



THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF THE GATINEAU

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

1986

JANUARY NEWSLETTER

NEXT MEETING: Monday, January. 27 at 7.45 for 8.00 at BJ'S CAFE, Old Chelsea.

It's our Annual Meeting, and it's a new setting. Since informal discussion about the Society's past, present and future will take the place of a speaker, we thought members might, for a change, enjoy an informal atmosphere where coffee, wine and beer will accompany our talk. (Though members may buy refreshments, the proprietors have donated the space to the Society.) There will be no reading of reports-- you have now received the Annual Review for 1985-- but there will be two important decisions:

- Election of executive for 1986; the report of the Nominating Committee is enclosed. New names for the President and other officers, as well as additional names for the Advisory Committee are warmly welcomed. (Just be sure your candidate is willing to serve.)
- Resolution: "Whereas it is desirable that members' fees reflect the costs of material provided to them, and that the general funds of the Society be devoted to projects for enhancing the history of the Gatineau, **BE IT RESOLVED** that membership fees be eight dollars per household, effective January 1, 1986."

Members will also be asked to approve the financial statement, the Annual Review, and the appointment of auditors.

This is a time for anyone to raise any questions and suggestions about our activities past or future. Two items have already been suggested by members: Restoration of the Old Chelsea Cemetery; Revitalization of Old Chelsea itself.

We also hope to have pictures of Society activities through the years, both transparencies and prints. PLEASE phone Bob Phillips (827-3164) about the kinds of pictures you can bring so that we can arrange their projection or display.

And of course the climax will be our time-honoured show-and-tell. To organize our time to best advantage, will you please phone Bob Phillips about items or stories you would like to present. We will all be very interested.

It should be a fascinating evening-- and, with apologies for the recent past, we propose to start on time. But if you want to hear the first public performance of Alex Sinclair's taped folk songs (see below), you will have to arrive at 7.45.

Last Meeting

Charles Lynch had members either on the edge of their seats or rolling in the aisles in a subtle combination of hilarious anecdotes and searching questions about the relationship of the Heritage Canada Foundation to member groups. Members especially appreciated his candour in discussing the problems of the Foundation in relating to the grassroots historical and conservation movement. The misgivings of our own Society about the apparent present lack of concern for community groups was apparently echoed manyfold across the country. As a consequence, Mr.

Lynch said, Heritage Canada was undergoing a searching re-examination of its role, priorities, policies and attitudes, to culminate in the 1986 Annual Meeting to be held in Ottawa with its main focus on relations with community groups.

We were honoured also to welcome Claudy Maily, Member of Parliament for Gatineau, who brought greetings to the Society.

Will Ye No Come Back Again?

It was a severe shock when, in mid- November, Sheila Strang told us she was leaving the Gatineau for British Columbia. It was a sad occasion when the Society wished her well at the last meeting. Bob Hyndman was there for the presentation of his painting, calculated to keep green Sheila's memories of the rolling landscape near Old Chelsea. Then we repaired to Bj's to drink toasts to a happy future for Sheila-- and an uncertain one for us.

Computers

Even for historical societies, the Information Revolution has challenges. We have saved time and money through putting our *Annual Review* and *Newsletters* on the computer; we hope you enjoy the new format. We have also put our Membership Lists on the computer to make it easier to keep track of renewals (or the lack thereof) and to offer up-to-date copies of it to members. (Please note that, to respect the privacy of members, we publish neither addresses nor telephone numbers.)

But we would like help, both ideas from those with more experience in this technology, and equipment. If you can advise us, or if you have access to a MacIntosh 512, will you please let us know?

Membership

Membership renewals are, of course, now due. Won't you please lighten the load of our overworked secretary by renewing at the Annual Meeting or promptly by post?

With the Annual Review, we are for the first time sharing our membership list. Our purpose in doing so is twofold. When you read it, please consider what names are missing. Then do your friends a favour by persuading them to join. Also, you will note neighbours who are members and you might like to suggest attending meetings together; you may wish to offer them a ride if they find transportation difficult, or you might appreciate a lift yourself.

The Rideau Street Covent Chapel

At our last meeting, we were pleased to give facilities to Mrs. Winkler to sell attractive cards carrying pictures of the famous chapel. All proceeds go towards its restoration as a permanent part of the new National Gallery. This is a very important project which deserves our warm support. They will be available at the Annual Meeting for \$4 per set of eight; or phone Mrs. Winkler at 731-3700.

The Daly Building

Friends of the Daly Building allowed themselves a small sigh of relief when the NCC called for private proposals to develop the Daly Building, now threatening records for the longest continuing heritage controversy in the Region. Another wise decision by Chairman Jean Pigott! There might well have been no Daly Building for the NCC to redevelop had it not been for the dogged persistence of a few enthusiasts who don't like seeing their history demolished by tasteless bureaucrats or greedy developers. Pity, then, that the NCC did not think it worth even a phone call to tell us of their decision and enlist our support in publicity: we read about it in a newspaper advertisement. Perhaps Mrs. Pigott's promise at our October meeting to work with voluntary societies has not yet percolated to her staff.....

Pictures

The picture in our last Newsletter was Shady Hill being demolished by the National Capital Commission a dozen years ago. Fiona Hyslop and Ann Crane, while ski-ing came across this tragic scene. Alone, they mounted a model campaign to arouse public opinion against the wanton destruction of the legacy which Prime Minister King had bequeathed to the nation. The demolition was stopped. We are not sure how far the planned destruction of King's houses would have gone, but we do know that it was only grassroots protest which stopped government vandalism. Had it not been for that happy accident of a ski run by two people with determination and a conscience for our history, who knows what would now have remained of the King estate?

That is a lesson close to home which is worth remembering whenever we consider the role of the Historical Society of the Gatineau.

Please Don't Adjust Your Set...

References in the *Newsletter* to our work on the Cemetery attracted the eye of CJOH's Mark van Dusen. The result was a sympathetic story on the December 8 Regional Report, about Private Thompson and the Society which worked to preserve his grave.

The Society Put to Music?

A feature of our May meeting was gifted folksinger Alex Sinclair who sang and played several early folksongs. He is also famous on the CBC for his satirical songs about current affairs. (The tape of early folk music which he donated to our Auction will be played as an introduction to the Annual Meeting.) All this has led some of our brighter musical spirits to suggest a contest to compose a modern folksong about the Society.

The idea will be considered at the Annual Meeting. Next year an opera? All we know for sure about the Annual Meetings is that it will be the most interesting yet. Please join us.

And finally.....

This is cheating, for our picture this month is beating the gun on the Annual Meeting where the strange story behind the photo will be shared.

