



THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF THE GATINEAU
LA SOCIÉTÉ HISTORIQUE DE LA GATINEAU

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Newsletter

March 1995

HSOG 10/30

Coming Events

- March 20 Joint meeting with **Gatineau Valley Gardeners**. Speaker: **Anne Ginns**, "Garden Plants Used by Settlers of the Gatineau Valley." Refreshments 7:30, meeting 8:00 p.m., Chelsea Community Centre.
- April 17 **Annual Banquet**. Larimac Golf Club. Name of speaker and other details to appear in April newsletter.

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Honours and Awards Presented at Annual Meeting

Honours and awards conferred by the Historical Society each year at its annual general meeting are: Honourary Life Membership, for outstanding and prolonged contributions to the Society by a member; Awards of Honour, for outstanding contributions to the preservation of history of, or in, the Gatineau; Letters of Commendation, for contributions to the Society's aims, worthy of recognition; and the Arthur Davison Prize, for the outstanding article in the year's edition of *Up the Gatineau!* The members of the Awards Committee this year were Patrick M.O. Evans (Chair), Anne Goodeve, and Annette Brand.

At the Annual General Meeting on February 20 President Jay Atherton presented Letters of Commendation to **Joan Gherson**, for her sterling services in connection with the planning and distribution of the society's publications; **Michael Reford**, in appreciation of his research on the Hetherington family and its farm, and the presentation of the Hetherington genealogy to the Archives; **Anne Goodeve**, for her services with the Archives over the past five years; and **Bill Place**, as recognition of his services in reconstructing the operations of the Wakefield Mill.

An Award of Honour was presented to **Janet Benedict**, for her devotion and skills as the Benedict family historian, including the conducting of interesting and valuable research, editing her mother's reminiscences, and presenting valuable documents and photographs to the Archives. **Enid Page** of our sister organization, the Aylmer Heritage Association, also received an Award of Merit, in commemoration of her role in the battle to preserve the British and Symmes Hotels in Aylmer.

The Arthur Davison Prize went to **Norma Geggie** in recognition of her article, "Spinning and Weaving in Days Gone By," the outstanding contribution of the last year in *Up the Gatineau!* Finally, an Honourary Life Membership, in appreciation of her long and varied services to the Society, was presented to **Gunda Lambton** - "a true lady of the arts."

Congratulations to all these fine people.

New Executive Elected

The Annual Meeting elected the following officers of the Society for the new year: *President* - Jay Atherton (Cascades); *1st Vice President* - Carol Martin (Kirk's Ferry); *2nd Vice President* -

Allan Richens (Gleneagle); *Directors* - David Castleman (Larrimac), Gunda Lambton (Farrelton), George Gould (Tenaga), Jeff Atkins (Kirk's Ferry), and Ernie Mahoney (Wakefield and Alcove).

In accepting the report of the Nominations Committee, Jay Atherton took the occasion to express the thanks of all members for the services performed by retiring director Stuart Geggie.

BOOK REVIEW

Le Chemin d'Aylmer Road - An Illustrated History, by Diane Aldred, Aylmer Heritage Association, 1994. Price \$24.95 including taxes. Obtainable from Aylmer Heritage, 55 Vanier Rd., Aylmer, QC J9H 5E7, Phone (819) 684-6809. If desired by mail add \$4.00.

Reviewed by Annette Brand, Archivist.

Diane Aldred's *Le Chemin d'Aylmer Road - An Illustrated History* traces the history of the Aylmer Road from its beginnings as a portage trail to the present. Originally a trail used by the Indians, trappers, and missionaries to bypass the Chaudière and Deschenes rapids, the road was cleared out of the wilderness almost two hundred years ago by the farmers and lumbermen who had settled this stretch of land between Hull and Aylmer. These settlers ploughed the road in winter, macadamized it with crushed stone in the summer, and collected tolls at each end for their services. Stage coaches ran transfer services from Ottawa, linking the tow boat landings at Hull and Aylmer that were used for commerce and pleasurable excursions on the Ottawa River.

The road later became highly desirable as a country home address for the rich and famous of Ottawa and Hull - a "pastoral Rockcliffe." Many magnificent houses were built. Golf, hunting, and country clubs sprang up, and horse racing came into vogue at Connaught Park. During the years that Ontario continued to be temperate while prohibition was lifted in Quebec, night clubs proliferated along Aylmer Road, attracting big name bands and other entertainers. While housing developments have made some incursions, the strong-willed South Hull Council—determined to preserve the extensive green spaces and heritage buildings along the road—has ensured that much of the old charm has been retained.

The second section of the book provides historical details of each lot and most of the buildings along the road. Their ownership is traced and interesting anecdotes, excerpts of letters, official documents, and hundreds of photographs are provided. The book is a fascinating read for all of us familiar with the Aylmer Road.

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