



THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF THE GATINEAU  
BOX 485, CHELSEA, QUE, J0X 1N0

1986

NOVEMBER NEWSLETTER

**NEXT MEETING: MONDAY,  
NOVEMBER 17 AT 8.00 P.M. IN THE  
OLD CHELSEA COMMUNITY  
CENTRE.**



King in 1920: photo by A.G. Pittaway

**Dr. Norman Hillmer**, senior historian at National Defence, has had a long personal interest in Prime Minister King and his times. He will share his views on this absorbing figure under the provocative title: "Mackenzie King: Hero or Fink?"

### LAST MEETING

**DR. R.H. Hubbard's** evening on Rideau Hall was not a formal lecture but a charming and enlightening stroll through history along paths set by a remarkable collection of slides reaching back to the early

years of Confederation. The journey started with Thomas MacKay's first villa, hardly any of which is recognizable today; it followed the bits and pieces gradually climbing on the original structure and snaking back into the gardens. There were photographs of all the vice-regal occupants, often in informal gatherings of family and staff -- including one striking Gatineau picture of a future British Prime Minister during his Rideau Hall days. Rideau Hall and the people in it now have a richer meaning for all members attending the last meeting.

### HISTORIC TOURS

As the 40 historic tourists made for the bus at the very end of the walking tour of Aylmer, the first drops of rain began to fall. On every other account, the Society's first Historic Tour scored top marks.

That did not, as they say, happen with mirrors. There were almost two years of planning, uncounted committee meetings, careful research into every historic plot, luncheon menu and bus; and above all there was **Diane Aldred** of Aylmer who wrote the book, briefed our tour guide and joined **Mary Howell** and **Jean Gilbert** as tour guides. There were also **Carol Martin** who chaired the committee, brought it all together, and gave the moving historic commentary (pun intended); and **Pat Evans** who provided the beautifully prepared tour notes given to all participants.

The tour began sharp at 9.00 in Jacques Cartier park in Hull with a general orientation. On the way through Hull it paused by the Philemon Wright Memorial and the Wright House, stopped for homage at the graves of Philemon Wright and Nicholas Sparks, veered from the Aylmer Road to see Parc Brébeuf where the famous missionary had portaged, identified every golf course and building of note till the centre of Aylmer. As a change of pace everyone visited the annual Antique Fair and Sale sponsored by Heritage Aylmer. Then it was time for lunch in the historic Symmes

Inn before a 90 minute historic stroll through downtown Aylmer. On the way back, visits were made to the old power installations at the Deschênes Rapids and the ruins of the once huge nickel smelter, before a short historic tour through Hull. Even the 4 p.m. return was on schedule.

Shortly afterwards, the Historic Tour Committee met to review the project and consider the future. The first tour was fully subscribed, with a short waiting list. The modest fee paid all expenses, with a small surplus for the treasury. The value to the participants lay not only in the day itself, but in the heightened interest which Aylmer and its environs will always hold for those who heard its story. The unanimous recommendation to the Executive was continuation next year, with one tour in spring and one in the fall. Like early nineteenth century settlement, they would gradually move out from Hull and Aylmer deeper into the Gatineau.

### We Shall Remember...

The Petawawa Battle School asked permission to hold a special memorial service on November 11 by the grave of **Pte. Thompson**. We expressed our warm satisfaction with this thought, and made the necessary arrangements. About sixty young soldiers from the Royal Canadian Regiment are expected to take part.

Members of the Society are, of course, welcome at this unique ceremony. No prior notification is necessary; we suggest arriving by 10.30 a.m. On this occasion, please do not park on the roadway or the carpark, for they will be needed by the visiting troops; the nearest safe parking is on Church Street, just across Route 105 from the cemetery entrance, and a few metres south.

The Protestant Burial Ground of Old Chelsea was the subject of an interview by Mark van Dusen for "Regional Contact" of CJOH. The visit to the cemetery was made 10 days before the program was aired on October 25. That site has also been the subject of continuing discussions with **Mrs. Jean Pigott** and **Mayor Doug Minnes**, both of whom want to see it properly preserved.

### The Museum

The Museum has closed its doors for the season, almost. After the scheduled open days for the public ended on Thanksgiving, there were visits by school classes, and of course the doors are being continually opened by indefatigable workers **Stuart Geggie** and **Ray Daly**.

The Museum Committee met on October 27. We are not sure how many people went through the MacLaren House, but the sale of about 1300 buttons suggests at least 2,000 visitors; 1100 of them signed the book. Even more remarkable is that the whole museum project was not only maintained, but established from scratch at no net cost to the Society. The generous grant from the Council of LaPêche and the sale of Society buttons even made it possible to set aside a small sum for future acquisitions and museum development. We had 30 volunteers (Someone said: "I think Ray was 8 of them!") serving as guides, as well as the back-up of the Museum Committee.

The ambitious plans for next year are the subject for an early meeting with the NCC, in the hope that all will be settled in time for a full report and idea session at the Society's Annual Meeting In January. On the assumption that all goes well in those talks, we have prepared the first draft of our "Want List". If you can help with any of these items, please phone **Stuart Geggie** at 459-2393.

1. Victorian bed, bedroom furniture and accoutrements
2. A carpet for the parlour
3. Parlour chairs
4. Men's and women's clothing from about 1890 to 1920
5. Old kitchen woodstove (it need not work but should look as if it could)
6. Any early photos of the Gatineau
7. Male and female mannequins
8. Victorian coat rack
9. Curtains for windows in parlour (2 pairs) and bedroom (about 3 metres high). Can you donate materials or help sew curtains?
10. Paint for interior walls and woodwork
11. Farm and house tools small enough to be lifted by one hand (no steam tractors, please)
12. Signs. Can you volunteer to do either the carpentry or lettering?

The volunteers who made it all possible have been invited to an end-of-season celebration at the Geggies on Sunday afternoon, November 16 at 4.00. If you helped with the Museum, but do not receive an invitation (we are awfully fallible), please phone **Stuart** or **Norma Geggie** (459-2393).

## NEW MEMBER

We are particularly pleased to welcome as members the **Honourable John Fraser**, Speaker of the House of Commons, and **Mrs. Fraser**. We are gratified to have on our rolls this distinguished holder of high office and occupants of an historic Gatineau home. Looking forward to our first meeting, all members of the Society wish Mr. Fraser well in his heavy responsibilities.

## NEXT YEAR'S EXECUTIVE

The Nominations Committee, under the chairmanship of Past President **Arthur Davison**, has been considering how to match talent to the growing responsibilities of the Society. Since they hope to present suggestions for voting at the Annual Meeting, now is the time for any member to volunteer services on the executive, or to suggest the names of those who might serve. The offices of president and two vice-presidents become vacant in January, and it is particularly hoped to find volunteers for these offices. (We are campaigning for the office of Past President.) Others who wish to serve on the Executive need not feel awkwardness about displacing someone else, for there is no fixed limit on the members of the executive's Advisory Committee. Please phone **Arthur Davison** (235-1064) with any thoughts.

The office of treasurer will become vacant on December 21, for **Adèle Robinette-Street** has regrettably felt obliged to lay down these duties, while continuing to volunteer for other services. We are grateful to her for stepping into the breach and tackling a difficult and unfamiliar job. Conversations are under

way for the possible appointment of a professional book keeper who would be able to put our finances on the kind of footing required by our expanding activities. Any suggestions about the financial administration of the Society would be welcomed by **Bob Phillips** (827-3164).

## A PAUSE FOR A SHORT COMMERCIAL...

Seeking to help those who have helped us, may we draw to your attention the Annual Bazaar for the Chelsea Co-operative Nursery School on Saturday, December 6 from 11.00 to 3.00, in the Chelsea Elementary School. Those who might be able to contribute crafts, baked goods or Christmas ornaments for sale are invited to phone **Adèle Robinette-Street** (827-3045). We must treat those preschoolers well, so that all will grow up to be healthy members of the Historical Society.

## HERITAGE DAY

Having cast a slightly jaundiced eye on last year's regional efforts to do something about celebrating Heritage Day, we have felt some responsibility to help make it work in 1987. To that end we have been attending meetings as far back as last spring and have been talking to representatives of other voluntary societies in the hope of some meaningful, grass roots ideas for remembering our heritage. Like St. Valentine's Day, it is **not** a public holiday, but if we can think of love without having a day off to do it, we should be able to do the same for our heritage.

Because our meetings are now on the third Monday of each month, we shall be meeting on Heritage Day, February 16 (when **Dr. Stuart Geggie** will be the speaker). Events are being planned in Ottawa, partly to tie in with Winterlude. The object is to raise consciousness about how the past has contributed to our present and our future. We would welcome ideas for our own marking of Heritage Day, as well as for our support of neighbours' activities.

**PLEASE HANG IN THERE.....**

This will be the last *Newsletter* of the calendar year. Setting a bold example which no government has yet dared to follow, we again plan to distribute our annual report within a week of the close of the year. Since we are dependent on printers and postal workers, the next *Newsletter* and *Annual Review* will reach you only a few days before the Annual Meeting. Will you therefore please mark now **MONDAY EVENING, JANUARY 18,** (place to be announced) as a commitment you will not want to miss. As usual, the circulation in advance of the *Annual Review* enables us to reduce to a minimum the time spent on the formal adoption of reports (about 48 seconds). Thus there can be an interesting and frank discussion about where we have come from and where we are going.

And meanwhile we wish all members a truly historic holiday season.

R.A.J.P.