

Gatineau Valley historical society

Newsletter

Coming Event

GVHS 44th ANNUAL AUCTION & Flea market

**Saturday, August 18th, 2007 - 9:00 a.m.
St. Stephen's Church grounds, Old Chelsea, QC**

Auctioneer Revel Stewart will lead the bidding on our usual selection of antiques, collectibles, and curiosities. Other events include the flea market and bake sale, a silent auction, and the sale of GVHS publications.



The Society can always use more quality antiques and collectibles for its auction.

If you have anything to donate, please bring them to the St. Stephen's Church grounds on *Friday afternoon or evening (August 17th)*, so they may be registered.



For further information contact:
Richard Adams (819 -827-0589),
Ernie Mahoney (819-459-2804, 459-1180)
or Marc Cockburn (819-459-2004).
Or email us at info@gvhs.ca



Musée Fairbairn Museum Project Update

The business plan was completed at the beginning of 2007 and the Steering Committee hired a project coordinator, Fabian Mugny, to move the project to its final stage.

Since March 2007, the Musée Fairbairn Museum has increased its visibility. The museum Steering Committee has had many meetings with community stakeholders about the project and everyone has been enthusiastic and expressed their support. Some of these stakeholders include, Mr. Robert Bussière, Mayor of La Pêche, and Mr. Marc Fortin, Development Agent of the CLD des Collines-de-l'Outaouais. At the same time, the Musée Fairbairn Museum has joined the Wakefield Commerce Association, and the *Conseil régional de la culture en Outaouais*, as we took part in the Second Colloquium on Cultural Networking in Outaouais. One of our Steering Committee members, Mr. Michael Cooper, attended the Wakefield PPU Planning Workshop, an urbanism and infrastructure plan being developed for the next few years. In the near future, in order to get more visibility, our new web site will be launched containing all necessary information about the Musée Fairbairn Museum and the progress of the project.

In April 2007, to gather community support, we launched a campaign to obtain letters of support from municipalities and other organizations. So far, we have received letters from the NCC, the CLD des Collines-de-l'Outaouais, the MRC de la Vallée-de-la-Gatineau, the Municipality of Chelsea, and the Municipality of Lac-Sainte-Marie.

At the end of April, members of the Steering Committee, with the help from Mr. Ken Bouchard and his team, cleared the brush from around the museum, particularly in the three additional acres the museum acquired from the Municipality of La Pêche. Stairs to the building will be built soon by the Municipality of La Pêche so as to access the museum easily.

On April 17th, 2007, following one of the recommendations in our business plan and after a presentation by Mr. Yannick Bouchard, from the *Coopérative de développement régional Outaouais-Laurentides* on June 5th, the Steering Committee decided to set up a cooperative. The chosen name for the coop is Solidarity Cooperative of Musée Fairbairn Museum.

The Annual General Meeting of the organization is set for Wednesday, June 27th, 2007 at 7:30 at the Wakefield Legion Hall, 11 Legion Road, Wakefield. Everyone is welcome.

Founding members of the Solidarity Cooperative of Musée Fairbairn Museum are: Marc Cockburn, Krista Cooke, Michael Cooper, John Kingsley, Fabian Mugny, Jonathan Murphy, Anita Rutledge, and Tamara Tarasoff.

The Musée Fairbairn Museum Membership Application Form has been written, both in French and in English (included with your newsletter), and is being distributed so the Solidarity Cooperative of Musée Fairbairn Museum can increase its membership. The lifetime membership fee is \$25.

The Musée Fairbairn Museum would like the members of the GVHS to show their support by becoming a member of the Solidarity Cooperative of Musée Fairbairn Museum, and by becoming part of the project. We would like to invite any members of the GVHS who wish to participate in the museum project to contact Fabian Mugny, our project Coordinator - Email: fabian.mugny@fairbairn.ca.

On behalf of the Solidarity Cooperative of Musée Fairbairn Museum, I would like to thank the Gatineau Valley Historical Society and its board for their and their continuing support.

Jonathan Murphy,
President of the Musée Fairbairn Museum

ARCHIVES CLOSED FOR SUMMER

As has been the case in previous years, the Historical Society Archives has closed for the summer, and will open again on Monday, September 10. (Normal hours will then be from 1:30 to 4:30 every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday.)

Those wishing special access to the Archives over the summer should contact a member of the staff with whom they are familiar, to arrange for a guided visit. If in doubt as to who to contact, call Jay Atherton at (819) 827-1703.

Head for the high ground folks, the water it's arisin'...

That was the call in 1927, 80 years ago, by travellers up and down the Gatineau River Valley from Chelsea to Farm Point, a distance of seven miles by water. All the villages, 100-acre farms, cottages and business' along the river, under 325 ft. below sea level, had been expropriated by the Gatineau Power Company for the planned back-water reservoir behind the new Chelsea hydro-electric dam. The railroad tracks were also moved and a new road from Hull to Maniwaki, Route 11, was built at this time. (Route 105 follows much of the same route as this earlier highway.)



The Historical Society's Image Bank now holds over 6000 digital photographs of by-gone days in this region. Only 10% of these are of sites flooded in 1927. **This is a plea addressed to everyone who has any pre-flood pictures, since we have so few of this important time.**

We in the GVHS Archives would be pleased to sort through them, with great respect, to see if you have any pieces of the giant puzzle that we are trying to piece together. The background of these photographs often yields the most information.

Everything had to be moved, dismantled, torn down, cut, burnt or simply flooded. One house we know of actually floated away. Many cottages, sheds and barns survived the move to higher ground; some still exist today including the former Cascades railway station (which can be seen across from the IGA at Farm Point), and the large Bates barn at Carman Road. Today, most of the people who witnessed this mammoth undertaking are no longer here, leaving only stories behind.

So as summer approaches and you open your cottages, clean or empty attics and garages, keep your eyes open for any old black and white photos. Please help us to preserve them for future generations, and through technology, partially rebuild our history with pictures of the old, lost villages and landscapes.

You can contact the GVHS or RJ Hughes at: 819-827-3766 or rjchelsea@yahoo.ca

William (Bill) James Bridgeman — the last Miller of Wakefield



William James Bridgeman, my father, was born in London, England in 1884. He was six years old when his family immigrated to Canada in 1900 and settled in Rowletta, Saskatchewan to farm. He served in WWI with the R.A.F. Canada. After the war he returned to farming in Saskatchewan where he met his wife, Florence Trowse. They were married in 1921 and their eldest daughter was

born in 1922 in Rowletta. In the fall of 1923 they moved to the east and settled in his wife's home town of Wakefield, Quebec. In 1924 they moved to the Maclaren House where their three daughters were born and later moved to the Miller's house where a son was born.

My father started working at the mill in 1924. At that time John Dolan was the Miller and Bert Green and Dad were his assistants. When Mr. Dolan left, my father became the miller and when Mr. Green left, Orville Brown was hired as Dad's assistant. We moved from the Maclaren house to the Miller's house in 1929.

During my father's employment at the Mill as miller, he was involved in the installation of a generator to supply the Maclaren House, Miller's house, Mill and the store with electricity - about 1930-31. He attended the generator as well as the Mill. I remember him having to go many

times to cut eels which had entered through the flume and become entangled in the turbine. This caused the light to become dim as the eels slowed the turbine. A telephone system was also installed for communication between the Miller's house, the Mill and the store about 1931 or 1932.

Once a year Dad would go to a small dam near Lapeche Lake and check it as well as taking care of the dam at the Mill site.

Sometimes in the spring, the ice would jam up at the dam because pieces were too large to pass through and this caused flooding of the houses along the creek, especially at the Miller's house. They very cautiously used dynamite to break up the ice into smaller pieces to flow through the dam.

During my father's time a breakfast cereal called "Golden Sheaf" was made and packaged at the Mill.

We lived there until 1940 at which time my father left the Mill because it was being sold after the death of the owner, Mr. Alexander Maclaren.

William J. Bridgeman was the last Miller to operate the Maclaren Mill as a flour and feed mill.

Prepared by Mrs. Ann (Bridgeman) Burnett

Executive 2007

President: Marc Cockburn - 819-459-2004
 marc.cockburn@lac-bac.gc.ca

1st Vice-president: Michael Cooper - 819-459-2787
 cooperm@magma.ca

2nd Vice-President: Jonathan Murphy - 819-459-4441
 jmurphy@geocognition.com

Past President: Ernie Mahoney - 819-459-1180
 ernieomani@hotmail.com

Secretary: Linda bardell - 819-827-0095
 lbard@sympatico.ca

Directors: Carol Martin - 819-827-1633 - Publications
 rjcmartin@primus.ca
 Allan Richens - 819-827-1616 - Cemeteries
 allanrichens@sympatico.ca
 Fergus MacLaren - 819-827-0799
 fergus_maclaren@cac.gc.ca
 Richard Adams - 819-827-0589
 richardadams@canada.com
 Margaret Phillips - 819-827-1969
 phillips.margaret@gmail.com

Archivist: Jay Atherton 819-827-1703
 jayatherton@sympatico.ca

info@gvhs.ca

Purpose:

"...to promote matters of historical or heritage significance in the general area of the Gatineau Valley."

The *Gatineau Valley Historical Society* is a charitable organization which has acted to conserve and foster interest in history and heritage in the Gatineau Valley region since its founding in 1962.

Membership Renewal Reminder

Please check your membership status code, which is located on the right hand side of the mailing address label on the envelope of this Newsletter. If the code is 2006/12, please renew your membership.

*Recipients of the Newsletter can choose to receive the publication by **email** (thereby saving the Historical Society approximately \$1.00 per delivery for copying and postage charges). If this option interests you, please send your e-mail address to our membership circulation coordinator, Shirley Grant Brown - browncrest@sympatico.ca*

~ Help Preserve Our Gatineau Valley Heritage ~

Membership includes the following benefits:

- *Up the Gatineau* - our annual local history journal
- GVHS newsletter
- Access to our archival material
- Regular meetings on local and national heritage topics

Gatineau Valley Historical Society Membership Application

Box 1803 Chelsea QC J9B 1A1 819- 827- 4432

Membership Fees: 1 year - \$15 - includes *Up the Gatineau* (whole family)
 2 year - \$25 - includes *Up the Gatineau*

Name _____

Address _____

City/Town _____ Province _____ Postal Code _____

Telephone (Home) _____

New Member -

Telephone (Business) _____

Renewal -

E-Mail _____

Would you like the newsletter emailed to you?

Areas of Interest:

Auction
 Archives

Cemeteries
 Executive

Publications
 Special Events

Youth Programs
 Web Site