louis Marcoux.

In their race for the border, Papineau and O'Callaghan remained together as they had been since their escape from Montreal. Their final desperate push took place on the night of the 4th of December, when they crossed Missisquoi Bay from the hamlet of Alburg to Swanton, Vermont, where at last they were safe, though now in exile. Their flight had been miserable to the end. Papineau, plunged into the frigid water when the ice on the bay gave way, had barely escaped drowning. Their harrowing escape was described by Robert Christie, an enemy of Papineau during Patriote times, who later became his admirer, in his History of the Late Province of Lower Canada. Comparing O'Callaghan to Aeneas's faithful companion in the Odyssey, Christie said of his unflinching loyalty to his chief that O'Callaghan was truly Papineau's "Fidus Achaës."

Gosford declared martial law throughout the whole Montreal district on the 5th of December. On the 14th, Colborne himself led the force of 1500 that set upon Saint-Eustache, leaving much of it in flames. The last of its 250 Patriote defenders were shot as they tried to flee from their barricaded bastion in the local church, which the troops burned down around them. The next day they marched on to nearby Saint-Benoît, where, as at Saint-Denis, they put the town to the torch while its inhabitants tried futilely to surrender. For all intents and purposes the rebellion of 1837 was now over. Wolfred Nelson's brave battle at Saint-Denis had been the Patriotes' only victory.

NOTE

The critical events of November 4 to 6 are recounted by Amédée Papineau in his *Journal d'un Fils de al Liberté, refuge aux États-unis, par suite de l'Isurrection Canadienne, en 1837* (repr., Éditions l'Étincelle, 1978), vol. I, 55-65.

This series of articles are adapted from a paper given by the author during the May 2008 conference of the Fédération des sociétés d'histoire du Québec. Marjorie A. Fitzpatrick is a writer and historian who lives in Pennsylvania.

PATHS TO OUR HERITAGE

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A BACHELOR'S LIFE

Portrait of the merchant as a young man in a bustling port city

by Anne Joseph

This is the first in a two-part series of articles based on diaries kept by Quebec City merchant Abraham Joseph during the early half of the 19th century.

When Abraham Joseph made Quebec City his home at the beginning of May 1837, he had a lot to learn as he set about establishing himself as a businessman with ambition. The story of his 49 years as a resident of Quebec is a reflection of how the city affected the man and vice versa.

Abraham did not reach the heights of stardom on the world stage, but in his own commendable and quiet way he did contribute, along with others, to the stardom of that collection of people who put Quebec City on the world stage. The politicians, the military, the professionals, the skilled craftsmen and the educators all made contributions to the phenomenal advancement of Quebec in those middle decades of the 19th century, but it was the talented tenacity of the merchants who fortified the platform upon which Quebecers collectively were enabled to rise to dizzy heights.

Abraham achieved his claim to fame in that aforementioned group of talented and tenacious merchants, who acted with a well-defined and targeted social conscience. Abraham became a most successful and well-respected businessman, extending his ventures way beyond the management of the family business, which continued to thrive after his death under the guidance of three more generations of his direct Joseph descendants until 1956.

But this status in local history was not on Abraham's mind as he moved alone to settle in a new city. His late father, Henry Joseph, had begun a general

merchandising business some 40 years earlier in Berthier, and by 1837, while elder brother Jacob stayed in Montreal to manage that end of the enterprise, Abraham set about establishing an additional permanent base from which to solidify and extend the family business.

Abraham kept a diary throughout



his first decade in Quebec, with plenty of insights into his bachelor years. After he married, the diary entries gradually became fewer. From day one, Abraham decided that if he was to succeed in business, then he must be equally successful in building up a pleasurable personal life. Settling into a boarding house, this affable and gracious young man of 21 immediately blended in with the local community, participating in their social activities.

The diary entries are rich in oftentimes charming, sometimes dull, fre-

quently tantalizing and sometimes downright stunning ways. The Abraham Joseph of the many obituary notices—as well as the fairly large collection of biographies in various books and articles over the years—is a man with a well-developed business acumen and a strong sense of social responsibility, a gentle man, and a most happily married man, comfortable and secure within his immediate family of wife and 13 children, enhanced by an immense extended family.

But the diary entries throughout his bachelor years in Quebec reveal another side of Abraham Joseph: a fast-maturing, fun-loving, at times flighty, sometimes a bit distressed young man doing his best to succeed in business (which he did, most of the time) as well as succeed in enjoying his social life (which he also did, most of the time). It is my opinion that the sanitized descriptions of Abraham diminish him, by depriving us of a glimpse of this high-spirited and sometimes insecure man dealing with the challenges of life.

Footloose and fancy free, Abraham both worked and played hard. He arrived in Quebec on 1 May 1837 and checked into Lemoine's Boarding House at a cost of £5 per month. He wrote "I am now more than likely to be stationary for sometime to come." Later that same week, on Friday 5 May, Abraham wrote "This has been a day of business with me—I made my first sales today & what's more in our new premises."

On arrival, Abraham hit the deck running. He worked hard, but he also tells us how he and his friends played cards, attended the theatre, dined and entertained, took part in riding and other sports, went to the races, and indulged in a little betting and sometimes more than

a little drinking. The Quebec Races and the Quebec Regatta figured prominently in his life. And, yes, Abraham “walks out” with quite a number of ladies. All these activities seem to have started soon after he arrived. A note on 19 June 1837 records: “This morning I had to walk very slowly as it gave me pain—I believe it is nothing but over fatigue & perhaps living rather too high”.

Entries noted such things as Abraham’s 5ft 6¾ins height and 133lbs weight, as well as his 26ins waist (26 June & 29 Nov 1837). There is plenty about the weather, mostly merely descriptive but some more personal: “4 June - and have not yet dropped my flannels.” Shipping fascinated him, and there are endless notes about the arrival and departure of all kinds of vessels.

The fluctuating population of six or so Lemoine boarders enriched his life, and conversation at times got pretty heated as their discussions ranged over many topics, including politics and religion. “Different topics were brought on – evening ended on religion with which I came off very well – I will turn to study religion more now than I have done.” (21 May 1837) From the frequency of Abraham’s entries, it becomes clear that receiving letters made any day that much more special. He studied French and took dancing lessons. Abraham always took care of his appearance, his manners were good, and so these lessons added another level to his social skills and acceptability in the community. To top it all off, he decided to get his own transportation.

My new vehicle consists of a long sleigh on high runners – on the front is a unicorn’s head beautifully carved by McKenzie & Bowls – his two hoofs resting on a scroll in front of the sleigh – his head is turned towards the seat – he being in a rising posture – A brass chain is attached to his neck & passes over his back – the unicorn is painted with a cream while mane – collar & hoofs gilt – panels of the sleigh are white with gold border – the sleigh it self is painted black with light color’d runners. (17 Jan 1840)

From this point on, horses were a big part of Abraham’s life. He bought and sold several, and enjoyed riding. Abra-

ham also liked birds, and on 30 August 1838 bought two canaries, naming them Jack and Fanny, that he kept in a cage in his bedroom. There is one mention of a dog named, Wolf. (13 Dec 1838)

Politics were of interest to Abraham, but my impression is that this interest was fairly casual, never passionate. Judaism was at all times an important element in Abraham’s lifestyle, even in these bachelor years as he lived without family in a boarding house. He observed the dietary laws by picking and choosing the food he ate. Abraham mentions oysters many times, but always stressed that he did not eat them—because of the kosher prohibition on shell fish. He often referred to the champagne or whisky that he certainly enjoyed.

Closed at 9 P.M. up hill and joined in the amusement of the evening – I did not partake of the oysters but did of the whisky – joined the singing circle. It is now midnight – Gordon has just left my room – this has been a determined evening of pleasure – a fête. (29 Oct 1839)

By the end of 1837, Abraham noted reports of trouble “with rebels” and unrest in the city. He joined a Volunteer Corps, Dr. Daly’s company, on 2 December, and after taking the oath of allegiance, etc., “the company began to drill 2 hours a day.” (3 December 1837). Diary entries record that Abraham was a Corporal at the end of December 1837, was promoted to Sergeant on 14 November 1838, and made his first appearance as Ensign in the Quebec Light Infantry on 3 January 1839. He was gazetted Captain on 10 November 1845, and Major in 1861.

Anne Joseph was born in England in 1935, arrived in Montreal in February 1959, settled here and married William K. Joseph, a 7th generation Quebecer, in 1974. Her 30-year working life always seemed to include research and writing. Retirement years have been filled with a variety of volunteer projects, and for the last dozen or so years most of her spare time has been focused on researching and writing about the earliest Canadian Jewish families who arrived in Quebec in the 18th and 19th centuries.



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BORDERLANDS

Reflections on a shared geography and history

by Rod MacLeod

Late last February, a few days after the president of the United States made his historic visit to Ottawa's ByWard Market to purchase cookies, a far more significant delegation from south of the border made its way to Montreal. At stake was nothing less than the appreciation of young people for history and geography. To judge by the school teachers, education administrators and heritage advocates that spoke of widespread ignorance and lack of interest, the cause is all but lost, thanks to generation gaps, silo thinking, and the "lies my teacher told me."

The draw for this delegation of Americans was a conference entitled *Discovery, Settlement and Struggle: Canada-United States Bi-national Planning Forum on Teaching and Learning History and Geography*, which took place at the McCord Museum under the auspices of the Association for Canadian Studies.

The solemn-sounding title did not do justice to the cozy atmosphere: thirty or so people relaxing around several tables listening to a series of informal presentations and then engaging in animated discussion peppered with often amusing anecdotes. It made for a very pleasant day and a half, as well as an eye-opening one.

Only about half the crowd were Americans. The rest were locals: McGill scholars Desmond Morton and Kate Desbarats, Sherbrooke prof Peter Gossage, Eastern Townships specialist Jack Little, Laval's Marc St-Hilaire, Montreal history teacher Robert Wilkins, Gisele Jacob and John Grigsby Geiger from the Royal Canadian Geographic Society, Hector Mackenzie from Foreign Affairs Canada, and the Association for Canadian Studies' own Jack Jedwab. Oh, and the Right Honourable Herb Gray, whom the American moderator introduced as the chair of the International Joint Commission on trans-border water and air rights—and then rather sheepishly added, after someone slipped him a note, that Gray was also the former Deputy Prime Minister of Canada.

The thing that everyone in the room had in common was the challenge of seeing history and geography without national blinkers. Canadians explained some of our own recent heritage issues—the debate over the Plains of Abraham re-enactment took centre stage. The Americans explained how focused their history curricula were exclusively on the United States, most of which lay hundreds of miles away from Vermont and Upstate New York, whereas Canada was typically

within an hour's drive. Many of the American participants came from the University of Vermont, the State University at Plattsburg, and the University of Maine—which apparently has the largest Quebec studies program outside of Quebec. Several people were of French-Canadian origin, and most were relatively well-versed in matters Canadian. Relatively.

The Canada-US border is clearly more than a barrier for travelers. It sits there like a Berlin Wall of the Mind, separating the history of an area into two awkward halves. Obviously, wars were fought over this border involving people on both sides. More to the point, however, residents of border areas relied on each other for trade, both

above board (including many of the elite 19th-century Montreal families whose fortunes once accounted for 70 per cent of Canada's wealth) and illegal (i.e. smuggling—including a roaring trade in Quebec maple syrup, which can be passed off as the Vermont product costing 20 per cent more, according to historian Garet Livermore). Both sides of the border share cultural connections as well: one thinks of the 1930s artists' colonies in Vermont, or the Haskell Opera House where you might soon need to clear customs if you want to go to the bathroom during the intermission.

The border may form part of the Borderlands' economic and cultural history, but most people have very little idea of the world on the other side apart from what they get in PBS public announcements and whatever New Englanders receive of the CBC. American news is notoriously local in nature, and it would seem



that so is perception; Canada ranks pretty low on the radar even of a New Englander. The insularity of Vermonters is apparently infamous. Livermore, who settled there from New York, described how obvious it was that the locals did not consider him a Vermonter even after many years' residence. After his first child was born, his wife reflected to a neighbour that at least their children would be Vermonters. The neighbour looked at her with a jaundiced eye and said: "Just because the cat has her kittens in the oven doesn't make them muffins!"

Canadians may be just as insular in many ways (perhaps Quebecers, even anglophone Quebecers, especially so) but our asymmetrical relationship with the United States obliges us to be a bit more savvy of them than they are of us. At one point, Kate Desbarats, describing the historical background of the Plains of Abraham battle, was asked by one of the Americans why she used the term "Seven Years' War" and not the "French and Indian War." A Canadian sitting near her explained that "that's what we call it."

The 400th anniversary of Champlain's discovery of Lake Champlain—or, at least, of the lake to which he gave his name—may provide an opportunity to chip away at that border, at any rate as a concept. Plattsburg historian Sylvie Beaudreau argued that Samuel de Champlain was a real trans-border figure, an explorer (and keeper of detailed notes on his voyages), a diplomat (albeit one who did not always make the best deals for what would later become Canada) and a builder of key military outposts. Champlain, she contested, was a true American hero—much more so than Henry Hudson, generally considered the founder of New York, who did little more than paddle on the river and then die the victim of mutiny in the Arctic wastes. It was agreed that the upcoming quadricentenary should provide opportunities to interest people, especially young people, in more aspects of local history. James Loewen of the University of Vermont did caution everyone not to fall back into old errors regarding European acts of discovery.

"Champlain discovered Lake Champlain," he observed to general laughter, "the same way that about 15 years ago I discovered oregano."

There was a consensus that it is often easier to make local history appealing to young people than it is to teach the grand narrative—although Jack Little confessed that he has on occasion been accused of undermining national unity by stressing local stories. Robert

Wilkins, who taught history at Montreal schools for more than thirty years, argued that young people do not naturally dwell on the past the way older folks do, and so it takes a great deal of skill and imagination to make that world a place they will agree to go to. This effort is not helped by our society's tendency to ignore the past by demolishing old buildings—and he drew special attention to the impending destruction of the old Trinity Anglican Church (now St-Sauveur) on Montreal's St. Denis Street.

Another problem is clearly the textbooks students have to work with.

Desmond Morton described the troubles he had back in the 1980s writing a Grade 11 Canadian History text for British Columbia's provincial government. He was not allowed to talk about why so many Quebecers resisted conscription during WWII ("rubbish," the Education Department people said) or mention the internment of Japanese-Canadians. He was encouraged to include the Holocaust, but in such a way to exclude any reference to Canada (bizarrely, in a Canadian textbook), including its role denying entry to Jewish immigrants before the war.

Loewen has made a study of American history textbooks (*Lies My Teacher Told Me*, 1995) and concluded that their insistence on portraying heroes is a major reason why students are turned off history. If history is essentially a sequence of the great achievements of past heroes, then students are left wondering why things seem so difficult now. If we have learned nothing, why bother studying the past?

We have to teach the conflicts, Loewen argued, so that students can see that there are ongoing problems that they can help solve. Vietnam is a case in point. Loewen once asked first-year university students who the principal antagonists in that conflict were, and most replied: North and South Korea. Korea? Well, they'd done that war in high school, sort of, but not Vietnam, and so had no idea. And Loewen refused to give any part marks for getting the "North" and "South" bits right!

Clearly there are too many borders in our world. This recent encounter between American and Canadian historians and geographers suggested that it may indeed be possible to tear down this wall of the mind between our two countries.

We have to go on to find additional ways to help students cross these borders, either by providing intellectual passports or, if necessary, by smuggling history like maple syrup.



E Ronjat, Posthumous Portrait of Champlain from A Popular History of France from the Earliest Times.

A FANCIFUL MIND

Jonathan Barber's curious odyssey in the realm of the self-help brain

by Susan McGuire

In 1825, some years before Dr. Jonathan Barber settled his family in Montreal, he published a booklet in Pennsylvania entitled *Exercises in Reading and Recitation*. A copy is now on display at Riversdale House Museum, which is a U.S. National Historic Landmark associated with the University of Maryland. It could be considered a measure of the recognition Dr. Barber achieved in elocution and oratory—fields that were in vogue in schools and universities of the time.

The booklet marked one of the many turning points in Dr. Barber's life. His was a long odyssey, which took him from a medical practice in England and the U. S., to teaching elocution at Harvard, lecturing in phrenology in the U. S. and Montreal, a homeopathic practice in Montreal, a stint as professor of oratory at McGill College, and finally to the small village of Knowlton in the Eastern Townships.

Jonathan Barber, son of a pharmacist, was born in 1784 in Scarborough, England, practised medicine there and in London as a member of the Royal College of Surgeons, and immigrated to the U. S. in 1820 "for health reasons, having been impaired by devotion to his profession," according to his 1864 obituary in the *Waterloo Advertiser*.

As a young man, Barber achieved stature as a "man of great elocutionary powers," according to Robert Leader in the 1875 booklet entitled *Reminiscences of Old Sheffield*. A speech he made in Scarborough in 1813 on behalf of the Bible Society was printed into a pamphlet. While in London, he was secretary to the Royal Humane Society, and is said to have distinguished himself by his eloquence at the Society's annual banquet.

After leaving England in 1820, he practised medicine for several years in Washington. He then gave up medicine to devote his efforts to literary pursuits, especially literature and elocution. He taught at Yale, and then in 1829-30 became an instructor at Harvard where he taught oratory and elocution in the Department of Rhetoric and Oratory until the close of 1834. In 1836, a work appeared entitled *The Elocutionist*,

consisting of *Declamations and Readings in Prose* by Jonathan Barber, Late Instructor in Elocution at Yale and Harvard University.

His stay at Harvard could not have been the happiest of times. A 2003 "Harvard Magazine.com" article refers to Barber's *A Practical Treatise of Gesture* (1829), and notes that Barber initiated students into the mysteries of rhetorical gesture with an apparatus like a bamboo cage that he devised. The article contains this description from Professor Michael West's book *Transcendental Wordplay*: "The student stood inside four equal vertical hoops, each angled at 45 degrees from the others. Around

these meridians ran three horizontal great circles, so seven hoops encircled a student. Constituting a hollow globe over six feet in diameter, the hoops divided its surface into 32 different apertures. The student could thrust his hands into various openings in front of him.

"The postures so defined corresponded to '15 fundamental or systematic positions' that the orator's arms might assume while speaking, each associated by Barber with a specific emotion..."

"To master eloquence, all Harvard students were marched into this bathosphere and required to declaim under his watchful eye, thrusting their hands through designated slats at appropriate points in the



text.” Concludes West, “More beloved by its inventor than by its victims, the bamboo sphere was found one morning dangling from a Cambridge barber pole.”

In his *Harvard Reminiscences*, Andrew Peabody says that Barber “was probably an accomplished trainer of vocal chords. A man of respectable character, zealous in his work, and disposed to hold pleasant relations with his pupils. But he was pompous and fantastic in mien, speech and manners.”

After leaving Harvard in 1834, Dr. Barber began to lecture on phrenology, a distant precursor to the field of neuroscience. With claims that it had roots going back to Aristotle, phrenology was developed in Europe in the early 19th century by Dr. Franz Joseph Gall and then by his pupil Dr. Johann Spurzheim. In 1832, Dr. Joseph C. Warren, professor of medicine at Harvard, added phrenology to his lecture topics, the same year that Dr. Spurzheim gave a series of lectures in the Boston area.

That December, the Boston Phrenological Society was formed, with Jonathan Barber as vice-president.

Phrenology was an advancement over previous theories about the brain and the nature of intelligence. It suggested that the brain is the home of all mental activities, and consists of separate faculties, each located in a particular part of the brain, and each controlling an aspect of character and personality. Franz Gall further postulated that the brain was made up of 27 of these individual “organs,” and that by measuring and analyzing the bumps and indentations of the skull, a person’s strengths and weaknesses, and thus personality and behaviour, could be established or predicted. Its value was claimed in such areas as choosing a marriage partner, making career choices, hiring employees and improved child-rearing.

The leading American phrenologist Orson Fowler, active in phrenology’s heyday from the 1820s into the 1850s, taught that a person’s defects identified through a phrenological analysis could be rectified through exercising the appropriate brain faculty, and the improvement would show up on subsequent examination. Phrenology became popular with the emerging middle classes in the U. S. and Canada as a route to self-improvement—a more egalitarian approach to a person’s worth and possible advancement than usual within the traditional rigid class system.

Phrenology was supplanted by scientific advances in various branches of the neurosciences. By late Victorian times, phrenology had taken on controversial aspects and in the 20th century was conscripted as evidence for racial profiling and had significant negative connotations. These less cordial aspects of phrenology do not seem to have pervaded the work of Dr. Barber. Martin S. Staum, in his recent work *Labelling People* published by McGill-Queen’s Press, seems to conclude that early practitioners of phrenology promoted it as a tool that could be used to ameliorate the effects of extreme passions on the social fabric—probably of interest to Dr. Barber because of

the political and social turmoil at the time, particularly in Montreal where he had visited.

Phrenology remained a long-time interest for Dr. Barber. In 1838, the records of the Glasgow Phrenological Society show that he participated in a phrenological observation along with William Weir, physician and lecturer in clinical medicine at the Glasgow Royal Infirmary. In the files of the Brome Lake Historical Society in Knowlton are the diagrams of the head that Dr. Barber used in his lectures, together with a booklet entitled *The Illustrated Self-Instructor in Phrenology and Physiology*, published in 1855 by Orson Squire Fowler.

By 1835, Dr. Barber’s family life had become complicated. His first wife presumably had died some years before, leaving him with two daughters, Mary and Emma. His second wife was Martha Hemming Dunkin who had previously lived in England, the widow of Summerhays Dunkin. Dr. and Mrs. Barber’s daughter Susan Fitch Barber was born in 1831.

Martha’s son from her first marriage was Christopher Dunkin, a highly intelligent young man who, following studies in classics and mathematics at London and Glasgow universities, came to live with his mother’s new family in the United States at the age of 19. He studied for a time at Harvard and, though not having been graduated with a degree, was awarded an honorary degree and appointed tutor in Greek at Harvard for the year 1834-35. In August 1835, Christopher Dunkin married Dr. Barber’s eldest daughter Mary—she had been born in 1813, according to her birth certificate now at the Brome County Historical Society, to “Jonathan Barber, Surgeon, and his wife Elizabeth” at Scarborough, England.

Having spent some time in Montreal, the Barber and Dunkin family moved to the city about 1836 where Dr. Barber had contacts that included the family of Charles Bancroft, who was a member of the extended Bancroft family of Boston and was the business partner and nephew by marriage of the important American-born Montreal merchant Horatio Gates.

In “Stories of 50 Years Ago” by James Mathewson, which appeared in the Montreal newspaper *The Daily Witness* of January 11, 1896, the author notes: “The late Dr. Barber and afterwards his clever son-in-law Christopher Duncan [sic] about 1836, gave the most interesting lectures on phrenology ever given. His collection of skulls and casts and charts was very extensive. Both were finished speakers and both thoroughly understood the subject.”

Dr. Barber went back to England from Montreal for some years. By the time he returned in 1842, he was versed in the field of homeopathy that had developed in Europe, a holistic system of medicine that seeks to stimulate the body’s natural ability to heal itself. Early proponents viewed homeopathy as a gentle and effective alternative to then-prevalent bleeding and purging procedures. Dr. Barber maintained a

homeopathic practice for some years; in Lovell's Directories, he is listed as "doctor" from 1847 to 1852, and then as "homeopathist" until 1859-60.

While winding down his practice, he began again to teach elocution, and in the McGill University Archives he is listed as Professor of Oratory in the years 1859-64. Dr. J. D. Borthwick notes in his *Montreal History and Gazetteer* to the year 1892, "The writer well remembers when associated with him in the old [High School Department of McGill College, later High School of Montreal], and Barber's method of Elocution, then in vogue, was one of the most interesting lessons the youth of Montreal learned."

Knowledgeable in many subjects, Dr. Barber was a frequent lecturer at the Mechanics' Institute of Montreal (now the Atwater Library and Computer Centre). In the winter of 1845-46, he gave a talk entitled, "Best Means of Preserving Health of Large Towns." In 1850 he gave a talk on "Oratory with Reminiscences of English Speeches," and in 1853 spoke on "The Philosophy of France." In 1848, he and his son-in-law Christopher Dunkin were made honorary members of the Mechanics' Institute, "in consideration of their valuable services to the Institute as lecturers during several sessions" and later were both awarded life memberships in MIM.

For some 20 years the family lived on Little St. James Street in Montreal, and beginning in the 1840s Christopher Dunkin, by then a successful lawyer and politician-to-be, had been setting down roots in the Eastern Townships, eventually settling in Knowlton where he built a handsome dwelling called "Lakeside." He established a large farm on the shores of Brome Lake—now the site of the Knowlton Golf Club and the Brome Lake Boating Club.

Dr. Barber's second daughter Emma Gertrude devoted her life to good works. She started a Home for Girls in Montreal, first in her own home where women in domestic service could go on their day off so they wouldn't be in the streets, couldn't be tempted to drink, and could receive religious education and sewing courses. This evolved into the Sheltering Home of Montreal, which Emma started in 1866 and which later became the home of the Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU).

In 1872, Emma Barber and Mrs. Samuel W. Foster, wife of the sheriff of Knowlton, were conducting a Sunday School for farmers' children in a little schoolhouse two miles from the village—probably the Tibbits Hill Schoolhouse. They also started a sewing class on Saturday afternoons to teach the children needlework. And they were organizing the Distributing Home in Knowlton for English orphans, who were placed mostly on farms in the area—a project supported by Christopher Dunkin.

Dr. Barber's third daughter, Susan Fitch Barber, married Henry Bancroft, a son of Montreal merchant

Charles Bancroft. Henry became a lawyer but had to retire because of ill health, and died at Christopher Dunkin's Knowlton home at age 45, leaving three children, one of whom was named Christopher Dunkin Bancroft. Susan Barber Bancroft later married George Rice of Montreal.

Dr. Jonathan Barber gave an address at the 50th wedding anniversary of Dr. and Mrs. S. S. Foster in Knowlton in 1863. He died at 80 the following year at the Knowlton home of Christopher Dunkin, and is buried, alongside Dunkin and Bancroft family members, in Mount Royal Cemetery.

Acknowledgements

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HINDSIGHT

The Gray factor

by Kevin O'Donnell

Chalk this up as one of life's coincidences. Late in January, Rod MacLeod and I arranged to meet to discuss upcoming heritage network activities, including a meeting about Montreal's diverse heritage.

When I entered McKibbin's, Rod was already there, poring over a book. It turned out to be *Raise the Flag and Sound the Cannon: the Northernmost Battle of the Civil War* by Donald J. Davidson, which our prolific past president had agreed to review (See Jan-Feb 2009 edition of *Quebec Heritage News*, pp. 24-25.)

My sister Mary Frances had given me this book for Christmas. I mentioned to Rod that years earlier, when Mary Frances was in elementary school, she had won a book about Montreal in the days of the American Civil War which I had eagerly read and then appropriated on long-term loan. *Conspiracy in Canada* reveals in gripping detail the role Montreal played as an operations centre for the Confederate secret service in Canada.

These courtly Southern gentlemen, popular with the city's smart set, made their headquarters at the luxurious St. Lawrence Hall on St. James Street. Their schemes to draw Great Britain into the war on their side included the St. Alban's Raid and later, the war lost, the revenge killing of Abraham Lincoln by John Wilkes Booth, also a guest at the hotel.

I told Rod that *Conspiracy in Canada* was the spark that ignited my interest in history. A consumer of American books and television, I was fascinated to discover that the city I lived in played a role in Lincoln's death, and was to be a postwar refuge of Jefferson Davis, the former presi-

dent of the Confederate States. In fact, I still read *Conspiracy in Canada* on occasion, as it had survived the years of moving from one apartment to another.

This is a book I would never part with—except perhaps to surrender it to its rightful owner some day. I could even tell Rod the name of the author: Clayton Gray. I recalled from the flyleaf that he had written for magazines



and the CBC, as well as writing other books on Old Montreal. We wondered if he were still alive, and if so would he be interested in contributing to our magazine.

Two days later our musings were answered when an obituary in the *The Gazette* announced that Clayton Gray had passed away at age 91.

To check that this Clayton Gray was indeed the author of *Conspiracy in Canada* and *The Montreal Story*, as well as *Le vieux Montréal* and *Montréal qui disparaît*, I found the tele-

phone number of a Clayton Gray who lived in Montreal's NDG district.

The woman who answered, Ruth Gray, confirmed that she was the recent widow of the author of these works. As we chatted, I realized that, clichés aside, his death marked the end of an era. Fifty years ago Clayton Gray was one of the handful of Montrealers concerned about the fast-disappearing architectural heritage of their city who resolved to do something about it.

Some of these heritage pioneers are still remembered for their achievements. In the early 1960s, music critic Eric Maclean restored the dilapidated Papineau house on Bonsecours Street and initiated interest in Old Montreal as a residential area. Students of McGill architecture professor John Bland made detailed records of Old Montreal buildings destined for the wrecker's ball. *Gazette* editor Edgar Andrew Colquhoun published his "All Our Yesterdays" columns on Montreal topics for 56 years.

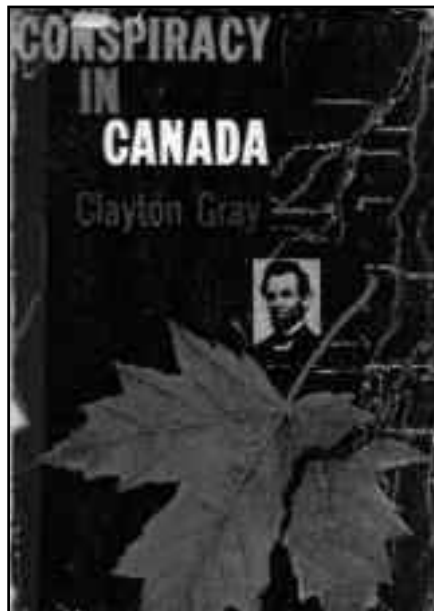
But who now remembers the Historical Association of Montreal? In 1961 its president was Priscilla Reid, librarian of the Montreal Presbyterian College and lecturer at Sir George Williams College. Hoping "to preserve the old along with the new," Reid convened a meeting of fourteen Montreal-area English and French historical societies to form the Historical Council of Greater Montreal. The mission of the Council was "to seek and maintain historical monuments and create an historical consciousness in the minds of the public"

Their efforts paid off the following year when the city created the Jacques-Viger Commission, a conservation ad-

visory group named after the first mayor of Montreal, himself an antiquarian. The Viger Commission played a key role in preserving what was left of Old Montreal. Both Maclean and Reid served on it.

Clayton Gray and his friends David Stewart and C.J.G. “Jack” Molson were in the thick of Montreal heritage efforts. With the support of Gray (and Mayor Jean Drapeau), Stewart’s Lake St. Louis Historical Society took over the old British garrison fort on St. Helen’s Island to establish the David M. Stewart Museum. In 1959 Molson became president of the Canadian Heritage of Quebec, a foundation dedicated to purchasing and preserving places of historical interest throughout the province, including the 1739 Hurtubise House in Westmount. He too was a member of the Viger Commission.

In 1964, the year Old Montreal was declared a historic district, Mayor Jean Drapeau penned the Introduction to Clayton Gray’s *Le Vieux Montréal*.



He noted proudly that “Nous avons donc un patrimoine historique à conserver et l’ouvrage du Clayton Gray contribue à en illustrer la valeur. Puisse la lecture de ces lignes nous renforcer dans notre fidélité et notre amour du passé.”

Ruth Gray said that in his final years Clayton had suffered from cardiovascular problems and that these years were not easy. His wife of 64 years arranged for Gray to indirectly make a final contribution to Montreal history. He had accumulated a significant collection of books relating to Montreal over the years. Ruth invited the McCord Museum to take what they wished from his collection; other items were donated to the Redpath book sale. She seemed pleased to hear from someone whom Clayton had influenced those many years ago, and that QAHN was contributing to the efforts to save Montreal’s heritage.

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EVENT LISTINGS

Eastern Townships

Société d'histoire de Sherbrooke,
275 Dufferin, Sherbrooke
Info: 819-821-5406
info@socetehistoire.com
www.shs.ville.sherbrooke.qc.ca

Permanent exhibition,
Sherbrooke 1802-2002, Two centuries
of history

Uplands Cultural & Heritage Center
(Lennoxville)
Tel: 819-564-0409

Spring 2009
Weekend Afternoon Tea, Saturdays &
Sundays 1-4:00 p.m.

March 29-May 31, 2009
Exhibit
Ena Greyeyes & Paula Curphy

Lennoxville-Ascot Historical & Museum
Society
9 Speid St., second floor of Uplands
819-564-0409
lahms@uplands.ca

Meetings every 3rd Monday of the
month, everyone welcome
LAHMS's collection of 6000 artifacts /
objects from 19th century-1950's re-
flects the social and cultural norms of
Lennoxville-Ascot region.

Stanstead Historical Society
Colby-Curtis Museum,
Info: 819-876-7322
info@colbycurtis.ca

Till Summer 2009
Museum Closed for Restoration except
for its members and the local population
special events and activities to be an-
nounced

Brome County Historical Society
130 Lakeside, Knowlton
Info: 450-243-6782

bchs@endirect.qc.ca

April 28
Musical entertainment
Manon, the Italian Way-Host Henry
Schreiber

May 5th, 2009
Musical Entertainment-Manon, a la
Francaise-Host: Henry Schreiber-Pre-
sented at Theatre Lac Brome

May 15, 2009
Gala Opening of Knowlton Antique
Show at Community Centre (Tickets
available soon)

May 16 & 17, 2009
Knowlton Antique Show

Montreal

McCord Museum
Info: 514-398-7100
Email: info@mccord.mcgill.ca

Permanent Exhibit
Simply Montreal Glimpses of a Unique
City
Over 800 objects from McCord's fa-
mous collection

Till April 4th, 2010
An International Travelling Exhibition
The history and experience of Being
Irish O'Quebec
An initiative of the St. Patrick's Society
of Montreal and the Irish Protestant
Benevolent Society of Montreal, in as-
sociation with the McCord Museum .

Till April 26, 2009
Exhibition
Much More Munsch, Child's Play!
For children 12 and under.
Till May 31, 2009

Exhibition
Norman Bethune-Trail of Solidarity
Collection is in English, French and
Spanish

Photographs and texts 3 parts (1) Biog-
raphical portrait of a Canadian surgeon
(2) Bethune in Spain (3) The Crime of
the Malaga-Almeria chapter.

May 29th – October 4th, 2009
Exhibit
Wathahine: Portraits of Aboriginal
women by documentary of photogra-
pher Nance Ackerman

Westmount Historical Association
Westmount Public Library
Fall Lecture Series 2008
Cost: Members: Free
Non-members: 5\$
Info: 514-925-1404 or 514-932-6688
Email: info@westmounthistorical.org

April 16th, 2009
Speaker: Peter Harrison, great grandson
of founder Dent Harrison
Topic: POM Bakery, Pride of Montreal
or Pain Orgeuil de Montréal

May 21st, 2009
Speakers: Caroline Breslaw and Ruth
Allan Rigby, WHA Board Members
Topic: The City of Westmount: 100
years ago

For Information Requests:
Archives are open to researchers by ap-
pointment
Questions related to the history of West-
mount will be answered by writing, by
telephone, or by email.

Material Donations:
Donations of photographs, memorabilia,
or other material relating to the history
of Westmount accepted.

Hudson Historical Society
St James Anglican Church 642 Main
Road, Hudson

Meetings in 2009

May
Ralph Simpson-The Law Family of

Côte St-Charles

Exporail, Canadian Railway Museum
110, rue Saint-Pierre
Saint-Constant
General Information: 450-632-2410

Permanent Collection
160 Unique railway vehicles on display

April 24th, 2009, 7 p.m.
Slide show form Fred Angus fonds, a great railway enthusiast:
50 years Fred Angus picture
Shown in French only

May 31, 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.
Museum Day
Free admission to the Museum from

Quebec Family History Society (QFHS)
QFHS Library-173 Cartier Ave, Pointe Clair
Information: 514-695-1502
www.qfhs.ca

April 25th, 10 a.m. – 4 p.m.
Lecturer: Gary Schroder, and others to be announced
Topic: A Genealogical Day on the Internet
Cost: \$30. Members
\$40 . Non-members

May 23rd, 10a.m. – 4 p.m.
Seminar: A Genealogical Day in Quebec

Irish Protestant Benevolent Society
5165 Sherbrooke St. W, Suite 320,
Montreal
514-489-2660
irishpbs@bellnet.ca
www.irishpbs.ca

May 19th, 2009
Annual General Meeting followed by cocktails and dinner
Founders Room, University Club,
Mansfield St.
Speaker: Professor David Wilson
Topic: The Orange Order in Canada
Cost: \$65. per person
Information: 514-848-8711
cdnirish@alcor.concordia.ca

Quebec City

Morrin Center
44, Chaussée des Écossais Quebec

418-694-9147 or 0754
info@morrin.org
www.morrin.org

April 18th, 2009, 1-5 p.m.
Quebec: English-Language Literary Weekend
Chance to meet and discuss with Canada's finest writer three of whom are the finalists of the Governor General's Literary Award.
Authors: M.G. Vassanji, Rawi Hage, Colin McAdam, Mark Frutkin Vivian Demuth
Followed by 7:00 p.m. "square table"
Adults \$10.00, Members \$8.00, free for students

April 21, 2009, 1:30-3:30 p.m.
Poetry Workshop
The Light of Common Day
Workshop runs every Tuesday from April 21 until May 19th, 2009
Members \$28.00, Non-Members \$38.00

May 1st, 2009, 7:30 p.m.

Writers Out Loud
Speaker: Neil Bissoondath

Outaouais Pontiac

Gatineau Valley Historical Society
819-827-6224
Email: info@gvhs.ca

April 20, 2009
Exhibit of photographs
Andrew Rodger, archivist, (LAC) on William James Topley Studio Photographs

June 1st, 2009, 6:00 p.m.
Annual Dinner and Awards Evening
Location: The Grange, 80 ch. Summer Rd., Cantley
Cost: \$25. per person
Carpools available: call Michael Cooper 819-459-2787

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Saturday, June 13, 2009

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This year's recipient of the

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Peter Howlett, president of Les Amis de la Montagne, a citizens group
instrumental in protecting historic Mount Royal Park

And special guest presentations by

Open Museum's Maureen Doyle, on an inspiring internet-based
project in support of small museums everywhere

Ontario Heritage Trust's Richard Moorhouse, on the mission and strategy of
heritage conservation in Ontario communities

A buffet luncheon will be served.

Smith House, 1260 Remembrance Road
Montreal, Quebec

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Registration: \$15 for QAHN members; \$20 for non-members.

See inside for mail-in registration coupon.