



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

1987

FEBRUARY NEWSLETTER

**NEXT MEETING: MONDAY,
FEBRUARY 16 AT 8.15 P.M. IN THE
WAKEFIELD SCHOOL GYM**

IT WILL BE A HERITAGE DAY SPECIAL when Dr. Stuart Geggie addresses us on "100 Years of Medicine in Wakefield". Physician, historian, author, museologist, Stuart has long been a pillar of the Society on whom we lean for important occasions. Please note the time and place. Approach the school by Burnside Drive. Since this will be our annual meeting in Wakefield, please encourage your friends from that area to join us, whether they are members or not.

LAST MEETING

The biggest Annual Meeting we have ever had was a challenge to the historic space in Chelsea's Restaurant. It tended to be a rather intimate encounter.

Finances. The meeting began with an explanation of the severe problems in financial administration over the past year. The Society expressed its deep gratitude to Anne Fleming who was somehow able to transform cartons of confusing paper into order and the attached financial statement, just hours before the meeting began. Members were reminded that this had been a year of new and sometimes costly projects: setting up and running the Museum, the Rededication of the Cemetery, the Historic Tour and expanded newsletters and Annual Review. Remarkably in the circumstances, we ended the year with a surplus of \$5700. Contributing to that happy result were our best year at the Auction (over \$4,000) and in membership (330 households), though each membership is now subsidized from general funds by an amount roughly equal to postage.

Phil Journeaux was present to receive the unexpected praises of members for his many years of devoted service as auditor. At 87 he is moving on to new careers. A unanimous motion expressed the Society's gratitude and appointed Mark Cuddy, C.A., of Ottawa as his successor to review the 1986 and 1987 accounts.

Ideas. In the general discussion of the past year, two subjects not on the agenda arose. One was the Union Mission Church, mentioned below. The other was a suggestion that we make a real effort to collect photographic records from Gatineau residents. The records exist in many a drawer and trunk. The Society will willingly pay for prints or copying. We look to the generosity of their owners, with a little organizational help which will be discussed by the Executive. Meanwhile, please tell us of any collections of family photos you know about, especially if they include buildings and other landmarks. Please write, or phone Stuart Geggie (459-2393) Rae Moore (827-1995) or Bob Phillips (827-3164).

Elections. Having had the opportunity to probe finances and all other aspects of the year's work, the meeting then heard Arthur Davison's Nomination Committee report. The only response to pleas for more nominations for the office of president was the embarrassed tinkling of glasses and cups, ending with a resigned motion to close the nominations. The 1987 executive is therefore as printed (and partly photographed!) in the Review of 1986: except that Joan Quain has regretfully had to leave the Executive Committee because of other commitments.

Prize. Arthur Davison then took pleasure in presenting the annual Arthur Davison Prize which members will recall was a gift established by members to honour Arthur's

long service as President of the Society. The 1987 winner, unfortunately in absentia, is **Lillian Walton** whose invaluable historic prose has appeared in eight of the twelve issues of *Up the Gatineau!* Like her predecessors, she has made many other contributions to the Society. We are all delighted to offer her our warm congratulations.

Volunteering. In this, its 25th Anniversary Year, the Society wants to emphasize participation more than expansion into new activities. That is the way not just to make the Society strong but to have the Society give greatest satisfaction to its members. We have appreciated services offered through the membership form and we apologize if we have not always been effective in exploiting them, but we are trying to match needs and wishes. At the meeting members signed sheets indicating their readiness to work on committees, to serve as guides and to help with construction in our growing museum. Those not at the meeting, but ready to participate, are invited to phone the relevant committee chairmen:

Auction: David Castleman-- 827-1610
Museum: Ray Daly-- 459-2038
Tours: Carol Martin-- 827-1633
Cemetery: (pro tem) Bob Phillips--
827-3164)
Search for History: John Starnes--
235-1971
Honours & Awards: Eric Fletcher--
230-7292

Also, a new committee has been established under **Eileen Castleman** (827-1610) to help with the selling and social side of meetings. They will solicit help at the membership and publications desk, and manage the coffee so that all these important functions do not fall so heavily on one or two people, as in the past. Eileen will appreciate your offer of occasional help.

If you have any doubt that the Executive is carrying too heavy a load, please note that three of its members have had hernia operations.

The Museum There was pretty big news from the Museum. The NCC, apparently pleased by our first year's work, has acceded to our request to expand through the whole ground floor of the MacLaren House, with offices and workshops upstairs. This means a need for volunteers to do carpentry, some plumbing, a lot of painting and curtain making, mostly when spring returns. There will be no increase in rent (\$1).

But that is not all. The NCC has asked us to help staff The Mill because of their budgetary restrictions. There is a growing feeling that we should respond positively, making this a community effort while the NCC uses its resources for activities beyond our capacities. The response to our plea for Museum volunteers was strong enough that we will be able to make a solid offer of help to the NCC.

Stuart Geggie spoke of exciting new plans for the MacLaren House and **Julie Dompierre** of the NCC spoke of The Mill, welcoming any help we could give. If you were not able to sign up at the meeting, please consider offering **Stuart Geggie** two part-days this year, at any time at your convenience.

Ecomuseums A year ago, the late Judy Crawley had introduced the idea of the Society involving itself in the preservation of the historic character of Gatineau villages. The idea got fast support, with Old Chelsea and Wakefield being offered as examples. We have talked to the Heritage Canada Foundation, specifically about their ideas for "Ecomuseums". It is too subtle an approach to be successfully condensed in a few words here, but there seems to be a sense that we should be seeing what is possible to promote the concept in the Gatineau.

Out to Launch Lest members be bored by continuing success, the Executive tries hard to provide a few spectacular failures, and we are succeeding in that. Like "Hurling Down the Pine". For months we had planned to launch the third edition at the Twenty-Fifth Annual Meeting, and we even managed all our homework-- with the author's cordial co-operation-- well ahead of schedule. We had a marketing plan for 2,500 copies based on that launching, to come just three weeks after the printer had guaranteed delivery.

Alas, private enterprise does not have quite the same standards of efficiency and responsibility. After some 20 phone calls in the two weeks preceding the meeting, we arrived without a single copy. Watch for the next instalment.

REVOLUTION!! To show that the fires of democratic independence burn brightly in the Gatineau winter, the meeting overturned a time-honoured executive policy on pricing *Up the Gatineau!* A motion calling for a uniform price of \$2 a copy for all issues past and present was passed by a rather convincing vote of 73 to 1. It will be done.....

Meeting Place? The meeting was honoured by the presence of West Hull Mayor Vincent Hendrick who spoke of the plans for the Town Hall. The Council had expressed "sympathetic interest" in the Society's requests for space to meet and for an office in the basement of the new building. A decision on the latter depends on the financial possibility of finishing the basement.

Union Mission Church Carol Martin outlined possible ways to save the Church. It might be moved to a site in the Chelsea area. It might be moved to the vicinity of the Wakefield Cemetery. It might be sold privately for removal. It might be left where it is, despite the limitations on use which the small site imposes. The membership was asked for its ideas and continued interest so that this landmark is not lost.

The Restaurant The decision to hold the Annual meeting at Chelsea's was in part a tribute to John Gordon for daring to invest in the rehabilitation of an historic building. In reply, he paid generous tribute to the Society, and especially to Pat Evans and Tony German for their support to his efforts.

Show & Tell Contributing to this traditional feature were Norma Geggie with a remarkable portable spinning device called a hurdy, Betty Davison with a wooden cup crafted from ancient Scottish wood in Stirling, and Arthur Davison who explained the working of three sad irons.

Video Climax of the meeting were two video cassettes. One, thanks to National Defence Canada, was a full recording of the May 24 Cemetery Rededication. The other, courtesy CBOT, was the 1986 Annual Auction starring Betty Davison. Both were with sound and vibrant colour. We hope these may be deposited in our pictorial archives.

HERITAGE DAY

Heritage Day was originated by Heritage Canada about 15 years ago as a time to encourage Canadians to reflect on how the past had enriched the present. It is one day a year when, with organized media support, we hope that the legacies of the past will be taken a little less for granted, and people will do something to preserve them. The legacies might be historic buildings and places, or much more abstract elements of our culture.

Many people believed that Heritage Day, always occurring on the third Monday of February, should be a national holiday. Others thought it more important to establish it in the public mind like other well known days which are not holidays, lest delay or failure in proclaiming it a holiday would result in its abandonment.

Heritage Day in this region has not been a very marked event in recent years, and a government committee's attempt to revive it in 1986 was not colossally successful. For 1987 a committee representing voluntary groups all around the National Capital hopes to make it better noticed. One publicized event is to be a happening on Dow's Lake at the end of Winterlude. Stuart Geggie will be taking our museum to local schoolchildren on that day.

Please watch for publicity about Heritage Day events and lend your sympathetic support. Directly, or through your school-aged children or grandchildren, enquire what their school is doing to mark Heritage Day. And, no matter what is organized, it is still a good day for people in the quiet of their homes to think what else we might do to save our history.

MEMBERSHIP

There has been a great response to our offer of two-year memberships for \$15. By the January meeting, 110 members had renewed. **SINCE YOUR 1986 MEMBERSHIP HAS NOW EXPIRED, WILL YOU PLEASE RENEW NOW?**

We welcome as new members **Robert Cote, Joan and John Drummond, Mrs. Ruggles Holmes and Mrs. Mildred Livingston.**

With great regret, we note the death of Rod Sparks who was more than a member. He was an institution. For longer than most of us can remember he was a marvellous helper at the Auction and a faithful attendant at meetings where he always added to the gathering. He will be much missed.

PARTY 25

Pat Evans asks us to mark our calendars for Saturday afternoon, June 27. That is the day of Party 25 marking our silver anniversary. Because of this party and the hoped-for spring Historic Tour, we plan no May meeting at The Grange this year.

POEMS

To **Violet Brownrigg-Simpson** we are grateful for a small book of poetry written by her grandmother, Katherine Blake McCloskey. Anyone wishing to borrow this work is invited to call the Secretary (827-1995).

THE CHAPEL

The Friends of the National Gallery have launched their \$500,000 campaign for funds to place the Rideau Convent Chapel in the new National Gallery. Please note the bazaar/garage sale/auction Saturday, March 7, at the Cartier Square Drill Hall. For free information brochures, or for posters, cards, stained glass, call the Chapel office, 53 Queen Street, at 233-7048. They deserve our help.

RAJP