



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

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Newsletter / Bulletin

HSOG 10/26

May / mai 1991

Publications Price List

Our Next Meeting:

Monday, May 27, 7:30 p.m.

A TOUR OF THE
PROTESTANT BURIAL GROUND

Old Chelsea

with

R.A.J. (BOB) PHILLIPS

"A rare local example of the eighteenth century New England cemetery The 50 known graves form a roll-call of the pioneers of the Lower Gatineau", including Asa Meech and Thomas Wright.

The above quotation is taken from *Touring the Two Chelseas*, a tour guide of Old Chelsea and Chelsea written by Bob Phillips from the research conducted by P.M.O. Evans.

Following the tour of the cemetery, members are invited to repair to the Chelsea Town Hall, for the official launching of *Touring the Two Chelseas*. Her Worship Mayor Judy Grant will be present.

Here is a revised list of currently available books distributed by the Historical Society. All prices have been adjusted to include the G.S.T. (However, please note that postage will be charged on mail orders.)

Up the Gatineau! \$ 4.25

Index for *Up the Gatineau!* to 1989 2.50

Green binder for *Up the Gatineau!* 8.50

Unto the Hills 6.00

Hurling Down the Pine 12.00

Historical Walks: the Gatineau Park Story 10.50

The Extra Mile 10.50

A Century of Schools 10.50

Historical area map 10.50

Wakefield and Its People 8.50

History of Cantley 7.25

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NEW: *Touring the Two Chelseas*, by R.A.J. Phillips, available on and after May 27. Cost: \$5.00.



That Thomas Brigham Prentiss Grandfather Clock

In a fairly recent *Newsletter* article on the J.B. Prentiss grandfather clock I'm afraid I left the readership up in the air respecting how the timepiece came into the possession of the Bytown Museum. Here, then, is that story. It is relatively brief but quite interesting.

The late Bertram MacKay, who was President of the Historical Society of Ottawa (which operates the Bytown Museum) when the clock was presented in 1961, wrote as follows:

"George Prentiss of Chelsea in the Municipality of West Hull [now (1991) the Chelsea Municipality] offered the clock, which had been his grandfather's, to the Bytown Museum. It appears that Thomas Brigham Prentiss brought both the name CHELSEA and the time-keeper, with its wooden works, from Chelsea, Vermont, in 1834, or thereabouts. The first he bestowed on his new Canadian home. The clock, ah! that thing of beauty, he kept for himself. However, man is not immortal, and so in due time, that masterpiece of time itself, passed to son and then to grandson, George. Alas, George was saddled with a clock whose wooden works, like the original owner's ticker, just gave out."

As the Historical Society of the Gatineau already owns the Prentiss piano (and one can still tickle its ivories), as well as a testimonial given to the family by a fraternity organization in Aylmer on the death of Thomas Brigham Prentiss. J.B. had moved to Aylmer upon retirement, after leaving his house and store to his son.

A move is on foot to see whether the society in Ottawa, hard up for storage space, will turn the clock over to this Society in a spirit of good will. [Note: by the "rules of the game" the item will have to be offered to a "free market" before it can be deaccessioned.]

By the way, the old Prentiss home in the newer Chelsea is vacant and up for sale.

The Hoopskirt Door

In the same article there was another tale which I sort of half promised. This concerns two hoopskirt doors, one in Old Chelsea and a second in the newer Chelsea.

The Silver Anniversary issue of *Up the Gatineau!*, in 1987, contained a description (by myself) of this type of door. For those who missed the article it is repeated herewith. The first of these doors is at the Chelseas' Restaurant, formerly Ed Dean's Hotel, in Old Chelsea; the other is in the old Prentiss house and store, owned by the Society's Pam McDougall.

John Gordon, a building contractor, undertook a major overhaul of Ed Dean's stopping place in Old Chelsea, with the idea of establishing an eating emporium. "Little did John Gordon know what he had found when he bought a second-hand door to be installed in his new possession as its front door. A hoopskirt door is actually two doors, hung one at each side of the opening. However, instead of the doors being of equal dimensions, one is twice the width of the other. Ordinary mortals were served nicely by the wider door; the other section opened out for ladies of fashion whose passage might otherwise prove awkward or even downright embarrassing should their costume become disarranged in the struggle to force unwieldy hoops through a narrow opening."

- P.M.O. Evans

[Editors note: both Dean's Hotel in Old Chelsea and the Prentiss store, post office, and home are described in *Touring the Two Chelseas*.]

Quote of the Month

"Progress, far from consisting in change, depends on retentiveness...Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to fulfil it."

- George Santayana

New Members

Welcome to new members of the Historical Society:
Blake Watson and Diane and Richard Morrison.

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Tony German Wins *Citizen* Award

Historical Society member Tony German has won the 1991 *Ottawa Citizen* award for non-fiction for his best-selling history of the Canadian Navy, *The Sea Is at Our Gates*. He was presented with the award and a cash prize by *Citizen* editor Gordon Fisher at the Ottawa Valley Book Festival awards ceremony, held at the National Library on April 26.

To quote from the *Citizen* story: "German, who retired as a navy commander in 1966, had commanded three destroyers during the Second World War, then headed the navy's weapons-training division.

"In addition to *The Sea Is at Our Gates*, published by McClelland and Stewart, and a half-hour National Film Board documentary of the same title, German has written the successful *Tom Penny* historical novels for children."

Congratulations, Tony!

- Jay Atherton

HERITAGE ROUNDUP

Information of interest from the newsletters of national and local heritage and historical societies.

The November 1990 issue of *Impact*, the newsletter of **Heritage Canada**, contains a description of the new "Canadian Heritage Network", sponsored by Heritage Canada to facilitate heritage work in the country. Also in this issue is a series of reports on progress with heritage across Canada. The Québec report describes the work of municipal authorities (Chelsea, Cantley, and LaPêche

each have such a committee - about which there will be more in future newsletters.)

The Historical Society of Ottawa has issued four interesting items in their Bytown Pamphlet Series: *J.R. Booth; A Lumber Baron of the Ottawa Valley*, by Sydney Clarke Bateman (no. 33); *Records of the Rise and Progress of the City of Ottawa...*, by Gertrude van Cortlandt (no. 34); *Some Notes on Bytown and the Fur Trade*, by Michael Newton (no. 35); and *Emile Brunet, Sculptor*, by Georgette Lamoureux (no. 36). The Society's January 1991 *Newsletter* contains a plea by Richard Cannings, President of Heritage Ottawa, for help in preserving the Byward Market area as well as a brief description of the work of a new umbrella group for all heritage related organizations in Ottawa, called The Heritage Council and chaired by Professor John Taylor of Carleton University. The April *Newsletter* contains, among other things, a description of the purpose and objectives of the Historical Society of Ottawa. The Society's last monthly meeting of the year was held on April 25, with a presentation on the history of the Byward Market.

The Spring 1991 issue of the **Heritage Ottawa** newsletter celebrates the decision by Ottawa City Council to create a Heritage Conservation District in the Byward Market, and speculated on the possibility of a heritage designation for the Rockcliffe air base. It is one of the first five air bases established in 1930 by the Air Board, and is one of only two bases in Canada that have maintained continuous operations.

The Winter 1991 issue of the newsletter of the **Aylmer Heritage Association** reports that the Association, in cooperation with the City of Aylmer and the Ministry of Cultural Affairs, is establishing Annual Heritage Awards, "to recognize the contribution made by owners who faithfully restore and maintain with care their heritage properties," etc.

Meanwhile, the newsletter of the **Nepean Museum** advertises the upcoming Antiques and Collectibles Show and Sale, to take place June 7-9 in the Nepean Sportsplex. Also noted is the recent visit of Sir Evan and

Lady Cicely Nepean, who reside in Goldens Teffont, Salisbury, U.K. In December Sir Evan and Lady Cicely were honoured with a lifetime membership by the Board of Trustees of the Museum, and were presented with special copies of five pages of genealogical information from the Nepean Family bible that is in the possession of the Museum.

Information also received on latest developments with **The Canadian Heritage Rivers System**. The CHRS is a co-operative program of the Government of Canada and most of the provinces (including Québec) and territories. The objectives of the CHRS are "to give national recognition to the important rivers of Canada and to ensure long-term management that will conserve their natural, historical, and recreational values for the benefit and enjoyment of Canadians today and in the future." To date thirteen rivers have been designated as "heritage rivers": the French and Mattawa in Ontario; the Alsek and the Yukon in (where else?) the Yukon; the Clearwater in Saskatchewan; the South Nahanni, the Thelon, and the Kazan in the Northwest Territories; the St. Croix in New Brunswick; the Athabasca and the North Saskatchewan in Alberta; the Bloodvein in Manitoba; and the Kicking Horse river in British Columbia.

Could the Gatineau River be next?

- Jay Atherton

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Mill/Museum Summer Program

The Society is looking forward to another summer season operating the Maclaren House and the Mill at Wakefield. Members are invited to participate in this interesting and unique project. Volunteers are required to act as "hosts" for a Saturday or Sunday afternoon (one time only). If you are interested in helping us, and spending an enjoyable afternoon in an historical setting, please call Fergus Maclaren at 827-4414.

Seeing RED?

Do you see a red mark on your address label? This means that we have not yet received your membership renewal at the time of the mailing of this newsletter. The membership fee (including all family members) is \$15 for one year, \$25 for two years. Please send a cheque, made out to "Historical Society of the Gatineau", to the address on our masthead. Better yet - come to the next meeting and take care of it there.

The Historical Society of the Gatineau *Newsletter* is published monthly. It belongs to the membership and should be seen and used as a vehicle of communication between and for the members of the Historical Society. Comments and/or contributions are welcomed and encouraged by the editor, Jay Atherton, either by telephone (827-1703) or by mail (R.R.3, Wakefield, QC J0X 3G0).



P.M.O. EVANS
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