


HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF THE GATINEAU

SEPTEMBER NEWSLETTER

1985

 **NEXT MEETING: Monday, Sept. 23, at 7.30 in the Chelsea School**

This is literally an extraordinary occasion. The resources of Canada Post and the Society have been combined to mark in a special way the 100 years of postal service in Old Chelsea. We start early because, before the party, there will be a film, presentation of a plaque, launching of Pat Evans' newest history and a talk by Dr. Robert Smith on early days of the postal service. Bring a friend (memberships only \$5 until December 31).

The Cemetery

Have you visited it lately? You will see the results of very hard work, supported by the contributions of the membership and the N.C.C. Truckloads of brush were cut and removed. The paths were laid out according to our master plan, graded with porous material, then covered with topsoil for pleasant walking. The jumble of multi-ton rocks left in the northeast corner when the cemetery was created have been shifted to the limit of the strength of heavy chains, winches, crowbars, our able-bodied student workers and the less able-bodied president. It has been landscaped ready for the creation of a pleasant rockery to be stocked with plants donated by members during their fall and spring thinning operations. (Please?) The road is newly resurfaced with gleaming brucite. More than 300 feet of trenching was laboriously chipped through the rock-hard ground for 230 cedar trees to frame the entrance. Excellent relations have been established with our immediate neighbours who are helping tend the new trees.

Equally important, our members responded to the Cemetery appeal with customary promptness and loyalty. Donations are now approaching \$2,000. The Executive has decided to match this from our treasury to create the perpetual care fund which will ensure that the standards of maintenance will neither slip nor be a burden on the Society. The Royal Canadian Legion has responded to our request for collaboration and is considering its form of help. The NCC, in addition to the Master Plan, has made a grant of \$8,500. We look forward to an appropriate rededication which will be left until the gentler days of spring.

Summer Project

Don't think this is all the students, Dan Buckley and Robin Mackay, have done. In our first summer project ever, far more time has been spent on historic research than on physical labour. We have now worked out, and tested on the ground, a four-stage historic tour of the Gatineau. We hope

that by 1986 we will be able to launch our "travelling seminars" which are to consist of one-day bus tours on four successive Saturdays to points of historic interest from Hull to Buckingham to Low. Although the research and programs for basic tours are almost finished, we hope to see the project further enriched by new stops which are now the subject of correspondence with their owners.

We have made a survey of historic sources, including the records of the Society itself. This is to facilitate future research and help us with the background for a history of the Society we hope to have for the 25th anniversary in 1987. The groundwork has been laid for another student project in 1986. Our thanks are due to the two excellent students (who, we hope, will report to members personally at the Annual Meeting in January) and to the Government of Canada's Challenge '85 student work program which made this possible.

Museum

We are in correspondence with Canadian Pacific which is sympathetic to the idea of donating a caboose to house our collection of artifacts. Meanwhile Ray Daly has been actively pursuing the possibilities of a site for a permanent Society museum, possibly in the Wakefield area. Much hard work and patience will be needed before it becomes a reality, but the prospects are interesting.

Relations with Government

Having been critical of the tendency of government to overlook and undervalue the role of the voluntary sector in preserving history, we were pleased to have had a long discussion-- our first-- with the Chairman of the NCC on both immediate and long-term issues. Mrs Pigott is personally committed to our ideals, and we look forward to happier days. She is as enthusiastic as we are about that October 28 meeting when she is going to address our membership and answer questions. Red circle that evening on your calendar now.

Public Issues

The threat that the proposed \$460,000 expenditure on "The Farm" at Kingsmere for use by the Speaker of the House of Commons could irretrievably affect its historic character has led us to take a public stand in correspondence with the NCC and in the media. Our position, briefly, is that in an historic building the user must adapt to the building, and not the building to the user. The consultant retained for redecoration of official residences has been in touch with us about The Farm-- something of a milestone. That is likely to be a lively issue for some time.

Program

An outstanding program for next year's meetings is almost complete. If you did not get a copy at the Auction, pick up one at the September meeting.

The Auction

In a phrase, the best yet! At press time we do not have the final net revenue, but for the third year in a row we have set new records in total sales, donations and possibly in numbers attending. Our heartfelt thanks to Auction Committee Chairman David Castleman and to all the extremely hardworking volunteers who made this possible.

Publications

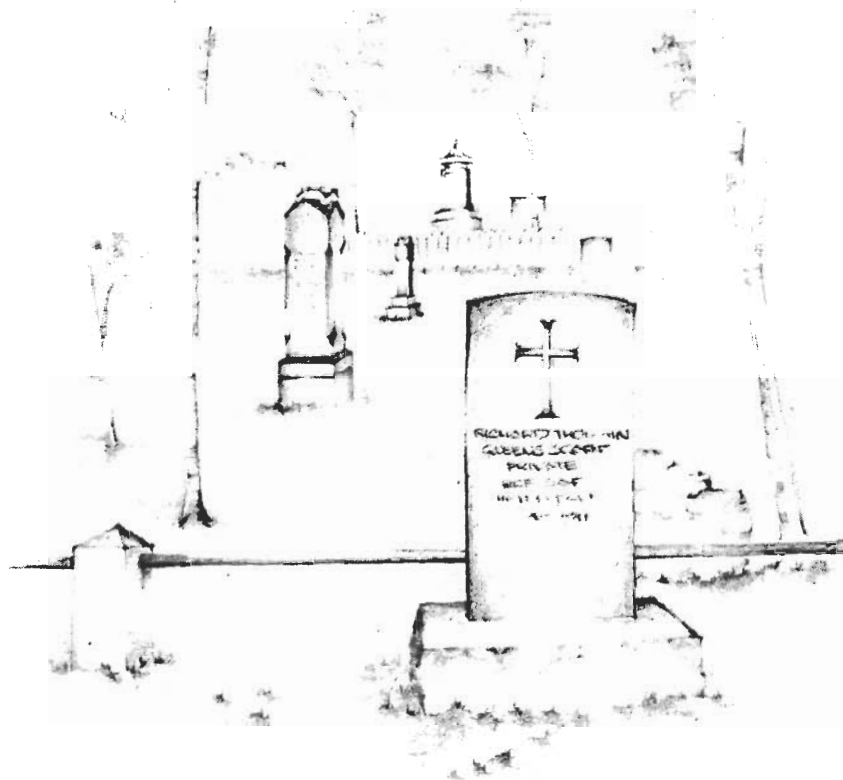
Our membership brochure is now available in both languages-- in quantity. Please ask any member of the executive for copies if you can help us by distributing them..... "A Century of Schools", a handsome book about Protestant education in Wakefield, Masham and Low which the Society helped finance, is available for \$13.95 by mail from the Kathrine Moore Memorial Committee, Box 232, Wakefield JOX 3G0..... Have you seen the superb two foot square map of 1875 land holdings in the Gatineau? Since each copy is being hand coloured by Carol Martin, Eileen Castleman and David Morisset, only twelve a year are planned: they cost just \$35 each. Members can still get on the 1985/86 list..... The limited edition, numbered, 8" x 10" drawings of the Cemetery donated to the Society by Michael Neelin cost only \$5 each, ready for framing.

Out-of-print issues of *Up the Gatineau!* (1975-6-7 and 1980) are being copied to sell for \$2.00 each. Other issues are still in stock and available for their cover prices. The complete set costs \$19.50. Cheques for mail orders should include postage (1-68¢; 2-90¢; 3-\$1.12; 4-\$1.35; 5-\$1.35; 6 \$1.80).

Executive

All members will join in warm wishes to Dr. Stuart Geggie whose valued and productive energies have been temporarily inhibited by illness..... We much regret the coming departure of Tom and Fiona Hyslop, long-time pillars of the Society, about to emigrate to Vancouver Island..... We are much saddened by the death of Dick Henderson, a rare servant of the community who, although not a member of the executive, had already helped us much..... Much-respected Press Gallery member John Maclean, a new member, has volunteered to help the Executive with publicity.





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**THE THOMPSON GRAVE,
FROM THE ORIGINAL DRAWING BY MICHAEL NEELIN,
MADE IN THE HISTORIC CEMETERY OWNED BY
THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF THE OATINEAU,
AUGUST, 1985.**