



THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY
OF THE GATINEAU

JANUARY 1988 NEWSLETTER

**NEXT MEETING:
MONDAY, JANUARY 18TH AT 20:00 AT
SAINT JAMES ANGLICAN CHURCH,
PORTAGE (formerly Principale)
AND St. JACQUES, HULL.**

The Annual Meeting, held at the scene of our very successful historic tour luncheon, begins our second quarter century of history. In the custom of recent years, it will also be a festive social occasion.

All reports will be circulated in advance to avoid the purgatory of tedious readings. The only exceptions are the financial and budget reports, the former being impossible to produce until early January, and the latter delayed by the regrettable December illness of our Treasurer.

Annual awards will be presented. Since much of the executive will be new, it is a good time to take a fresh look at what we have been doing and where we should go. Please bring questions, comments and ideas.

And we shall continue our honoured tradition of Show and Tell; would those contributing to this section kindly phone the president (827-3164) so that we can organize the agenda.

LAST MEETING

In 25 years of meetings we had never had an evening about recreation in the early Gatineau. Professor John Taylor filled that gap with an absorbing look at the leisure activities that brought people to the Gatineau just before the turn of the century. Taking the lead from the vice-regal arbiters of leisure tastes, the invasion was well-heeled, anglophone and sturdy enough to take in its stride the daunting distances from transportation to the hills. One of the unchronicled revolutions of our region was the utter change in leisure patterns that started just before World War II and completed soon afterwards.

A DAY TO REMEMBER

No one could recall a November 11 when the weather was so fine. Eighty soldiers from the Royal Canadian Regiment Battle School at Petawawa and, by the *Citizen's* estimate, about 100 people from the Gatineau gathered in the Chelsea Pioneer Cemetery at 1030 for the short service of remembrance by the grave of Private Richard Rowland Thompson.

Padre MacLean, who had presided at the dedication of the Richard Thompson Building in Petawawa a few years ago, gave the address. The two minutes of silence were ended with the sound of the pipes. A wreath was laid on behalf of Barry Moore, M.P., and a second wreath was laid by Captain Smith of the Royal Canadian Regiment.

After the ceremony, the soldiers and all other participants were invited back to The Grange for coffee and other refreshments. It was a satisfying occasion in which military and civilians of all ages met and mixed, having in common their respect for heroes who died long ago.

After two such successful years, all concerned seem determined to make this an annual event. From the Regiment we have had generous thanks and anticipation of 1988. We invited the pupils of Chelsea Elementary School to join us, and possibly lead us in singing, but November 11 was a Professional Development Day. Perhaps next year.... The principal invited us to speak to the pupils about remembrance on November 10, a task skilfully performed by Tony German.

After the appreciated lunch in the Legion Hall at Wakefield last year, the soldiers had asked about a repeat. The Legion declined to participate, though our Society offered to help defray expenses. That is why the soldiers were invited to relax at The Grange before facing the tedious drive back to base.

We owe many thanks to John Hazen for faultless organization: and to Alice Hudson who mercifully pitched in to help with refresh-

ments in the absence at hospital of the chate-laine of The Grange.

Walking out of the cemetery, the padre wondered aloud if it would not be a good idea to have the young men and women of the Battle School come one morning in summer to help with the annual maintenance of the cemetery, and then to go on to the War Museum to see the Queen's Scarf. We responded warmly.

Through **Graham Lohead**, the suggestion has been made that the Boy Scouts might make a badge-earning contribution to the cemetery. We were delighted to suggest planting about another 50 cedar trees to complete the perimeter hedge—a task which should be done before our summer students appear.

It is, of course, not only such offers of help that we appreciate: it is the sense of wider participation in the Society's work. The process, as we say, is the product.

It takes a day like November 11 to persuade us that all that work, all those contributions for the preservation of the Chelsea Pioneer Cemetery were well worthwhile. The fallen heroes, military and civilian, will not be forgotten again.

1987 IN REVIEW

With this *Newsletter* you receive our annual report of activities. We hope you will spend a little time with it to get a fast perspective on what we have been doing and where we are. Where we will be is, of course an important subject for the Annual Meeting.

In particular we draw attention to the 1987 and proposed 1988 executives. We owe a great debt of gratitude, too; rarely expressed, to those who are retiring from the executive, some after many years representing hundreds of hours of service to the Society.

The Society will feel the loss of such great contributors as **Arthur Davison** (longtime president and four-year Past President); **David Morisset** (director of membership and long-time auction organizer); **Helen Starnes** (organizer of volunteers for the Auction and member of nominating committee for years and years); **John Starnes** (chairman of the research committee); and **Jon Purcell** (vice-president).

All will remain loyal members and, we venture to hope, not too far away to reach in time of dire need. Meanwhile, we offer our warmest thanks.

GATINEAU BOUND

They really are worth waiting for. Not quite on our 25th anniversary, but still in our anniversary year, we have...

the binders!

They neatly hold all thirteen issues of *Up the Gatineau!* so far produced, with room for years more.

Each is held securely into the binder by its own wire which does not obscure the type, and which makes reading easy. They are in our corporate colours of green and grey, with the Society's name and logo, as well as the name of the publication. At \$10 each they cost far less than bookbinding and of course are adaptable to future uses.

We ask those able to attend the Annual Meeting to get their binders there to save the time and cost of posting. Members unable to come are invited to send a cheque to the Secretary for \$12.

Of course you have the opportunity to buy back copies of *Up the Gatineau!* at the same time. A complete set of thirteen issues in a binder costs \$38, including postage. To complete your partial file of copies, you can get single issues for \$2.

MEMBERSHIP

We welcome as new members **Mrs. Sheila Anderson, Mrs. Donna Burr, Maria Muehlen, Mrs. Irene Nielsen, Elizabeth Rutledge and Mrs. Ann Schnurr.**

This year can we break a record on prompt membership renewals. Every month that a renewal is delayed is causing more unnecessary work for our volunteers.

Every membership has now expired, except two-year memberships bought last year.

Will you *please* renew at the earliest possible moment by post (address on page 1)? And it would greatly help us if you would consider the two-year membership for \$15.

HERITAGE DAY

Plans for the observation of Heritage Day on February 15 are limping along throughout the National Capital Region.

A recent *Citizen* column lamented the indifference of schools to Heritage Day and to local history, a charge that has been questioned by one primary school teacher. In past years **Stuart Geggie** has carried the message to local

schools on heritage Day. Teachers who are interested in stimulating curiosity about local history are invited to talk to any member of the executive about getting a guest lecturer.

The National and Provincial Parks Association, a voluntary organization, has a Chaudière Falls Committee working to have that interesting area better known and appreciated by the public. We have been discussing with them the possibility of a special Heritage Day meeting of the Society to honour the Falls. The likely meeting place is the Maison du Citoyen in Hull. Details next month.

PROTESTANT BURIAL GROUND

Progress has at last been recorded with the West Hull by-law to facilitate municipal ownership of this orphan land. In 1988 that legal problem may well be settled, but a practical dilemma of equal proportions remains.

The recent use of the site for burials and the rumoured claims of some families to the future use of plots in the cemetery would seem to make this an operating cemetery rather than an inactive, historic site. If this is so, our Society can do nothing, and if we do nothing to foster preservation, probably no one else will.

The problem has been discussed with Mayor **Judy Grant** to whom it has been proposed that the "active" section of the cemetery be divided from the historic part. In this way, we can get on with the preservation of this valuable history (and secure funds to do it while they are still available) without awaiting clarification of the status of the southern corner.

OFFICE SPACE

With the demise of West Hull's expected new town hall go the Society's immediate hopes for permanent office space and appropriate meeting place.

Mayor **Judy Grant** assures us that our interests will be sympathetically remembered as the Council develops its plans. Meanwhile we are grateful for temporary space in the West Hull Community Centre.

For archives and storage we have been using the upper floor of the MacLaren House. This has the disadvantages of being geographically far from the Secretary and Treasurer; uncertain heat in winter; and a future assured only in the short-term.

WHERE CAN THE GATINEAU PARK?

In tune with its policy of local consultation, the NCC has invited the Society to participate in a major closed forum to consider its plans for the Gatineau Park.

After this stage, the general public will be invited to give its views before the plans are finally approved.

We congratulate the NCC for this process. In advance of the oral consultations, we submitted a policy paper setting forth the Society's position. It underlined the need for more emphasis on our human heritage, and the desirability of greater public access to historic treasures in the Park.

INCIPIENT ALARMS

The Ferme Columbia on Boulevard Saint Joseph just east of the Galeries de Hull is one of the best known early landmarks of the Gatineau. Believed to date from 1837, it was the home of Thomas Brigham, son-in-law and assistant to Philemon Wright.

Recently the NCC advertised the property for sale. Rumours abounded of the demolition of this important building, or of its possible removal from its founding site.

We were shocked to learn that not only had the decision been taken to sell the property with no consideration of safeguarding its future, but the advertisement itself was placed before the legal position had even been looked at.

We joined forces with **Karen Lohead**, President of the Outaouais Alliance and a Society member. We offered no objection to sale of NCC property, but we were insistent that Québec law should be used to place a covenant on the property which would protect it from demolition or disastrous change.

At a meeting in December, NCC Chairman **Jean Pigott** reassured us with a recently drafted covenant proposed for the property. In effect it says that any new owners would not be allowed to change the building against the wishes of Hull. We wish that Hull itself, despite its many virtues, had a better track record on preserving its historic places. Discussions with city councillors continue.

BRIDGE, ANYONE?

The Wakefield Covered Bridge Committee, with the Society's support, has been trying to save the Wakefield temporary Bailey bridge as a step towards a permanent pedestrian/cyclist covered bridge like the one that was burned. A great idea for reminding us of our history, and for enriching tourism.

The Government of Québec, whose local member happens to be the Minister of Tourism, responded by tearing down the bridge without the courtesy of a communication to the Bridge Committee.

Is the Québec Government unbelievably arrogant or just hopelessly incompetent?

HISTORY BEING MADE

Pat Evans reports being present at the ceremony on October 26 when the prolongation of Autoroute 5 was launched with the detonation of 1000 kg of dynamite.

That we should live so long...

HERITAGE CANADA

The October *Preservation Action* explains the Foundation's new course of action.

"Our objective, then, is to involve as many people as possible in the management of change and to harmonize the participation of governments, business, and the public. To achieve this objective, we have chosen three areas of intervention: networking, marketing and demonstration projects.

"Networking allows us to build on the strengths of the existing movement by supporting it and helping it to grow. Through marketing, we broaden the movement by selling the concept of heritage conservation to a larger public. Marketing is also a source of funds to maintain our activities. Through demonstration projects we directly affect specific aspects of our environment....."

NEPEAN HERITAGE DAYS

Saturday and Sunday February 6 and 7 is the time and the Nepean Sportsplex is the place for the second annual Nepean Heritage Days Exhibition.

Performances by local groups and exhibits on costumes, genealogy, books, sports, quilting and cooking feature this two-day program admission to which is free.

AU REVOIR

This is the last issue of the *Newsletter* with the authorship of the last four years.

It was with hesitation and misgivings that we moved from the revered single-page typed newsletters of Arthur Davison to which members had been devoted for so long. But we were becoming too big and active to fit in.

We did not get very far with our customer survey after meeting the lady who said she always "throws out that junk before reading it". We have been grateful, though, to those of you who, out of kindness, charity or sheer humanity, have made encouraging remarks. We appreciated that. And we look forward to reading the *Newsletter* created by new hands.



R.A.J.P.

Charles Linden