

GATINEAU VALLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Spring Newsletter

Upcoming Meetings

Beekeeping in the Gatineau Hills

Monday, April 19th 2010 @ 7:30 p.m.

Chelsea Library, Main Floor, 100 Old Chelsea Road, Chelsea, QC.

Come and hear what the buzz is about!



Local historian **Louise Schwartz** will introduce long-time beekeepers David Selwyn of Kirk's Ferry and Tijs Bellaar-Spruyt of Lascelles. They will enthral you with their anecdotes about beekeeping and close encounters with bees.

Louise will give you some highlights of beekeeping from a historical perspective. Her story on Harley Selwyn, a local commercial beekeeper active in the 1920s to 1940s will appear in the next volume of *Up The Gatineau!* available in May 2010.

This talk coincides with the opening of an exhibit on beekeeping at the Chelsea Library

All current and prospective beekeepers are welcome to attend. Honey-sweet treats will be available (for a donation) as well as some Berg en Dal honey products (for sale).

Please note the location of the talk - THE CHELSEA LIBRARY, MAIN FLOOR.

Annual Dinner & Awards Evening

Monday, May 17th 2010 @ 5:45 p.m. - cocktails
6:30 p.m. - dinner

Dunnderosa Golf Club, 11 Notch Rd. Old Chelsea, QC

\$25.00 per person

Please call Rene Nielsen before May 10th
at 819-827-1845 to reserve your spot

Preston Wilson, GVHS volunteer & Up the Gatineau! author (1935-2010)



Preston Wilson first appeared—like a comet from Cascades—as a volunteer in the Gatineau Valley Historical Society Archives in 2003. His cousin Linda Bardell and long-time pal, R.J. Hughes, luring him in to help identify historic photos and sites. It was soon clear that he would also entertain us all. As a result, the Wednesday afternoon volunteers were soon nicknamed “the happy gang,” and those sessions were productive and funny. They also led to warnings from the Chelsea librarian about the noise they generated.

With his gift for humour, penchant for words, and intimate knowledge of some of the lesser-known lore of the region, I could see that Preston would be a “natural” to write for the Society’s publication, *Up the*

Gatineau!. With very little arm-twisting, he produced an article about “One-Armed Bandits in the Gatineau Hills,” the days when modest slot machines operated, sub rosa, and evaded police detection, in a network involving Cascades, Wakefield, and Alcové.

In his brief biography for that volume, Preston described himself as a retired geologist, “bred buttered and aging in Cascades,” who came from a short line of relatives with literary inclinations. His father, Billy Wilson, was the publisher, editor and writer of *The Gatineau Echo*, a newspaper that appeared briefly in 1935. His aunt, Lillian Walton, was a frequent contributor to *Up the Gatineau!*

His encore, for Volume 31 of *Up the Gatineau!*, won the Arthur Davison Prize for the best article in that volume. The article, titled “Meech Creek Valley Girl” was based on Gladys Cross Payne’s journals, and his story was a distillation of 10 years of those journal records. As Gladys wrote, and Preston concluded, “It was a good time.”

In his biography that year, Preston noted that, though he was getting pretty old, the description of his beloved Meech Creek Valley during the Great Depression and early World War II years was not a first-hand account. His main research achievement in that year was locating a mica mine that his grandfather and great-uncle operated in 1915, near Ladysmith, Quebec.

The next year, 2006, brought another article, for Volume 32. This one was about “Public School Pastimes: Toys and Games,” and in it Preston described the games and pranks he enjoyed, with fellow students, in School #4 on the Pine Road in Cascades, where he would arrive in the winter and “jostle . . . for space on the three-foot-square hot air register with the other twenty or so pupils, and, sometimes, the teacher, who stood in the middle like a mother hen.” It was a place where “the law of the jungle ruled our playground, tempered by whatever amount of civilized behaviour our parents had been able to drill into us . . . [and provided experiences that were] helpful later in coping with our adult lives.”

I didn’t know it then, but this would be Preston’s last article for *Up the Gatineau!* His biography hinted at the reason: he had been inspired to try writing fiction, in which he would not be “bound by the strictures of historical facts.” At that point he referred to producing either “the Great Canadian Novel,” or, at least, “the Not-Too-Bad-Central Gatineau Valley Short Story.”

We missed him at the GVHS Archives in 2007, because he was so busy working on that novel—the images of Finnegan and his story had become his creative focal point. Still, he would often still take a break and join the Wednesday Archives volunteers at the end of the day, to touch base and have a drink at the pub.

In June 2007, Preston organized his annual birthday walk, a 10-km jaunt that began on the Cross Loop Road in his beloved Meech Creek Valley, and ended with a hearty breakfast for all at La Vallée Restaurant, where his wife Melva joined the group who’d walked all, or most, of the way with Preston.

Early that autumn, when we met at the pub, he was cold, and ordered a bowl of hot soup. What he thought was the ‘flu turned out to be a mysterious illness, from which he did not recover. Preston did finish and publish his novel, *Tales of Finnigan Leblanc: Prince of Mushrat*, in 2008, with the support and assistance of Linda Bardell and Anita Rutledge. We celebrated for him in our hearts, but he was hospitalized by the time his book appeared, and we all missed having a party with him. He would have loved that party.

Carol Martin

Cemetery Report 2009 ~ Allan Richens

There was a large pine tree removed which was causing a potential problem on Peter Jessen's property. John Pomeroy took care of the removal cut it up and laid it along the cemetery lane, for a cost of \$200.00. Chelsea municipality "public works" removed the debris at no charge to GVHS. David Larcher and his family cut the grass and removed any branches and debris over the summer. They also trimmed some brush and with cement, re-pointed some of the stones in the Cenotaph and the two posts along the lane, the cost for this work over the summer was approx. \$160.00. The Larchers also made the cemetery look nice prior to Remembrance Day at no additional cost.



The Gatineau Valley Gardeners under Marilyn Liddiard planted some flowers in the pots at the Cenotaph. Louise Leblanc planted and looked after the garden under the Pioneer Cemetery sign at the road. Peter Jessen repaired one of the benches in the cemetery which had become un-glued during the winter.

A few days before Remembrance Day there were incidents of vandalism at the Pioneer Cemetery, which caused damage to the enclosure around Private Thompson's grave. Thanks to efforts by the nearby residents and some GVHS members all was made right just prior to the Remembrance Day Ceremonies on November 11th.



Program Report 2009 ~ Margaret Phillips & Michael Cooper

January: **Arnold Midgely** showed historic photos of the Ottawa Ski Club, and outlined its development, and the personalities involved.

February: **Robert Grenier**, Head of Underwater Archaeology, Parks Canada, presented, with artifacts, "North-west Passage", his latest project investigating the Franklin Expedition.

March: **Michael Rosen**, President of Trees Canada, discussed our Gatineau forests, their history and their future coping with environmental changes.

April: **Andrew Rodger** of Library and Archives Canada explained the history of the Topley photo collection at the LAC.

June: Our **Annual Dinner** was held at the Grange in Cantley, as a summer social event. The rain gods were angry at not being invited, so the main entertainment was provided by 2 lost and dripping 1759 British sailors, apparently looking for Halifax...

August: Our annual **auction** held at St. Stephen's in Old Chelsea QC.

September: Aylmer restoration architect **Louise McGugan** presented a slide-talk on the "Forgotten Painted Ladies", Victorian homes of Aylmer either successfully restored, or in need.

October: **GVHS Archives** in Chelsea hosted an "Open House", where our volunteer archivists gave mini-seminars on current equipment and methods used in archival preservation.

November: Those formerly lost reenactors **Ken Bouchard** and **Michael Cooper** returned to tell the story of Halifax 2009, and were joined by honorary captains Victor Suthren and Vernon Fairhead.

December: **The Grange in Cantley** hosted the annual Christmas carol singing, in a perfect setting with warm hospitality.

Archives Report 2009 ~ R.J. Hughes & Carol Martin

For nearly fifty years, the GVHS has been collecting and preserving original books, photos, maps, recordings and digital images. Since securing permanent space in the Chelsea Library, our collections have been growing and have become one of the Society's most important resources, supporting the Society's mission to make known and preserve the history and heritage of the Gatineau Valley.

The Archives is operated by a group of volunteers with R.J. Hughes as Manager. All offer their enthusiasm, skills, and community knowledge on a voluntary basis. The volunteers include: Linda Bardell, Janet Bradley, Annette Brand, Glennis Cohen, Norma Geggie, Adrienne Herron, R.J. Hughes, Carol Martin, Erik Rask, Anita Rutledge, Louise Schwartz.

One of our initiatives this year (October 26) was an Archives Evening, an open house when members and the public could visit tour our archival facilities to view some of our hidden treasures, learn more about the programs and services we offer the community, and find out about volunteer opportunities with the Society's Archives. The program highlighted the services offered to members and the community, including the GVHS Image Bank, Genealogy references, and the GVHS website.

On the weekend of November 27-28, 2009, eight members of the GVHS Archives group attended the 5th annual Archives and You! Conference, held in Gatineau and organized by the Canadian Council of Archives. It was an opportunity to rub shoulders with others involved in large and small Archives, along with historians, genealogists, and members of the public. The program included workshops, "as the expert" discussions, talks and site visits to several local archives facilities.

What is in the Archives?

Our main holdings can be grouped into: Document files (records of the GVHS itself, records of local activities and significance); Image Bank (digital photographs of people, places and events in the Gatineau region); Maps, pictures, artifacts, etc. (a small collection including paintings, a replica of the Queen's Scarf, etc.); microfilmed records (local census from 1842 to 1891, some local church baptism, marriage and burial records).

Some Archives activities:

Acquisitions: New holdings are received and accessioned. In 2010 we are working towards listing acquisitions in a database (presently have paper files).

Reference and research:

During 2009, the GVHS had an average of six inquiries a week. Visitors arrange in advance or drop in to our Archives, asking for photographs, family, local and historical information. We also receive e-mail inquiries about photos in our Image Bank collection, genealogy or local history.

Exhibits:

Small exhibits of photographs are situated in the lobby of the Chelsea Municipal Building, and on the wall beside the GVHS Archives, as well as in the libraries in Wakefield and Masham. A number of commercial enterprises (including the Wakefield Mill, the Wakefield General Store, the Cascades Club, La Vallée Restaurant in Chelsea, etc.) have historically relevant displays of photographs from our Image Bank. The GVHS shares a display cabinet with the Municipality of Chelsea, and recently mounted displays in it at the Archives Open House (in October 2009) and for Remembrance Day 2009.

Library:

We have several hundred printed items in a small library, the contents of which are also listed on our website.

Image Bank:

As of 2009, the Image Bank has nearly 7000 digitized historic photos of persons, places and events from the Gatineau Valley.

Looking ahead for 2010:

During 2010, the GVHS Archives group will be working on accession procedures and standards (including computerized databases of items recently added to our inventory), copyright policies, and the GVHS website.

Publications Report 2009 ~ Carol Martin

The quarterly GVHS Newsletter is produced by Shirley Brown. GVHS members who have provided e-mail addresses receive the Newsletter electronically — a choice that gets the information to them immediately, permits us to send reminders about forthcoming events — and, of course, it saves postage costs! Please let us know if we can add your name to that list — the benefit to you is that you will receive reminders about events, as well as helping us cut down on mailing..

Carol Martin edits the GVHS annual journal, *Up the Gatineau!*, published each May and distributed then to all members. We thank those who assisted with this publication in 2009: Margaret Coleman as assistant editor, Beth MacFie copy editor, and Jay Atherton who indexed it.

In 2009 we also produced a new Index for Volumes 1-35, formatted with the assistance of Shirley Brown, and reprinted 900 copies of earlier volumes of *Up the Gatineau!* to continue meeting the demand for back issues and complete sets. The GVHS web site now includes an on-line version of the Index to all volumes of *Up the Gatineau!*, and a selection of 17 articles, including illustrations.

At the annual dinner in 2009, David Lee received the Arthur Davison Prize for the best article, "Logging and Lumbering on the Gatineau River," published in Volume 34. Mr Lee donated the \$100 prize money he received to the GVHS, a generous gesture to help further our work.

Publications Sales:

As part of their membership, some 300 GVHS members each receive a free copy of *Up the Gatineau!*, valued at \$7. The new Index for Volumes 1-35 sells for \$4, and offers a ready reference to those of us who have a collection of *Up the Gatineau!* Complete sets of *Up the Gatineau!* (35 volumes and an Index) are available at for \$125, a saving of \$29 over the individual price.

We sell the current *Up the Gatineau!*, back issues, and other publications directly at GVHS events and at 13 stores and boutiques in the region. We also have a GVHS presence, selling publications and responding to inquiries for historical information about our area, at several other local events. In 2009 we attended the Gene-O-Rama sponsored by the Ontario Genealogical Society, the British Isles Family History Society of Greater Ottawa (BIFHSGO) conference, both in Ottawa, the Wakefield Craft Fair held at Vorlage in Wakefield, and the GVHS Auction in Chelsea. (Total sales at these four events realized \$307.50).

As well, we reprinted 900 copies of early volumes (100 each of Vols.3,4,6,7,8,9,10,11, 18) in order to be able to fill the continuing demand for sets and specific volumes. In 2009 we sold 756 *Up the Gatineau!*s and other publications, including four complete sets, 7 maps and 4 railway posters.

Continued interest in the Gatineau Valley Historical Society is reflected in the sales figures for 2009.

Total sales: \$3224.00
Direct sales - \$1751.00
Retail sales - \$1473.00

Other Publications:

In addition to *Up the Gatineau!*, the Society sells a Historic Map of Chelsea -1875 (\$6.00) and a poster of Gatineau Valley Railway Stations (\$8.00).

The following books by Norma Geggie and Carol Martin are also currently available through the GVHS: *The Extra Mile* (\$16.00), *A Place Apart* (\$8.00), *Wakefield Revisited* (\$12.50), *Wakefield: un deuxième regard* (\$12.50), *In Memory of Chelsea's Historic Cemeteries* (\$14.50). (The inside back cover of *Up the Gatineau!* carries ordering and mailing details.)

Contacts:

Newsletter - Shirley Brown can be reached at browncrest@sympatico.ca.
Up the Gatineau! - Carol Martin can be reached at the GVHS address or by e-mail at rjcmartin@primus.ca.
Publications sales - Harold and Margaret Reid can be reached at 819-827-0138 or by e-mail at reidh@travel-net.com

Report of the Nominations Committee 2010 Marc Cockburn, Michael Cooper & Carol Martin

Our Constitution stipulates that the terms of office of the members of the Executive Committee of the Society are two years long, and are staggered, so that the full terms of office of half the positions expires each year.

Motion

Whereby the Society By-laws stipulate that 'a member of the society shall normally serve no more than two consecutive terms in any of the senior Executive position', the Nomination Committee proposes a motion to the Society to approve the extension of the term of office for the President by a further two years. (Carried unanimously)

Motion

The Nomination committee is pleased to nominate the following persons for election to the 2010/2011 Executive Committee of the Gatineau Valley Historical Society: (Carried unanimously)

President,

Marc Cockburn (2 yrs)

First Vice-president

Richard Adams (continues into the 2nd year of his term)

Second Vice-president

Shirley Brown (2 yrs)

Directors

Allan Richens, Director (2 yrs)

Carol Martin, Director (2 yrs)

Robert Hughes. Director (2 yrs)

Meredith MacLean (1 yr)

Bob McClelland (1 yr)



Genealogy Questions

Can you help trace Joseph Vincent and Louise Otterson, the parents of Joseph Vincent, born June 15, 1864?

Linda Inch has located the marriage record of Joseph Vincent, jr. to Emilie Lauzon (her great-grandparents) in 1888, and 2 days earlier, a record of Joseph's conversion to the Roman Catholic faith. She believes that Louise Otterson's family were based in Masham. She has not been able to find the marriage record of Louise Otterson and Joseph Vincent (sr), who were presumably married in a Protestant ceremony. Please contact Linda with any information you have about the Vincents or Ottersons at: malcolmxi@sympatico.ca

Chamberlain/Chamberlin search.

Josiah and Sophia Chamberlain/Chamberlin were early settlers in Chelsea, and raised a large family there. The senior Josiah was still living in 1881, but died before the 1891 census.

Laurel Gurnsey at lgurnsey@telus.net is seeking burial/death date information for the senior Josiah. If any descendant knows of a historic family Bible held by a descendant of this family, she would also be most interested.

GVHS Annual General Meeting - Chelsea Community Centre - Feb. 15, 2010 President's Message

Good evening everyone, and depending on where you live, happy Heritage Day, Family Day, Flag Day or President's Day, and even a belated happy Valentines Day.

Welcome to the 2010 Annual General Meeting of the Gatineau Valley Historical Society and as usual we are aiming to have the quickest AGM in the Gatineau Valley. I am pleased to tell you that I will keep my report short this year so that we can move on to a few business details and to give the floor to over to tonight's main event, speaker Caroline Forcier and the home movies that we collected for this occasion. As well, last year we started to do our Awards at our Annual Dinner, which I think will give us a better chance to properly recognize and toast our recipients.

Our Executive reports will be in the next Newsletter, so this evening I mostly want to thank all the GVHS members and friends who have supported the many aspects of the Society's mission in the last year. Our finances and membership base are in good shape and with new volunteers coming on board, we are confident that we can plan ahead to continue supporting the Society's core activities, and to continue offering assistance to new member-driven initiatives - especially as we approach the Society's 50th anniversary in 2012.

I think the program where we saw the greatest activity this past year was in the Society archives, where the success of our Open House last fall greatly encouraged us to continue acquiring new material and to seek new ways to provide distance access to our collection and resources through our website. Many thanks to R.J., Linda, Adrienne, Erik, Carol, Annette, Louise, Janet, Anita, Norma and everyone else who have contributed to building our collections and to making them accessible the local heritage community.

Our monthly meetings have been very well attended, thanks mainly to Michael and Margaret's innovative programming and to Shirley and Erik for promoting the events through our email list and the Society website.

Our Remembrance Day service was especially well attended this year by members of the Armed Forces who have adopted our service as their own and I want to thank Carol, Allan, Michael, Erik, Margaret and Richard Adams for their assistance this year in prepping the cemetery, assisting at the service, and for the exhibit at the Chelsea Library.

Many thanks to Carol Martin for once again leading the publication of the Up the Gatineau and I especially want to recognize Carol's effort in the last year in assisting Chelsea Municipality define their heritage program, during a year when bigger issues were at the forefront of the Municipal agenda.

Although we had a productive year, the Executive has recognized the need to strengthen our administrative capacity by reviewing our Constitution and By-laws and creating a better committee structure that will give more people a chance to participate in program development and decision making. One of the biggest needs at the moment is to find some help to automate our finances. Many thanks to Marg Tardiff has been a great help in providing us assistance with our finances during an interim period, but if anyone is interested in picking up that role we would love to hear from you - before we have to start twisting arms.

Which brings me to a few special thank-yous as a couple of our Executive team are stepping down this year.

First, Margaret Phillips has been a great help to us in programming and helping out with the Remembrance Day and the Auction. Margaret assures us that she will keep the Phillips family connection with the society going and will continue to stay involved in the Society.

I am also saddened to note that Michael Cooper is stepping down from the GVHS Exec. Ten years ago we both started on the board and I'll be sorry to see him go as Michael has been a constant source of inspiration and always willing to help a hand. He is going off to continue his good work with the Fairbairn Museum, something that we should all support, so I urge everyone to buy a membership in the Fairbairn Museum Coop.

Marc Cockburn

Executive 2010

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Coming Events

August 21 - Annual Auction

The *GVHS Archives* is located in the basement of the Chelsea Municipal Library, 100 Old Chelsea Road. It is open from 1:30 to 4:30 on Monday and Wednesday afternoons, or by arrangement (by e-mail at: info@gvhs.ca or telephone at: 819-827-6224).

~ 2010 Membership fees may be due ~

If you have a highlighted "2009" on your mailing label, please fill in the application below and mail your fees to the address on the form.

If you receive the newsletter by email — there will be a *message in the email* saying your 2010 fees are due. Please follow the above instructions re payment. *If there is no message, then your fees are current.*

Gatineau Valley Historical Society Membership Application/Renewal Form

Box 1803, Chelsea QC J9B 1A1 ~ 819-827-6224 ~ www.gvhs.ca

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

Membership Fees (per family): 1 year — \$15.00 2 year — \$25.00

New Member ___ Renewal ___

Name _____

Address _____

City/town _____ Prov _____ Postal Code _____

Telephone _____

Email Address _____ The newsletter will be emailed to you.

I would like to help with: Auction__ Archives__ Cemeteries__ Executive__ Publications__