

THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF THE GATINEAU

1986

BOX 143, OLD CHELSEA, QUE., J0X 2N0

APRIL NEWSLETTER

**NEXT MEETING: MONDAY, APRIL 28
IN WAKEFIELD
7.30 AT THE MACLAREN HOUSE
ON MILL STREET
8.15 AT VORLAGE**

That's right-- a progressive meeting. Members who would like to see inside the Maclaren House where we are planning to open our museum this summer are invited to come early for a very short tour. It is the Victorian mansion up Mill Street, just beyond the mill on the right, and just before the entrance to the cemetery. We must lock the doors by 8.00 and be on our way to Vorlage to start the main meeting promptly at 8.15. Vorlage is just up Burnside Road, about opposite the railway station.

The feature of the main meeting is the Great Train Debate. Readers of the local press will have seen strongly opposing views, extensively expressed, about the wisdom of the plan to keep the train going to Wakefield, but there has never been a public meeting to air all views on this question of such consequence to the future of Wakefield. John Trent and Richard Hofer will lead the debate in which all present are invited to join. The agenda is flexible enough to allow general discussion on the preservation of Wakefield's past. By a special letter, we have invited all the members of the Wakefield Community Association to be our guests. There will be coffee and a bar is available.



This is the first time in many years that we have had a regular meeting outside the Lower Gatineau. It is a reminder to all of us that our concern for history

extends up the Valley from which an increasing number of our members and executive come. For those from Ottawa and thereabouts, it will be a pleasant spring drive and a lively meeting in what was described at our Annual Meeting as "the gem of the Gatineau". And it is a chance to see the focus of some of our important activities in the coming months.

LAST MEETING

Bruce Stewart's beautifully illustrated talk on the archaeological digs around the LaSalle Fort in Kingston gave a fascinating early dimension to our season's look at history. As we saw the stones of history emerging with the artifacts of the earliest days of exploration, the wonder was that such remarkable survivals of the past remained buried so long. All members driving near Kingston this summer will wish to make a point of stopping opposite Fort Frontenac-- just beyond the Causeway-- to see the Cataraqui Archaeological Foundation at work in the dig and in the information hut. They will be very welcome.

---AND OTHER MEETINGS

The pace of activities in the Society is beginning to cause traffic jams in committee meetings. The Museum Committee under Ray Daly was snowed to a halt in the last winter storm. The Committee on Travelling Seminars (Historic Tours?) under Carol Martin has met to plot its plans, with a hoped-for launching this autumn. The Cemetery Committee, under Pam McDougall, has met to cope with the fast-approaching date of the rededication ceremony-- probably late May. The applications for summer students have been taken to the federal government-- but not a single expression of interest in summer jobs from the membership! Can it be that we are overtaken by overemployment? We have had another useful meeting with the NCC (The Dandelion Summit?). And we have participated in a meeting on Heritage Day 1987 (see last Newsletter!). It will not be long until David Castleman's Auction Committee gets under way again; meanwhile, we hope you are reserving a special corner of your attic for all the priceless surplus goods you are going to bring.

We have been asked to address the April meeting of the Rideau Township Historical Society, with one suggested title being "The Exhilaration of Presiding over a Highly Successful Historical Society". Who could refuse?

MEMBERSHIP

It is that time of year when it is our painful duty to remind all readers of this newsletter that, unless their 1986 membership fees are paid by April 28, we must regretfully remove their names from our mailing list. Please don't let this happen to you, and don't let this happen to us. We think that our activities in the coming months will be of more interest to you than ever, and we know that we need your support to succeed in our ambitious program. **Please send your \$8.00 cheque now to Box 143, Old Chelsea. J0X 2N0.**

We are pleased to launch a new small service for members: a membership card which includes a calendar marked with dates of the Society's activities. If you receive it with this newsletter, you will have the comfortable feeling that you can ignore the preceding paragraph.

Recent federal conflict-of-interest guidelines have created doubt about the propriety of certain public servants, who deal officially with us, being members of the Society. Far be it from us to think there could ever be a conflict of interest with government, but we have found a way to resolve this situation. In addition to memberships, we are now offering subscriptions to our publications at the low, low price of \$8.00 a year. Now we can all keep in touch.

We have sent personal letters to over 100 people whom we would like to have as members. Our thanks to those who suggested names.

We warmly welcome the following new members: Klaus and Carole Becker, Marian Burdsall, Dr. and Mrs. D.C. Geggie, John Hastings, Bruce Heggtveit, Sally and Charles Ingles, J.A. Laflamme, George Langill, Rita Logan, Outaouais Alliance, Mr. and Mrs. J.H. Warren, and Major General and Mrs. R.J.G. Weeks. We are also especially pleased to have as member our Member of Parliament, Barry Moore.

WITH DEEP REGRET.....

we record the death of Ray Foley, good friend and pioneer of Cantley. The Society treasures members like the Foleys who are so much a part of our history. We offer our sympathy to Lola Foley and her family.

THE FARM

In connection with the recent publicity, Jean Pigott wrote us an explanatory letter about responsibilities for The Farm, which we appreciated. In reply we underlined our two main convictions: that the government, when making plans that significantly affect the preservation of history, has a responsibility to tell the public what it is proposing and why; and, in historic properties, the tenant must adapt to the building, not the building to the tenant. Since our letter touched the work of Public Works, we sent a copy to its Deputy Minister with a further request to be told what happened at The Farm, the reasons for it, and the responsibility for the decisions.

Meanwhile, thanks to Mrs. Iris MacLaurin

whose family lived in the homestead which became The Farm, we now possess an excellent photo, taken not long after its construction about 1891. The NCC and Public Works, who seem to prefer highly paid consultants to cheap voluntary friends, had put the date at 1865 and 1932. Always glad to be of help.....

THE CEMETERY

The sudden evaporation of winter is a reminder of much work to be done in the cemetery. We would particularly appreciate offers of plants from gardeners who are thinning their plots-- before May 24. If you could help us with the planting, we would be even more grateful; but if that is not practicable, we will look after them. Will you please phone either Pam McDougall [(613) 836 3191] or Bob Phillips (827-3164)?

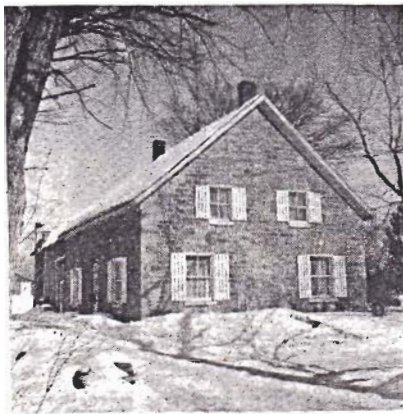
If you would like to help guide the future of the cemetery, and especially the ceremony being planned, Pam McDougall would appreciate your participation on the committee.

You may not have heard of the International Plastic Modellers Association, Calgary Branch: but then, a couple of months ago they had never heard of our Society or Private Richard Thompson. Now, their imagination caught by this hero, they have renamed their club "I.P.M.S./Pte Richard Thompson, Q.S." This was a result of the Morningside broadcast and ensuing correspondence. The International Association is to hear about Richard Thompson in its periodical *Random Thoughts*.

We are indebted to Lillian Walton for the use of her extensive scrapbook on Pte/ Thompson which thoroughly chronicles the ceremonies of 20 years ago and events leading up to them. It is on Mrs. Walton's article in *Up the Gatineau!* that our recent publicity has been based.

ALARM!

The oldest surviving building in western Québec is under threat. The 1827 Methodist Chapel on the Aylmer Road beside the Gatineau Club was a centre of worship until 1858, and since 1880 has been a well cared-for private residence generally known as the Foley House. It was expropriated by the Québec Ministry of Transport for the approaches to a future



bridge across the Ottawa River. The City is willing to buy it for one dollar if the Ministry will move it-- very carefully-- to a new site which the City would provide. Even though the bridge is distant and hypothetical, the City is reluctant to spend money on the stone house if it will later

have to be moved. The Ministry has so far been unresponsive to that suggestion, or to the idea of a minor re-alignment in the bridge approaches to let the building survive where it is. Heritage Aylmer would appreciate every possible expression of public concern so that this unique part of our history is not needlessly lost.

UP THE GATINEAU!

Through the usual herculean efforts of Arthur Davison and his collaborators, *Up the Gatineau!*, 1986 has been put to bed and will be distributed next month.

Members had rightly raised an eyebrow about the somewhat confusing array of prices for various years of the journal. For simplicity, and the peace of mind of our hard-working secretary and treasurer, all issues will now sell for \$2.00 each (postage extra). The current copy will, of course, be free to members.

The executive has decided to commemorate our 25th anniversary next year by a special issue of *Up the Gatineau!* The suggestion has also been made that next year we might have available a special binder in which to keep all issues. Has anyone suggestions for obtaining a suitable binder at a suitable price?

THE MAP

We hesitate to mention that our hardworking artists have caught up on all back orders for the hand-coloured map showing 1875 land holdings in the Lower Gatineau. If you would like to order a copy (\$35) we hope that our artists will be patient with us and find time to fill your request. Black and white copies are available for \$10. Please phone the Secretary (827-1995), or place your orders at the next meeting.

KUDOS

The Kathrine Moore Memorial Committee has received the Cinq-Mars Award for its book "A Century of Schools". We offer our warm congratulations and share a little of their pride, for the Society's financing helped make this publication possible.

HISTORIC TOURS

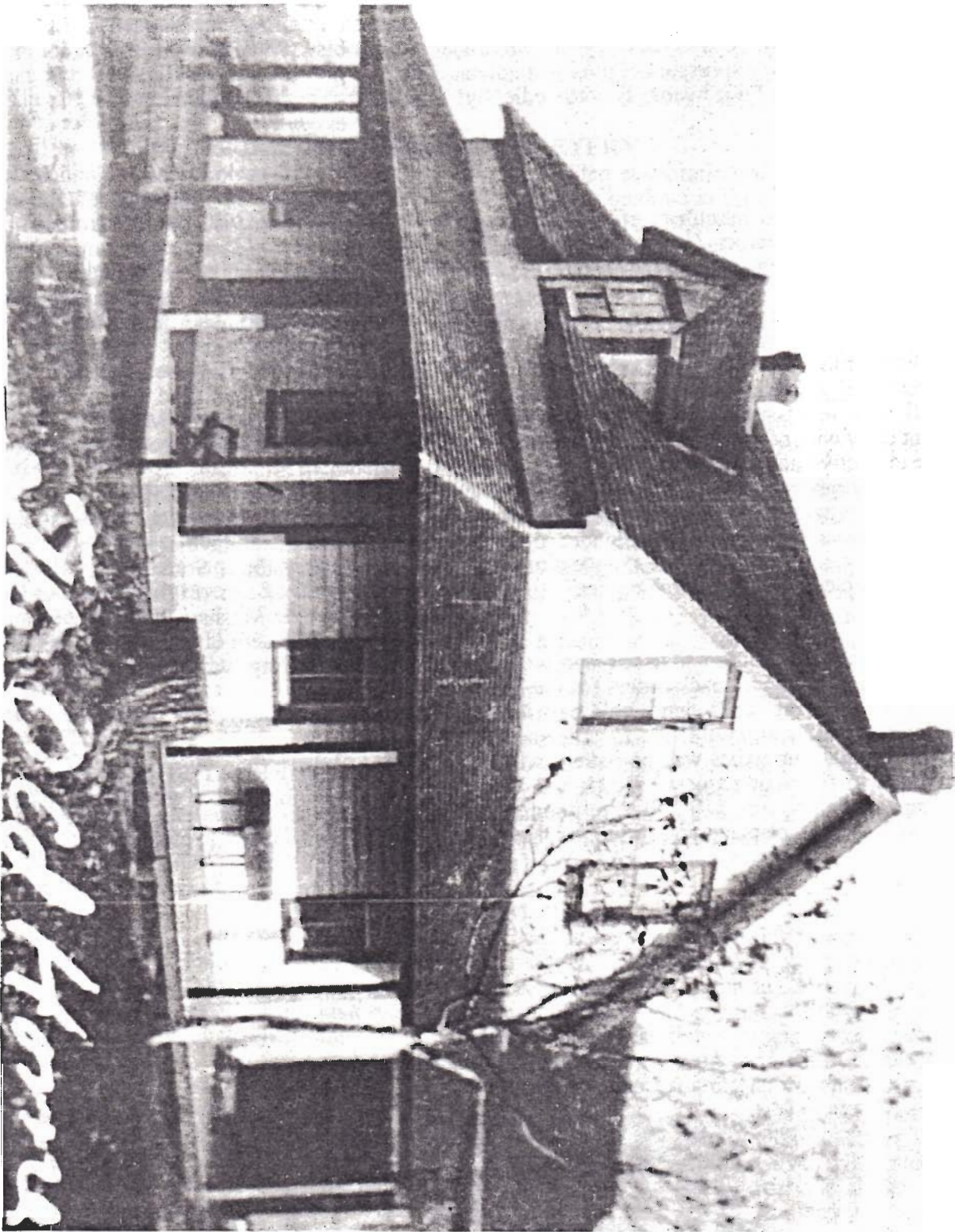
Carol Martin, who includes in her many responsibilities, the planning of the historic tours, wants help. Most of the background historic research was done during last year's summer student project. The information should be checked and amplified by personal knowledge. Administration includes enquiries about transportation, meals, and so on. Dry runs must be made early this summer on each of the routes. Publicity must be planned. If you would be willing to give a little time to help on some aspect, will you kindly phone Mrs. Martin at 827-1633? Please don't leave all the work to our busiest people.

INFORMATION WANTED

A member library has asked about a number of books which we have traced, but we do not have "Gracefield, Album Souvenir", 1945, by G. Pelletier and "Duclos et son origine (livre souvenir du 125e anniversaire de Masham" 1978), par Pauline Monette. If you know where either of these could be borrowed for photocopying, will you please phone Rae Moore (827-1995)?

SONG SINCERELY SOUGHT

Don't forget that the closing date for the song competition is April 30. For more information, please see the last two Newsletters, or phone Carol Martin (827-1633).



The Homestead which became Mackenzie King's "Farm" Photo taken shortly after construction about 1891.

*Photo credits: "The Farm", Mrs. Iris McLaurin;
Methodist Chapel, Aylmer, Diane Aldred
Wakefield Train, N.C.C.*