THOSE FABULOUS GASPÉ FIDDLERS

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Quebec Heritage News

VOL 6, NO. 5 SPRING 2012

Putting Heritage at the Top of Our Agenda

Interview with Michael Fish

1812 and All That

Exploring a 200-year-old Conflict

Come to the Congrès

The Fédération Histoire Québec Meets in Sherbrooke, May 2012

Quebec Heritage News

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Cover photo: Erskine Morris and his fiddle, Wakeham, Quebec. Photo: courtesy of Brian Morris.

Editor's Desk

Jimmy Darou and Carole too

by Rod MacLeod

Just like the way your bum leaves an impression on a vinyl seat cushion after you stand up, so does a memory press into your mind: it's an imperfect version, and it gradually fades, but until that time you are left with a trace of what went on.

OK, so that sentence may not win Metaphor of the Year award, but it does allow me to talk about memories of vinyl barstools, as well as changing streetscapes, where I used to get my car fixed, and my favourite pharmacist.

I am just old enough to remember the old drug store on our main street (Westminster in Montreal West) with its soda counter supporting clear plastic domes full of doughnuts (when they took the "ugh" out of "doughnut" a whole lot of flavour was lost), boxy spring-loaded napkin dispensers, and, as often as not, the elbows of the guy in a white shirt and crisp white hat who would serve you if he noticed you. In front of this counter were half a dozen stools shaped like black kettle drums (yes, with vinyl seats) which you could twist a half turn in either direction as you sat before they swung you back to face the counter again. I'm not old enough to remember having met anyone socially at this drug store counter – not the guys for cokes on hot Saturday afternoons, not the girl down the street for a daring single ice-cream float with two straws – for the counter was gone before I was up for any of that. (Alas, by the time I was, fast food was as romantic as it got – not that I remember complaining.) My only memory of actually patronizing that drug store counter was stopping there one day for hotdogs with my father, probably coming back from a ball game, and being hugely disappointed to find that the big shiny milk dispenser with its space-age silver knob was out of order and the white-hatted guy had to pour me a glass from a carton he took out of the fridge.

That was Berke's Drug Store, not to be confused (although I did confuse it) with the jewelry store downtown where my uncle worked. But the days of soda fountains and (alas) "doughnuts" were quickly fading, and one day Berke's was gone – or rather it moved a couple of doors down to a spanking new building and reinvented itself as Budning's Pharmacy. The business took itself more seriously now, and if it lost the soda crowd it gained a loyal following of people of all ages who needed what it had to offer. Although Budning's did sell greeting cards and kleenex, the main focus was drugs; there were no bar stools, and what went over the counter wasn't milk or hotdogs but over-the-counter drugs. When it came to prescriptions, you found that Mr B himself, a large, jovial gent, had a knack for explaining the way that what you had to take would work without sounding like a tape recording. He seemed to care about his clients, both as a good professional and as a member of the community – which he was: he and his family lived just up the street.

"Jimmy Darou's Filling Station, May 1938," Conrad Poirier Collection, Bibliothèque et archives nationales du Québec.

And it was a family business: Budning's daughter Carole studied pharmacy and worked alongside the master for many years. When he died in the late 1990s, Carole took the helm of Budning's and kept it going; it is now in its 65th year. She, too, has a knack for explaining little multicoloured pills and how they can affect your life, and on at least one occasion has given me a clearer understanding of what a certain medicine might be seeking to cure than I had received from the doctor who had made out the prescription. The Budning reputation is such that many people who no longer live in Montreal West still have their medication sent to them from Carole's humble counter. In the last years of his life, my father had his impressive array of pills delivered regularly from Budning's to his senior's home in Westmount, a municipality not known for its dearth of pharmacies.

Until a couple of years ago, a business with an even more remarkable pedigree than Budning's stood just across the street. Gas stations don't normally find themselves on anyone's list of heritage buildings, yet "Jimmy Darou's" was a fixture on Westminster for four decades and, like Budning's, had a charm and a sense of dedication that more than made up for its unprepossessing aesthetics.

Born Thomas Harold Darou, the entrepreneur's fame came less from whatever mechanical savvy he may have had than from his widely respected drive to be useful when others in his situation might have despaired. A Montreal jockey, "Jimmy" Darou was thrown from a horse in a race at Blue Bonnets in 1933 and was paralysed from the neck down. For several years, according to *The Montreal Gazette*, Darou rarely left his

room in the Prevost Sanitorium, his main source of distraction being the radio. One of his favourite shows was NBC's "Don McNeill's Breakfast Club," a zany compilation of comedy acts featuring such regulars as Fibber McGee and Molly. (My parents grew up with this stuff and often referred to my bedroom-cleaning skills as being like those of Fibber McGee, who apparently had a closet that dumped an avalanche of junk on him whenever he opened it.)

The other radio personality Darou loved was "Cheerio," whose soothing voice reached across the continent from San Francisco's KPO (an affiliate of NBC). Cheerio's real name was never revealed (we now know it was author and editor Charles Kellog Field), but he had a loyal following among the "hundreds of cripples and invalids who listen daily to his programme," as *The Gazette* put it. After receiving several enthusiastic letters from the former jockey, Cheerio decided to come all the way to Montreal and broadcast his show to 42 stations across North America from Darou's room in the sanitorium on February 28, 1936.

Inspired by Cheerio's enthusiasm, Darou checked out of the sanitorium and looked for a way to occupy himself within the community. By this time, his mobility had improved considerably and he could sit at a desk and manoeuvre in a wheelchair. He decided to start a business and, as Charles Budning would do two decades later, chose Montreal West. Darou was featured in *Life Magazine* in March 1938: the article described his "busy gas station" and the positive influence Cheerio had on his life, and it featured a photo of him looking reasonably hale having gotten into his wheelchair from a car. Appropriately, Darou named his Westminster Avenue business "Cheerio," although within the town it was always known as "Jimmy Darou's." For many years, Darou himself lived in a flat above the office. The gas he (or rather his staff) pumped was Indian, and the station featured the profile head of an Indian chief over its doors; in the 1950s, the building was remodelled to sport the modern Texaco logo, which had bought out the Indian Oil Company.

From the beginning, Jimmy Darou's attracted the attention of another photographer who had less international clout than *Life*'s but a solid place in Quebec history. Conrad Poirier, who lived one street over from Westminster in Montreal West, had taken to photographing people going about their daily business in his community and sold the results to *The Gazette*, *La Presse*, and other newspapers – making him one of the province's pioneers of photo-journalism. He found Jimmy Darou's curiously photogenic, and documented it for over two decades, along with the colourful wheelchair-bound fellow who ran it. A great many of Poirier's photos were deposited in the provincial archives after his death in 1968, and his views of Montreal life during the middle decades of the twentieth century, including plenty of shots of the Canadiens in action, can be viewed at www.banq.qc.ca.

Darou was an old man by the time I was growing up, but in more recent years I got to know his successors over all-too-frequent visits. Dave Weigensberg bought the gas station from Darou when the latter retired in the mid-1970s, and when Dave retired two decades later his son Joel took over. Joel closed the gas part of the business and focused on car repair, in which field of expertise he was a certifiable genius. And (in keeping with the "human touch" theme in this article) he was a pillar of both the community and much further afield: you felt you could trust him with your life – which, as he kept cars roadworthy, was pretty much the case. Year after year I brought my aging Mazda onto his lot, surrendering the keys into his greasy hands in return for a casual promise that they'd "have a look." When it came, the diagnosis was always less dreadful, and the cost less onerous, than I'd feared. Some mechanics give you the runaround, voicing doom and gloom if exorbitant sums are not spent on parts they have to send away for; Joel would

Top: "Jimmy Darou, 21 March 1940," Conrad Poirier Collection, Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec.

Bottom: Westminster Avenue, Montreal West, February 2012. Photo: Rod MacLeod.

hand my keys back with a shrug, saying that they'd just had to tweak the cavorance and assuring me that my wheezing old clunker was "a nice little car" that could go on running well for years. It did, thanks to Joel.

Two summers ago, Joel and his partners disappeared. Apparently he got an anonymous buyout offer that spelled comfortable retirement, and he took it. Sometime later, Montreal West residents learned that a Pharmaprix would open on the site, news that has led to a great deal of protest at council meetings and spilled much local newspaper ink. Many complain that the new building will be out of character with the street – and now, as it materializes on Westminster, it is hard not to take this point: while the garage was a modest structure set well back from the road, the pharmacy fronts right on the sidewalk and its height and bulk will make the entire street seem narrower and darker. Many are also worried for the health of the small-scale competition across the street. Carole Budning has certainly contributed to the public discussion on the subject in Montreal West, but her gently confident position is that people will still value the personal touch they get from her. I notice that Budning's circulating flyers bear the motto: "Large enough to serve you, small enough to know you." And long may that be true.

I'm sure that a couple of years from now we will have forgotten all the controversy along with what used to be on the new Pharmaprix site. Jimmy Darou's will have faded from memory, and exist only on Conrad Poirier's plates at the Bibliothèque et Archives nationales. That is, of course, the way of things – and, anyway, it's hard to get weepy nostalgic about a gas station. Even so, it's all part of our heritage, and when it's gone we've lost something that was, in its own way, grand.

Like the "ugh" in doughnut.

Sources:

Montreal Gazette.
Life Magazine.
Budning's Pharmacy Newsletter, Autumn 2011.
The Breakfast Club Yearbook, www.richsamuels.com.
David Watson, *Montreal West: Looking Back.*
Andy Riga's *Montreal Gazette* blog.

Letters

Canada before its time

Sandra Stock writes that at the time of the War of 1812 the term "Canada" referred to the colony of the two Canadas, Upper and Lower ["1812: a war of islands and rivers," Winter 2012]

It may interest your readers to learn that as early as 1775 one Nathaniel Smith, a Yorkshire immigrant to that part of Nova Scotia that later became New Brunswick, wrote home about his grain production saying, "Kannida is one of the finest corn Countries in the World and can send to Markit large quantities at a low price."

This was 16 years before the Constitutional Act of 1791, and 92 years before Confederation. See Nathaniel Smith: Stranger in a Strange Land, Tantramar Heritage Trust, (Sackville, NB), page 21.

James Brierley
Dunham, QC

Editor's note:

Mr Smith may have been aware that "Canada" was used during the French regime to refer to the Laurentian part of New France, by way of distinguishing it from the maritime portion, Acadia – or Louisiana, for that matter.

The origins of the term "Canada" of course go back to the early Spanish explorers, one of whom ventured this far north (it is not clear exactly which part he visited) and was unimpressed. "Ca! Nada!" he was reported to have muttered – meaning "Pshaw! Nothing! At least Voltaire had the good grace to admit that we offered several acres of snow.

Internment no haven

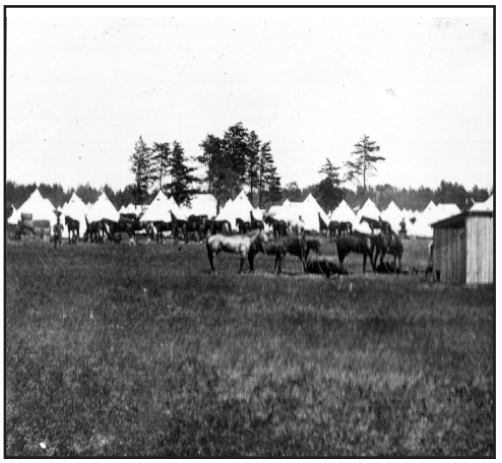
I read the article on the War of 1812 ["1812: a war of islands and rivers," Winter 2012] , and, although most of the piece is well-researched and informative, I would like to call your attention to a different take on the Jewish refugees at Fort Lennox/St-Paul-Ile-aux-Noix.

I know people who were interned there and they would hardly have used the expression "safe haven" to describe their experiences. Yes, it was safe, but they were interned there, behind barbed wire.

There are good descriptions elsewhere that more accurately explain the conditions at the time than the sanitized version available from Parks Canada.

There is a good story here, waiting to be told.

Sheila Eskenazi
Ste-Agathe, QC

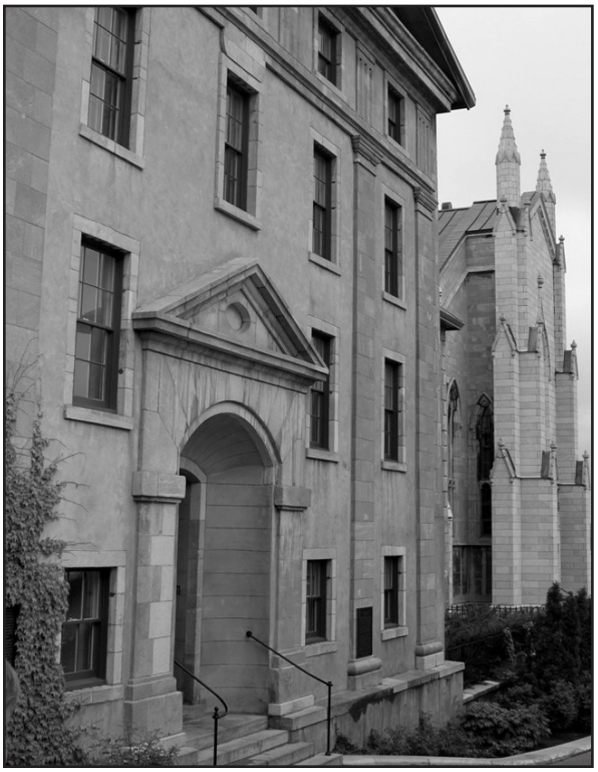


Mystery Photo!

Can you identify this photo? The only clue is that it is part of a set of First World War-era stereoscopic images from Quebec's Eastern Townships. Send your answers to: **editor@qahn.org.**

Timelines

Quebec's Morrin Centre wins award



The superb and newly restored Morrin Centre in Quebec City was presented a Special Jury Prize at the 8th Annual Mérites d'architecture de la Ville de Québec last fall. These awards recognize innovation and quality in architectural design, and are presented in various categories, including the Special Jury Prize.

Martin Pineault, who was president of the jury this year, and who heads the Direction de la Capitale-Nationale at Quebec's Ministry of Culture, had the following to say: "In my capacity as President of the Jury, I am honoured to present the Special Jury Prize. The selected project caught the jury's attention for the restoration works undertaken since 2005 to refurbish a building that is recognized as a heritage site for Canada and a historical monument for Quebec.

"The jury noted the commitment and efforts of those concerned in preserving and showcasing the various functions of the building throughout the centuries as prison, college, library and cultural centre, all while keeping the edifice abreast of security and accessibility norms in a subtle architectural blend of past and present."

Fairbairn's final renovations

This past Valentine's Day, a crew began the last phase of construction work on Wakefield's 1860s Fairbairn House. These interior renovations are expected to take up to four months, but the house should be ready for opening as a Heritage Centre later this year. This work has been funded by recent grants from the federal Department of Economic Development and the Municipality of La Pêche.

Meanwhile, Fairbairn House committees are busy preparing exhibits, displays and programming to be presented at the Centre. Already, many artifacts and ideas have come in from Gatineau Valley residents eager to preserve their local history and to support the efforts of this new heritage centre.

The old Fairbairn family farmhouse is a landmark most residents well remember on the main road leading north from the village. The house was built by William Fairbairn, a Scottish stonemason who worked on the Rideau Canal before settling in Wakefield, where his first venture was to build the 1838 grist mill. The Wakefield mill is now an attractive auberge and conference centre, which played host to U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and other dignitaries at the Foreign Ministers meeting in December 2010.

As soon as weather permits, work will get started on landscaping and fencing the grounds around the house, including an upgrade of a natural amphitheatre in the park behind it, which will provide a permanent outdoor stage.

A busy spring and summer is ahead for all! For more information visit: www.fairbairn.ca.

Top: The Morrin Centre. Photo: Matthew Farfan.

Bottom: The happy wreckers of Fairbairn. Photo: courtesy of the Fairbairn House.

New Outaouais Museum Network

Pooling resources to make a stronger whole

by Nick Seebruch

At a time when funding for museum and heritage sites in Quebec is inadequate at best, it is only logical that the museums in the province create networks of mutual support to fill the gap that might otherwise be taken up by the government. This is what has happened in the Outaouais region where eight local heritage organizations and museums have decided to form a network dedicated to improving communication and promoting solidarity.

The Outaouais Museum Network, as the new organization is called, was christened last fall and has slowly begun to organize. The OMN was formed to serve smaller museums and interpretation centres.

Richard Bégin, president of the network, told QAHN that the OMN is designed specifically for smaller museums in the Outaouais region which survive largely by virtue of community volunteers.

Currently, the organizations that comprise the OMN include the Kitigan Zibi Anishinabeg Cultural Centre, the Centre d'interprétation de l'historique de la protection contre le feu (Château Logue), the Centre d'interprétation du patrimoine de Plaisance, the Fairbairn House Heritage Centre, the Symmes Inn Museum, the Musée de l'outil traditionnel en Outaouais, and the Musée des pionniers de Saint-André-Avellin.

Other organizations are eligible to join, and Bégin describes two types of membership for which potential members can apply.

The first type is full-voting membership, for which museums or interpretation centres are eligible, provided they meet the mission and objectives of the Network and are accepted by the founding members. The second type is for friends or honorary members of the OMN, who are non-voting.

According to Bégin, the mission of the Outaouais Museum Network is to "support, promote and represent the interests of its members, i.e., the museums and interpretation centres located in the Outaouais."

The Network, Bégin says, is "born from its members and will accomplish its goals through its members. It is a multilateral network based on mutual recognition."

The OMN's objectives, Bégin says, are largely centred on the exchange of ideas, the pooling of resources and the reaping of the benefits of shared experience.

This pooling of resources includes the sharing of artefacts, exhibits and expertise, as well as the lessons learned from being small organizations, so that greater numbers of people can see the varied history of Quebec and the Outaouais region.

Thus far, the OMN is working to establish itself. It has created a website, http://www.reseau-museal-outaouais.ca, and is working on a promotional campaign for its member organizations, something that has been overlooked in the past by Tourisme Outaouais and the Quebec government due to the small size of these institutions.

The Outaouais Museum Network plans to publish a pamphlet to advertise each of its members, and to develop a financial support system for small heritage and historical organizations in the region that lack support at the local, provincial and federal levels.

Fairbairn House. Photo: courtesy of the Fairbairn House.

Minutes on the war

The Historica-Dominion Institute explores 1812

by Elise Cotter

Canada has begun its commemoration for the War of 1812 bicentennial. While the war is seen by some as an unimportant conflict (since it returned parties to the status quo ante bellum) it was an essential period in our history. Lasting three years, the War of 1812 represents the last time Canadians had to fight off a foreign invasion on Canadian soil.

In addition to the important impact the war had on First Nations, English, French, and Black Canadians, it also had an critical role in defining (or preserving) the geography of Canada. It might be argued that Canada took its first steps towards independence by successfully resisting American sovereignty after war was declared against Britain, and therefore against the British colonies of Upper and Lower Canada, on June 18th 1812.

On the occasion of its 200th anniversary, Canadians pay tribute to the war's significance. We also take the opportunity to talk about and teach a conflict which set Canada on the path to nationhood and shaped our identity.

As the largest independent organization dedicated to history, identity and citizenship in Canada, The Historica-Dominion Institute is making sure students – from elementary school to university – are engaged in the War of 1812 commemoration through dynamic, interactive initiatives such as the "Make your own Heritage Minute Contest."

The Institute's mandate is to build active and informed Canadian citizens through greater knowledge of the heritage and stories of Canada. Based on the celebrated Heritage Minutes, this contest invites classrooms and individuals (ages 13 to 23) to write and produce a live-action or animated 60-second video based on the War of 1812.

Through this contest, students can discover, consider and recreate stories of battle, like the ones that took place in Lacolle Mill and Châteauguay, and of heroes, like Tecumseh and General Brock, from the War of 1812.

The contest accompanies the official Parks Canada War of 1812 website (www.eighteentwelve.ca). Filled with articles, learning resources, as well an interactive map, timeline and trivia game, the website provides ample inspiration for 1812-themed Heritage Minutes.

The Historica-Dominion Institute also presents a War of 1812 Education Guide for middle and high school students. This print and digital resource discusses defining moments, personalities and events of the war through themes of identity, historical significance, perspective and legacy. It is accompanied by an online national quiz competition (www.historica-dominion.ca/1812).

Canada's history is defined by many significant moments; the war of 1812 is such a moment. By sharing the stories of the war, as well as allowing for interactive ways to learn and discuss it, we insure it remains present within Canadian consciousness.

Photo: courtesy of the Historica-Dominion Institute.

Dying of neglect

The burial grounds of West Bolton

by John Fowles

The rural municipality of West Bolton in the Eastern Townships has three extant nineteenth-century family burial grounds – the Blunt, Fuller and Last Wayside – with a total of 41 inscribed headstones. Legally, these burial grounds do not exist and have no protection in law. Each is privately owned. Two of them are next to active gravel pits whose owner-operators also own the burial grounds. All three grounds have been neglected for decades. The last burial, in the Fuller, was in 1898. All three grounds stand in wooded areas and are not visible from the road. One of them had a right-of-way and a fence in 1946. None of them is mentioned in the current deeds.

The three burial grounds are the last resting places of West Bolton's earliest settlers, who came largely from Great Britain and the United States. These are the people who cleared the land and farmed it, built houses and barns, schools, churches, roads and mills – the very people who helped make the municipality the beautiful area that it is today.

We have formed a small committee, which has graciously been accepted by the Missisquoi Historical Society (MHS) as a sub-committee of its Cemetery Committee. Over the last eighteen months we have negotiated with the owners of the Blunt and the Last Wayside burial grounds for permission to clean the sites, put up a simple T-Bar and chain fence, and to place an inscribed stone marker at the entrance. The fence is there neither to keep animals out nor the people in, but rather to make a statement: "This is a special area." The fence sets the burial ground apart from the surrounding woods, fields and working areas.

With the help of a number of wonderful volunteers, we have cleaned and fenced the Blunt and Last Wayside burial sites. The stone marker is in place for the Blunt burial ground (see photo). In the spring, we plan to finish the fence and place the stone marker for the Last Wayside site. Having enjoyed such friendly cooperation from these two owners, we hope that the third owner will also give us permission to clean and fence the Fuller burial ground. It can only enhance the property.

In spite of the dedication of committee members and volunteers, these burial grounds still have no legal protection. We hope that the municipal council of West Bolton will eventually give them legal status by citing these properties as heritage sites, according to the provisions set out in Quebec's *Loi sur les biens culturels*.

Members of the Missisquoi Historical Society subcommittee for the Preservation of West Bolton Burial Grounds are: John Fowles, Robert Chartier, Nancy Dixon, Kathy LePoer, Arthur Mizener, Cathy St. Jean and Heather Tuer.

Restoring the Blunt family burial site. Photo: John Fowles.

Expansion on the horizon

Eaton Corner Museum

by Nick Seebruch

The Eaton Corner Museum is one of many small historical sites in Quebec working to preserve local culture and history, while striving to find ways to better fulfill its role in the community.

The museum, located on Route 253 mid-way between Cookshire and Sawyerville, has been around for some time. It first opened its doors in 1959 after volunteers purchased the use of the former Eaton Corner United Church for a dollar. (Almost four decades later the building was purchased outright for another dollar.) The Eaton Corner Museum is currently comprised of two buildings: one the church, the other the former Eaton Academy on the other side of the street. But the museum is seeking to expand.

The expansion project is an ambitious, expensive undertaking, especially for a small town museum like this one. Charles Bury, President of the Compton County Historical Museum Society, the organization that operates the museum, says that current estimate for the expansion project is about $1.6 million, a figure that may climb higher.

When asked where all that money would go, Bury said that $200,000 has already been spent, some of it towards feasibility and archaeological studies, some to purchase one house for $80,000, and some to hire a project manager, Mario Santerre.

The Alger House was the first house to be acquired as a part of the project. The museum hopes the next one will be the Foss House, which will cost about $120,000. Both houses date to the nineteenth-century, and both are named after their original occupants. The Alger and Foss families were among the first settlers in Eaton Corner. The cost to authentically restore both houses will be about $600,000.

The Eaton Corner Museum has also bought six and a half acres of property behind the Alger and Foss houses. Eventually, these properties will accommodate barns, outbuildings and displays.

Where is all of the money coming from? Several organizations, including the CLD du Haut-Saint-François, the Eastern Townships Tourism Association, the Haut-Saint-François MRC, and the government of Quebec have all made major contributions to the project. This is not to say that the museum has all of the money it needs. Indeed, as Bury points out, the museum plans to solicit the help of other organizations, and to hold "local fundraising events and activities."

As for the two heritage houses, the Caisse Desjardins des Hauts-Boisés is lending the museum the money for the mortgages, which are being countersigned by the town of Cookshire-Eaton, in whose territory Eaton Corner is situated.

For its part, the town has provided the labour for the construction of parking lots, trails and plumbing systems on the museum properties. The town also owns the old Eaton Academy building which houses the museum's offices and archives. The building is leased back to the museum by the town, with the town responsible for upkeep. The academy and the Alger and Foss houses are all recognized by the municipality as heritage properties.

Regarding the museum's mission, and more specifically if the museum is interested mainly in local history, Charles Bury says that the museum's goal is to "collect locally, think globally." He says that the museum is interested in artefacts relating to global events, but only in so far as they apply to the local situation. An example of this is the museum's collection of military uniforms worn by soldiers from Compton County.

This concept of "collecting locally, thinking globally" is a key part of the Eaton Corner Museum's expansion efforts. The museum is collecting artefacts from the local community but is also trying to present them in a more universally appealing way. Bury hopes that when the expansion is complete, people from outside the area will want to visit so that they can learn more about Quebec and Canadian history. He also hopes the museum will attract people who live in the community but who have never visited.

The short-term goal of the expansion project is to acquire more historically significant buildings that are located close to the church and academy. The long-term goal is to attract tourists and locals interested in history.

The Compton County Historical Museum Society has assembled a committee comprised of Charles Bury, Vice-President Marc Nault, Secretary Jaqueline Hyman, Past-President Patricia Boychuck and Project Manager Mario Santerre, who together are handling the execution of the project. Julie Pomerleau of the local CLD and Karine Dimarchi of the town of Cookshire-Eaton are also involved.

Although he describes the process as "slow as molasses," Bury expects that the Foss and Alger houses will be open to the public sometime in 2013. Until then, the existing museum facilities (with all of their fascinating artefacts) will be open, as always, on a seasonal basis.

L-R: Patricia Boychuk, Charles Bury and Mario Santerre of the Eaton Corner Museum. Photo: Nick Seebruch.

Putting Heritage at the Top of the Agenda

Interview with heritage activist Michael Fish

by Matthew Farfan

During forty years as an architect practicing in Quebec, Ontario and Nova Scotia, Michael Fish became an advocate for conserving buildings of historical interest and economic value. He was especially involved in keeping people in their homes during urban renewal and replacement. He was a co-founder of Sauvons Montréal and served as a director of le Conseil des sites et monuments du Québec for many years. Since retiring, he has done some hands on re-development of ruined monuments. He also writes commentary and lectures on current development issues.

Q: In your opinion what is the main challenge facing heritage preservationists in Quebec today?

A: The main challenge to us all is to elect politicians who will put heritage near the top of the public agenda, as is the case in most of Europe, for example.

Most citizens are not educated to the values of living surrounded by beauty and meaning in the community. There are a number of reasons for this. The entire educational system, for one, is geared to turning out work-ready people who will carry out the will of large institutions, not people who are aware of their place in the environment and their responsibilities to protect it while they change it, hopefully for the better.

There is a passionate, institutionalized bias for what is new – fed by almost every manifestation of the social and economic system. The old is not necessarily put down. It is ignored until it gets in the economic way of what is new. Usually argument in favour of preservation is flat out denied, especially when supported with economic facts. But when argument is debated, conservation is treated as unrealistic, utopist, anti-progressive, anti-capitalist or worse.

Every fact in favour of conservation will be denied, false facts will be substituted in endless train to overwhelm arguments in favour of conservation. Often there are intimidation and threats to serious conservers.

There are now many so-called think-tanks and politico-economic foundations supported by corporations and wealthy individuals that fight preservation with expert advice and material support. They have made conservative political movements much better organized and much more effective than they used to be even a few years ago.

There is thus a big shortage of volunteers among the population who can and will fight for conservation.

Q: Have things improved since you first became involved in heritage preservation?

A: Absolutely. Any conservation that could be effected until the 1970s had to be done with the permission of the owner of a property. The very concept of a "monument" was limited to buildings. Today, legal heritage protection is extended to groups of buildings, neighbourhoods, landscapes, sites, historic people and events, objects, even immaterial concepts. Moreover, administrative structures have been mandated such that (theoretically, at least) our entire organized society, from government, down through its designated ministers, cities and towns, through advice from (hopefully) expert committees, has been invoked to take some formal and/or informal part in the overall system of protection. Even the individual citizen has a place in this structure, although the powers of that place could be improved.

Politicians, however, have been able either to take advantage of these mandates for the good of conservation or to frustrate them. Those who would not protect heritage can fail to notify owners of their responsibilities to maintain listed properties. They can fail to tell them that their properties have some legal protection. They can fail to inform neighbours that properties nearby are under threat. And they can fail to advise them that they can make representations to expert committees. Politicians can fail to nominate competent people to the various expert committees that give advice. They can employ inspectors who report on the condition of properties that are under threat who can be 'guided' to give 'friendly' advice, a stratagem that is all too common when cities and/or developers hire experts to comment on properties that developers wish to demolish. So far, citizens are not necessarily able to verify expert reports by visiting properties un-

Michael Fish. Photo: Matthew Farfan.

der threat. And until any citizen can visit a threatened property, any excuse can be made in favour of demolition even of listed properties.

Municipal authorities have also been loath to list properties and even more loath to respect the spirit of the regulations that development within the 500-foot distance has to be of such a nature and scale that the value of listed properties is not lost or mocked.

Since the late 1970s, new laws from Cultural Affairs have had as their main thrust the transfer of principal responsibility for heritage from the Quebec government to local municipalities. While it is praiseworthy in itself to involve municipalities, the provincial experts within the Cultural Affairs ministry that had worked to build up a powerful civil service, along with an irreplaceable library of documents, were scattered to the winds, their expertise transferred to other duties in other parts of the government. Since the 1970s, successive Cultural Affairs ministers have thus, sadly, maintained a distance from almost all daily cases, especially those problems which have arisen within municipalities which have almost no interest in the protection of local heritage because of their close ties to local developers.

Q: What would you say is Quebec's greatest achievement in heritage terms in the last decade?

A: The greatest leap forward is that Montreal now has a good expert heritage committee that has protected quite a lot of the city from demolition. They could do more if the city council could distance itself from the large engineering and real estate development firms. Few other municipalities have done much with their increased powers. If the Ministry of Cultural Affairs had kept its powers and its experts, I believe that more would have happened. Local people with careers involved in promoting demolition are immensely powerful compared to disinterested individuals who would preserve local heritage.

Q: What is your opinion of Quebec's new Cultural Heritage Act, Bill 82, which will come into effect on October 19, 2012? Will this legislation be practical? What are its strengths and/or weaknesses?

A: I share the opinions of such passionate conservers as Marcel Junius. Mr. Junius was long a dedicated civil servant at Cultural Affairs. He made a strong submission to the government when the new law was being considered in the National Assembly. He mourned the loss of the expertise in the ministry and the withdrawal of the minister from day-to-day problems since the 1970s. He also maintained that the new law was bloodless. It lacked a preamble, he said, that spoke to the value of protecting heritage in every aspect of our national life. I would add to this that the new law fails to refer to the international responsibility that Quebecers have to the world community. There is no reference to the rich international literature and to the UNESCO charters that have been written to guide and inspire everyone to do their part in one of the great efforts to humanize our world. I would like the new law to give the ordinary citizen who works to conserve an equal place at least with other actors involved in a file. There should be a preponderance written into the law that conservers have a better than equal voice than demolishers.

What has particularly annoyed me over the years has been the fact that listed properties can be delisted. This I find absurd. Elsewhere around the world, delisted properties cannot lose their status. Where would Florence, Rome, London, or Paris be if delisting were possible? And if a developer is economically hurt by having to repair, preserve, or adapt a property, governments allow for subsidies to assuage the problem. I am aware of almost no property that has been given a subsidy by any local municipality on such a basis. But I know of many properties that have been demolished even though there were bans on demolition.

As to the practicality of the law, look to those who now have the responsibilities to protect and preserve. We have to be optimistic, of course, but most cities have not stepped up to do what they are authorized to do. I would also note that the minister is no more likely to act in the stead of errant municipalities now than before the act was adopted. If municipalities refuse to protect, the minister should always act.

Q: What would you say is the most effective way for local heritage groups to get involved in heritage preservation / promotion?

A: Citizens have to educate themselves. They should start by reading the international charters on conservation of heritage. Local municipality-based conservation groups, hopefully free of the local real estate development industries, are essential to forceful intervention promoting conservation. Such groups should also develop and maintain contacts with other groups in Quebec and Canada, as well as in Europe. They need support, too.

UNESCO maintains a website and publishes all sorts of information that is helpful to everyone. Newsletters and local conferences will also keep conservationists improving their skills. Articles on websites and in magazines and newspapers are also effective. There is strength in a group that doesn't exist with individuals. And politicians pretty much only listen to organized groups, not individuals.

Q: What would you say was your greatest personal heritage success story and/or (if applicable) defeat?

A: As for me and those who have worked with me, the failure to buy and preserve 360 excellent housing units for low income residents at the Benny Farm with new high rises on the site during the 1980s and 1990s, rather than the chaotic rehabilitation and demolition-replacements that actually happened, still sticks in my craw. On the other hand, the preservation of most of Windsor Station makes me feel good, although the withdrawal of its original track fan and the senseless location of a hockey stadium in its place makes me very angry.

But there were some 300 files that I have worked on across the country. Many have worked out reasonably well. Philosophically, everyone doing this work used to say, "Don't lose the faith; there will be losses." I always thought – and still think – that perhaps with just a little more luck and ministerial help, there would have been no losses.

The Saddest Fire

Tragedy at the Laurier Theatre, 1927

by Rohinton Ghandhi

The flicker of images on the screen was the only source of light for an estimated crowd of 800 who were packed into the old Laurier Theatre on January 9, 1927 for a cold Sunday afternoon matinee. The balcony itself was crammed with almost 300 children ranging in age from 4 to 18, as they stared on in wonderment at the images being projected. It was a silent picture: a comedy called Get 'Em Young. The view from the balcony was slightly blurred, as plumes of cigarette smoke formed linear clouds before the screen. As the smoke thickened and the air took on a different scent, the children in the balcony continued to focus on the on-screen action. Moments later, the action would become real, as a smouldering cigarette was slowly burning between the old theatre's sub-floor and its upper floorboards.

The first alert came at 2:00 p.m., as a boy in the balcony eyed a small flame coming from the projection room below and shouted "Fire!" – sending people scrambling for the nearest of four exits. Within minutes, a choking, blinding smoke filled the theatre. In the darkness of the aisles, the panic grew and swept across the rows of seats. The 500 or so sitting in the orchestra section were lucky enough to make it to the street. For the remaining 300, mostly children, the theatre would take on a more surreal appearance, as they rushed down the balcony stairs only to be ordered back up by a frantic ticket collector.

Children returning up the stairs only crashed into those still forcing their way down in sheer panic. Only one of the balcony stairway exits was open, the other remained locked, causing a bottleneck of youngsters with only one way to go. When the first line finally reached the exit doors, they found themselves being crushed against them by the force of the rushing crowd behind, as the doors only opened inwards. As wave after wave crashed forward, they trampled and pinned those in front, jamming the doors shut ever tighter. From just across the street, firefighters from Station 13 quickly arrived, but could do nothing to clear the mounting surge of youngsters pushing against doors from within.

Fireman Alphea Arpin was the first to enter, only to find his own son, six-year-old Gaston, among the dead. Of the 78 children that perished, 64 were asphyxiated, 12 were crushed, and ironically only 2 died from the actual fire itself.

Although the funeral procession was watched by over 50,000 Montrealers and lasted for only a day, the disaster itself changed Quebec's cinema laws. For nearly 40 years, all Quebec children under 16 were banned from going to the movies.

A generation of children, therefore, would not enjoy comedies such Get 'Em Young – written, directed and starring Stan Laurel himself as "Summers" the butler. It was a 1926 production made at the Hal Roach studios in Hollywood. Soon after, Stan Laurel would meet Oliver Hardy and begin producing films as the team of Laurel and Hardy – films that Quebec children would not see because of the laws passed just as they were starting to be made.

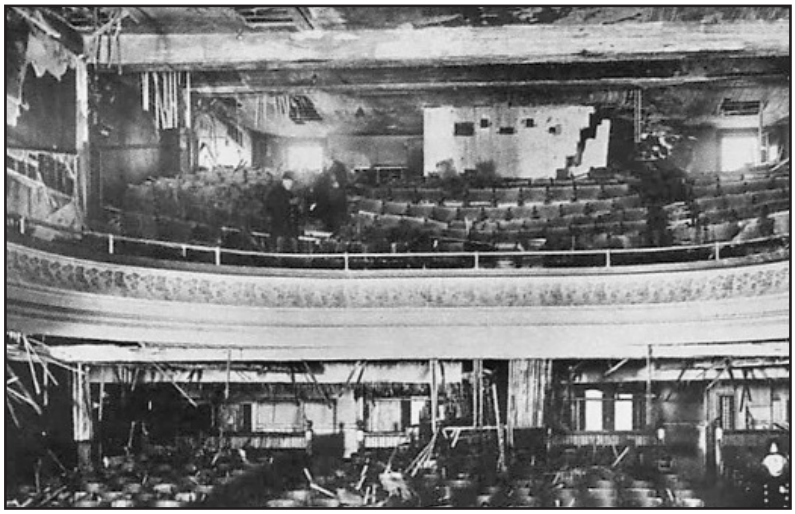
The Laurier Theatre had been inaugurated in 1912, the year the Titanic set sail. It was located on St. Catherine Street East, on the north side between Dezery and Préfontaine. The theatre presented nickelodeon-style silent movies and could hold more than a thousand viewers in its wooden-back seats. It was part of small local chain of cinemas owned and operated by the Lawand family, including the Dominion, King Edward, and Maisonneuve theatres. The

The Laurier Theatre after the fire. Photo: Cinémathèque Québécoise.

Laurier did have a stylish "horseshoe" balcony, yet it lacked the prestige and architectural beauty of later Montreal theatres.

Who could have foretold that, only 15 years after its opening, the Laurier would become world-renowned as the site of one of the worst theatre fires in Canadian history? To this day it is still known as "the Saddest Fire" or as "the Laurier Fire Crush." Although the Laurier was a simple movie house for the working classes, the fame of its catastrophic end and great loss of life continue to allow it to stand out within the ashes of our own local history.

A year after the fire, on March 22, 1928, the Taschereau government would adopt a law requiring all theatres to have exit doors that opened outwards and prohibiting all children under 16 from going to the movies. From 1928 to 1932, theatre owners continued to appeal the law, and at one point they succeeded in having it suspended, if only for a short period. In February 1938, a public outcry was made across Quebec newspapers and airwaves pleading to permit children to be able to watch the newly released Disney film Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs, which those in other provinces could see. Yet Quebec courts continued to uphold the movie law, citing that "family life would be breached if our children were allowed to view movies before the age of 16." Many saw the law as inconsistent, as at the time Quebec children could marry at age 14. The law was finally repealed in 1961, and only officially replaced by today's movie rating system to coincide with the opening of EXPO in 1967.



At one time, Verdun had four major theatres: the Savoy, the Verdun Palace, the Fifth Avenue, and the Park Theatre – all of them built to meet the specific fire code, with sections most probably derived from the Laurier disaster. Although these theatres were built to these new standards, smoking continued to be allowed within them, and at times was openly promoted in their lobbies, in their movies, and even by their favorite Hollywood actors on screen.

Rohinton Ghandhi is a Verdun historian and writer; his column "The Southwest Corner" appears frequently in The Suburban.

Interior of the Laurier Theatre after the fire. Photo: Cinémathèque Québécoise.

47th Annual Meeting of the Fédération Histoire Québec

LA SOCIÉTÉ D'HISTOIRE
DE SHERBROOKE
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Les Cantons de l'Est / The Eastern Townships
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Sherbrooke, Sherbrooke, May 25-27, 2012
Delta Sherbrooke – Hotel and convention centre

A session title in English indicates a presentation given in English. Participants can register for the complete conference, or for individual sessions and activities.
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Quebec Anglophone Heritage Network QAHN
Réseau du Patrimoine anglophone du Québec RPAQ

Fédération Histoire Québec

Friday, May 25, 2012:

1:30-5:00 p.m.	Welcome and registration of delegates; Hotel Delta Sherbrooke, 2685 King West, Sherbrooke
2:30 p.m.	Annual Meeting of the Fédération Histoire Québec
5:15 p.m.	Depart from hotel for opening cocktail, Société d'histoire de Sherbrooke
6:45 p.m.	Depart on foot for the Granada Theatre, 53 Wellington North On the way, you can enjoy views of the Magog River Gorge, Place des Moulins, city hall and historic Wellington Street
7:00 pm.	Opening banquet, featuring an opening address by historian Jean-Pierre Kesteman: ***Séjourner et repartir. Mobilité géographique, rééquilibrages sociaux et culturels dans une région du Québec. Le cas des Cantons-de-l'Est, XIXe-XXe siècles***. Followed by a presentation by the theatre group Traces et Souvenances.
10:00 p.m.	Return to the hotel.

Saturday, May 26, 2012

7:30 a.m.	Delegates' Breakfast
8:30 a.m.	Delegates' registration; opening of Salon des exposants.
9:00 a.m.	First block of presentations.
Conférence 1:	***Les Abénaquis et l'arrivée des Blancs dans les Cantons-de-l'Est*** (titre provisoire: Nicole O'Bomsawin

	Conférence 2:	***Irish Emigration and Rural Settlement in the Lower St. Francis Valley, 1815-1855***: Peter Southam
	Conférence 3:	***Du Paléoindien récent au Régime français : 10 000 ans de présence amérindienne à Weedon***: Éric Graillon
10:30 a.m.		Second block of presentations
	Conférence 4:	***Sherbrooke, terreau fertile pour l'implantation du féminisme***:Micheline Dumont
	Conférence 5:	***Les communautés religieuses dans les Cantons-de-l'Est : un rôle spécifique au Québec?***: Guy Laperrière
	Conférence 6:	***Explorer David Thompson in the Eastern Townships in 1834***: Barbara Verity and Gilles Péloquin
Noon		Buffet luncheon; presentation by Léon Robichaud: ***L'histoire et les médias numériques : enjeux et réflexions pour la diffusion auprès du grand public***.
2:00 p.m.		Third block of presentations
	Conférence 8:	***Hors de Montréal, point de salut? L'histoire des petites et moyennes villes du Québec, 1900-1939***: Harold Bérubé
	Conférence 9:	***Le Chemin des Cantons : parcours illustré d'un patrimoine religieux unique à la région***: Monique Nadeau-Saumier
	Conférence 10:	***A Southern Wind: American Printers and the Emergence of the Press in the Eastern Townships***: Pierre Rastoul
3:30 p.m.		Fourth block of presentations
	Conférence 11:	***La jeune recherche en histoire à Sherbrooke*** (student Round Table, bilingual) Animateur: Guy Laperrière
	Conférence 12:	***Quand la diversité change de visage! Les nouvelles vagues d'immigration et leur impact sur la vision contemporaine de la diversité dans les Cantons-de-l'Est:*** Michèle Vatz-Laaroussi
	Conférence 13:	***Où était la Nouvelle-France?***: Catherine Desbarats
6:00 p.m.		Cocktails, Delta Hotel
7:00 p.m.		Closing Banquet; presentation of Fédération Histoire Québec prizes and awards

Sunday, May 27, 2012

10:00 a.m.		Sunday Mass, Basilica Saint-Michel Cathedral, 130 rue de la Cathédrale
11:30 a.m.		Cultural excursions (lunch provided):
	Excursion 1:	Tour théâtralisé de la Cité « Par le chemin des fresques » An animated tour of the outdoor frescoes of Shebrooke
	Excursion 2:	Circuit « Mémoire vive » A self-guided tour of historic Sherbrooke, with iPad access to maps, photos and historical information
	Excursion 3:	Victorian tea at Uplands Cultural Centre, Lennoxville, followed by a visit to St. Mark's Chapel at Bishop's University, with a brief organ concert.
	Excursion 4:	A visit to the Compton-Coaticook region including the Beaulne Museum and the Louis Saint-Laurent Museum, with a multi-media presentation on the life of the former Prime Minister.
		Participants will be returned to the Delta Hotel in Sherbrooke by about 3:00 p.m.

That Gaspé Sound

Exploring the old-time fiddle traditions of the Gaspé coast

by Glenn Patterson

From 2005 until 2010, I was one of two hosts at a weekly bluegrass and old-time music jam session at Grumpy's Bar in Montreal. As a fiddle player, I had spent the previous six years learning the old-time fiddle music of the southern United States. In particular, I was fascinated by the music of pre-commercial and early commercial fiddlers from Kentucky, West Virginia, Virginia, and North Carolina, whose repertoires extended back well into the nineteenth century. Various American folklorists had made recordings of local old-time fiddlers starting around the 1930s and many of these recordings had been made available through the United States Library of Congress, university archives, and tapes in personal collections. These were often copied and sent among fiddle enthusiasts throughout the continent who were interested in discovering the older fiddle styles not represented on commercial recordings.

Unlike much of the commercially recorded fiddle music, which had become more homogeneous to meet market demands after the Second World War, the music of these home-grown fiddlers generally showcased highly unique styles and repertoires that were often local to a small geographic area such as a county or a cluster of villages. After having taken several trips down to the southern United States to study their music, and having befriended a fiddler who had done extensive collecting of old-time Kentucky fiddlers during the 1970s and 1980s, I suspected that there might be similar collecting opportunities in Canada. Unlike in the United States, there didn't seem to be as large a group of Canadian fiddlers interested in discovering the obscure older fiddle tunes and styles, so I felt there were likely relatively unknown local fiddle styles and tunes in Canada still awaiting discovery.

Some time in 2008, a talented acoustic guitarist named Brian Morris began attending our weekly jam sessions in Montreal. He mentioned that his father, Erskine Morris, was an old-time fiddler. When I asked where his father was from, he replied: “Gaspé.” Perhaps somewhat predictably for a younger Anglophone with roots outside of Quebec, I said: “So, he was French, then.” To paraphrase Brian’s answer, he told me that his father was from an Irish village called Douglastown on the Gaspé coast, and that his family was a mix of Irish and French Canadians, though just about everyone in the village was English-speaking. Intrigued, I asked Brian if he might have any home-made recordings of his father that I could listen to. He said he did but warned me that they were just home-made cassettes and weren't of the best audio quality and that I probably wouldn't be very interested in hearing them. I assured him that poor audio quality was not a deterrent as I had heard plenty of great fiddle music recorded on very primitive equipment and insisted that I would love to hear his father's music.

Erskine Morris entertaining friends at a house party. Photo: courtesy of Brian Morris.

About a year passed before Brian emailed me the first batch of his father's tunes. I was completely unprepared for what I was about to hear. This was some of the most exhilarating and passionate fiddle music I'd ever heard and was easily of the same calibre of many of the most revered southern fiddlers I had spent several years studying. This was raw, driving music being played for a room full of step dancers at a family reunion in Douglastown in 1984. The tunes were all played over Erskine's complex foot clogging, typical of Québécois fiddlers, with the fiddle tuned in several open tunings. The use of open tunings on the fiddle (tuning the strings to pitches different from the standard violin/fiddle tuning of G-D-A-E), was a feature common among the older generations of North American fiddlers, but has essentially disappeared in Canada among the current generation of fiddlers. I was also struck by the ancient French Canadian character of these tunes and their English titles, like "The Queen's Reel," "Fat Molasses," and "Tommy Rooney's Jig." Although the fiddle style was heavily French Canadian, it was still quite different from anything I had heard from early Québecois fiddlers like Isidore Soucy, Joseph Allard, Jos Bouchard, or Louis Boudreault.

After several fruitless Google searches of these tune titles and their French translations, I began suspecting that perhaps the music I had just heard was more than just a lone Anglophone Gaspesian who had managed to pick

some tunes off records of French Canadian fiddlers. Perhaps this music was instead the result of a local fiddle tradition particular to the Gaspé coast around Douglastown. In a series of follow-up emails and phone conversations with Brian Morris, I was made aware of a rich musical culture of fiddle playing, step dancing, and square dancing that once existed on the Gaspé coast around Douglastown where his family was from. As Brian put it, "the fiddle could pull the whole town together for a party just about any night of the week in Douglastown."

Brian's father, Erskine Morris, the oldest son in a family of six girls and four boys, was born in Douglastown on November 29, 1913, to Edgar Morris and Beatrice Fortin. Erskine began playing the fiddle at thirteen. His first fiddle teacher was his mother Beatrice who did not play the fiddle but who instead could sing the old tunes note-for-note similar to the well-known Madame Bolduc, also a Gaspesian of Irish and French descent from further down the coast in Newport. The singing of fiddle tunes, sometimes referred to as "lilting" in Cape Breton and "turlutte" in French Canada, was a skill once found in many rural communities in Ireland, Scotland and Canada. Beatrice was so skilled at singing the tunes that the first piece young Erskine learned from her was "Fat Molasses," a complex tune with highly irregular musical metre, a feature common among the older French Canadian and First Nations fiddle music. A further testament to Beatrice's skill was that when a fiddler was unavailable for a group of dancers, they would have her sing the tunes alone while clogging her feet to provide music for a square dance or for a group of step dancers.

Erskine's main fiddle tutor was an older neighbour, Joseph Drody (affectionately known as "Mr. Joe"), born in Douglastown in 1884. Erskine would walk from his home on the main road along a path through the woods to Mr. Drody's homestead on the second range. There, Erskine was taught many of the old Douglastown tunes that had been played in the area for well over a century. Erskine looked up to Mr. Joe not just as a fiddler but as a person as well.

Joe Drody and his family were well-loved in Douglastown for their generous spirit and their laid-back demeanour. It is said that Mr. Joe had a sweet sound on the fiddle, produced with a gentle touch on the bow, and that he would shift closer and closer to the edge of his seat as he played to clog his feet. Erskine also learned tunes from Joe's brother, Charlie Drody, who was an excellent fiddler as well, and who was actually Erskine's next-door neighbour. The Drodys are renowned even today for all the musicians the family has produced. Joe Drody passed on his music to his sons Anthony, Joseph, and Johnny, who learned the fiddle. His two daughters also picked up music, Brigid becoming a guitarist and Mary Ellen a singer and guitarist.

Other well-known fiddlers Erskine would have heard growing up in Douglastown were Willie Grant (his mother's uncle), James Henry Connolly, Fred Kennedy, Napoleon Rooney, Tommy Rooney, Arty Savidant from York, and Patrick and Roland White from Bois-Brulé. The fiddle was so popular in Douglastown that many houses had fiddles just for occasions when a neighbour who played happened to stop by.

Erskine was frequently engaged to play fiddle for house parties and dances around Douglastown. As this was the era before amplification and guitars were commonplace, he played on these occasions with only his feet clogging for accompaniment. These parties being rather raucous affairs, Erskine developed a self-contained style of playing that featured an aggressive bow attack, extremely precise and highly syncopated rhythms, and sharp foot clogging patterns. He would also often re-tune his fiddle to open tunings which would give his fiddle more volume and resonance. Essentially, Erskine was the "whole band" and had to create as much music as possible with his fiddle and feet to propel a room full of rowdy dancers.

Like many Gaspesians, Erskine left the coast in search of work after the end of the Second World War – accompanied by his new bride, Kyra Grant, also from Douglastown. The couple moved to Powerscourt, Quebec, in the Châteauguay Valley, south of Montreal. There, he purchased a farm with the help of a veterans assistance loan, and began his family with Kyra. During his time in Powerscourt, Erskine would often play the fiddle after a day's work in the field. Just about every weekend, a gang of fellow Gaspesians would come out to the farm to hear the fiddle.

Growing up, Brian Morris remembers his mother and father hosting parties with fellow Gaspesians most weekends. Sometimes Erskine's friends would show up unannounced at the farm from Montreal late in the evening, long after Kyra and Erskine had gone to bed. Nonetheless, the visitors were always given a warm welcome to come into the house for a night of music, step dancing, and cheer that would last until the early hours of the morning. Erskine was never reluctant to play music for friends, especially if there were step dancers among them.

After twelve years in Powerscourt, Erskine moved his family to Verdun, where, Brian remembers, his father often played most of the day at home on weekends. After the Second World War, you could often find many expatriate Gaspesians in Montreal neighbourhoods like Verdun, Lasalle, and Notre-Dame-de-Grâce. Erskine often entertained friends around Montreal with his music until he retired to Cambridge, Ontario, in the late 1970s.

As well as playing fiddle for the Gaspesian diaspora around Montreal, Erskine made numerous home recordings of his fiddle playing which he and his wife would copy and mail out to friends and relatives from the Gaspé across the country who missed hearing the old Gaspesian fiddle music. When these tapes reached their destination, the recipient would usually make copies for

Erskine and Kyra Morris.
Photo: courtesy of Brian Morris.

several family members and friends, and so even today there are many Gaspesian households throughout Canada that have copies of Erskine Morris' home recordings. Erskine's home-recording legacy spans four decades, extending from the late 1950s until the early 1990s. These recordings, made on reel-to-reel and cassette recorders, include music Erskine made at house parties, family reunions, or alone in his living room. Erskine would also take his recorder when visiting his Gaspesian musician friends, back home and abroad, and would record them. In this way, he also left us with many recordings of his family and neigbours playing fiddle, harmonica, guitar, mandolin, tenor banjo, lilting tunes, and singing songs.

During Erskine's time away from the coast, he was exposed to the music of commercially recorded French-Canadian, Down East, Ontario, Cape Breton, and Métis fiddlers, and in this way learned many new tunes from outside of the Gaspesian tradition. What is perhaps unique about Erskine as an old-time fiddler is that he would always adapt the new music he was learning into his native fiddle style. This would often require that the melody and rhythms of the tunes be significantly reworked. However, as Brian tells me, Erskine was very assured that playing the tunes in the Gaspé style was the best way they could be played. Also, unlike many old-time fiddlers who began learning tunes from commercial records, Erskine never abandoned the local Gaspé tunes he learned while growing up. For this reason, we often find Erskine playing popular Don Messer and Andy DeJarlis tunes alongside the old Gaspé favourites, with the new and old repertoires all rendered into Erskine's Gaspé style.

With all the music and information Brian was providing me about his father and the old Gaspesians he remembered, I thought there might be some interest in this music among fiddle aficionados on the Internet. I thought the same fiddlers I had met and corresponded with while I had been studying the old-time southern fiddle music might be interested in these old Gaspé tunes. Around December 2009, I began to entertain the idea of creating an Internet "blog" (http://gaspefiddle.blogspot.com) to serve as a place where Brian and I could share his father's tunes and information on the Gaspesians who played this music.

By March 2010, Brian and I had posted several of his father's tunes on our new blog, and it became clear that a significant portion of those interested in our work were Gaspesians, many of whom now lived throughout Canada and the United States. As I became aware of the scope of the Gaspesian diaspora and how fragile their culture had become over the past sixty years, I realized that our blog could be a useful resource for current and future generations of Gaspesians and their descendants who might benefit from a free online resource where they could explore their musical heritage. In order to better understand the forces that shaped Gaspesian fiddle music, I decided that I would benefit from meeting Gaspesians now living around Montreal who had first-hand contact with this music.

One of the names Brian Morris kept mentioning was Brigid Drody from Douglastown, now living in Howick, in the Châteauguay Valley. Brigid is Joe Drody's daughter and is a well-loved guitar player in the Châteauguay Valley and at the Pembroke Fiddle and Step Dance Festival. She is regarded as one of the best backup guitarists for the old-time tunes and is famous for her ability to play non-stop for fiddlers in marathon sessions sometimes lasting up to sixteen hours. If anyone knew about the old-time Gaspesian fiddle music that Erskine Morris was steeped in, surely the daughter of Erskine's fiddle mentor would.

Brian took me to meet Brigid at her home in May 2010, and during the seven-hour jam session that followed she shared with us a seemingly endless store of stories, jokes, and genealogy concerning many of Douglastown's and Gaspé's best fiddlers, step dancers, and colourful characters. Brigid and her husband Jimmy's generous nature, patience, and easy-going attitude is really inspiring and I have since been fortunate to have spent many hours and late-nights making music with Brigid and enjoying the company of her family.

During our first visit with Brigid, Brian and I played a tune we had learned from a recording of a fiddler from L'Anse à Brillant, Cyril Devouge, who was 95 years old at the time and living in a seniors' residence in Châteauguay, Quebec. Brigid had met Cyril while they were both working at the Murdochville mine in the 1960s and they had played lots of music together throughout the years both back home and around Montreal. Although he could no longer play the fiddle, Brigid suggested that Cyril would love to hear us play this tune, especially as we had apparently played very close to the way Cyril had.

In June 2010, Brigid had arranged for Brian and me to go with her to visit Cyril at his home. I met an exceptionally sharp and entertaining gentleman. Throughout the afternoon, Cyril effortlessly told jokes and spun stores about old-time Gaspesians and all the fun they used to have. He had a tireless sense of humour which had us laughing throughout our visit.

Cyril was born in 1915 to Leslie Devouge and Ruby Leggo in L'Anse à Brillant (or Brilliant Cove, as he and other older Gaspesians sometimes called it). His father, mother, and two brothers, Denzil and Glenn, also played. As Cyril described it, "there were four fiddles hanging on the wall back home, and the four of them were never all there on the wall at the same time." Like many older Gaspesians, Cyril's father, Leslie, fished

Cyril Devouge, Truro, Nova Scotia.
Photo: courtesy of Trena Devouge-Stirling.

the shores during the spring and summer and worked in the bush in the winter. While fishing, Leslie would return home every weekend and play the fiddle around the house. Cyril learned tunes from his father during this time. He also learned many tunes from his best friend, Roland White, of Bois-Brulé, who was from a family of well-respected fiddle players.

Cyril was perhaps the first person I've met who demonstrated the deep emotional response many Gaspesians have when hearing the old fiddle music. He spoke of being so moved by his father's fiddle playing growing up that he would often start to cry and have to run up to his room so that his father would not see this. At ten years of age, Cyril played for the first time in public at a "tea meeting" in Seal Cove. "All of Seal Cove and half of L'Anse à Brillant were there," he recalled.

Cyril was touched that we had come out to play music with him and that we were interested in his music. He became very emotional at times during the afternoon, and once or twice was nearly in tears – which he described as "tears of joy." He told us that he liked nothing better than to hear a fiddle and guitar play the old tunes. However, it was clear during our visit that Cyril was very sad to have lost the use of his hands in old age and that he could not join us on the fiddle. He did treat us to several tunes expertly played on the harmonica that he had learned from his father and from Roland White. He also sung or lilted the melodies to several other Gaspé fiddle tunes including the quirky "Golden Rooster" that he learned from Roland White. For the "Golden Rooster," he claimed, "no one in the world knows this tune anymore except me." (Note that this tune is not the same melody recorded by Don Messer under the "Golden Rooster" title.)

We visited Cyril several times after our first visit. I also had several pleasant phone conversations with him. On subsequent visits, Cyril helped me to understand the intricacies of the Gaspé style, particularly in the manner of using the bow to give the tunes the old Gaspé touches. Although he could no longer play, Cyril had many of the old Gaspesian tunes so firmly in his mind and was so skilled at singing the melodies, that he would always stop us when we played a wrong note or needed to add an extra "jiggle" or "hook," as he often put it. I worked hard on the bowing techniques Cyril had helped me with, and on our second visit he gave me a most encouraging compliment by turning to Brigid and saying: "He has that Gaspé sound."

Sadly, Cyril passed away in March 2011, a few weeks after what would turn out to be our final visit. Cyril had a charming, comical personality, and was a prankster and natural entertainer up until the end of his life. He was a notorious teller of tall-tales – and he told them not from a wish to deceive but from a love of entertaining people and stretching their imaginations. As a child, Ernest Drody from Douglastown remembers Cyril coming back home from Montreal on a motorbike that Ernest and his friends greatly admired. Cyril would always brag to the younger Ernest that he was going to get rid of the motorbike because, as he put it, "it takes the speed wobble when I get it up to 150 mph." On a phone conversation in September 2010, I asked Cyril about his motorbike, and he told me the same story that he had told Ernest over seventy years earlier. Like Brigid and her family, Cyril struck me as one of those special people of the older generation that understands the value of music, family, friends, and laughter in a well-lived life.

In the summer of 2010, I cycled from Campbellton, New Brunswick, to Douglastown with my touring bicycle and camping gear. I met many great friends along the way in Shigawake, Barachois, Malbay, and finally, Douglastown, where the town was holding its annual Irish Week festival during the first week of August. I met up with Brian Morris (and my fiddles) in Douglastown where he was visiting family.

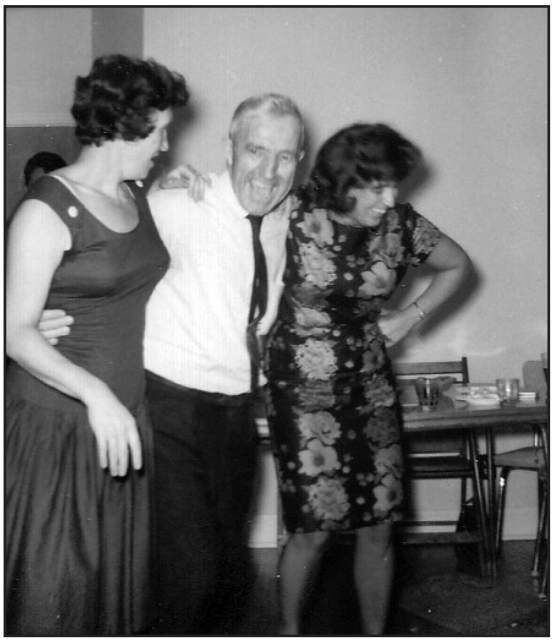
Brian showed me how strong the love for fiddle music still is among the people of Douglastown by arranging a series of musical visits throughout the week with different friends and family who wanted to hear us play the old Gaspé tunes. It seemed like Brian and I played in at least two different kitchens every day and I was struck by how much people appreciated hearing this music. As a fiddler performing at the festival described it to me, people in Douglastown seem to follow every bow stroke. Special highlights included meeting Brigid's brother, Joseph Drody, at his cottage in L'Anse à Brillant, playing for Brian's aunt Phyllis, his friends Norma

The Drodys entertaining at Pembroke, Ontario, with Hemas Rehel. Photo: courtesy of Debbie Sams.

and Brian McDonald, Marguerite Rooney, and swapping tunes with one of Douglastown's last old-time fiddlers, Ernest Drody, Charlie Drody's son. Brian and I were also happy to meet Gaspesians who had been following our blog and who had offered encouraging feedback. I was especially touched when Brian's aunt showed us the binder she had containing every article we had posted on the blog that her niece had printed out for her. Seeing the positive response to fiddle music during the festival, it was clear that the fiddle could "still pull the whole town together."

I returned to Douglastown in August 2011. Irish Week organizer Luc Chaput had offered me the chance to do a performance, lecture, and fiddle workshops for the festival, which I had gladly accepted. On the Wednesday evening, I was scheduled to give a presentation on the life and music of Erskine Morris at the community centre with Brian Morris and Brigid Drody. Although I had feared attendance would be low since Erskine had left Douglastown so long ago, people started flooding in about five minutes before we started and it was soon standing room only in the classroom with a few people even poking their heads in from the hallway. We had a warm response from the mostly local audience as we played tunes and detailed the life of Erskine and the Gaspé fiddle style. It was rewarding to see the audience participating in the presentation, openly sharing stories and insight into their musical culture. The audience especially enjoyed hearing Norma McDonald lilt while we played two local tunes and having a mini-concert with fiddlers Joseph and Anthony Drody.

Towards the end of the presentation, the energy in the room soared when a renowned step dancer and caller from Saint-Eustache, Jean-Francois Berthiaume, got up and treated the room to some high-octane footwork. It was clear when our presentation ended that people still wanted to hear more fiddle music and I suggested we all go to the dining hall after a short break for air. What ensued was a three-hour jam session of Gaspesian and French Canadian tunes including a 40-minute set of non-stop square dancing that lasted until two in the morning. I also had a great time teaching two fiddle workshops for beginners and intermediate players wanting to learn about the Gaspé style. Other highlights were two unplanned late-night music parties in Phyllis Morris' kitchen, with myself, Brian Morris, Brigid and her brothers, Joseph and Anthony, and Montreal-based fiddler Laura Risk providing the music to a packed house of appreciative fans. During the 2011 Irish Days, there was a tangible sense of cultural pride and it was great to see that more attention had been given to local Gaspesian culture around Douglastown. The town seemed to come together over their culture, and people would find any excuse to start a square dance set, especially when the Drodys were providing the music.



Throughout 2010 and 2011, I was fortunate to meet and play music with more Gaspesians and learn about their musical heritage. I made pilgrimages to the famous blue Gaspé tent at the Pembroke Fiddle and Step Dance Festival, where I made new friends and shared lots of late nights with Brigid, Joseph, and Anthony Drody playing and listening to fiddle music. I was impressed by how dedicated to expressing their culture the Gaspesians are during this festival, which a core group of them have been faithfully attending annually since the late 1970s.

Our blog has continued to grow and now contains over 80 posts detailing various aspects of Erskine and his neighbours' music, including tune analysis, history, and reports of various events Brian and I have attended. Throughout, we have always had lots of help from various members of the Gaspesian community, several of whom have contributed articles. A great help came in the form of a new contributor, Laura Risk, who had taken a keen interest in this music after discovering our blog in the spring of 2010.

Recently, I started a channel on Youtube (www.youtube.com/gaspefiddle) where we have been adding videos from our collection. So far, we have placed footage of several of our visits with Gaspesian musicians and have lots of donated footage from friends at the Pembroke Festival that we are currently processing. Soon, I will be posting some great footage including an afternoon I spent with Romeo "Tunny" Hottot of Shigawake, who is from a family of fiddlers and step dancers whose legacy extends back several generations. We are also considering putting some of the best music we have collected from Erskine and other Gaspesians on a CD with extensive liner notes.

It is interesting to note that there are a growing number of fiddle music enthusiasts in the United States and Europe, including some well-known fiddlers, who are using our blog to listen to music that was once little-known outside of the Gaspesian community. I am hopeful our work will help to bring about a renewed interest in Gaspesian fiddle music among people from the Gaspé and elsewhere and that this music will not be lost in generations to come. So far, the response to our work has been touching, and I extend my heartfelt appreciation to all the Gaspesians who have helped us along the way.

Glenn Patterson is a Montreal-based old-time fiddle player. He plays fiddle and old-time banjo with several Montreal area groups and is interested in local North American fiddle traditions. He is the co-founder of www.gaspefiddle .blogspot.com , a website devoted to documenting the older fiddle traditions of the Gaspé coast.

Roland White at a house party, 1963.
Photo: courtesy of Trena Devouge-Stirling.

1812

A war of islands and rivers, Part II

by Sandra Stock

Part One of "1812: A War of Islands and Rivers" (Winter 2012) featured the role of Fort Chambly and Fort Lennox during the War of 1812 and in the years after.

Lacolle

In warfare, as in real estate, nothing matters more than location – and tiny Lacolle was on the front line during the War of 1812. Two noteworthy conflicts occurred there over the course of the war, one of them marking the first significant appearance of Charles-Michel d'Irumberry de Salaberry, later hero of the Battle of Châteauguay.

Part of the Lake Champlain-Richelieu military territory, the Lacolle River fed into the Richelieu about two kilometres away from today's town. In 1812, the settlement known as Lacolle Mills had a sawmill and, curiously, a lighthouse, both guarded by a small fort or blockhouse.

The First Battle of Lacolle occurred in November 1812, when the blockhouse was captured by a party of invading Americans early one morning. Later, in the dark, when more American reinforcements arrived, this first group mistook them for the local militia and fired on them. In the ensuing total confusion, the real Canadian local regiment (the Voltigeurs), under the command of de Salaberry, arrived. The Americans had to retreat towards Lake Champlain and later withdraw completely from Lower Canada, at least for a while.

The Voltigeurs were primarily a French-speaking regiment, although there were an appreciable number of English-speaking members as well. The Fencibles were essentially English-speaking. Both groups were made up of native-born Canadians, not regular British forces from Britain. There were also local militias (again, mainly native-born), who were part-time volunteer soldiers. In those days, militia duty was often linked to having received a land grant, one of the duties owed the seigneur. Canadian forces also included Mohawk warriors from Kanhnawake and Kanesatake allied with the British and Canadians. The Mohawks played an important role as guides, scouts and fighters in terrain that was still mostly unfamiliar to Europeans.

Not willing to give up easily, the Americans attacked Lacolle again, in March 1814, under the command of Major General James Wilkinson who ultimately proved to be quite incompetent. By this time, the regular British army had strengthened its defenses and installed a full-time garrison of eighty men in the blockhouse and the stone mill with 420 reinforcements closely posted. Although the American invaders had a force of 4,000, the British were easily able to hold them off as they had the latest technology in weapons: the Congreve rocket. These rockets made so much noise they not only scared the enemy but could be heard three kilometres away by a force of Canadian Voltigeurs and Fencibles, who attacked the Americans from the rear. British gunboats then appeared in the Richelieu at the mouth of the Lacolle River.

The municipality of Lacolle has preserved the blockhouse as a heritage site as well as the nearby Whitman Cemetery, a Loyalist burying ground used from 1816 to 1971.

Although there was some loss of life and many injuries during these encounters, compared to more recent conflicts these battles were more like skirmishes and guerrilla warfare. At the same time, the population of Lower Canada was not very large, and it was very difficult to move troops through this terrain. Many lives were lost on both sides due to poor living conditions and sickness, especially in the harsh winters.

Châteauguay

In the autumn of 1813, a large American force advanced along the Châteauguay River intending a two-pronged attack on Montreal. They were met by a much smaller force of Canadian Fencibles, Voltigeurs and militia led by Lieutenant-Colonel Charles-Michel d'Irumberry de Salaberry. This entirely local army defeated the Americans and forced them to withdraw. Montreal was saved. The battle took place near the Châteauguay River, between the present towns of Ormstown and Howick, upstream from the town of Châteauguay.

Charles-Michel d'Irumberry de Salaberry was born in 1778 at his family's manor at Beauport, just east of Quebec. His father, Louis-Antoine d' Irumberry de Salaberry, was the seigneur of Chambly and Beaulac. The de Salaberrys were an aristocratic military family originally from Bayonne, a town in southwest France near the Spanish border; they were partly of Basque descent. De Salaberry Père had been a sea captain with

Blockhouse at Lacolle. Photo: Pierre Bona.

the French navy and was sent to New France in 1735. Charles-Michel's mother was Françoise-Catherine de Hertel.

Like many of their class, the de Salaberrys appeared to make the transition to British rule quite easily. They had little sympathy for the French Revolution, for Napoleon or for the republican United States.

Charles-Michel followed family tradition and enlisted in the 44th Regiment of the British Army. He enjoyed the patronage of Edward, Duke of Kent, who was commander-in-chief of the British forces in North America during the 1790s. Edward was an exceptionally bright and well-educated royal, but did not see eye to eye with his father, King George III. In Quebec, Edward lived openly with his mistress, Madame Julie Saint-Laurent, and their son Robert Wood was adopted by a middle class family there. Being a prince, Edward could never legally marry Madame Saint-Laurent, and was later pushed into an "acceptable" union with a German princess; their daughter was Queen Victoria. Edward established very agreeable relations with the Quebec elite, and for many years kept up a copious and friendly correspondence with Charles-Michel de Salaberry – in French; Edward was fluent in several languages. Through Edward, de Salaberry was initiated into the Masonic Order. Freemasonary was a powerful social and political network at this time, and being a Mason was highly useful for an ambitious young man.

With this connection, along with his family's position, de Salaberry was slated for the military "fast track," though he showed ability as well as ambition. He was first garrisoned at Quebec, but soon saw action in the West Indies, the Netherlands, Sicily and Ireland. Recalled to Canada in 1810 after an absence of sixteen years, he was asked to organize a new unit, to be called the Canadian Voltigeurs light infantry. The creation of the Voltigeurs and Fencibles marked the birth of the Canadian Armed Forces. At that time, officers had to purchase commissions (positions) in the regular armies and navies and then were expected to recruit, clothe, feed and generally care for their own groups of men. The weaknesses of this system are obvious: leadership depended upon social position, wealth and advantageous connections as much, if not more, than ability and training. Soldiers could rise through the ranks, but usually not very far. Soon after the Napoleonic Wars this situation improved somewhat with reforms to the military and the improvement of training academies. Luckily for Lower Canada, de Salaberry had good natural leadership as well as a fine talent for making the right friends in high places.

The Châteauguay River valley was very thinly populated in the early nineteenth century. It wasn't until the 1830s that agricultural development began and the main towns of Ormstown and Howick were established. The Battle of Châteauguay took place between these two later settlements on both banks of the river. The river marked another route towards Montreal from New York through reasonably flat land, even though the waterway is much narrower than the Richelieu and not navigable other than for pleasure craft. In 1813, the American invasion force was led by General Wade Hampton and Colonel Izard. It numbered about 4,000 men, although estimates vary depending upon the historical source – we found a variety of head counts from 3,000 to 7,000. The normally reliable Parks Canada count of 4,000 seems the most likely. By all reckonings, it was a considerable force for the time and definitely very much greater than the opposing assembled Canadian force. In some situations, however, actual numerical strength is not always an advantage.

In late September 1813, de Salaberry decided to harass the American force as it began to move along the Châteauguay River. He led his Voltigeurs and their Mohawk allies towards Châteauguay Four Corners, New York, blocking the roads (such as they were) with carts and fallen trees. This was a good guerrilla warfare tactic, suited to the area's swampy and wooded terrain – more sensible than having serried ranks of regular soldiers marching along in the open. There wasn't much "open" in upper New York State or Lower Canada at that time, yet it took a long while for the various militaries to adjust their European methods to North American conditions. Those who learned the most quickly from the native tribes tended to succeed.

De Salaberry then retreated back downriver to a spot called Allen's Corners, where he found a good location for digging trenches and building other defenses. On October 21, the American force crossed the border and camped downriver at the site of where the Ormstown Fair is now held. De Salaberry took a position on the north bank, where deep gullies and bushy swamp would provide cover, and encouraged his men to shoot their muskets sporadically to give the impression of a much larger force. The Americans tried to circle around through the swamp, but were ultimately unsuccessful, and retreated. Once again, Montreal was saved.

The Battle of Châteauguay was the first truly Canadian military victory. De Salaberry had defeated a much superior force with only 400 Canadian troops and 170 warriors from Caughnawaga (modern-day Kahnawake). In November, a second American invasion was defeated at Crysler's Farm in eastern Upper Canada. This failure ended the American plans to take Montreal from any direction.

After the war ended with the Treaty of Ghent in late 1814, de Salaberry retired from military and public life. Although he was an acknowledged hero

Charles de Salaberry's portrait and sword on display at the Château de Ramezay, Montreal. Photo: Rod MacLeod.

and deemed the "Savior of Montreal," he decided to concentrate on looking after his extensive properties – his own, as well as the even larger ones belonging to his wife, Anne-Julie Hertel de Rouville. The Rouvilles gave the de Salaberrys land at Chambly (near the fort) and then Charles-Michel received a large sum of money from his godfather, the cleric Charles-Regis des Bergères de Rigainville. Later, Anne-Julie inherited the fief of Saint-Mathias down the Richelieu; they also bought an adjoining fief from merchant William Yule of Chambly. De Salaberry became a justice of the peace for his area, and after his father's death, seigneur of Saint-Mathias. In 1817, he was awarded the Order of the Bath by the British government.

Many of the old seigneurial properties had been redistributed or sold after the Conquest. Part of Chambly had been given to Gabriel Christie, a general in the British Army. This property, adjoining de Salaberry's now vast estate had passed to Samuel Hatt, another wealthy merchant. Hatt became a friend as well as a neighbour to the de Salaberrys, and in 1820, Charles-Michel joined with Hatt to form a steamship company. Steamships were the new and going thing for wealthy investors of the time, and given that the best and fastest transport was still by water, this must have seemed a good plan for de Salaberry. However, their steamship, the *De Salaberry*, was wrecked off Cap Rouge with some loss of life, and that venture came to an unpleasant end. In 1829, de Salaberry died suddenly while visiting his friend Samuel Hatt in Chambly.

There are a large number of direct Charles-Michel de Salaberry descendants, as he and Anne-Julie had four sons and three daughters, but according to the *Dictionary of Canadian Biography* website, they live in Ontario and British Columbia. The Yule and the de Salaberry manor houses still exist as well-preserved private homes in the town of Chambly.

After the War

There were several important long-term outcomes of the War of 1812. Immediately after hostilities ceased, Britain implemented a serious defense project for the colonies – especially along Lower Canada's waterways. The importance of the Richelieu and St. Lawrence rivers finally seemed to be realized in practical ways. The government bought St. Helen's Island from the LeMoyne-Grant family, who had owned it since 1665. In 1820, construction began on the stone fort, the powder house and the wooden blockhouse. This was the central depot for supplies and administrative offices. The fort on St Helen's Island was a British army garrison until 1870, when Canada took it over from the British. In 1874, it was made a public park. In the 1930s, the buildings were partly restored as part of a public works programme. At this time, the Levis Tower was erected as a water tower, sporting an antique look that has erroneously led people to think it is part of the old defensive structures. During World War II, the facilities were used to detain prisoners of war, who were forced into labour for farming and lumbering on the island. In 1955, David Stewart purchased the buildings and they now house the Stewart Museum of Military History, featuring an excellent collection from the French regime onward.

The Quebec City Citadel was constructed in the wake of the War of 1812, and Fort Lennox was expanded. The old walls of Quebec were repaired and strengthened, even though they were already seen as obsolete defenses. A very visible military presence was maintained throughout Lower Canada, primarily as a deterrent to any further American invasions.

The War of 1812 was the last major conflict in which native peoples played a leading role. The final results of the war were disastrous for them. Their great leader, Tecumseh, the Shawnee chief who had tried to unite the midwestern tribes, and who had fought with the British (mainly in Upper Canada), had been killed at Thamesville in October 1813. The British, who had encouraged the native peoples to claim a homeland to the west of the United States, abandoned their First Nations allies after the war. The expanding United States pushed ahead westward over the Ohio River and the disunited and leaderless native peoples lost their lands and independence.

The one positive result of the war was the birth of a uniquely Canadian identity. Although most people in Lower Canada in particular were still somewhat at a loss to define this, they knew who they didn't want to be – American. The English-speaking, as well as the French-speaking, population of Lower Canada became more aware of being on a different political and cultural path from the Americans. The scenes of the battles are now all parks and historic sites. The rivers and islands that saw so much conflict are now peaceful.

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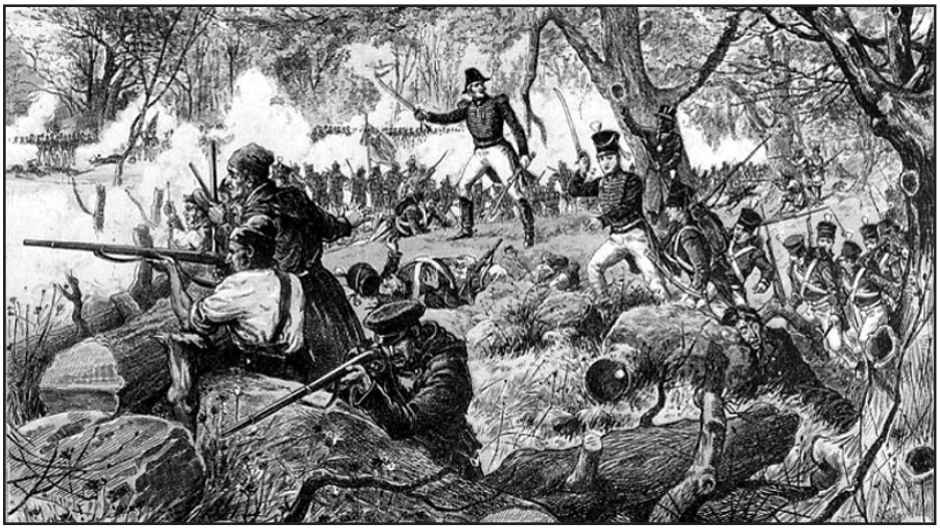


Henri Julien, "Battle of Châteauguay, 1813."
Lithograph published in Le Journal de Dimanche*, June 24, 1884.*

Millwrights and Migrants

The Argenteuil's early entrepreneurs

by Joseph Graham

During the first ten years of the nineteenth century, there was an influx of Americans into the Ottawa Valley and many other parts of the British colonies. What we call the American War of Independence, they called the American Revolution, and their term might be both more accurate and less flattering. Howard Zinn, in his *People's History of the United States*, shows how the revolution was a power grab by a colonial elite of businessmen and landowners. They promoted ideals of democracy in order to control a severely stressed and exploited rabble. Great Britain, having exhausted itself in a war with the French, fell into possession of France's American empire and was obliged to keep promises they had made to allies such as the various Indian nations. Thus, the Proclamation of 1763, ending the war with the French, included the tracing of a jagged boundary line running from Florida north through New York. Among the proclamation's provisions, Algonquin land along the Ottawa River was designated as Indian land. The original purpose of the proclamation, when conceived by the powerful Sir William Johnson, British Superintendent of Indian Affairs, was to delineate the eastern limit of Indian lands and the western limit of the colonists in the Thirteen Colonies.

Many of the wealthier elite in the Thirteen Colonies had achieved their positions by ignoring an increasingly large population of unemployed people and exploiting tenant farmers and workers. Poor, landless whites were starting to rise up, arm-in-arm with 'Negroes' (African Americans), and cause bloody havoc in the colonial society. By directing their anger against the British overlords, the colonial elite focused these angry mobs on a common enemy. Further, by according the poor whites certain rights that were not extended to African Americans, they encouraged hatred between the blacks and whites, reducing the risk that they might rise together. This new dynamic converted a dangerous subclass into a human resource that could be directed against the British while keeping slaves, blacks and freemen in their unenviable places, watching and distrusting each other.

As the plan progressed, most of the Indian nations, seeing problems developing in the rebelling states, sided with the British. During the fighting that ensued, rebels spilled across the line of the Proclamation of 1763 and saw first-hand the well-kept farmland of the Seneca, the Shawnee, the Cherokee and other Indian nations.

The American Revolution solved few problems for the new United States and created a huge one for the Indians. The British had the most incredible 'oops' moment in North American history: they forgot to invite their Indian allies to the negotiating table at the end of the American War of Independence. The new masters of the American rabble, having made no peace with the Indians, simply offered Indian land to their still-angry underclass. Since they vastly outnumbered the war-weary Indians, they moved west and began a huge holocaust, leaving the American elite's hands free of blood. Not surprisingly the largest influx of 'Loyalists' into the remaining territories of British North America was by disillusioned Iroquoian farmers. To this day, having been promised land in southwestern Ontario, they continue fighting to correct broken promises.

Many Americans with no prospects at home, no will to steal land from the Seneca, Shawnee and Cherokee, and faced with high taxes on anything they might earn, migrated to British territory looking for opportunity. They were post-war immigrants who were not Loyalist but exploited Americans who came, a generation after their 'revolution,' looking for work and land in the booming British colonies. The British were at war again, this time with the new French empire, led by Napoleon, and war brings opportunity.

They settled, sometimes with strong doses of naivety, into our small communities. Two such men, Jacob Marston and Josiah P. Cass, both originally from New England, homesteaded on adjacent farms in what has come to be known as Cassburn in Prescott County, Ontario. As is so often the case, the influence of the female line is not properly recorded. We know that the two were related by marriage; Marston's wife was Cass's sister, but I have not found her name. Thanks to this

Murray Mill, St. Andrew's East, Quebec. Photo: Matthew Farfan.

unrecorded family bond, the couples partnered in most things, carrying their purchases on their backs the twenty miles from Pointe Fortune. They carried wheat through the woodlands for seeding and produced admirable crops, which of course would have to be carried back for milling.

Realizing the potential of wheat, and intrigued by the idea of milling their own grain, they purchased a millstone – and carried that huge weight the same twenty miles to their homestead. Having no doubt consulted with an honourable millwright, they soon came to discover that their stone was too hard to grind wheat. It is likely they received a lot of hazing from their patient wives as this strange, ambitious project did not work out as planned. After great expense and successive failures to grind grain, they learned that a good way to deal with a hard millstone is to bury it for a few years and let it soften underground.

Waiting the requisite number of years, they went to dig up the stone, but couldn't find it. The huge millstone had simply disappeared into the ground. Two generations later, Richard Marston, a grandson, was still digging up the land, looking for it. Whereas the very generous Cyrus Thomas recorded the incident without pointing fingers or scoffing, he did venture that the stone may simply have slipped into the underworld, defending beliefs "of our forefathers" to that effect, as perhaps among the few real possibilities. In spite of this loss both of stone and face, the Marston and Cass descendents would figure among the prominent families of the valley.

In the meantime, Major Patrick Murray, who fought for the British in the American War of Independence and rose to command Fort Detroit during the 1780s, purchased the seigneury of Argenteuil in 1793. Seigneuries, dating from the French regime, were used to colonize regions. The owner, who looked actively for settlers, made an income by leasing farmland for homesteading. After the French Regime, it was not uncommon for wealthy or well-connected people to acquire seigneuries, build mills, promote colonization and reap the benefits.

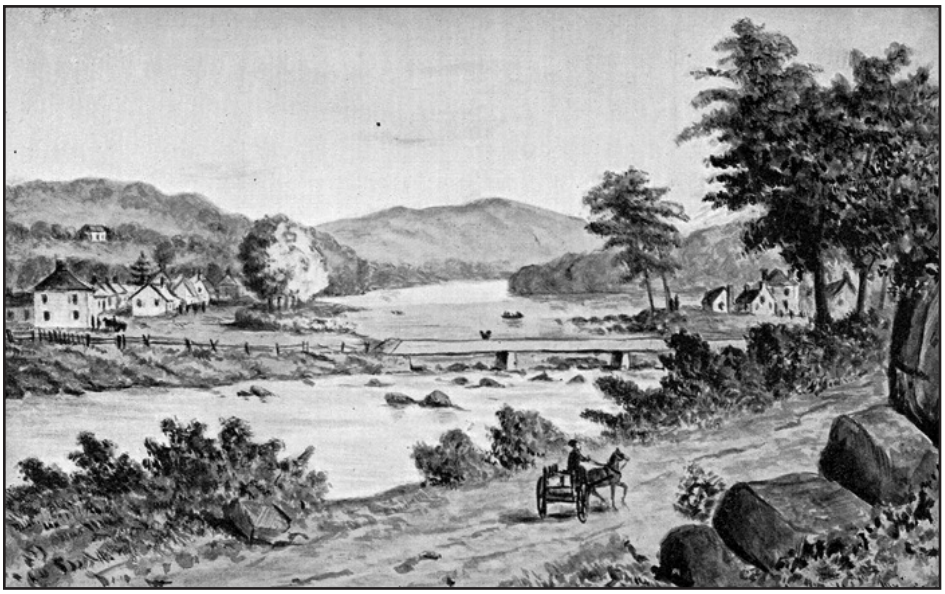
Pierre Panet, the seigneur who sold to Murray, accepted to defer a part of the purchase price. While the repayment schedule was reasonable, Murray lacked the necessary experience to develop the property, and soon faced insolvency. His son, James, who some sources claim rescued the seigneury from creditors in 1803, was influential in its subsequent development, but while the seigneury developed rapidly, their tenure was never stable. They named it St. Andrews, and worked hard to develop it, while up the North River, they sold a large parcel to Jedediah Lane of Jericho, Vermont, compromising their seigneurial rights for a quick payment.

Needing to improve services to his tenant farmers and assure their trade, Murray sought expertise in New England to help him harness the North River and build a gristmill in St. Andrews. Human resources were plentiful in New England. Even a generation after Shay's Rebellion of 1787 there were many growing up with no future. In 1787, thousands of Massachusetts farmers, many of whom were forced to become soldiers and then were never paid for their services, rebelled because the wealthy Boston elite was taking their farms for back taxes. The army crushed the resistance and the courts showed no mercy. One of the Founding Fathers, Samuel Adams, a willing participant in the suspension of habeas corpus in that event, declared: "In monarchy, the crime of treason may admit to being pardoned or lightly punished, but the man who dares rebel against the laws of a republic ought to suffer death." Not surprisingly, the Ottawa Valley, opening for settlement in the wealthy, powerful British Empire, attracted many New Englanders.

Murray engaged Thomas Mears, a hydraulics engineer, who dammed the North River and helped him design and build the mill. Stories of Mears' work brought more young Americans to St. Andrews. Headed by Walter Ware, whose father operated a mill in Massachusetts, they negotiated a lease with the seigneur and built another mill almost directly across the river from the gristmill. It would become Canada's first paper mill.

In order to make the mill viable, Ware contracted with James Brown, a bookbinder and printer in Montreal, to sell the mill's paper products. By 1806, only a year after the mill had begun producing, Brown, whose properties would grow to include ownership of the *Montreal Gazette*, became a minor shareholder in the mill. After taking Ware to court for not respecting his obligations, he bought out the balance of the shares in 1810 and moved to St. Andrews to run the mill himself.

The balance of Brown's working career became continually more focused on the mill and, in spite of financial success in Montreal, by 1822 he had sold both the *Gazette* and his Montreal business, sinking his capital into the mill. He had moved into the territory of hard-working, risk-taking immigrants. Village-sized rafts of logs floated along the Ottawa, guided by the currents and the efforts of the crews that lived on board,



St. Andrew's East, Quebec, c.1850, from Cyrus Thomas, A History of the counties of Argenteuil, Que., and Prescott, Ont., *1896*.

while gangs of Irish, Canadiens, Maritimers and Scots, some farmers and others desperate for any kind of employment, chopped away uncomprehendingly at the ancient Algonquin forests. The Ottawa River, once called the Grand, that for centuries had accommodated the meeting, trading, fishing and hunting communities of the Indian cultures, was deteriorating into a sewer, rife with a new kind of commercial-industrial culture whose relationship was one of exploitation. The new paradigm was not the rotation of the seasons, but the status of the individual. Fortunes were won and lost, and anyone could be the winner or the loser.

The Murrays once again faced insolvency and lost the seigneury through a sheriff's sale in 1807. Sir John Johnson, legendary for his family's relationships with the Indian communities, acquired the seigneury and the Murrays faded from the historical record. The significance of this change for Brown was that the Johnsons would refuse to renew Walter Ware's original lease when it came due in 1834.

Although not necessarily the best adapted to the farm culture that was developing along the valleys on both sides of the river, entrepreneurial American immigrants were becoming the most numerous of the new arrivals. Ambitious risk-takers, they brought new ideas and techniques into the valley. Thomas Mears, among the better educated and no longer needed in St. Andrews once the mills were built, followed the pattern of acquiring land for farming but, transfixed by a fast-flowing channel on the far side of the river, identified on the old French map as Chennail écarté, he had other things in mind.

Joseph Graham is writing a book on the history of the Ottawa Valley, of which this is an excerpt.

Sources:

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Frank Mackey*, Steamboat Connections,* 2003.

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Proof of pedigree

The United Empire Loyalists' Association in Quebec

by Mark W. Gallop, U.E.

"Those Loyalists who have adhered to the unity of the empire, and joined in the Royal Standard before the Treaty of Separation in the year 1783, and all their children and their descendents by either sex, are to be distinguished by the following Capitals affixed to their names: U.E. alluding to their great principle, The Unity of the Empire."

A legacy of the popular growth of family history in the United States in the late nineteenth century was the foundation of hereditary societies. The best known of these are the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) and the Mayflower Society. Canada has a similar organization with an august pedigree originating from the 1789 decree of Lord Dorchester reproduced above, which established the only hereditary honour endorsed by the Government of Canada. The United Empire Loyalists' Association of the Province of Quebec was founded in 1895 and the national organization, the United Empire Loyalists' Association of Canada (UELAC), in 1914.

My interest in my family history started in my teens, which was fortunate as so many of my older relations were still around to share their stories. At a certain point I discovered that an Eastern Townships ancestor had emigrated from the United States after the Revolutionary War and might qualify as a Loyalist. The UELAC intrigued me. I particularly liked the idea of the discipline of the application process for full membership, which requires primary source documentation proving the qualifications of the Loyalist ancestor as well as the links between generations.

It is not sufficient that one's ancestor was a resident of the Thirteen Colonies and left during or after the Revolution. Migration is not sufficient in itself. There needs to be evidence of loyalty to the Crown, such as service in a Loyalist Provincial Corps; loss of home and property through threats, violence, theft or confiscation; demonstrated loyalty by service to the British authorities by either men or women; or death prior to the 1783 Treaty of Separation due to imprisonment or on their way to Canada.

Finding an ancestor on the muster roll of one of the Loyalist regiments makes the proof of loyalty relatively straightforward, although there remains the challenge of proving the connections in each generation of the descent.

The circumstances of my own ancestor were not as clear. Lemuel Stevens was born in Petersham, Massachusetts in 1748. However he took his oath of loyalty to the Crown only in 1798, before a commissioner at Missisquoi Bay. This puts him in a category relatively common for those who settled in Quebec from the Thirteen Colonies: "Late Loyalists." These were immigrants who may have been Loyalists but were not within British lines by 1783. Lemuel's migration was extended and indirect, moving from Massa-

chusetts to Newfane, Vermont, for two decades and the birth of most of his children.

The question of Lemuel's Loyalist status and migrations was confusing in part because the history of Vermont in the later decades of the eighteenth century was far from straightforward. Vermont was not one of the original Thirteen Colonies to establish the United States of America in 1776. For some time after, Vermont fiercely maintained its independence and was favourably disposed at times to casting its lot with British North America. Largely unsettled at the time of the Revolution, the Newfane and Brattleboro area of southern Vermont became a haven for refugee Loyalist families from Massachusetts such as the Stevens. Vermont only joined the Union in 1791, after which many of these families were prompted to resettle further north in Lower Canada's Eastern Townships, this time firmly within the boundaries of the British Empire. The story of this multiple migration is told in a chapter entitled "Newfane Loyalists of Stukely Township" in *The Loyalists in the Eastern Townships,* published in 1984 by the Sir John Johnson Centennial Branch of the UELAC.

The proof that Lemuel was more than a migrant with British sympathies in search of land, but indeed a true Loyalist, was found in the U.S. National Archives in Washington D.C. I visited while on a family vacation, and after a brief search found Lemuel's name on a roll of "Officers & Soldiers who marched to Brattleborough in the muster December 24, 1782…to surpress insurrections & Disturbances then subsisting in those parts." While this battle was more of a skirmish, it came at a time when Ethan Allen, as head of Vermont's governing body, was negotiating with Sir Frederick Haldimand, Governor of Quebec, for the union of Vermont with Canada. The muster was called to surpress Yorkers (New York "patriots," in the language of Americans, or "rebels," in British terminology), who were agitating for Vermont to join the United States.

Because Lemuel had taken up arms against American revolutionaries, this was acceptable proof of Lemuel's loyalty to the Crown for the UELAC. So I worked to complete the application and find proof of the links between each generation in my descent from him, using mostly birth and marriage certificates as they almost always give the parents' names. Census records, newspaper obituaries and tombstones can also help when they spell out the family relationships. My application was accepted and my certificate was issued in 1980, after which I headed to university, and with multiple moves and life changes I lost touch with the organization.

Thirty years later fate brought me back in touch when I sat next to the president of the Montreal (Heritage) Branch of the UELAC at a barbeque of the St. Andrew's Society of Montreal. Through the course of the evening I was recruited back as a member of the organization and also as Branch Genealogist. In this role, I now provide support and assistance to others in the process of preparing their applications, as I had done three decades before. The Branch Genealogist must recommend applications before being sent to the Dominion Genealogist for approval.

I found the UELAC to be a thriving organization with an impressive semi-annual magazine and a weekly electronic newsletter. Quebec is well served by three branches: Heritage, based in Montreal; Sir John Johnson in the southwestern region of the Townships; and Little Forks in Sherbrooke/Lennoxville. It is most common to join the branch closest to you, although for a nominal additional charge it is easy to also join a branch in the area where your Loyalist ancestor first settled (there are 27 branches across Canada). It is also usual to join the UELAC first as an associate member while working to complete the application proving Loyalist ancestry to qualify for full membership. Individuals with an interest in the aims of the organization but without Loyalist ancestry are most welcome to join as associate members.

The Heritage Branch has a resource collection of Loyalist books and material housed in the Quebec Family History Society's Pointe Claire library. This includes *The Loyalists of the Eastern Townships,* mentioned earlier, as well as *The Loyalists of Quebec 1774-1825: A Forgotten History*, published in 1989 by Heritage Branch. While the former is out of print, the latter is still available ($24.95 plus $4.50 shipping and handling within Canada, UELAC Heritage Branch, 700 Casgrain Ave., St. Lambert, QC J4R 1G7).

More information on the UELAC, its benefits and resources can be found at www.uelac.org and contact information for branches can be found at http://www.uelac.org/branches.php

The Little Hyatt School in Milby, Quebec, a project of the Little Forks Branch, UEL. Photo: Matthew Farfan.

Reviews

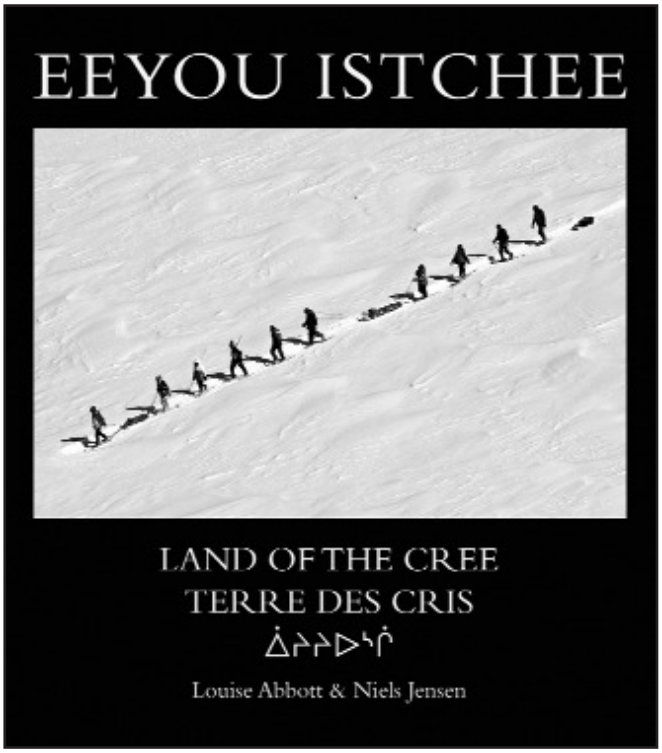
The magnificent land

Eeyou Istchee: Land of the Cree

By Louise Abbott and Niels Jensen

Cree Outfitting and Tourism Association, 2012

Now in its second printing, *Eeyou Istchee: Land of the Cree* is the latest book by Louise Abbott (text) and Niels Jensen (photography), funded by the Cree Outfitting and Tourism Association (COTA). An unusual feature of the book is that the text (a short history of the Cree of northern Quebec, brief chapter introductions and photo captions) is in three languages: English, French and Cree, reflecting the trilingual nature of the modern Cree people.



In the preface, Abbott explains how the book came about. Between 2007 and 2009, she and her husband/partner Jensen were commissioned by COTA to travel to the territory of the Cree on the east coast of James Bay and Hudson Bay. This "dream assignment" (Abbott's phrase) was to photograph the Cree people, their communities, and their environment in an effort to help the Cree promote regional tourism, in particular eco- and cultural-tourism. Eventually, the pair were commissioned to produce this book.

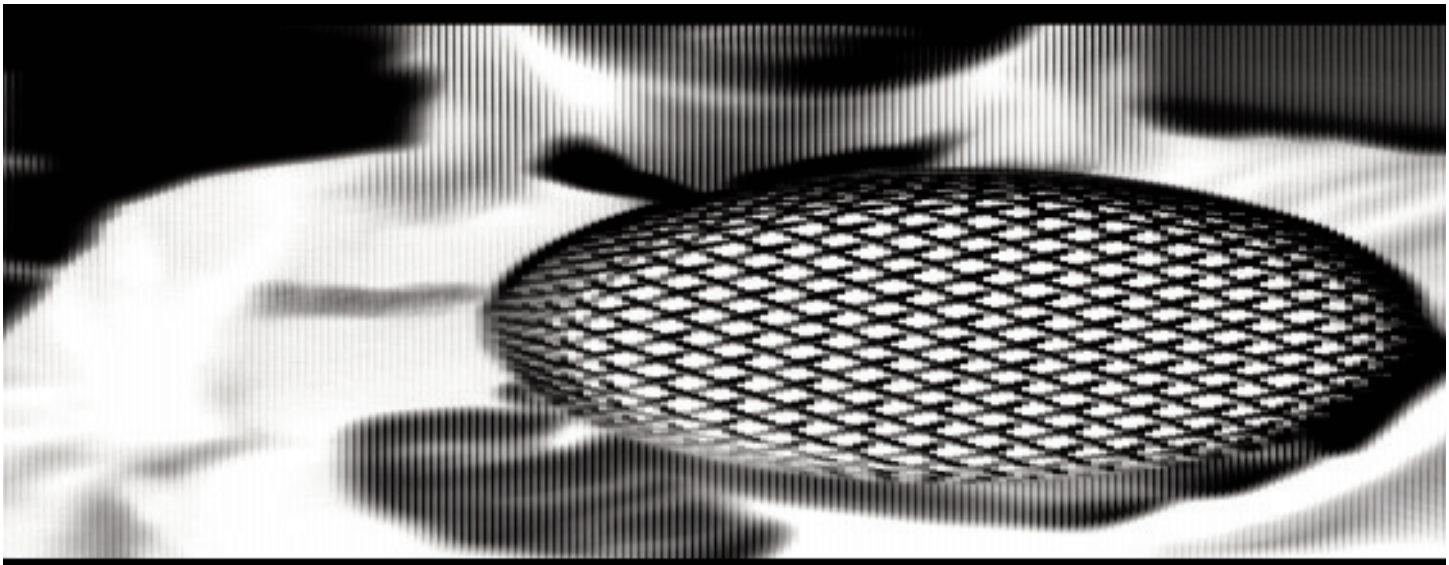
"People down south don't really know us as a people – our history and traditions," writes COTA president Sherman Herodier in the preface. Abbott, however, hopes that the book "will provide an introduction for non-native readers and an incentive to visit Eeyou Istchee [and...] a commemoration for Cree readers of their distinctive heritage and of the magnificent land that they have inhabited since time immemorial."

Eeyou Istchee: Land of the Cree (252 pages, hardcover) begins with a brief overview of the Cree and the land in which they have lived for thousands of years. The introduction sketches the transition of the Cree from a nomadic people to one centred in modern, self-governing villages – a transition that has come about largely in the 35-year period since 1975, when the Quebec government signed a landmark agreement with the Cree pertaining to the use and exploitation of their ancestral lands for hydroelectric purposes.

The bulk of the book is photography, with over 200 full-colour images divided into chapters, each commencing with a short introduction. Most of the chapters focus on traditional Cree activities, such as fishing ("Rod and Reel") and basket making ("From Bark to Basket"). The longest chapter, however, is titled "The Seasons of Eeyou Istchee," which features images of the landscapes and the flora and fauna of the Cree territory. Here we find everything from close-ups of lichens, to panoramas of water and stone, to colourful birds, like the northern horned lark, fluffing up its feathers in an effort to keep warm in the snow.

Intended, at least in part, as a way of promoting tourism in the region, the portrait presented in *Eeyou Istchee* is, not surprisingly, a somewhat idyllic one. There are, however, some stunning views here, and the authors have done an excellent job selecting, researching and presenting the material.

Reviewed by Matthew Farfan



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