
Purpose of the Society

"... to promote matters of historical or heritage significance in the general area of the Gatineau Valley."

Next Meeting

Monday, April 17
8:00 p.m.

West Hull Community Centre
Old Chelsea

**"Father John Brady:
Pioneer Priest of Buckingham"**

with

Pierre-Louis Lapointe

A sparkling narrative about a fascinating, colourful Irish priest and his tempestuous relations with his bishop, his parishoners, and the Irish settlers in and around Buckingham between 1840 and 1870

The meeting will be preceded by
a Social Half Hour
beginning at 7:30

BRING A FRIEND!

AN AID TO DIGESTION

It may have been hard for some officials to swallow, but the NCC has done the Right Thing by Hull's most famous industrial landmark. The Digestor Tower beside the new Museum of Civilization is to be saved.

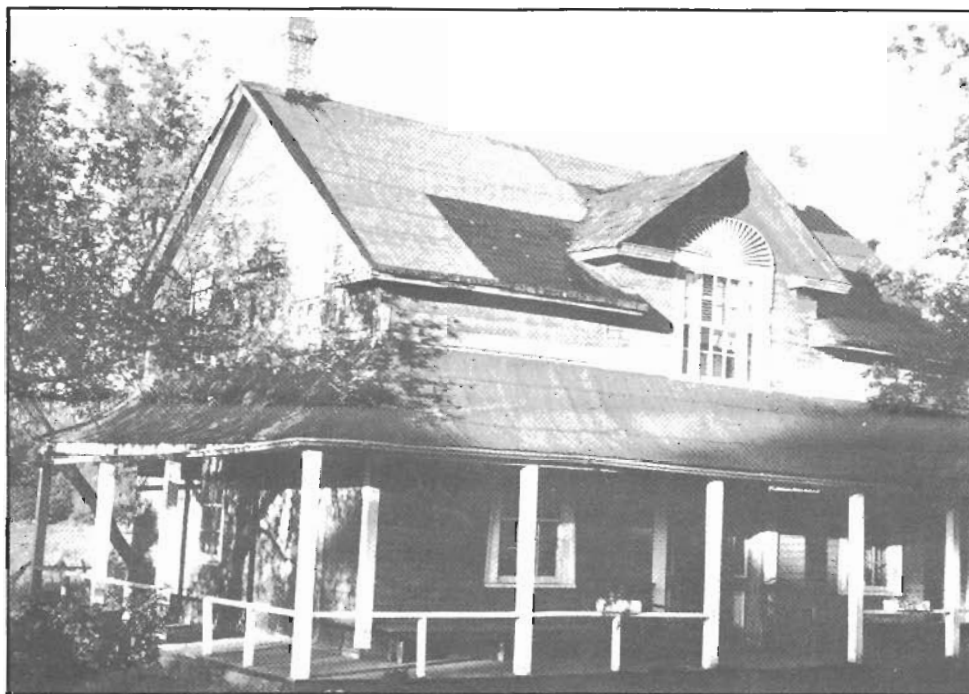
NCC spokesman H el ene Bourret announced an agreement reached with Public Works and the Museum. Since it would have cost the Commission an estimated \$250,000 and many sleepless nights to destroy the heritage site, it has agreed to put the money towards stabilization and have an untroubled conscience. Public Works will pick up the rest of the stabilization bill, and the Museum will look after the bill into all eternity.

The Historical Society believes this a victory for good sense, and warmly commends those who made it possible. Besides the NCC's Jean Pigott and the Museum's George McDonald, credit is due to Hull's Mayor Michel L eg ere who vigorously supported this preservation of history. It was not always thus in Hull.

The Digestor Tower does not lack imaginative ideas for its next century. While waiting to see how the future unfolds, we can rejoice in having two remarkable buildings on Hull's prime river site. (We think the Museum will also be worth visiting.)

R.A.J. Phillips

FROM THE SOCIETY'S ARCHIVES



DO YOU RECOGNIZE?

Few of today's motorists, driving north to Wakefield on Highway 105, would probably recognize this building, even if they parked their cars opposite. If one crossed the road a small sign suspended from the verandah roof reveals it is the O'Keefe House, situated some fifty metres south of the Pioneer Cemetery in Chelsea. At one time it was an important structure. The land upon which the house stands was recorded by Letters Patent in the name of John Maxwell on 21 September 1827.

The building itself was constructed between 1850 and 1860 by one Paddy O'Neil as a stopping place for stage coaches plying between Ottawa and North Wakefield, now known as Alcove. Later the stage run extended to Maniwaki, a trip that took four days.

This inn, or hotel, was managed at different

times by Ed Farrell and Charles Kingsbury. It was during the latter's regime that the building acquired its claim to fame, for it was here that the West Hull Municipal Council held its initial meeting, on 1st March 1875. Shortly afterwards the Council moved the scene of its operations to Ed Dean's Hotel in Upper or Old Chelsea.

This venerable building has passed through a number of phases in its time. When Arthur O'Neill acquired the place he set up a sign indicating that it was a "temprance [sic] hotel with STABLING". The stage coach horses were often changed here for fresh ones, while the passengers regaled themselves with what the establishment had to offer.

The drivers of sleighs loaded with logs found the O'Neill House a good place to stop for the night, with the added attraction of adequate stabling for their jaded animals.

Downstairs there was room for ten diners at a sitting. Upstairs there were brass beds for the guests, although there were times when a mattress on the floor had to suffice for late comers. Incidentally, the brass beds would be collectors' items today, perhaps fetching prices ten or twenty times their original cost.

At some time a decision was made to "go wet", the spacious basement being used to house the bottled stock. How long the locally issued permit allowed alcoholic drinks to be served is not known. What is evident is that the basement hatches have long been nailed down and the old inn has been in private hands since it ceased operations to serve the public.

Oh yes, the possible reason for not recognizing the place is its changed appearance since the photograph was taken. In 1963 a grass fire deliberately set in the spring got out of hand and badly damaged the building to such an extent that the top floor was removed and a new roof constructed over the lower floor. There is evidence of the fire indicated by scorched beams and stair riser in the staircase now serving as a cupboard. The inside of the building's front door still wears fire scars, bearing witness to the near loss of a part of the Gatineau's rich heritage. In the case of the O'Neill House the West Hull Municipal Council recognized its heritage a couple of years ago by awarding a "Century Plaque" to the current owners, for public or private display.
Patrick M. O. Evans

ONTARIO HISTORICAL SOCIETY TO MEET IN OTTAWA

"Consuming Passions: Eating and Drinking Traditions in Ontario" is the theme for the conference of the Ontario Historical Society to be held in the Radisson Hotel, Ottawa, on May 4, 5, and 6.

This theme conference will trace changing food traditions over the last two centuries. Beginning with the First Nations, it will explore the food and beverages of the military, the French, and the pioneers. Speakers will examine how changing technology has affected food from the nineteenth century to today's fast food outlets.

Sessions will be enhanced by samples, snacks, and meals of the foods and beverages from the historical periods under discussion.

Registration for the three day conference will cost \$100 per day for non-members of the OHS. For information, contact the Society at 5151 Yonge Street, Willowdale, Ontario M2N 5P5.

SOCIETY MEMBERS IN PRINT

Two long-time members of the Historical Society have burst forth into print within the past few months.

"A Tale of Two Chelseas", written by the Society's prolific archivist, Patrick M.O. Evans, presents a lively account of the history of Chelsea and Old Chelsea. The book contains information on early settlers, roads, and buildings. Photographs, illustrations, and maps enliven the presentation. A valuable reference work for anyone interested in the history of Hull Ouest. Published by J. Oscar Lemieux of Ottawa and available from the offices of the Historical Society at a cost of \$30.00.

Reginald Hale's "The Beloved: St. Mungo, Founder of Glasgow" traces the story of this contemporary of King Arthur, based on oral traditions and legend. The book paints a picture of the age in which St. Mungo lived, through text, illustrations, and maps. Published by the University of Ottawa Press, it is avail-

able in either hardcover (\$17.05) or paperback (\$11.95) from Ottawa bookstores.
Jay Atherton

HISTORY REPEATS ITSELF

(A story with a sequel)

Some years ago while browsing in the antiquarian emporium known as Bytown Glass at 21 York Street, Ottawa, owned and operated by Alan Powell, of an old Ottawa family, my attention was drawn to a small hard backed volume entitled THE VOICE - 1885-87. Upon examination, much to my surprise, what I had in my hands was a bound copy of two years of the monthly magazine, "The Voice", published at Chelsea, Quebec.

As the first page indicated that this was No. 1 of Volume X, it would seem that the publication had an earlier birth. This is substantiated by an advertisement on page 127 as follows:

"The Nos. of THE VOICE for 1883-84, bound in one handsome volume, are now ready. Price, 50 cents, postage free."

The magazine was produced and edited by the Rev. Jas. Brown, approved by the Bishop of Montreal, and printed by the authorization of the Bishop of Ottawa.

The contents were a mix of stories from countries around the world, exhortations to pray daily (with suitable prayers to be used as opportunity offered), all liberally sprinkled throughout with admonitions to live by the Golden Rule.

This little pocket gem was, in time, generously presented to the Society by Mr. Powell, and has recently been added to its growing library.

As has been intimated earlier, there is a sequel to the story. In the summer of 1988 a publication with the name of "The Voice" appeared in the

area, being No. 1 of Vol. 1 produced for the English Zone in the Gatineau-Hull Diocese.

There was to be a postscript to the sequel (if that can be). I was honoured to be invited to write a history of St. Stephen's Church in Old Chelsea. The second number of the first volume of the revived periodical contains that history. One never knows, does one?

Patrick M.O. Evans

MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS

Members are reminded that all memberships (except those covering the second year of a two-year membership) have expired. If you have not yet renewed, please do so (address: Box 485, Chelsea, J0X 1N0). The membership fee is a modest \$8.00 for one year, \$15.00 for two years.

If you are unsure of your present membership status, call our office (answering machine - leave a message) at 827-4432.

The Society welcomes new members. Encourage your friends to join and support our interesting heritage activities.

The Historical Society of the Gatineau Newsletter is published monthly. Editor is Jay Atherton (827-1703). Comments and/or contributions are welcomed and encouraged.