THE BAKERS OF WEST BOLTON AND THEIR REMARKABLE HORSE

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Quebec Heritage News

VOL 9, NO. 3 SUMMER 2015

Fifteen Years On

QAHN Celebrates a Milestone

Knowlton Banks and the Richmond Bridge

Unsung Townshippers' Writings

Let's Put on a Show

Young Actors Emerge from an Old Scrapbook

Quebec Heritage News

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Cover photo: The *Effie*, named for Harry Baker's sister Effie.
Photo: Glen Allingham.

EDITOR's DESK

Remembering an old children

by Rod MacLeod

No, that isn't a typo. I am well aware that the word "children" is plural and shouldn't take a singular article. (I'm also aware that "old children" is an oxymoron, but never mind that one for the time being.) It isn't good English. But it's correct, at least in Quebec.

If you've been anywhere near the site of the new McGill University Health Centre these past couple of years, you will have noticed signs featuring an adorable red-headed cartoon lass, often wearing a construction helmet and always accompanied by a small purple hippo. The message on the signs is: "Aidez-moi à bâtir un children tout neuf!" It's puzzling, yes. Why would a small cartoon child be building children? How could anything that one built be other than new? And, above all, what was that English word doing inside a French message, especially given that we're in Quebec.

The answer to that last one is, of course, that we're in Quebec.

For me, it certainly took a while for the penny to drop, slow on the uptake as I sometimes am: "Un children" refers to the Montreal Children's Hospital, which in French is "Le Children." Officially, of course, this august Anglo institution's other name is "L'hôpital de Montréal pour enfants," but in common usage, infected by that frisky redhead's propaganda, proper French is tossed to the wind, along with proper English, for the sake of catchy Franglais. The usage has crept into English, in that the hospital's website is www.thechildren.com – although to be fair, I don't think the Internet likes apostrophes much more than Quebec does. Similarly, the English website of the Montreal Children's Hospital Foundation is childrenfoundation.com, and the French version is fondationduchildren.com. "Du children." The vocabulary may be screwy, but the grammar is fine.

I'm sure there's a story behind the carefree adoption of the word "children" in French usage – similar to the one behind that peculiar Quebec idiom "chum" (as in, "mon chum," not at all the way the word works in English! CHUM, of course, is also the acronym of the French super hospital, which at least makes that institution sound welcoming, unlike the English MUHC.) There must also be a story behind the adoption of Shilvi as the mascot of Le nouveau children. The creation of singer-songwriter Sylvie Dumontier, "Shilvi" has released several CDs, performed on stage, and authored a number of children's books – in short, gained considerable fame long before her career as a hospital propagandist. She and her purple sidekick Popo are in some ways the Francophone counterpart to ROC's Loonette and Molly from the Big Comfy Couch, which my children grew up on. (The show, I mean, although it did seem at times they were growing up on the couch). That Shilvi, a cultural icon relatively unknown to the hospital's traditional clientele, should have been appropriated to sell Le nouveau children is telling of the way the hospital seems to be marketing itself across linguistic lines. As is the use of "le children," albeit in a kind of reverse psychology way.

I don't object to any of this, mind you. Culture morphs. Even so, we all know that the proper name for this hospital is "The Children's," in keeping with those other standard hospital nomenclatures: The General, The Jewish, The Vic (The Royal Vic, if you're wearing a suit), The Chest, The Neuro, The Allan, The Douglas, The Queen E, Queen Mary's and St. Mary's (I found distinguishing the last two very confusing as a kid), and, going back a bit, The Reddy. All of them bizarre-sounding in their way, although none of them inaccurate, just abbreviations. Easier to say, but also affectionate. The same culture referred to one of the city's most prestigious downtown churches as the "A & P."

If I view the loveable antics of Shilvi and Popo with a degree of cynicism, it's only because my flesh has a tendency to crawl at sentimentalizing sick children. That's my problem, of course. Shilvi does good work, as do the legions of clowns, singers, athletes and other celebrities who visit kids in hospital to distract them and their families from what they are going through. Efforts to raise money for the Foundation are noble. (I have done my bit, and have the chilblains from carolling in -30° temperatures to prove it.) The cause is vital. At the end of the day, however, a hospital for children is a place of tremendous anxiety and sadness, arguably more so than other hospitals. Sure, it can be a place of comfort, and even joy, when things go well and health is restored. But it is also a place where kids go to die.

We go back a long way, you see, the Children's and I.

Montreal Children's Hospital, Tupper Street façade, April 2015. Photo: Rod MacLeod.

A few weeks ago I found myself at Atwater with a spare half-hour, and strolled down to the old place, conscious that it would soon be empty. (By the time you read this, Le nouveau children will have opened and everything will have moved there.) I went around Cabot Square, now closed tight for landscaping, its usual down-and-out residents displaced (another story). I inspected the Emergency entrance at the building's eastern end, a couple of ambulances idling ready to fetch kids in distress. I walked the length of the building facing Tupper Street, glancing up at the windows and trying to remember from which one I'd had that winter's night view of harsh neon shop fronts and Xmas shopping sludge (St. Catherine Street, I assume) that was etched in my brain nearly half a century ago. I went round to the René-Lévesque side and noted the rather modest brick structure with white columns that is the oldest part of the hospital, dating to 1912. It has some heritage cred, though the rest of the complex is essentially 1950s functional, plus later additions. No great aesthetic boon to the neighbourhood, I decided, acknowledging as I did so that heritage is about a great deal more than aesthetics.

The hospital's move to Tupper Street came after a long stint on Cedar Avenue atop the mountain. By 1950, the Montreal General was preparing to pull up stakes from both its original downtown address and its Western Division annex on Cabot Square. (The Western Hospital, founded in the 1870s, had been taken over by the General at the beginning of the century.) After much soul-searching, the Children's acquired the Western site, demolished the original 1870s structure and built new multi-story facilities around the 1912 annex facing what was then Dorchester Street. Being close to a residential population seemed to make sense for a children's hospital. The building committee even anticipated that Cabot Square would soon be the site of a subway station (according to Jessie Boyd Scriver, who wrote the hospital's official history after a long career as a pediatrician at the Children's). The square was also home to the Atwater Library and the Forum. More relevant to the hospital was its close proximity to the Children's Social Service Centre in Weredale Park, allowing for easy dialogue between pediatricians, social workers and child psychologists.

It was in Weredale Park at the time the Children's was taking shape that two social workers met who would eventually become my parents. She had an office there, working under the formidable Muriel McCrea pioneering mixed-race adoptions. He worked with troubled youth at the PSBGM on McTavish Street, and came by one day on business. Apparently it took some time for the business relationship to become a romantic one, and it was a long time again before "marriage" was a word with much meaning for them – let alone "children," which they associated mainly with their clientele and the hospital. Then…surprise! A two-income professional couple with plans to see the world (and there was such a lot of world to see, as Johnny Mercer reminded them in the year I was born) suddenly became parents at 39 (she) and 43 (he). They also became frequent users of the Children's, when their baby developed mysterious breathing problems, an affliction eventually resolved through tracheotomy.

Or so it seemed. Over the rest of the pre-school years and through Kindergarten, they watched their offspring carefully, agonizing at every illness lest it deteriorate into bronchial distress. The glorious summer of Expo 67 saw all three on wild rides and in long hot queues and consuming quantities of unfamiliar food with nary a sign of trouble. Then, an early winter cold got worse and worse and worse, and it was back to the Children's for a second round of steam

Top: Montreal Children's Hospital and Cabot Square, April 2015. Photo: Rod MacLeod.

Bottom left: Montreal Children's Hospital, Boulevard René-Lévesque. Photo: Rod MacLeod.
Bottom right: Western Hospital, Atwater Avenue, 1902. McCord Museum, VIEW-2983.

tents, allergy tests, and another tracheotomy. This was not what my parents had bargained for a decade earlier when they'd found themselves potential soul mates. But that is life. It is surely one of the fundamental properties of a children's hospital that one never expects to have to use it. Other hospitals, yes, and even the cemetery: these we anticipate in our darker moments. But children are supposed to be bundles of joy, we argue – forgetting that joy can be very painful.

The Children's constitutes my earliest sure memories. I probably remember things from before my second incarceration, but can't place them with certainty. Even my clear recollections of Expo 67 may be corrupted by other memories from subsequent versions of the fair. I do have a vivid image of the base of the window in my bedroom the night I got suddenly worse, propped as I was in front of it to breathe in as much cold damp air as possible through the crack while my parents scrambled to get ready to go to the hospital. The sight of small flows of ice such as will gather in open window cracks in winter still fills me with a numbing horror. I recall arriving at the Children's in a frantic state, jumping uncontrollably on the bed I was given until a combination of soothing words from a nurse and some kind of anaesthetic brought me down. After that, my hospital memories are relatively benign, bordering on agreeable fascination, the way six-year-olds typically discover the world. I woke to find a small metal device on my throat with a hole I had to plug with the tip of my finger if I wanted to talk. One morning many days later I woke to discover I could talk without plugging the hole, and that was seriously cool – and no doubt a source of relief to everyone around about me, though I can only recall the sense of personal satisfaction.

I spent most of that December chez the Children's. At first, I was in a ward lined with beds equipped with steam tents, an appliance into which I was resolutely zipped for most of each day, whiling away the hours in the sole company of the yellow bunny I had been given on my first birthday. The steam that helped my airways left my bunny bereft of fluff, but in gratitude for her service (yes, she was a girl bunny, which seemed to confuse people) she was later resurfaced in pale cloth to the best of my mother's sewing abilities. In the foggy confines of the tent, I often drifted to another universe where my bunny had a family of her own and enjoyed exciting adventures involving treasure maps and spooky old houses. A year or so later, I put pencil to scribbler and wrote the first of what would become many volumes of stories featuring my dear friend, all of which my parents read with enthusiasm despite the highly creative spelling that has been a distinguishing mark of my prose ever since. Inevitably, one story described one of the younger characters having to be hospitalized with breathing problems – and recovering, thanks to time in a steam tent.

The number of hours I spent out of the tent increased daily, and I was eventually moved to different quarters. At first, I was in a semi-private room along with a kid who had accidently shot himself in the neck with a BB gun and who submitted every few hours to a round of vigorous thumping on the back from a hefty nurse to help clear his damaged throat. Later, I was in a public ward with lots of noisy kids suffering from a wide range of issues, most of which required, but did not always receive, bed rest. On one occasion, a sudden commotion drew every kid in the ward except me out of the room even though we were halfway through dinner; I was hungry. Almost at once, a grubby kid in a wheelchair rolled in and proceeded to eat his way through the contents of several of the abandoned trays. Catching my eye at one point, he gave me a rather menacing grin, put his finger conspiratorially to his lips, and shovelled in several more helpings before rolling out again. I eventually had a room of my own, where I felt less self-conscious playing the recordings my father had prepared using the tiny reel-to-reel machine he'd borrowed from the PSBGM tech department. I think it was from the window of this room that I stared out over the bleak neon cityscape, wondering whether I was going to go home for Christmas.

I did. The device in my throat was removed and all seemed well, although we went home with a portable steam tent, just in case, which I never used. I did not return to the Children's either, at least not as a patient. When it was my turn to be a parent, however, I found myself back again. I established a different sort of relationship with the place, an equally problematic one: high esteem and tremendous gratitude notwithstanding, there is pain in the memories. A visit in great distress to a geneticist, whose detailed analysis answered much-needed questions; not cheering, but calming. The patching of my two-year-old's forehead after he'd tripped running down the sidewalk and cracked his face on the sharp edge of a wooden planter; his mother had sprinted with him six blocks (à la Kramer vs. Kramer) to the Queen E, where they told her, no, he'd have to go the Children's even though he was gushing blood. (They were nice enough to supply a bandaid and the number of a local taxi.) I got the after-the-fact call at

Montreal Children's Hospital, Tupper Street façade, April 2015. Photo: Rod MacLeod.

work and hurried over – much as I did six years later when my son called from an ambulance to report that his little sister had gone into anaphylaxis after eating Halloween candy, and, though stabilized with adrenalin, was on her way to be checked out. Sometime later, he spent most of a night in the Children's after returning with breathing difficulties from a school camping trip; it was probably a form of asthma, relieved by the application of bronchodilator masks. Deeply planted anxieties have haunted me as I've watched my children struggling with air, their circumstances always improved (touch wood) thanks to the ministrations of the Children's.

All of my children emerged from this venerable hospital alive, as did I. Not all children are so lucky. And of the lucky ones, many have spent days and weeks within its walls, as I did, instead of the shorter visits my children have experienced. No one wants to have loved ones in the hospital. But when children are hospitalized, it can seem so wrong to go back home without them, where they

are supposed to be. I don't know how my parents coped – but I salute them for having endured, just as I salute the countless parents who have to leave kids behind in lonely hospital beds.

Although I have no memory of it, my mother later described me asking her "Where did you go when you went through that big door?" – meaning, I assume, the door out of the operating room, or perhaps the recovery room, when they had to leave me to rest. Those are hard doors to go through, for parents – just like the main hospital doors that close behind us on the misery within and leave us healthy and free and feeling guilty for being healthy and free. When the Children's has completed its metamorphosis into Le nouveau children and flown away, and we are left with a drab brick shell on the side of Cabot Square, I hope we will continue to recognize it for what it is: a monument to the anguish and the guilt and the joy and the relief that have tolled within its walls for sixty years. The Saddest Corner in the World, I have often thought, staring up at it the way I did a couple of weeks ago. Yet also a magic place. And, for many of us, home.

Merci, Shilvi. You seem like a good kid.

Letter

To have loved and lost

I enjoyed "The Story Behind the Portrait," by Nick Fonda (*QHN*, Spring 2015). The death of a son is a difficult blow for a family. Seven months after her own son's untimely death in August 1912, Olivia Laberee Gale wrote to the grieving parents of Cleveland Smith, who was her student at the Waterville Congregational Sunday School. The words she quoted from Tennyson's "In Memoriam" are the more poignant with the knowledge of her own recent suffering. They appear in my article, "The Loss of a Child" (*QHN*, Fall 2011).

Once again, a very fine issue with a hook to some aspect of my Quebec heritage in almost every story.

Daniel B. Parkinson
Toronto, Ontario

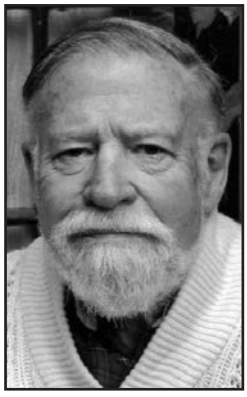
Man of History

The author of numerous books cataloguing and depicting the history and built heritage of Anglophone Quebec, Ray Baillie is a revered name in heritage circles. Even before the appearance of the first of three *Imprints* books, Ray and his wife Diana entertained a capacity crowd in the library at Bishop's University during QAHN's founding conference in June 2000, providing a simple but fascinating running commentary on the slides they had taken of historic spots about the province.

But Ray Baillie, who died this past May at 80, was even better known as a history teacher by generations of students and colleagues. One former student, immigration lawyer and *QHN* contributor Myra Shuster, posted the following tribute to Ray on Facebook – reprinted here in the hopes of encouraging others to share their own memories.

It is with a heavy heart that I learned that Ray Baillie – my dear mentor, Chomedey High teacher and friend – passed away this morning as a result of an accident at his home. He created an unforgettable oasis of learning for us in the CPHS History Resource Centre, a place to read, explore and ask questions, a place to simply be ourselves without ever worrying about how we were perceived. Ray brought history and international affairs to life for us. I would not have chosen my present career path without his guidance. My thoughts and prayers go out to his family. Rest in peace Ray. To Sir, with love.

Ray Baillie, 1935-2015



Above: Shilvi and Popo. Photo: http://shilvi.com.

Bottom: Ray Baillie. Photo: QAHN.

Curator's Handbook

Secret Eaters

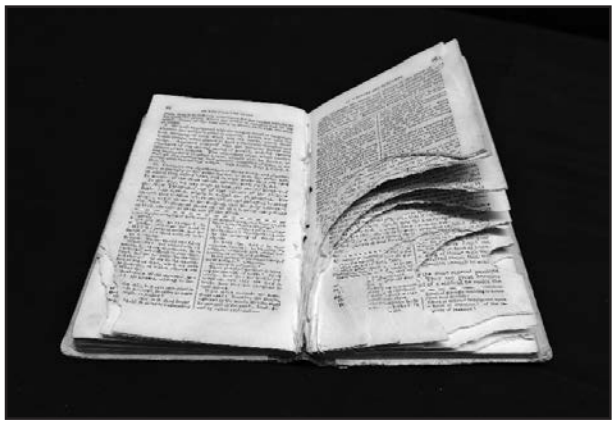
The unpalatable truth behind caring for archival books

by Heather Darch

Sir Francis Bacon said, "Some books should be tasted, some devoured, but only a few should be chewed and digested thoroughly."

Obviously Sir Francis did not have musty paper in mind. It's hard to imagine anyone who isn't a bug or a rodent savouring a mouthful of book mould peppered with droppings. Yet that's the sort of fare you'll find in most historic book collections where careless handling practices combine with less-than-ideal storage conditions.

The good news is that, by following some basic guidelines and simple steps to improve archival storage, staff and volunteers in the heritage community can help secure these collections for the pleasure and benefit of future generations.



Being made from organic materials – paper and leather, for the most part – old books are naturally vulnerable to decay. Everything alive rots, eventually. The goal of heritage conservation is to slow this process down. With practiced care and a little forethought, even small museums and community groups on tight budgets can steer their documentary heritage out of deterioration's fast lane.

To start with, archival books should be purged of old bookmarks, slips of paper and other extraneous matter, such as pressed flowers and locks of hair. These might have served some long-forgotten purpose and may even have been regarded once as precious mementos, but now they present a clear and present danger, leaching acidic compounds that leave burn marks on pages. "Post-it" notes are particularly insidious as they deposit a residue that attracts dust and causes pages to stick together.

Here's some advice: if your organization lets researchers use bookmarks, insist on archival-grade products only. You can make your own by tearing strips from sheets of acid-free paper.

Technology is no substitute for common sense either when it comes to conservation. At one of QAHN's Security for Heritage workshops held at the British Gaspesian Heritage Village in New Richmond, Jeannot Bourdages, archivist with the Musée de la Gaspésie, illustrated how the improper use of modern research tools can actually *weaken* archival books.

"Photocopying or scanning books on a flat surface will cause damage to the spine," Bourdages warned. A better option, he says, would be to photograph the pages "and then print them out and limit access to original editions by providing copies to researchers."

As with any chemical reaction, high temperatures will hasten the breakdown of archival materials, so getting a handle on your building's environmental conditions is key to preventive conservation. Mould colonies thrive in a damp climate, and these conditions also lure insects, which feed on the starches and glues in paper and book-bindings. In a word, it pays to monitor relative humidity levels where your archives are stored.

According to the Canadian Conservation Institute (CCI), relative humidity should be kept stable at around 50 per cent. At levels of 70 per cent and above, mould and insects will literally devour your collection. If installing a fully automatic climate-control system is beyond your group's financial means right now, remember that you can achieve much the same result using portable dehumidifiers and fans, for a fraction of the cost.

Books also benefit from regular cleaning, because dust traps air moisture. Dust on a regular schedule using a soft dry cloth or brush. Hold the book firmly closed to prevent dirt from slipping between the leaves and wipe or brush away from the spine. Clean the top or "head" of the book first, and proceed downward, wiping from the spine to the edges.

Of course, the way books are handled will impact their longevity. Adopting simple rules is the best way to protect them from the greatest threat of all: human beings. There may be some disagreement among professional conservators as to the net benefit of glove-wearing, but hand-washing gets a universal thumbs-up. The best way to safeguard old documents from dirt, skin oils and perspiration is to work up a soapy lather in the nearest sink before you go to work in the archives. And leave the hand cream at home.

The same applies to books in storage: good shelv-

A slightly chewed Improvement of the Mind *by Isaac Watts, D.D. Missisquoi Museum Collection. Photo: Heather Darch.*

ing habits will yield a well-preserved library for years to come. For most volumes in fair condition, that means upright and supported by adjacent books or book ends. Otherwise, as Jody Robinson, archivist with the Eastern Townships Resource Centre, recently pointed out during a training session at the Eaton Corner Museum, bindings will be strained. (Only very oversized volumes should ever be stored horizontally, to avoid stressing their spines).

"Books leaning on their sides can become misshapen over time and heavy books stored on their fore-edge will cause the spine to weaken and collapse." A common handling mistake, Robinson says, is removing a book from its shelf by pulling on the "head-cap" which eventually tears the binding. Another is careless book piling: a good rule of thumb is to limit book piles to a maximum of three volumes, and never stack books with decorative features.

Finally, it should go with without saying that food and drink don't belong around historic documents. The last thing you need is a pest infestation, and that's exactly what you'll have on your hands if eating in the archives is a regular habit with visitors and personnel.

Mice are particularly destructive, especially when female mice collect and shred paper to make nests. Mouse urine and droppings can also stain paper and contaminate books. Almost as bad are silverfish, insects known to literally eat the words off a page as though it were a lunch buffet. Beetles, too, find books delicious and once they've slipped between the covers they will burrow quietly through the thickest of volumes, tasting, devouring, chewing and digesting your collection, one bite of history after another.

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

History and Quebec

From classrooms to collaboration

by Kevin Armstrong

History as a profession was, at one point, rather narrow in its applications and accessibility. The historian's work was limited to the academic sphere: classrooms, scholarly journals, and partnerships with others with similar credentials, knowledge, and expertise, driven by a relationship with literature and information that was relatively exclusive to those able to navigate vast, dusty symposiums of knowledge, thick with formal writing intended for the well-read academic.

Today, with the advent of modern communication technologies, information is readily available to a broader consumer base, requiring less of an investment of time to familiarize oneself with an array of topics. Access to information has never been easier, enabling virtually anyone to participate actively in the study of history and, if desired, in the pursuit of any sort of heritage preservation project.

With modern technology come new opportunities and challenges for historians, and the focus of their work has shifted from the academic sector to the community. The field of public history, a relatively recent one, represents a change in how history is presented, communicated, experienced, and brought to life. It is the job of heritage groups around Quebec to connect with their local communities, to educate, and to cultivate passion for local history. These groups are distinct from academia. While university-educated individuals are active in many heritage groups, these groups are collaborations between volunteers, advisers, and community members drawn from diverse backgrounds, offering diverse skills.

The work of historians has changed in this regard, as a broader range of skills is necessary to bring a community project alive. If one wishes to stage a historic re-enactment, or a play based on a true story, only a historian can attest to the story's accuracy. Beyond that, one needs a choreographer familiar with organized routines, set and costume designers, a director to guide rehearsals, and so on. For any community project, collaboration is an absolute necessity.

Quebec is no stranger to this relatively recent paradigm shift towards community heritage work and preservation. Recent research suggests that the province has welcomed these more communal takes on the preservation of history. Since 2003, the Observatory of Culture and Communication of Quebec has examined data on admissions to Quebec museums, interpretative sites, and exhibition centres, consolidating data supported by the Ministry of Culture and Communications. Across 440 organizations, the total number of visitors reached 14.2 million, a record high since these annual surveys were begun. This upward trend has consistently grown with every passing year, with a 38% increase in total attendance from 2003 to 2013. These are reassuring statistics, especially for heritage groups that are often dependent on the generosity of their patrons, and it indicates that Quebecers have a cultivated relationship with history and an invested interest in heritage projects in their local communities.

A survey of 1,001 adult Canadians published in 2012 by the Department of Canadian Heritage confirms an important connection between the public and the history of their region. Quebecers were among the most likely to feel that governments in Canada were obligated to provide "a great deal" in supporting arts and culture, and in turn were much more likely to attend arts and cultural festivals than Canadians in other provinces. Similarly, many Quebecers think highly of the in-

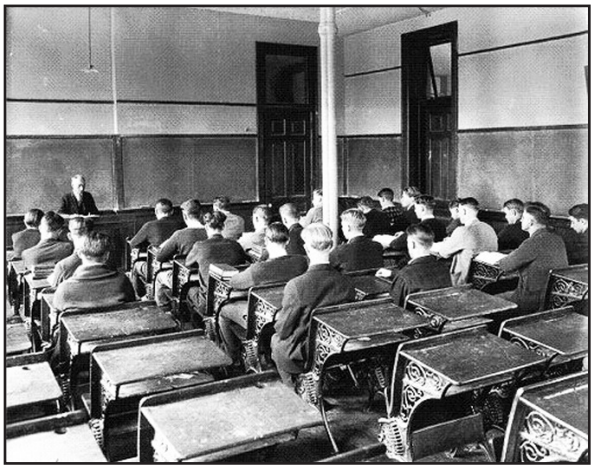
frastructure supporting their arts and cultural communities, more so than other Canadians. Overall, the survey suggests that Quebecers are more deeply invested in heritage groups, and are appreciative of the work done to preserve the history of their communities.

History has posed some important questions in Quebec. How should history be presented? What should be the narrative? History, as a subject, conveys to young Quebecers the knowledge of how Quebec came to be, what challenges it has faced – all of this preparing them for the questions that are raised today across society, particularly at the political level.

Headlines about the history curriculum in Quebec dominated the news in 2013. What should Quebec's official curriculum say about the history of the province? The Parti Québécois' minority government made various statements regarding changes to the curriculum that were to have been made by 2015. Nationalism was a central theme. PQ Education Minister Marie Malavoy advocated a program that would teach students how nationalism was a factor in shaping their province, and how it can be applied to national issues today. Although these policies were widely criticized, the debate raised critical questions about how history is taught in Quebec.

The question of nationalism also ties into a rather dreary perception of Quebec history among students. Université de Laval historian Jocelyn Létourneau, author of *Je me Souviens? Le passé du Québec dans la conscience de sa jeunesse*, examines how young Quebecers perceive Quebec history. Létourneau finds that students report a national narrative filled with defeat, oppression, and lamentation – a perception that entrenches itself at the university level. It is a perspective that situates Quebec as a victim of English oppression. These findings are remarkably different from those of other studies we have examined, which suggest Quebecers have a cultivated appreciation of their history and that they are actively engaged in the preservation of their heritage. What accounts for this discrepancy? Perhaps it ties into the limitations of academia mentioned earlier, that the discussion of the "Quebec nation" as a binary to the rest of Canada represents a simplification of the complexities within Quebec's myriad of communities, interactions that are commemorated, in greater detail, among smaller community heritage groups. These groups form a patchwork of efforts that may do greater justice to the construct of Quebec history than what we might find inside a textbook. Perhaps more importantly, the narratives of these smaller constructs may be more inspiring – and encouraging – than the seemingly predominant academic narrative of defeat, oppression and humiliation.

Heritage groups across Quebec have a valuable role to play in the continued preservation of history in Quebec, one that is expanding as interest in Quebec history broadens to new generations. Perhaps it will fall to these groups to build a multifaceted narrative that can capture the diversity of Quebec's cultures. History today is a product of collaboration among groups, and what is Quebec without collaboration? Quebec history, if it is to



prosper, will be the product of this kind of intensive collaboration, providing narratives and truths that inspire a new generation to face the challenges of the modern world.

***Kevin Armstrong**, a student in public history at Bishop's University, interned with QAHN in 2014.*

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History class. Photo:https://westcivproj.wordpress.com/2010/03/18/teaching-history-in-the-classroom-a-view-from-9th-grade.

Fairbairn News

by Kevin Armstrong

Since opening in 2012, the Fairbairn House Heritage Centre in Wakefield has been developing both its programming and its grounds.

The house itself is an artefact. Its history, and that of the Gatineau River Valley in which it sits, is unusual. New France was not a force in the development of the region; rather, by 1800, the area was populated with immigrants from Ireland and Britain in search of land. The region served as the centre of an important lumber industry, an industry that supplied oak for British navy ships constructed to fight Napoleon. Lumber workers used the Gatineau River as a means to raft logs downstream for shipping and processing. As a result, the area along the banks of the river was developed for settlement and the transport of goods.

From the 1850s to the 1860s, village development accelerated as more farmland in the valley was cleared. The Fairbairn House dates back to 1861, and has now been meticulously restored. Originally, the Fairbairn House served as a "stopping place." At that time, "stopping places" were equidistant from each other, providing places for travelers to eat and sleep along the way. The Fairbairn House is tied to the history of the Gatineau Valley, and especially to the lumber industry.

In 2005, the Fairbairn House was moved from its original location on the west side of the Gatineau River to its current site on the east side, inside the municipally-owned Hendrick Park. From 2006 to 2012, a committee of local people transformed the house into a regional heritage centre for the Gatineau River Valley.

"It takes a lot of time to get your people together, to get your support in place, to start raising your funds, to get credibility, to get government interest and therefore funding, to find donors, to find sponsors, to find partners," Fairbairn president Michael Cooper says regarding the resources required for the project. "However, the end of the story is what you see today, and we're pretty proud of it. It's a very strong, good-looking house. It's providing services both as a heritage centre and as a municipal tourist office."

Since 2012, Fairbairn's facilities have expanded at an impressive rate. The most significant addition to the centre this year was a log cabin, donated by the National Capital Commission. It is now being refurbished and transformed into a re-creation of an early one-room school. It will be made available for various activities, events and workshops.

This year's major exhibition is "Women on the Homefront: the Contribution by Gatineau Valley Women to WWI."

Wine, Cheese and Heritage

by Matthew Farfan

QAHN's second annual "Montreal Wine & Cheese,"held on April 23 at the Centre d'histoire de Montréal in Old Montreal, was another success.

The event, which has quickly become a much-anticipated QAHN tradition, and which is hosted by the members of QAHN's Montreal Committee, is billed as an informal gathering of English- and French-speaking heritage enthusiasts to "learn more about what QAHN is doing, and to exchange ideas about the challenges currently facing the heritage community in Quebec." This year, over 70 people from around Montreal, representing nearly 30 historical and cultural organizations, attended.

Participants had the chance to take in some of the fascinating exhibitons currently on display at the Centre d'histoire, including one called "Scandale," which looks at the seamier side of the city's past.

The gathering was emceed by QAHN Montreal Committee Chair Rod MacLeod, and featured a stimulating keynote address by Dinu Bumbaru of Heritage Montreal. Bumbaru spoke about the city's English-speaking heritage and the challenges facing heritage preservationists. Another highlight of the program was Nathalie Martin of the City of Montreal, who gave a presentation on the heritage policies of the city.

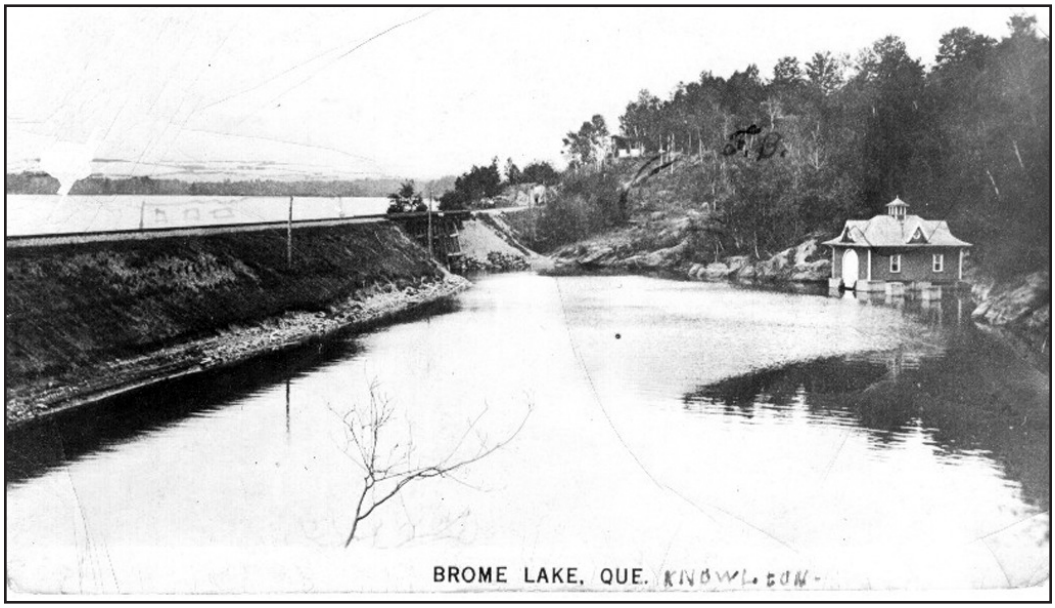
Photos: Matthew Farfan.

Postcards to Jacqueline

by Susan McGuire

Susan McGuire *spent most of her childhood in Knowlton (now Lac-Brome). Her father, Edward Pilson, acquired these postcards at an auction in the early 1950s. The English translation is hers.*

Juliette Lyth Brouillette, longtime Knowlton resident, identified the family of Jacqueline Lefebvre and her brothers Roland and Joseph. Jacqueline married, moved to western Canada, and late in life returned to Knowlton. Joe Lefebvre, a talented pianist, was for many years Brome County registrar. Neither had children.



1. Brome Lake trestles

A railway line ran between Knowlton and Foster. The photo shows the trestles over the stream running into the lake just outside of Knowlton.

Knowlton, 11 Oct 1925

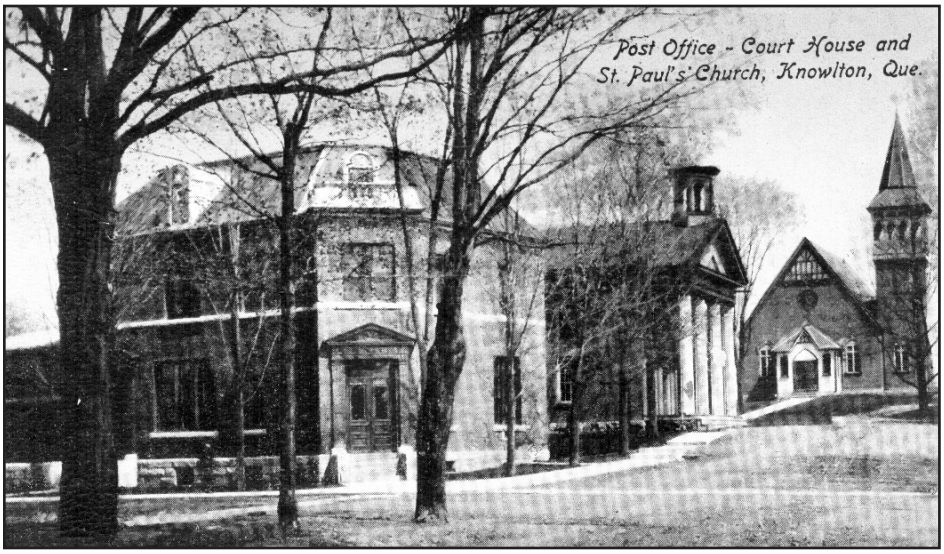
Ma chère Jacqueline,

How are you? Good I hope. We are all very well.

What winter surprise! One huge snowstorm, impossible to get our car out of the garage. It was necessary to have M. Dryburgh this morning to go to church. Our retreat started, preached by two Oblate fathers, Decelles and Lemieux. Father Decelles made the first sermon. His style is elegant, and he is so convincing. This week I paid a visit to Madame Fleury. Madame Bidu, back from hospital, is much worse. Roland is very faithful in writing to us.

What are you doing, your letters are so few? We are going to Farnham next week if the temperature is more clement.

We hope you are working. Understand all the affection and tenderness that we have for you is more than the words that my pen is able to write to you. A kiss from your papa and little brother. A cuddle from your mother.



2. Post Office, Court House & St. Paul's Church, Knowlton, Quebec

The church pictured here burned down in 1941, and was replaced by a new stone structure.

Knowlton, 24 Oct 1926

Ma chère Jacqueline,

What compensation! When we cannot see you we can write to you. I understand the boredom that assails you from time to

time. It is natural. Have recourse to your courage, and you will see, you will have nothing to regret. There is nothing comparable to convent life, and we know what is best for you: that which is perhaps useful or prejudicial.

We have received a letter from Roland, he seems fine in his work; he has a holiday, and we will go to pick him up Saturday. If you can get permission, we could come pick you up for a couple of days.

Madame L. Pratt has said her goodbyes to us, she will be leaving Knowlton for good.

I wish you health and success. We hug you hard because we love you. Our best wishes to Gabrielle.

Ton père, ton frère, et ta mère.

3. Bank of Commerce, Knowlton, Quebec

The Canadian Bank of Commerce building, located on the northwest corner of what is now Victoria and Lakeside.

Knowlton, 6 March 1927

Ma chère Jacqueline,

I am replying to your letter, so elegantly phrased, and so delicately affectionate, that we are warmed in the sunshine of this affection.We will have the sweetness of seeing you on the 16th or 17th. May this thought be an encouragement.

What's new here is that our bank manager is leaving to go

to Magog. And our worthy pastor is going on a trip to Europe in the summer.

Your father is well, but Joseph and I have colds. I hope that you and Roland continue well?

Continue to look out for him. I would like to hear good things from my Jacqueline.

We hug you as we love you.

"Ta mère"

4. Molson's Bank, Knowlton, Que.

Molson's Bank was taken over by the Bank of Montreal in 1924.

Knowlton, 5 Feb 1928

Ma chère Jacqueline,

Smile, I think, on the message of our next visit on the 20th February, which will not get a cry from Roland because he is bored. Is it not with the price of sacrifice that one acquires knowledge?

Jean Paul has come back from college. He is ill.

This afternoon we are going to pay a visit to the convent and to the presbytery, my first outings because I am not yet strong.

Stay well, and be a good student. Receive the hugs from your father, your brother Joseph, and your mother who love you very much.

"Ta mère."

15th Anniversary QAHN Convention: Lower Ottawa River Valley

by Matthew Farfan

The event was absolutely fantastic! I enjoyed all the activities over the two days. The Macdonell-Williamson House was particularly inspiring. From the perspective of heritage restoration and preservation, it was very pertinent to what we are trying to do at St Mungo's and it could easily tie into a circuit of historic properties along both sides of the Ottawa River. A brilliant idea to include it in the activities… I consider the luncheon at St Mungo's a roaring success... It was the perfect venue for the awards… I loved the hustle and bustle. It created a wonderful buzz that will help us at St Mungo's as we go into the future… It brought an outstanding constituency of dedicated heritage enthusiasts to St Mungo's and their appreciation was a wake-up call to the tired little congregation having trouble seeing beyond yesterday's worldview… Many thanks to QAHN for agreeing to be the catalyst for change.

Cecil McPhee,
St. Mungo's Church
Scotch Road Cemetery Association

Once again, records were broken at this year's convention of the Quebec Anglophone Heritage Network. With over 80 people in attendance, including representatives of heritage groups from across Quebec, members of the general public and political leaders, the 15th annual QAHN convention took place at six venues in four municipalities, two MRCs, and two provinces – all situated in close proximity to each other amid the splendid surroundings of the historic Lower Ottawa River Valley.

Exceptionally, this year's programming took place over two full days. Friday (June 5) got under way with heritage-themed guided tours of the Hydroelectric Dam in Carillon, Quebec. The power plant, built on the Ottawa River between 1959 and 1963, occupies the site of the Long Sault Rapids, scene of Dollard des Ormeaux's ill-fated 1660 battle with the Iroquois.

On Friday afternoon, participants congregated at the Macdonell-Williamson House, on the opposite side of the Ottawa River in Chute-à-Blondeau, Ontario. Located within sight of the Pointe-Fortune-Carillon ferry crossing, this historic Georgian home was built in 1817 by Upper Canada soldier, judge and political figure John Macdonell. In a state of neglect and facing demolition, it was acquired in 1978 by the Ontario Heritage Foundation. Constructed entirely of local stone, the house is currently being restored.

Visitors were greeted by President George Henderson and volunteers who toured people around the extensive building from basement to attic, with stops in the library, bedrooms and ballroom. Visitors were treated to a rare look at a 200-year-old mansion stripped bare of all its trappings, including furniture. Jean-François Furieri, of the firm Iconoplast, gave an overview of the restoration work currently being undertaken by his team to stabilize the plasterwork throughout the house.

Historian and rare bookseller David G. Anderson then gave a presentation on historic fur trade sites in the border counties of Eastern Ontario, focusing on three leading explorers of the British period: mapmaker David Thompson, Sir Alexander Mackenzie and Simon Fraser. This was followed by a talk by Métis historian Anne Anderson who spoke about the Pemmican Wars, and more specifically the political and family struggles of Métis woman Magdeleine Poitras-Macdonell.

On Friday evening, participants gathering at the Auberge des Gallant in nearby Sainte-Marthe, Quebec. Here they attended an informal QAHN Cocktail, followed by supper at the hotel. On hand for the occasion was special guest Lucie Charlebois, MNA for Soulanges and Quebec Minister for Readaptation, Youth Protection and Public Health. The evening concluded with a meeting of QAHN's board of directors.

Following breakfast at the hotel, and a crossing of the ferry over the Ottawa River between Pointe-Fortune and Carillon, the Saturday (June 6) program began with participants gathering at Christ Church in Saint-André-d'Argenteuil (St. Andrew's East) for QAHN's annual general meeting. This Anglican church, completed in 1821, and classified as a historic site by the province of Quebec, was once the place of worship of Sir John Abbott (Canada's third prime minister) and, later, of Dr. Maude Abbott, a pioneer woman doctor and a leader in pathology and cardiology.

André Jetté, the Mayor of Saint-André-d'Argenteuil, welcomed visitors to his municipality. Presentations were then made by QAHN President Simon Jacobs, Executive director Matthew Farfan, and Montreal Committee Chair Rod MacLeod, who out-

Left: Carillon-Pointe-Fortune ferry. Photo: Kathy Teasdale.

Top : Carillon Hydroelectric dam, Carillon. Bottom: Macdonell-Williamson House, Chute-à-Blondeau, Ontario. Photos: Matthew Farfan.

lined QAHN's initiatives over the past year.

Following another brief meeting, at which QAHN's directors renewed the mandates of the executive, participants returned to Carillon for a tour of the Argenteuil Museum, with animation by historian Robert Simard. The museum is situated in an old "barracks" built entirely of locally quarried stone at the time of the construction of the Carillon Canal in the 1830s. Now a National Historic Site, the barracks housed soldiers during the Lower Canada Rebellions. Today, the museum is home to over 10,000 objects that tell the story of Argenteuil County and the Lower Ottawa River Valley.

In the afternoon, attendees headed up the road to Cushing, in the Municipality of Brownsburg-Chatham, where they congregated for lunch and a guided tour at St. Mungo's, a superb church built in 1836 by some of the same masons who built the Ottawa River canals. The church is currently undergoing the last phase of a lengthy restoration, a process that has taken years, but that is slowly returning the church to its former glory.

At St. Mungo's, they were greeted by Yves St-Denis, the MNA for Argenteuil. The MNA saluted participants for working so hard to preserve Anglophone heritage, which he called "a part of the heritage of all Quebecers," and thanked them for visiting the "most beautiful riding in Quebec."

During the buffet lunch in the church hall by local caterer "Aux Lubies Gourmandes," keynote speaker Michael Cooper, of Wakefield's Fairbairn House, gave an inspirational, and sometimes humourous, talk titled "Ply Them with Whisky: Motivating Heritage Volunteers at the Community Level."

This was followed by the presentation of QAHN's annual volunteer recognition awards. The 2015 Marion Phelps Award, presented to an individual who has worked over a period of years to preserve and promote Quebec's English-speaking heritage, went to Elaine Fuller for her leadership in getting St. Mungo's restored and for her volunteer work at the Argenteuil Museum and the Argenteuil County Historical Society.

The 2015 Richard Evans Award, presented to an organization or group of volunteers, went to the Scotch Road Cemetery Association, whose members have worked tirelessly over many years to restore and maintain one of the oldest pioneer cemeteries in the Laurentians.

Finally, in honour of QAHN's 15th anniversary, a surprise Special Recognition Award was presented to Rod MacLeod for 15 years of unstinting service to QAHN – as President for five years, Editor of *Quebec Heritage News*, Chair of the Montreal Committee, and as the wearer of countless other hats.

QAHN's 2015 Convention would not have been possible without the support of the following sponsors:

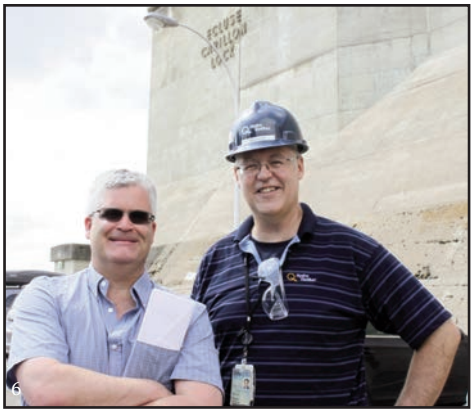
Top left: St. Mungo's United Church, Cushing.
Bottom left: Carillon Barracks (Argenteuil Regional Museum), Carillon.

Top and bottom right: Argenteuil Regional Museum, Carillon.
Photos: Matthew Farfan.

Scenes from the 15th annual QAHN Convention, June 5-6, 2015

Christ Church, St. Andrew's East.

At the border of Lower and Upper Canada.



Photos 1, 3, 4, 5, 10: Matthew Farfan; 2, 6, 7: Kathy Teasdale; 8: Carolyn Coffin-Caputo; 9: Rod MacLeod.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Scenes from the 15th annual QAHN Convention, June 5-6, 2015

Photos 11, 12, 14, 15, 17, 18: Matthew Farfan; 13: Rod MacLeod; 16: Kathy Teasdale.

Walking Black Montreal

Notre Dame Street

by Ashlie Bienvenu

With many restaurants, antique dealers and parks, Montreal's Notre Dame Street West is a very busy and popular thoroughfare within the district of Little Burgundy. During the early twentieth century, the area around the street became heavily populated due to its proximity to the Grand Trunk and Canadian Pacific railways, and to the Lachine Canal. It was also close to many factories and warehouses, such as Stelco, Redpath Sugar, Nordelec, and Dominion Glass.

Also known as Antique Row or Quartier des Antiquaires, the street was, and still is, lined with antique shops showcasing collectibles such as furniture, art, and lamps. Once a buyer's paradise for cheap odds and ends, the street has become a centre of artistic and cultural expression. Though a bustling storefront area, little green oases occasionally break the landscape. Chatham Park, one of the many parks that line the long street, used to be a place of great gathering of the Black community when they would go to watch outdoor movies. At one time, Notre Dame was one of the local nightlife strips. The Corona Theatre was also a gathering place for the community when there were shows, such as comedies, dance numbers and musicals. The Atwater Market, situated just below Notre Dame on Atwater Street, was a place where residents of Little Burgundy could buy fresh produce and see one another. Before its upgrade several years ago, the market was a favourite stop for young kids: with a quarter in your pocket you could spend a whole morning there, and that quarter would be enough to get a banana or an apple, plus a hot dog or some other hot food.

There have always been many restaurants, taverns and "greasy spoons" along Notre Dame. Today, the street has gone upscale to attract the gentrified residents of nearby townhouses and condos. The taverns on every corner have been replaced by fashionable pubs, cafes, specialty eateries like the Burgundy Lion Pub and Joe Beef's restaurant and tavern. Joe Beef (nee Charles McKiernan) was an Irish-Canadian quartermaster in the Crimean War who later came to Montreal and opened a tavern. His policy was never to turn away a customer, no matter the colour of their skin or their religious affiliation.

For the local Black community, Notre Dame was the strip where you could buy clothing, shoes, and groceries at affordable prices. Many of those stores were run by Jewish families who took it upon themselves to develop loyalty with the St. Henri and Little Burgundy residents. Today, few of the family-owned, cut-rate retail establishments remain, though the large Dollarama continues to draw foot traffic along the street. Notre Dame was the centre of retail for residents below the escarpment. It came to be the economic heart of Little Burgundy, much as St. Catherine Street is for downtown Montreal. The street hosted community gatherings at parks, theatres and a favourite outdoor market. It also came to embody a sense of artistic culture while at the same time being a stone's throw away from a heavily industrial centre.

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

Sources:

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"Joe Beef," http://en.wikipedia.org /wiki/Joe_Beef.

Photos: Ashlie Bienvenu.

John Hayes and the New Bridge

by Nick Fonda

In 2009, when the newer of the two bridges spanning the St. Francis River at the junction of Highways 116, 143, and 243 was officially named *le pont Frederick-Coburn*, one voice in the wilderness suggested that a more appropriate name would have been *le pont John-Hayes*.

Frederick Simpson Coburn (1871-1960) is a name known internationally, albeit within that rather small subset of people who collect art. The name is still recognized in art galleries and mentioned in art history texts. Some seven or eight decades ago, F. S. Coburn was arguably the name most readily associated with Canadian Art.

As for John Hayes (1866-1932), his name is long forgotten and it was never known much beyond Richmond and the Eastern Townships. However, during his lifetime, he was very prominent in Richmond, and his contributions to the community he served were such that it would have been entirely appropriate to commemorate his name with a bridge.

Dr. John Hayes seems to have been a most dynamic and remarkable man. He was born in Quebec City to Irish parents, and grew up in Richmond. He attended the Little Red Schoolhouse that served the Catholic population, and then St. Francis College, before going on to the Sherbrooke Seminary, Laval University, and finally McGill, where he earned his degree in medicine. He returned to Richmond to establish his medical practice, married Agnes Dohan, and raised five children.

He embraced his community as few men do. Hayes practiced medicine at a time when – at all hours of the day or night – doctors made house calls, or were visited at their homes by patients well enough to get there on their own. Beyond his professional life, he was president of the St. Patrick's Society, the Richmond Catholic School Commission and the Eastern Townships Historical Society. He was elected mayor of Richmond on five occasions between 1902 and 1923. He was fluent in both official languages and wrote articles for both the *Sherbrooke Daily Record* and *La Tribune de Sherbrooke*.

The Frederick Coburn Bridge.
Photo: http://wikimapia.org/18799194/Frederick-Coburn-Bridge.

Most interesting for us today, he was also an enthusiastic amateur historian.

The archive of the Richmond County Historical Society houses at least a dozen boxes, each laden with stacks of large, manila envelopes that contain reams upon reams of papers filled with Hayes's very neat calligraphic notes. Similarly, the Société d'histoire de Sherbrooke also has considerable archival material from John Hayes.

Surprisingly, given the extent of the Hayes collections at the RCHS and SHS, there are yet more papers and photographs left by John Hayes to be found in Richmond. In 1983, Jean-Roch Lapointe purchased a three-storey, red-brick house on Main Street, directly across from St. Bibiane's Catholic Church. The house had been built by Dr. Hayes in 1891 or earlier, and had remained in the Hayes family for nine decades. When Jean-Roch moved into the newly emptied house he found a number of discarded family photos, and, in a wooden kindling box in the basement, a very considerable collection of papers.

These, Jean-Roch sorted by content into some 20 large manila envelopes: Patrick Quinn's jubilee, St. Patrice Convent and St. Bibiane's Church, Craig's Road, McKenzie Bridge, Pioneers of the Townships, the first Catholic School, early Townships newspapers, and Congregational Churches. The manila envelopes hold some published material: copies from the 1930s of the *Quebec Chronicle-Telegraph* the *le Soleil de Quebec*, yellowed newspaper clippings from both the *Sherbrooke Record* and *La Tribune* penned by Dr. John Hayes, and a small, 32-page booklet, written in French and co-authored by Hayes, on writers of the Eastern Townships (the doctor's contribution being short biographical sketches of 77 writers divided by genre: historians, poets, science writers, novelists, statesmen).

Some clippings provide a glimpse of how meticulous Hayes was: on July 9, 1913, the *Sherbrooke Record* published an article by Hayes entitled "Pioneers of the Townships Press." Hayes kept two copies of the article, but he also kept two copies of a letter to the editor from L. C. Belanger, who provided a different account of the first French-language newspaper in the Townships, and finished his argument with a flourish of Latin. (Hayes replied to Belanger's retort, but kept only one copy of his reply; we assume the doctor got the last word.)

The overwhelming majority of the

material Jean-Roch Lapointe found consists of countless sheets of paper filled with Dr. Hayes' very legible and almost faultless handwriting. Hayes wrote in ink with a straight pen, or possibly a fountain pen, and only on one side of the sheet. Much of the paper that Hayes wrote on bore letterheads. It's easy to explain his own letterhead, "John Hayes M.D. Richmond," but how did he come to have so much paper bearing the words "Grand Trunk Railway System" or "Queen Insurance Company of America Agency" or "Jos. Bedard & Sons General Merchants"? Why did he invariably use the American spelling of words like 'colour' or 'honour' rather than the British spelling? And why did he often end a sentence with a long dash rather than a period?

There are some frustrations for the reader. Hayes never dated his work. The occasional newspaper clipping includes a date, but never does he indicate a date on his handwritten papers. We can't tell if he wrote about the Craig Union Library before he wrote about the Methodist Church, or if he was interested in the Mechanics' Institute before he began writing the Annals of the Catholic Church, Richmond.

Similarly, because he was writing for his contemporaries, his geographical points of reference are of little use to us today. For example, Hayes writes: "As early as 1816 the Methodists built a 'union meeting house' in Melbourne, the remains of which are yet visible in the angle of the road near Capt. Rose's farm (now occupied by Mr. J. Dionne)." To know where the Captain and Mr. Dionne lived! To know what angle in what road!

Potentially more problematic is that Hayes never numbered his pages. His texts on different topics are kept together most frequently by straight pins in the top left hand corner of the sheaf of papers. These have rusted with time and only the most sure-fingered researcher is going to attempt removing a pin to better read the clump of pages. Other pages are held together by butterfly pins and, more rarely, paper clips. Fortunately, it is only the rare sheet of paper which is found floating loose.

Hayes wrote copiously. He was a dedicated amateur historian who acknowledged his sources and who assiduously chronicled memorable events. For example, when Father Patrick Quinn celebrated 50 years in the priesthood in 1912, he was widely feted and among other tributes received a warm congratulatory letter from Bishop Paul Laroque of Sherbrooke; Hayes translated the letter for his own notes.

Following World War I, or the Great War, as Hayes would have known it, he made what seems to be an exhaustive list of the young men from the area – Richmond, Cleveland, Melbourne – who served in the war, allotting each man a short biographical note of a page or so.

His interest in history was accompanied by an active participation in politics. Through the first few decades of the twentieth century, Richmond elected its mayors for one-year and two-year terms. The town also adopted the practice of regularly alternating between English-speaking and French-speaking mayors. These factors explain Hayes' several short stints at the helm of the town: 1902-03, 1910, 1914, 1920, 1923. His multiple terms suggest Hayes was a popular mayor, but his popularity seems not to have radiated quite as far as he might have liked. He ran for provincial office in 1923, and for a federal seat in 1911 and 1926 but his political career never went beyond the municipal level.

It's easy to imagine that one of the highlights of the doctor's political career came during his first term of office when a new bridge across the St. Francis River, linking Richmond to Melbourne, was constructed in 1903. This was the third bridge to be built between the two villages. A wooden bridge was erected in 1847 and was succeeded by a metal one in 1882. In 1889, ice damaged two of the five spans of the steel bridge; worse, in 1901 ice swept the bridge away completely. People went back to crossing by scow, a wide, flat-bottomed boat that was polled across the river – when conditions permitted.

John Hayes, as mayor of Richmond, was very much at the centre of the inauguration of the new bridge. (Officially called the Mackenzie Bridge but better known as the Old Bridge or the Green Bridge, it's the preferred bridge of most locals). Meticulous as he was about keeping papers, it is not surprising that Hayes kept the speech he delivered when the bridge was opened.

This is what Dr. John Hayes, mayor of Richmond, told his fellow citizens and invited guests on May 25, 1903, at the Richmond Fair Grounds (just across the street from the present day Town Hall) where part of the festive day's events were being held:

The presence of this large concourse of citizens here to-day to do honor to the memory of that good and dearly loved Queen, Victoria, whose name is a household word throughout the lands, as well as to celebrate in a manner befitting the importance of the event, the official opening of the New St. Francis Bridge under such favourable auspices is a subject, no doubt, of gratification to us all.

I take this occasion to extend, on behalf of the Citizens of Richmond, whom I have the honor to represent and in the names of the Bridge Board to the Honorable Gentlemen members of the Provincial Cabinet and their colleagues in the Legislature, to the Mayors and members of the different Municipal Councils, who have come to assist us in this demonstration, and to you all a most hearty welcome.

I have reason to feel proud of the honor you have conferred on us by your presence; I have reason to feel proud of this day marking as it does an epoch in the annals of this community.

The disaster of that eventful Sunday,

Dr. John Hayes, Agnes Dohan, Harold, Jerome, Redmond, Leslie, and Mona. Photo: courtesy of Nick Fonda.

*April [*date missing in original text*] 1901, is too vividly impressed on your minds to necessitate my recalling it. Free Communication between the banks of the St. Francis River was once again interrupted.*

A generous people was deprived of free intercourse, trade was impeded and altogether the condition of these municipalities was deplorable indeed.

The old Bridge Company had lost everything in the disaster, and notwithstanding its good will, was unable to rebuild. I believe I echo the sentiments of all present when I say that public sympathy was entirely with the company in its misfortune.

Outside capital could not be induced to undertake what appeared to be a hazardous enterprise, it soon became manifest that if ever the St. Francis Bridge was to be re-constructed, the three Municipalities interested must undertake the task either alone or with Government assistance.

This idea was actively promulgated by our Member, Mr. Mackenzie, and I deem it my duty to compliment him on the manner in which he has performed his parliamentary duties, in and out of the house, in this connection. Through his untiring energy and indefatigable zeal a large measure of the success of this enterprise is due. To Mr. McKenzie therefore and to the Provincial Government we owe our sincere thanks for the substantial grant of $15 000.

On behalf of the Bridge Board, I may say that we have looked forward eagerly and with anticipation of unalloyed pleasure to the day when we could say that our labors were ended; that the inconveniences, the worries and dangers of the past two years were buried in the joys of this inauguration.

Our task was a comparatively easy one, under the guidance of Mr. Wm. Ross, Inspector, and Mr. L. L. Vallée, the government engineer, whose artistic talent and engineering skill have produced this magnificent structure, a gem indeed in the emerald setting of the Melbourne Hills.

I am aware that there has been a certain amount of opposition to the scheme. I ask you gentlemen who have opposed it to

-Let the dead past bury its dead

-Act - act in the living present

-Hearts within and God o'erhead

Act, that is to say to put forth our best efforts for the welfare of this community, for that of our native province which has sent us some of her most distinguished sons to participate in our official opening, and for Canada, our common country.

-Hearts' within – that is hearts united in a common effort for the good of all. We have spanning the St. Francis River to-day tangible evidence of what can be done by united action. May I hope that this union, which has accomplished so much in the past, may be continued into the future, for the best interests of all.

-God o'erhead – I trust that providence will not look unfavorably on our work and that the new St. Francis Bridge will long remain on its rock foundations, a thing of beauty and a joy forever.

I have one more wish to express, I know it cannot be realized, nevertheless I wish that all here present will be present also when this bridge will have attained its majority and will be declared free.

The mayor's speech, it is easy to imagine, was very warmly applauded by the Members of the Legislative Assembly, the Mayors and Councillors, and all those present.

Hayes was present – but not the Town's mayor – in 1913 when the bridge "attained its majority" and was "declared free," that is, was fully paid for and users were no longer required to pay a toll to cross it.

John Hayes was 66 when he died in Richmond on August 19, 1932. His five children – four boys and a girl – all remained in the area. Redmond Hayes, who practiced law in Montreal before returning to Sherbrooke to become a judge, came to own the family house in Richmond, though it was his brother, Harold, who lived there. It was the estate of Redmond Hayes that sold the house to Jean-Roch Lapointe.

As for John Hayes, while there is no bridge named after him, a small street in Richmond's industrial park carries his name.

Nick Fonda *is a past president of the Richmond County Historical Society and the author of several books about the Eastern Townships, including the recent* Hanging Fred and a Few Others: Painters of the Eastern Townships.

Back to Glenmere

Exploring the story of "Canada's war horse"

by Janet Chandler Allingham

When I was ten years old, I heard about a horse from the Eastern Townships who "served" in World War I. Morning Glory, accompanied her owner, Colonel George Harold Baker (known as Harry), to the battlefields of Belgium. The Colonel died there at the age of 39, at Sanctuary Wood during the battle of Mont Sorrel. He remains the only Canadian parliamentarian to lose his life in war. After the war, Morning Glory returned to Canada. As we recall the history of World War I more than a century ago, their story bears retelling.

My connection began in 1960, when my brother and I accompanied our parents on the "Fall Cavalcade," near Knowlton, Quebec. Organized by the Brome County Historical Society, this was a tour of the region around Knowlton. Following other cars, we stopped at various points of interest. At each location, a member of the Society explained the history or significance of the building or site. For two children, the event was an unwelcome and boring extension of an already long trip to our cottage on Lake Memphremagog.

Boring perhaps, but only until we arrived at Glenmere, a stately house on Baker Pond Road (near Knowlton) in East Bolton. The cars stopped along the road, close to a large pond. Our guide pointed past the house, across the road, and announced: "Colonel Baker's horse is buried over there. There's a marker at the grave site with the name of the horse on it." These words caught our attention. For city children, the burial of any horse was a novel concept!

The story of Col. Baker and his horse remained in my memory. At some point, I became puzzled that a horse had returned to Canada from the battlefield; it would have been expensive and impractical. Later on, my interest was rekindled as we moved closer to the centenary of the start of WWI. I also heard about the related stage play War Horse. A CBC documentary drew a parallel between the story of that British horse who went to war, and a Canadian horse who was also drawn into the fray. It wasn't hard to confirm that this horse was, indeed, Morning Glory. I felt compelled to delve into the story, and fill in the blanks. A protracted stay in the Townships made this possible.

Glenmere, West Bolton, Qc. Photo: Glen Allingham.

The Bakers of Cowansville and Glenmere

Two references inform us about the history of the Bakers. The first is David Monaghan's article about the Baker Memorial in the House of Commons Heritage Collection. The second is the book Harry's friend wrote about him, after his death: *A Canadian Soldier: Harold George Baker*, available through the digital library of the University of British Columbia.

We learn that Harry Baker was born in Sweetsburg (now part of Cowansville) on November 4, 1877. The Bakers had Loyalist roots: their ancestors had come to the Eastern Townships from Massachusetts and Vermont. He was the son of Senator George Barnard Baker (1834-1910) and Jane Percival (Cowan) Baker. Senator Baker was elected three times as the MP for Missisquoi, Quebec, and also had served in the Quebec Legislature. At the time of his death, he was still serving as a Senator. Jane's brother Peter was the founder of Cowansville. Harry had two older sisters: Harriet (1865-1962) and Effie (1871-1928), and a younger brother, Percival Cowan (1880-1910). In 1878, when Harry was a baby, his parents built "Glenmere," that beautiful large house still located on what is now the Baker Pond Road, in East Bolton, near Knowlton. It would serve as their country residence for many years.

Harry was a ten year-old boy when his older sister, Effie, left for boarding school in Montreal. Celebrated as the first student at the Trafalgar Institute (now Trafalgar School for Girls), Effie arrived at the Simpson Street School the first morning it opened in September 1887.

Harry attended Bishop's College School, in Lennoxville, and the Berthier Grammar School. Eventually, he studied Law at McGill University and practiced in Sweetsburg with his father. Later, he practiced in Montreal. In 1911, at the age of 34, he was elected as the MP for Missisquoi.

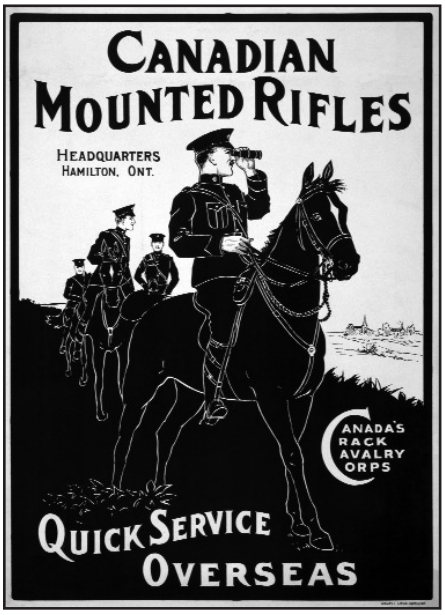
It was at this time that Harry acquired his horse, Morning Glory.

Pre-engagement Canadian military service

Harry was interested in military matters as a child. This would not have been surprising in the years leading up to World

War I. By his early twenties, he was gazetted as the Provisional Lieutenant of the 6th Hussars, and eventually became a Major and a Lieutenant-Colonel. When war was declared, Harry was given the authority to raise the 5th Canadian Mounted Rifles (5th CMR). Many of the recruits, from Montreal and the Townships, were students at McGill and Bishop's Universities. Training began in Sherbrooke in the spring of 1915.

Harry left Valcartier on June 8, and, the next day, eight days before he sailed



for England, he was toasted by his friends in Knowlton. He responded:

> I make no profession as a soldier, I lay claim to no special mission; my aim is to win, if possible, the confidence of my men and to leave the rest to circumstance and the turn of events. The memory of this gathering will follow me; you have strengthened my hand, and if ever in a tight place I shall try to acquit myself as you would have me. (*A Canadian Soldier*, 4)

Another serving Canadian, born twenty years after Harry, was Lester Pearson, who would become Prime Minister in 1963. He wrote that for his generation

> War was still a romantic adventure. Our views were not yet contaminated by revelations of prewar political maneuvering by the European governments in the pursuit of power rather than principle. We had no realization yet of the carnage that would follow the use of modern mechanical instruments of destruction… I was in a library in 1915 studying a Latin poet, and all of a sudden I thought 'War can't be this bad.' So I walked out and enlisted. (Quoted in Cohen, 14)

Harry and Pearson, along with millions of their generation, were to answer the call of the motherland. It was just what you did.

Morning Glory was also drafted into service, one of approximately 130,000 horses shipped from Canada for use in the war. This number represented more than 10% of the horses that served on the Western Front. Over 30,000 horses were lost each year of the war. Horses were mainly used to haul heavy loads behind the lines.

Harry Baker and his Mounted Rifles went to war thinking that they would be fighting as cavalry. But tanks had replaced the cavalry, and so Harry and the Mounted Rifles were reclassified as infantry, and sent across the Channel to the trenches. Morning Glory, on the other hand, became the personal mount of a battalion commander. Harry only saw her occasionally.

The war letters of Lt. Col. Harry Baker

Harry was, as one might expect, an excellent writer. His letters from Europe, collated after his death in *A Canadian Soldier*, give us a sense of both the man and the times through which he lived.

On June 17, the 5th CMR left Canada, arriving in Portsmouth on July 29. Harry wrote of England:

> The country is beautiful beyond description, the fairest thing I have ever seen. The land… is highly cultivated and it looks like a garden – beautiful hillsides, trees, streams and picturesque houses, splendid cattle, horses and sheep. I don't see one single poor cow...The enthusiasm is wonderful: the women waved madly and threw kisses throughout the route…We can see the outline of France… we are not far away. (*A Canadian Soldier*, 5-6.)

He does admit that crossing the Channel was his worst experience yet, but, ever the optimist, adds that he hadn't been "too sick." Once on French soil, he observes that the mud is wet and deep in the trenches, but that life is good: the food excellent, the beds comfortable, and the morale of the men, remarkably, very good. He calls their activities a "great game," says that the men do him proud, and feels that his French will probably improve. His birthday, on November 6, 1915, is celebrated sitting on a box of ammunition in a trench, sipping some rum. He calls the death of a comrade, a "Bishop's College man," the result of "just a chance shot – bad luck."

By the end of the month, with temperatures plummeting, he is writing about socks. He has rigged up a way of drying them to prevent "trench feet." War is still a game, but there is an underlying sense of foreboding: "If I had youngsters I would not enjoy this, but the only frame of mind is 'Well, this is my last job, so here goes.'"

By the new year, there has been a reorganization at the front, but Harry remains in the Infantry. He is still writing

Top: Canadian Mounted Rifles recruitment poster, 1914. United States Library of Congress, cph.3912402.

Bottom: Cavalry in training: The Greys resting on the roadside, France. Photo: National Library of Scotland C.2785.

home about socks. He is thankful for the Sock Campaign, which has provided him with 1200 pairs, but still expects to receive more from E___ (perhaps his sister, Effie).

By early February, he has moved underground, but is still comfortably accommodated. He writes of the bravery of his men, describing them as "VC stuff" (Victoria Cross): "Excuse me for talking so much about these fellows. I feel like a proud parent telling about his wonderful kids… only these chaps are not kids." On March 4, the weather reminds the Townshipper of home: the snow was "like sugar snow" and would not last long.

On April 10, there is a happy moment when he catches sight of Morning Glory:

> She is ridden by the O.C. of one of the battalions in this Brigade, and he is very fond of her. I can't get her back until he finishes with her. She is in excellent condition and well cared for. She goes to the Officers' Mess every morning for her ration of sugar; she is keeping up her old habit… (A *Canadian Soldier*, 23.)

Later on in the day, in another letter, the mood has changed. He is in "a hell of a place." A bomb has fallen on a dinner party, but does not say much of the result.

Lester Pearson tried to make sense of such wartime experiences:

> We spent hours trying to get some understanding of what we were being asked to do; to bring some reason to the senseless slaughter. For what? King and country? Freedom and democracy? These words sounded hollow now in 1918 and we increasingly rebelled against their hypocrisy." (Quoted in Cohen, 22.)

In 1956, Pearson was to win a Nobel Peace Prize. Journalist Andrew Cohen postulates that "It is possible, though not obvious, that the Great War made Pearson more cautious about the use of force and gave him credibility later as a conciliator." (Cohen, 24.)

Unlike Pearson, who spent much of the war in hospital, Harry remained at the front, except for a few periods of leave. He saw Morning Glory for the last time on May 5: "She's in the pink of condition," he writes. "I hope someday to have her back." A few days later there is a sense of impatience in his letters. He says that the soldiers were playing baseball and football, but hadn't seen any of the real action yet. Towards the end of the month, he writes to his sisters about meeting them in London when he is on leave.

This happy reunion was not to be. Effie and Harriet were en route to England when Harry died.

Harry was one of some 8,000 Canadians who fell at the Battle of Mont Sorrel, near Ypres, which took place from June 2 to 13, 1916. He had been walking behind the lines, shouting encouragement to the troops amid the din of fire. After one blast, a soldier called out to him and, receiving no answer, left the trench to find Harry breathing but unresponsive. He was already dead when they reached the nearest first aid station. A crushing German bombardment on the morning of June 2 killed hundreds, including the division commander, Major General Malcolm Mercer.

Harry's body was buried the afternoon of his death in the New Military Cemetery in Poperinghe, Belgium. His regiment, the 5th Battalion, Canadian Mounted Rifles, recorded in their Official War Diary:

> Particularly regretted is the death of our O.C. Lt. Colonel G. H.Baker who has been O.C. since the Regiment was recruited in January 1915. He had endeared himself to Officers and men alike by his tact and cheerfulness under all conditions. Our comfort is that he died as he wished, at the head of his men, and his cross in the new Military Cemetery at Poperinghe (Lot 2, G1) is inscribed "Killed in action," the epitaph of a man. He was buried with full military honours. (*Destination Knowlton*, 2)

A memorial service at Christ Church, Sweetsburg, took place at home on June 18. Harry was praised for his accomplishments, but mostly for what he had given up to serve his country. The Rev. W. P. R. Lewis said:

> He had everything to sacrifice and he sacrificed everything. Harry Baker had social position, he sacrificed it; he had a promising parliamentary career, he sacrificed it. No young man had more things to sacrifice. We who know him best could say nothing but what was good of him. His loyalty, sincerity, his modesty and withal his ability made him a marked man in our community. Our Eastern Townships were better thought of be cause of him and what was in him. Loyalty was the warp and woof of that family and he lived and died a witness to that fact. (*A Canadian Soldier*, 76.)

General Sir Sam Hughes, Minister of Militia, also spoke at the service:

> I knew him and his late father for many years, and it was with pleasure to welcome him to Parliament in 1911. He was a capable and active member, always interested in the advancement of his Province. He was especially interested in military matters, and that led to our personal friendship. When War broke out, he as a cavalry man offered to raise a regiment of horse, but there were no cavalry needed then… Finding no work for cavalry at the front he was one of the first to volunteer his battalion for infantry work. There

Poperinghe New Military Cemetery, Belgium. Photo: www.ww1cemeteries.com.

were too many officers after the rearrangement, and I offered him a legal position at headquarters, far superior to the rank he held, but he said he would stick by his boys from the Townships, and he did to the end. (*A Canadian Soldier*, 77.)

The Baker Memorial on Parliament Hill

Fifty MPs and senators enlisted for service in the War. Of this group, Harry was the first and only one killed. In May 1919 the government proposed that a memorial to Lt.-Col. Baker be designed for the Centre Block of the Parliament Buildings in Ottawa.

The uniqueness of the bronze memorial is that it commemorates an individual, and not a group of soldiers, as is usually the case for war memorials. The work of R. Tait McKenzie, one of Canada's most prominent sculptors, it was unveiled on February 29, 1924, by Governor General Lord Byng, who had been commander of the 3rd Canadian Division at the Battle of Mount Sorrel. Prime Minister King's words on this occasion were as follows:

> It is personal in character, but it is also essentially symbolic. It speaks not of one member of parliament only who gallantly served this country overseas, but of the fifty or more members of the two Houses who en listed at the time, many of whom served actively in France, and of the eighteen members of Parliament who lost sons in the Great War. But it speaks of more than this. It speaks of Canadians, approximately 600,000 in number, who enlisted for service in the Great War, and above all of the more than 60,000 who gave their lives as the supreme sacrifice of this nation in the cause of the World's freedom. (Quoted in Monaghan, 2.)

I visited the Baker Memorial this past summer while writing this article. Harry, trench coat over his left arm, looks towards the famous Prime Minister's Staircase we see on television during media scrums. Knowing Colonel Baker's height from his war record, I could see that the statue was larger than his five foot eight inch frame. Perhaps it symbolizes his representation of the thousands of other Canadians who died.

Touching the bronze boots, I thought of all that Harry and so many of his generation chose to give up for the cause of a peace that did not hold. I thought of Effie, who had attended the unveiling, and pictured the crowd in that very space. Despite the interval of years, I felt a deep sadness. My attempt to fill in the gaps in his story had been successful. I had followed him from Glenmere to Parliament Hill. Harry, like me, was proud of his Quebec roots and loved the Townships. In that place, I felt and mourned his passing.

Morning Glory comes home to Brome County

After WW I, Harry's friends decided that Morning Glory should live out her days at home in Brome County. First she lived on the farm of General Draper, at Sutton Junction. Later on, she pulled a mail wagon.

Morning Glory died in 1936 and was buried at Glenmere. A plaque on the cairn marking her resting place reads: "Here lies Morning Glory, a faithful charger who served overseas 1915-1918. Died 1936 aged 26 years."

Harriet Baker's Letters

The only post-war reference I could find about Harry's sisters was Harriet's correspondence with her cousin, Kenneth Erskine, during a trip she made to France in 1939. Erskine, manager of the Bank of Montreal in Knowlton, lived with his family at Glenmere, at least during the summer. These letters can be accessed in the archives of the Brome County Historical Society, in Knowlton.

Harriet felt a strong affinity with Harry during her travels in France. She writes about Morning Glory and her burial site, as well as her discussions with Col. W. Rhoades, who had been with Harry when he died.

Harriet's reaction to yet another war (in 1939-40) is that "the catastrophe has fallen... but there is a great sustaining force in the Unity of the Nation." Harriet was able to leave France shortly before it was taken by Germany.

Like Effie and their parents, Harriet was buried in the family plot at All Saints Anglican Church, Dunham, Quebec.

Summer, 2014

The story of Morning Glory is interesting enough, but I have been surprised at how the interrelated acts of researching and writing it have affected me. Behind the name of every casualty of war, beyond the statistic, is a human story. As in Harry's life, there is the principled act of serving one's country, the noise of battle, and the premature ending of a young life. There is the ensuing loss to family and of

Top: Colonel Baker Memorial, Centre Block, Parliament Hill, Ottawa.
Bottom: Morning Glory plaque. Photos: Glen Allingham.

human potential. My own father, who served in Europe during World War II, typical of his generation, never shared his feelings about his wartime experiences. Writing about Harry Baker and Morning Glory has helped me to "feel" what it means to go to war.

"The Bugle and the Passing Bell," a CBC radio production that relates the experiences of World War I through the voices of its veterans, was playing on the car radio as I drove through Ottawa one day last summer. Ironically, I had just passed the Canadian War Museum. "That's where Harry's original war record is catalogued," I thought to myself. I listened more intently, wondering if the battle at Sanctuary Wood near Ypres might be mentioned. It wasn't, but one of the veterans recalled the experience of talking with his comrades one minute and the next, climbing onto their dead bodies in order to get out of a trench. It was a gruesome image, but not unlike some of those to which we have become accustomed through televised coverage of warfare and human loss. I was, therefore, surprised by an overwhelming wave of nausea. This time was different: I felt I knew one of the soldiers, where he had lived, the university he had attended, and his sister's school. I knew how he had felt about going to war, and serving in it. Proud of his horse, he had taken her overseas and, ultimately, to the front.

I was drawn to that place and time: Belgium, in June of 1916. It was evening. There had been a day of shelling. Harry was encouraging the troops from behind the trenches. Morning Glory, ridden by another soldier, was not far away…

I visited Glenmere again last summer. The current owners were not at home, but they had kindly permitted me to take pictures to accompany this article. It was a perfect day: sunny with a blue sky overhead. Only the slightest ripple disturbed the surface of Baker Pond. Walking up the dirt road to the house, I could almost hear the horses and buggies, see the ladies with their long skirts, and hear the chatter of happy voices as family members and visitors reached their destination. The talk might have been about taking the *Effie* out on the pond. Harry might have been playing with his younger brother, Percival, while the older sisters, Harriet and Effie, looked on demurely. The men in the party would probably have talked about politics, hunting and fishing. To this day, the location and its amenities invite fun and frolic.

Behind the house, close to Morning Glory's grave, I noted a lush and thriving raised kitchen garden. Trees in their summer glory provided a verdant backdrop for the house. From Glenmere, the view of the pond was tranquility itself.

Harry noticed and wrote of the verdant countryside when he reached England. Perhaps it reminded him of Glenmere in high summer. I like to think that in the thick of battle and the ugliness of war, memories of a quiet pond in Brome County provided some calm and respite for both Harry and his faithful Morning Glory.

Janet Chandler Allingham *has spent many summers in Brome County on Lake Memphremagog in the Eastern Townships. She lived in Vale Perkins for a short time, and now resides in Ottawa.*

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Jane Wardle*, who now owns Glenmere, shared her knowledge of the Baker family and her home. She also allowed me to take some of the photographs accompanying this article.*

Adelaide Lanktree*, a historian from Farnham, Quebec, who provided all sorts of references.*

Baker Pond at Glenmere, West Bolton, Qc. Photo: Glen Allingham.

Strangely Promising Talent

The Westmount Thespians through the decades

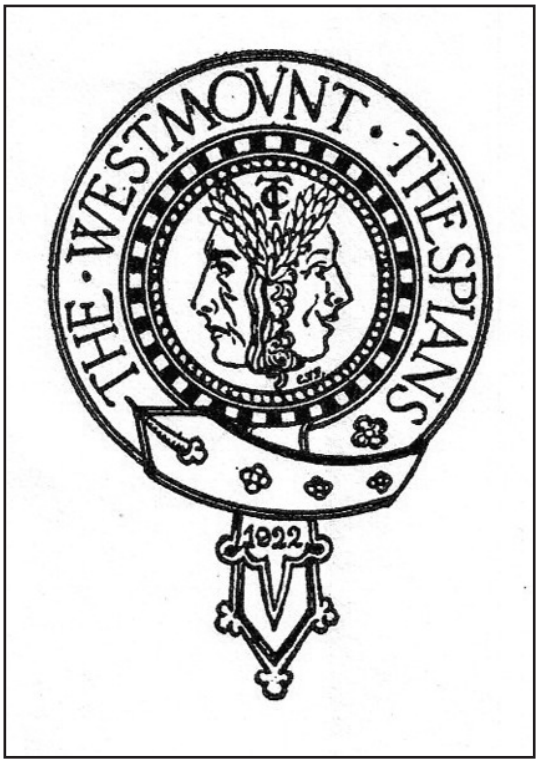
by Mark W. Gallop

The newspaper headline read, "Waitress Collapses as Lady Smokes Big Cigar." The tongue-in-cheek story tells of a "sweet young thing wearing a green evening gown" visiting Murray's Restaurant accompanied by several gentlemen. After demurely declining a cigarette, she demanded a cigar "and leaned back in her chair with her thumbs stuck in the arm-holes of her dainty dress… All of which goes to prove that a combination of an Arts Junior and a leading female impersonator of the Westmount Thespians is too much even for a Murray's waitress."

This undated clipping is pasted in a lovingly-prepared and well-preserved scrapbook now in the care of the McCord Museum Archives.

My grandfather, Montague Willis, and his twin brother, Selwyn, were founding members of the Westmount Thespians. This group started with friends in the Willis basement in 1922 before they entered their teens. The story of the group is remarkable for its longevity. They progressed from children playing to polished theatrical productions as young adults, and then, after careers and families took over, to a group that kept together and in touch long enough to celebrate its 60th anniversary in 1982. All of this is documented in the scrapbook and supporting files of correspondence, minutes and ephemera. The scrapbook contains such prizes as the props list from the first basement productions, false mustaches worn by my grandfather (labelled "shades of Monty!") and a sample of every ticket stub and programme.

We've all attended children's theatrical plays, with sheets for curtains and improvised lighting from household sources (in the case of the Westmount youngsters, candles in tin cans). Such was their start, with a ten-cent price for "box" seats. Originally calling themselves The Putnam Club, they became the St. Matthias' Boys' Dramatic Club when they moved to the parish hall of the closest Anglican church for four years. The next move was into Westmount's Victoria Hall where they renamed themselves the Westmount Boys' Dramatic Club. They finally became The Westmount Thespians in 1927 after considerable and carefully-documented debate over alternatives, but with a consensus that the word "Boys" was a hindrance in the solicitation of advertising.



The group focused on one production in the fall of each year. The plays were usually farces that saw their debut on the London theatre stage, such as the Thespians' 1930-31 production of *The Dover Road* by A. A. Milne (of Winnie-the-Pooh fame) about newly-weds stranded on their way to a honeymoon in France. While comedies were the general choice, casting men in all the female roles was intended as an illusion rather than a camp presentation for cheap laughs. Indeed, despite their amateur status, they worked to present credible productions. An early review from their St. Matthias' Boys' Dramatic Club days set the tone for these aspirations: "The boys, all of whom are under fourteen years of age, made their own scenery and costumes, organized their own orchestra and produced and mounted the plays themselves… The performances were marked by enthusiasm and unusual sincerity, and in several instances strangely promising talent was revealed."

While farce, female impersonation, fun and comradeship were the order of the day, all proceeds from the plays and the advertising in the programmes were given to a designated charity not under the aid of the Federated Charities (a precursor to Red Feather and Centraide), most frequently the Grace Dart Home (see *Quebec Heritage News*, Spring 2014 issue). Victoria Hall was home base but they also took their shows on the road. 1929's *Adams Apple* was performed for two nights at Victoria Hall, but also in Point St. Charles, Rosemount and Shawinigan Falls. The 1930-31 production of *Dover Road* included a performance at the Chateau Frontenac in Quebec City with Lieutenant Governor and Mrs. Carroll attending. The "home" presentation at Victoria Hall was usually followed by a dance (50 cents per couple), with ribbons for paying guests and dance cards, samples of which are, of course, preserved in the scrapbook. Even after the last production in 1931, the dances continued on through 1933, always with a charitable fundraising aim.

The Westmount Thespians logo. Photo: courtesy of Mark Gallop.

The 1930s were transformative years for the group and its members, as the decade was for the world. No longer schoolboys, the group was described in the 1929 programme for *Tons of Money* as comprising 15 young businessmen and 16 college undergraduates, most of whom were "McGill Men." Old members headed out of town to other universities or employment opportunities, and new members were recruited. Theatre may have succumbed to other demands, but group cohesion did not. Get-togethers continued, usually at least on a monthly basis, and were carefully documented in minute books. In the first years of the decade, some of these were focused on the social good, such as a 1932 lecture on unemployment insurance in Great Britain. However, as the years passed, the emphasis evolved to less high-minded activities, such as bowling, bridge, ski parties, dinner-dances and Laurentian weekends.

If the economic privations of the Depression impacted the Thespians, it is not particularly apparent from their archives. The records are not all of happy times, however. In 1936, one of their number died in a climbing accident in the Swiss Alps. The Thespians funded and dedicated a bronze plaque to his memory at Westmount High School which reads: "In Memory of John Gardner McNaughton, M.A., B.Lit. Journalist, British United Press, died at Rochers de Naye, Switzerland Nov. 21st 1936. Aged 27 years. Remembered affectionately by classmates of the Westmount Thespians." The plaque still graces the main hallway of the present WHS building.

Club members were also subject to the approaching horrors of fascism and war, first through the words and actions of a fellow Thespian. Gunther Kempff was the son of Dr. Ludwig Kempff, the German Consul General to Montreal from 1922 and Nazi Germany's senior Canadian diplomat and spokesman from 1933 until his death in 1937. The Kempffs lived in Westmount, where Gunther attended Westmount High School and joined the Thespians. Even after he left Montreal to attend university in Berlin, he remained an out-of-town member. He followed his father's career path as a diplomat and the last correspondence from him comes as an attaché to the German Legation at The Hague, in 1937 contributing 10 Dutch guilders toward the McNaughton memorial plaque. He starts the letter warmly with memories of his Thespian years, but ends railing against the League of Nations and against "the American press agencies who hysterically presage war at even the most unimportant diplomatic encounter." His name no longer appeared on the rolls of the Thespians after war was declared and no further reference to his membership was made.

When war broke out, the Thespians were in their early 30s, many with wives and children and no longer prime military recruits, but most saw service overseas or in the reserves. My great-uncle, Selwyn Willis, was an Anglican minister in 1939, and toured Europe after post-graduate studies in England. He and his mother were west-bound passengers on the SS *Athenia*, torpedoed off the coast of Ireland within hours of the war's start on September 3, 1939. Both survived the sinking and Selwyn later returned to England and occupied Germany as a chaplain with the Canadian Army.

Like many all-male social organizations, the Thespians faced issues of the inclusion of women. With female impersonation at the root of the club's character, there was no question of inclusion of women in their performing days, but girlfriends came soon enough, with the dances providing the outlet. The first

Top: Cast photo of the 1926 production of Adam's Apple. Photo: courtesy of Mark Gallop.

Bottom: Victoria Hall, Westmount, c.1935. Photo: McCord Museum: M2011.64.2.3.126.

Thespian married in 1935, but as late as 1937 the group received a letter from a member imploring others to reconsider the growing number of activities open to the "wives and lady friends" of members. The tide was not to be turned however. In the post-war decades, the partners of Thespians began to be considered full members and, starting in 1955, serving on the executive, with my grandmother, Lorna Willis, as the first female president.

1947 marked the Thespians' 25th anniversary, with a weekend reunion at the Gray Rocks Inn at St. Jovite. These formal reunions, planned every five years over several decades, were landmark social occasions for the members. Despite their promising start, no Thespian continued with the stage as a career or hobby in later life. That didn't stop them from pulling out the old scripts and reprising their roles at the reunion dinners. The 1947 reunion programme promised a "scene from Act I of *Tons of Money* with four of the original cast."

Less formal social activities also continued, especially for those still living in the Montreal area. In the 1960s and 70s, the "Thespian Picnic" was a highlight of my own summers at the Willis country property at Lacolle, where Lake Champlain flows into the Richelieu River. An annual invitation was extended to Thespians and their children and grandchildren, who descended on us in great numbers and high spirits.

To the best of anyone's knowledge, the last of the Thespians was Errol Clift who died at the Wales Home in the St. Francis Valley in February 2001. Doug Hamilton, the Thespians' last president, died a few months before him, and it was from his widow that I retrieved the scrapbook and memorabilia with a promise that I would find an appropriate home for it – with the McCord Museum Archives in mind.

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

Top: The Scrapbook. Photo: Mark Gallop.

Bottom: Westmount Thespians, 60th anniversary reunion. Photo: courtesy of Mark Gallop.

The King of Courage

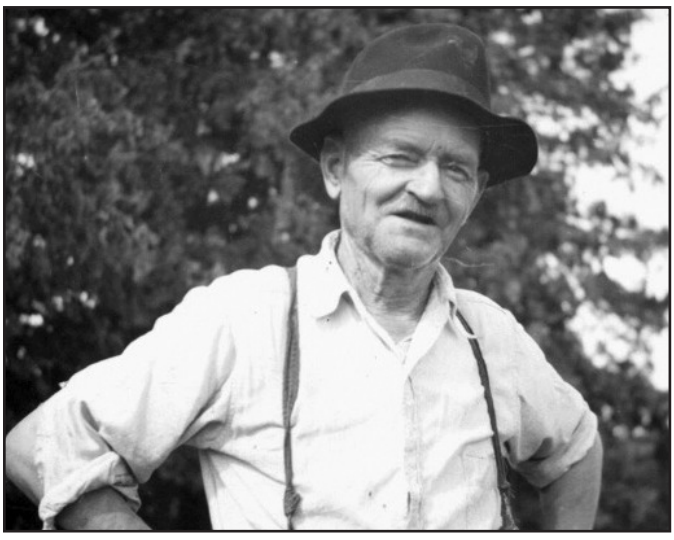
Jimmy Darou and his extended family

by Wes Darou

The Spring 2012 issue of *Quebec Heritage News* contained an article about Jimmy Darou, a famous Montreal jockey from the 1930s, paralyzed in a racing accident at Connaught Raceways in Aylmer, Quebec (today Gatineau). He was my second cousin once removed, i.e., we shared the same great grandfather. This piece will update his story a little. The title is borrowed from a privately published book on the man.

Our ancestor, and essentially the ancestor of all the Darous in North America, was Benoît Darou (1788-1861), a veteran of the War of 1812. Benoît was from Hazebrouck, France, and at the age of 16, joined a Swiss mercenary army, the De Meuron Regiment. In 1816, he was given a land grant north of Perth, Ontario. Veterans were encouraged to settle near the Rideau Canal to protect the Canadas from a potential American invasion. In 1815, there was a massive volcanic eruption in Indonesia, and 1816 became known as the year with no summer. It was reported that Benoît liked hunting and fishing more than farming. In a year where all the crops failed, this seems to have worked for him. He and his wife, Alice Williams, had 11 children.

Jimmy's full name was Thomas Harold Darou. He was nicknamed Jimmy, after his grandfather, to differentiate him from his father, Thomas Howard Darou. According to my great-uncle Ken, as young men, Tom, Sr. and my grandfather Fred, both grandsons of Benoît, liked to drink together. Tom died in 1947, and is buried in Mount Royal Cemetery. In an obituary from Huntington, Quebec, he is described as "one of Canada's most prominent horsemen." I would be interested in learning more about the man. Coincidentally, a relative in France, Adrien Darou, is a retired horse trainer.



I would speculate that Jimmy and his father did not particularly get along. Jimmy is buried in Rideau Gardens in Dollard-des-Ormeaux, Quebec, while his father and mother are in a large and attractive plot at Mount Royal. There is no mention of Thomas in Jimmy's book. This strikes me as odd considering Thomas' importance in the horse world.

Jimmy's racing injury resulted from a spill involving two feuding jockeys. One cut the other off, and Jimmy's horse Singlestar was not able to avoid the pile up, throwing Jimmy and then falling on him. Despite being paralyzed from the chest down, Jimmy reported that he came out better than the other two jockeys: "One of the other jockeys committed suicide and the other never rode again."

Jimmy married his nurse and had one son, Donald, who eventually moved to Toronto.

Wes G. Darou *has written about First Nations contributions to international development and the history of the Nakkertok Cross-Country Ski Club. He is president of the local historical society, Cantley 1889.*

Sources:

Ernest Ball, *Jimmy Darou: The king of courage*. Privately printed, Montreal, 1938.

Al McNeil, "Paralyzed for 33 years but he's still winning." Canadian Press, Montreal, March 5, 1966.

Top: Jimmy Darou with St Locheil & Cuvanna. Photo: Bibliothèque et archives nationales, Fonds Conrad Poirier, P48, S1, P8015.

Below: Fred Darou. Photo: courtesy of Wes Darou.

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