

THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF THE GATINEAU
BOX 485, CHELSEA, QUE. J0X 1N0

1987

MARCH NEWSLETTER

**NEXT MEETING; MONDAY
MARCH 16, AT 8.00 P.M. IN THE
WEST HULL COMMUNITY CENTRE**

It's time to think of gardens, including the historic kind. We are delighted that **Cecilia Paine**, renowned consultant on historic landscape architecture, can join us to talk about her work with slides. Ms. Paine was responsible for landscape design and restoration at the King and Billings Estates and the Log Farm. This will be a new and fascinating perspective for the Society.

LAST MEETING

It was a great climax for Heritage Day. The gymnasium of the Wakefield School was filled to hear **Dr. Stuart Geggie** talk about "100 Years of Medicine in Wakefield". It was partly an absorbing personal story of **Dr. Hans Geggie** and his father-in-law; partly a somewhat chilling account of the dramatic difference in the means to treat disease less than 50 years ago. We are grateful for the medical heritage the Geggie family has given us-- particularly the Gatineau Memorial Hospital-- and relieved that the scourges of those earlier years have been left behind.

To top off the evening, **Grace Reid** generously made sandwiches for all to enjoy, then had a bad fall requiring five stitches preventing her attendance. Our warm thanks for the generous contribution, and our good wishes for fast recovery.

HERITAGE DAY

Last year we may have been a little churlish about Ottawa efforts to observe Heritage Day without voluntary groups. This year things went rather better. Not all the plans suggested by a planning committee worked out, but there was widespread distribution of a

leaflet listing Heritage Day activities (including our Society's meeting), an introduction to Heritage Day on the closing Sunday of Winterlude, an official noon-hour Heritage Day observance in the Market area, and a Museum event when the federal Minister of the Environment made pregnant announcements about historic federal buildings and other matters. There was wide coverage in the press, including a piece in the *Saturday Citizen*.

At the official launching **Jean Pigott** spoke, and **Mayor Durrell** read the proclamation in both official languages. The voluntary Sector was represented on the platform by the Historical Society of the Gatineau. This had been preceded the week before by a private gathering of the clans for coffee at the NCC; there **Jean Pigott** was particularly generous in her words about the work of our Society.

Real hero of Heritage Day was **Stuart Geggie**. Did we say he gave a speech? Understatement! He gave four-- the others being to school classes.

THE YOUNG

For reasons that our best friends may not dare tell us, we are not doing well with the young. We rarely see students at meetings even though the speakers are intrinsically interesting and of potential relevance to academic pursuits. Despite the continuing bombardment of teachers with information about our Search for History which offers honest dollars for all kinds of projects relating to the collection of history, it is years since we have had even an enquiry from any educational institution in the Gatineau. While we read about the imaginative Heritage Day projects being carried out by numberless teachers just over the Ottawa River as well as across the country, in the Gatineau the response has been zilch, except for **Stuart Geggie's** work.

Having long looked at this remarkable indifference to local history in our schools, experienced teacher **Jon Purcell** talked to many of his teaching friends in the Gatineau, passing along a list of proven suggestions involving students with their local past. We offered personal help, meetings, even money yet. No response.

Maybe things are not as bad as they seem mid-winter, but we swear they could be better. Who can help?

HISTORY CONTEST

Only a couple of weeks are left (March 15) for entries in the second annual Alliance Québec Alan Jones History Contest. This is "a classroom project for students in elementary (sic) schools and secondary schools" requiring "a display/montage depicting an aspect of the history of the roots of our community". Information is available at ALLIANCE QUEBEC, (514) 849-9181.

SUMMER IS ICUMEN IN

We have applied to the federal government under the Challenge '87 program for two students to help prepare and run the museum, to work on historic tours, the cemetery and oral history. It can be a very rewarding and interesting summer.

Apart from the usual requirement of high character untainted by public scandal, the main qualifications are interest in local history and ability to communicate orally in both official languages. Access to a car is an important plus. (We pay a mileage or kilometre allowance, as the driver may prefer.) Other things being equal, preference may go to a member of the Society, if this is not in conflict with the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

May we now have nominations? The student should drop us a note summarizing work and academic background, and explaining why the job is of interest. The selection board will be meeting next month.

THERE ARE NO FREE LAUNCHES..

The big publishing event planned for this 25th Anniversary Year is the new edition of Courtney Bond's *HURLING DOWN THE PINE*. The official launch, when we hope the author will be present with his signing hand, will be at our Anniversary meeting June 27. Since we have received the copies, we are now offering them for sale to members.

The popularity of this definitive history of lumbering in the Ottawa and Gatineau Valleys has apparently sent the price of second-hand copies up to \$60 since it went out of print. The new edition is priced at \$11.95, but only \$9.95 for members. It is available at meetings, or by post (please add \$2.00 for postage). We hope that all members will wish to have copies and draw them to the attention of (or give them to) their friends. It is a splendid way to help keep our history alive.

EARLY DAYS...

A year ago **Sheila Thomson** kindly presented our Society with a bound and indexed collection of interviews with Gatineau old-timers, entitled "Early Days in the Gatineau Hills". As she explained at that March meeting, this is raw, unedited material, accumulated during a search for the history of the old Ridge Road in Gatineau Park. Her main purpose in giving this invaluable document to the Society was to help future researchers. The manuscript may be borrowed by applying to the Secretary (827-1995).

LIBRARY?

Mrs. Thomson, in the course of many good suggestions, asked about the books we owned. This raises a big question. The Society has been given books, and our attempt to trace some of those titles a couple of years ago was depressing. Further, we get a considerable volume of documentation from other Societies, from governments and so on, including periodicals, brochures and announcements. We try to have one member of the executive take responsibility for going through the material to suggest how it might best be used. Though some information finds its way into the *Newsletter*, generally it is being underused.

This summer we shall have access to the whole of the MacLaren House. One of our thoughts is to reserve suitable space where we can put our very modest library, including current material, which would be available on loan to members. Another possibility is that we may have a permanent, year-round, but very small, office in the West Hull Town Hall. That could be a place for our library. If the library were also there, we might ask the library to accept some of our material on permanent loan so that it would be available for lending at any time.

Within a few months we hope to see the first of our reforms.

SUGGESTIONS

The lesson of the previous item is that when people like Mrs. Thomson make suggestions, we all benefit. Noting that at regular meetings our time is limited and members may not wish to raise extraneous matters, Treasurer Anne Fleming set up a suggestion box. Since it also contains the money we donate for our refreshments, it is unlikely to be forgotten or overlooked. That was a bright idea, and we hope to see more bright ideas within it.

If you can't get to meetings, please drop us a note with ideas for a better future. We hope you will send your name, but we do accept plain brown envelopes....

MEMBERSHIP

All last year's memberships are now two months overdue. Won't you please renew by post if you cannot come to the next meeting? If you choose the two-year membership for \$15 we shall be very happy. If you do not renew promptly, we tend to cry, and it is not a pretty sight.

We are pleased to welcome new members this month: Gerald M. Daly, Mrs. P.M. Deline, Miss M.E. Farrell, Mrs. J. Howard Hunter, Frank J. McGoldrick, Peter Meggs and Barbara Thain.

THE MUSEUM

The expanded museum will open for the season on Saturday afternoon, June 27, amid pomp and even circumstance if we can find any. Before that happens, we shall need lots of volunteers to paint, clean-up, carpenter and sew, and we would like to have twice as many volunteers during weekends of the season as last year, for we must staff the museum and help staff the Mill. If you have not already given your name as a volunteer, please do so by note to the Society or by phone call to Stuart Geggie (459-2393). The pre-season work starts next month.

GOING PLACES?

It's time at least to think of those pleasant spring drives to release us from the internment of winter. Mrs. Goldie A. Connell of the Grenville County Historical Society writes to express appreciation of *1986 in Review* and to invite us to their museum in the Solomon Jones house (1800) at Homewood, Highway 2 just west of Prescott and immediately east of Maitland. They are open May to November, from 10 to 4 on weekdays.

Rob McNarry offers a similar invitation to the Cumberland Heritage Museum. "a fine village cluster of 11 buildings" with active public involvement. A steam-driven sawmill acquired from Poltimore in 1978 is being developed.

AND CLOSER

Elizabeth Doherty of the NCC writes us about summer plans for Kingsmere. A new water system now underway will be complete this spring. Renovations are starting in Moorside. Repairs to the garage, shed and forge will come later this year. Restoration of landscaped areas adjacent to Moorside and The Farm will begin this year.

On the program side, Aileen Merriam tells us that the dinner-talk series at the Estate will continue this summer. Most of the speakers are said to be excellent.

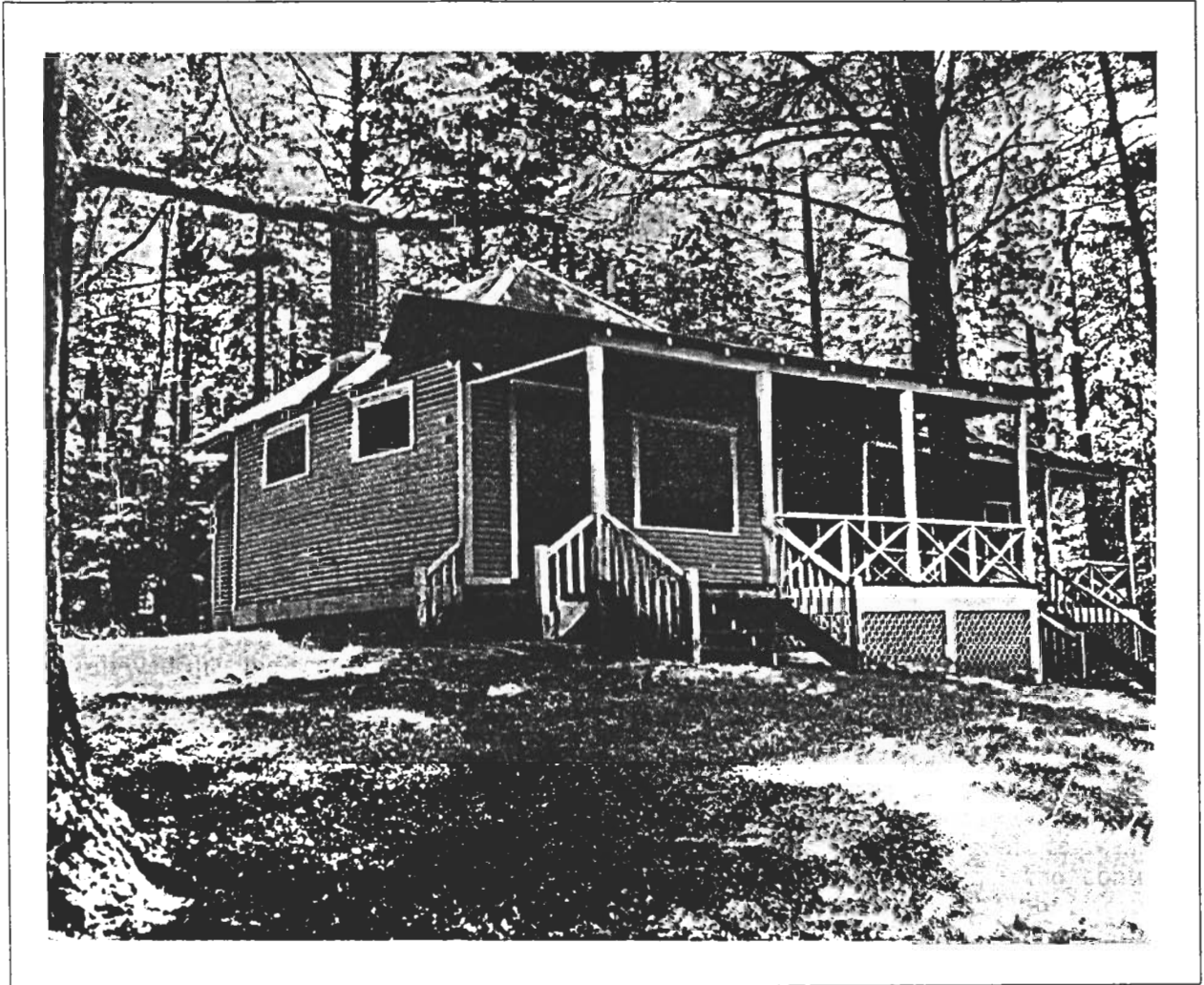
TREASURE VAULTS

The Cartier Square Drill Hall is the place to be on Saturday, March 7, between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. for the "Bazaar, Giant Garage Sale, Auction and Raffle" which will be a main fund-raising of the Friends of the National Gallery raising money to place the Rideau Convent Chapel in the National Gallery. The Auction is scheduled for 1 p.m. As we have noted before, this cause deserves our support. We have already contributed the writing and design of their main promotional pamphlet, now being distributed in 14,000 copies.

OTHER CAUSES

Please watch for news of efforts to save the Aberdeen pavillion at Lansdowne Park, a remarkable part of our history. Also consider the efforts to save the environment of the National Capital Region's largest cemetery from high-rise development, and to keep alive the idea of an eventual national cemetery.

R.A.J.P.



Think positive: think summer! If you have not yet been to Kingswood, Mackenzie King's restored cottage at Kingsmere, put it high on your visiting list. Try to choose a quiet hour when you can be alone with the spirit(s) of the great man and his times.

Courtesy NCC