

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

Box/C.P. 485, Chelsea (Qué) J0X 1N0 (819) 827-4432

# Newsletter

Special Issue: February 1997

# Annual General Meeting - February 17

# Chelsea Community Centre, Old Chelsea

7:30 - Social Hour (coffee, tea, snacks, wine)

8:15 - Speaker: Jake Warren: "Diplomats and the Valley - Reminiscences and Reflections"

Annual Meeting
Presentation of Awards, Election of Officers
[PLEASE NOTE LOCATION]

# Report of Nominating Committee

The Nominating Committee proposes the following slate of officers for the year 1996/97:

PRESIDENT Carol Martin (Kirk's Ferry)
1st VICE PRESIDENT Ernie Mahoney (Wakefield)
2nd VICE PRESIDENT Randolph Gherson
(Larrimac)

**DIRECTORS** 

Allan Richens (Gleneagle)
David Castleman (Larrimac)
Anne Fleming (Ottawa)
Susan Hanley (Cantley)
Bruce Lister (Larrimac)



# New Members

Welcome to Eric Marshall and Huguette Poulin.

# HSG Constitution Under Review Jay Atherton

The Executive of the Historical Society has begun a review of the constitution and by-laws (the last such review took place in 1985). Among other things, the Executive is looking at the Society's name. The current name often leads to confusion (involving the City of Gatineau). Also under consideration are whether the term of office of members of the Executive should be lengthened. Other administrative changes also are being discussed.

As soon as the initial work by the Executive is complete, a proposed document will be mailed out to all members with a newsletter, asking for comments and suggestions. The final step will be presentation of the new document at a monthly members' meeting, possibly in the fall. The objective is to have any amendments in effect for the annual meeting in February 1998.

# BIFHSGO Future Events

The British Isles Family History Society of Greater Ottawa has issued its "calendar of events" for the coming months. Highlights are:

Until April 6 - "Family Albums," an educational exhibition at the Canadian Museum of Contemporary Photography (next to the Chateau Laurier). Admission free.

April 25-27 - Ontario Genealogical Society's Annual Genealogical Conference, in Alliston, Ontario. Focus will be upon *Rural Roots and Other Connections*. Contact the Seminar '97 Committee, P.O. Box 47518, Don Mills. ON. M3C 1P0.

April 26 - Upper Ottawa Genealogical Group seminar. Theme: Research Facilities Available to Researchers. Details from Olga Lewis, Program Chairman, Upper Ottawa Genealogical Group, 190 Massey Crescent, Renfrew, ON, K4C 4C1.

#### GENE-O-RAMA '97 Set for March 21 - 22

The 16th annual "Gene-o-Rama" of the Ottawa Branch, Ontario Genealogical Society will take place on March 21 and 22 in the Nepean City Hall. The conference has a decidedly American bent. Featured speaker is a Washington-based genealogist, John Philip Colleta. Topics include U.S. Passenger Arrival Records, 1820-1954; U.S. Naturalization Records, 1790-1922; and Using Artifacts in Genealogical Writing. As usual, there will be an interesting and informative exhibit area.

The cost of registration is \$25 in advance, \$30 at the door. For further information, contact Gene-o-rama '97, c/o 20 Glacier Street, Nepean, ON, K2J 2N

# **ANNUAL REPORT, 1996**

#### President's Message

Carol Martin

The HSG, as a voluntary organization, achieves results through the work of people—executive, committees, members—and by influencing people. Thank you, everyone, for your support during 1996.

Three of our activities—the *Newsletter*, our program of monthly meetings, and *Up the Gatineaul*—have been very visible and important ways of promoting local history during the past year. We have issued the *Newsletter* less frequently (but at least every two months), to save postage costs. The trade-off has been that each edition is now longer and newsier, and many of you have responded that you like the change. Through our regular program of speakers we have heard from a variety of talented and interesting people. *Up the Gatineaul* has continued to encourage and celebrate local events and people. Memories of a historic anniversary, the end of World War II, as experienced in this area and by people living here, became the theme of the 1996 edition.

Special events included the Remembrance Day ceremony at the Chelsea Pioneer Cemetery, and the 34th Annual Auction, which made record profits. Some of the items from the Society's museum in the Maclaren House and the Wakefield Mill were "on the block," so it was also a time of regret for all those who had worked so hard to support the

museum over the years. The Society has retained part of its collection, with some smaller items in storage and many items on loan to the Hogue House museum at Maniwaki and to Heritage Aylmer. The balance of items were returned to their owners or found new homes through the auction. I like to think that at least the cycle of caring for these relics of the past has continued, and we have plans to prepare some mini-exhibits for short-term display in the community.

The Society's Archives have survived some dislocation during the renovation of the Chelsea Library and Administration Centre; Jay Atherton will be the Society's new Archivist, with Patrick Evans —to whom the Society owes a great debt of gratitude for his work over the years—remaining as "archivist advisor emeritus."

A good deal of the HSG's work is achieved by Committees and volunteers. If you would like to help with any of our activities, please let us know. Perhaps you have some new ideas, or another activity to suggest. Again, please share your ideas. And many thanks to those who have worked this past year on maintaining the Pioneer Cemetery, marketing and distribution of the Society's publications. updating membership lists, producing and mailing the Newsletter, and organizing the food and coffee for meetings and special events. Thanks in particular to Muriel How and Mary Lamoureux, for their work in the appointed positions of Secretary and Treasurer. We welcome Eileen Castleman as the Society's new Secretary and, at the time of writing this, are still seeking candidates for Treasurer. In two other areas, the Society would like to find volunteers with ideas to help in developing more bilingual presentations and activities, and in working with school children.

A new committee, under Randolph Gherson, is exploring ways for the Society to celebrate the year 2000. Do you have a creative bent or some suggestion as to what the Society should do to celebrate the millennium (which is also the 200th anniversary of the arrival of Philemon Wright to these parts)? What special contributions can the HSG make to celebrate our local history for this year. Please let us know your ideas, or, better still, come to an informal meeting this Spring on the topic. (Call the HSG telephone number for more information: 827-4432.) During the coming year, another committee will be reviewing the Society's constitution. This process will involve consultation with the membership at large, and the results considered at a general members' meeting in the fall.

We have participated with other local history societies by exchanging information, inviting their attendance at our events, and attending theirs. This year we received a provincial grant towards production of a booklet on Chelsea's protestant cemeteries, and we have sponsored and provided a loan to Gunda Lambton for her book *The Wildest Rivers, the Oldest Hills*. We also provided a loan to the Wakefield Covered Bridge Committee to fund work to roof in the bridge before winter.

I marvel that there are always new things to learn about our history, and am pleased that there are so many willing to support and promote the history and heritage of the Gatineau. Thank you, everyone.

#### Finance Committee

David Castleman

As in previous years, the Committee developed a budget in consultation with the Executive and the other committees, and provided advice and assistance to the Treasurer on financial matters. This year the Committee carried out a member service cost analysis for a membership of 250. On the basis of its findings, the Committee recommended that membership fees remain unchanged and that serious attempts be made to increase the number of members.

The 1996 Financial Statement, which will be mailed out to members after the Annual General Meeting, will give the regular balance and operating data as well as the profit/loss summary reports of the major activities of the Society. An interim report on the financial status of the Society will be available at the Annual General Meeting.

# Annual Auction Sale

Randolph Gherson

The Annual Auction was held on Saturday, 17 August, as in the past on the grounds of St. Stephen's Church, Old Chelsea. This was a record year, in terms of both participation and revenues. It was a perfect summer's day. Three other important factors also contributed. First and foremost, several "treasures" and collectible items from Maclaren House and the Wakefield Mill, which could not find a home in other museums or be kept in indefinite storage, were put up for auction. Well orchestrated publicity helped to attract the interest of Canadiana and local history buffs, as well as practical collectors who could find use for such pieces as an early nineteenth century scythe or chamber pot.

The second factor was that we innovated with a Collectibles Corner, with priced items, in addition to the flea market. Lastly, we held a silent auction for special items that had been graciously donated by the Prime Minister, our local MP, Robert Bertrand, and local merchants and restaurateurs. All in all we turned in a profit of over \$10,000.

In large part the success of the Auction as an event is due to the quiet, unsung efforts and generous gifts of time, experience, and transport of many Society volunteers. It was they who planned the activities, registered and ticketed the items from Maclaren House and the Mill, transported and arranged them for viewing and subsequently for presentation on the grounds, registered the bidders and the sales, did the running and spotting, processed the purchases and the accounts, operated the Collectibles, the flea market, the silent auction, and the bakery and coffee stands - and, finally, the inevitable cleanup. A special vote of thanks also to Hoss Bertrand, who once again performed magnificently as auctioneer, and for our perennial master of ceremonies, Bob Phillips.

#### Archives/Research

Patrick M.O. Evans

This year was not an ideal one for the people engaged in keeping control of the mandate presented to us by the Society. Some of the staff suffered illnesses, in addition to which there were changes caused by the renovations of the municipality's office space, which caused concern with the safety of the Society's holdings, all of which slowed down our work. However, there were some bright spots. Anne Fleming became a permanent member of the team and Joan Gherson joined on a time-to-time basis. The best news was that Jay Atherton is to succeed me as Archivist early in 1997.

A tally is kept of those who visit. Most of these are genealogists who come to check our records. There are those who end up maintaining their interest in correspondence with us. There are others too distant to visit, who write. Between us we are able to give ninety-five percent satisfaction.

Some of the visitors come with gifts for our varied records. It is our wish to thank them in a public fashion for their generosity - at the same time it is a reminder to others. Herewith the gift list:

Effie MacDiarmid:a) Monthly statement of Kelly and Leduc

Hardware, dated 21 March 1945, for \$203 addressed to Thomas D. McDiarmid [sic] of Cascades; b) receipt from Dr. Harold J. G. Geggie to Mrs. MacDiarmid for \$5.00.

Bob Gibson Newell: Update of Gibson genealogy.

May Chaffers: From an empty house in Wakefield, the papers of a young lady who attended the same commercial college in Ottawa as Bruce Heggtviet (the artist formerly of Kingsmere Road); their college days were more than fifty years ago.

<u>Ernie Mahoney</u>: The 1959 Dinghy Year Book. It has already answered questions posed by the executive of the local yacht club.

<u>Eva Henry Desormeaux</u>: Fiftieth Anniversary of Our Lady of Sorrows, Venosta, 1943-1993.

Bob and Henry Morris: Descendants of (a) James Pritchard and Judith Ferguson; b) William Hamilton and Susannah Boon; (c) William Fitzpatrick and Mary Anne Seamans; (d) William Colbert and Mary ——?——; (e) Joseph Irwin and Mary Pritchard.

<u>Keith Lachance</u>: Descendants of James Pritchard and Judith Ferguson.



### Wakefield Covered Bridge Project Anita Rutledge

The year 1996 saw the goal of the Covered bridge Committee—formally undertaken at its kickoff in June 1991—become a reality. Now one need only look up river from the village to see the bridge back in its familiar setting on the river. Many hours of work were involved: meetings, planning, fund-raising and administration, finding affordable materials and equipment, as well as engineers, surveyors, sawyers, and builders—now all made worthwhile.

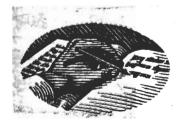
The third week of August the four wall trusses and all the roof trusses for the bridge had been constructed at the building site in the village. Then, during the last week of August, the four wall trusses were raised by heavy cranes and braced together to form the two spans or main supporting structures for the bridge.

During the first week of September the two 144-foot spans were moved, one after the other, first be truck to the river's edge and then by barge up-river, to be lowered onto the original bridge pier and abutments. The following weeks saw the installation of the floor, and then the prefabricated roof trusses, followed by roofing tin just before winter set in at the end of November. The last step will be installation of the siding; however, this must await the arrival of warm weather and more funds.

Meanwhile, the Committee continues to work, arranging lighting, insurance, signage, and landscaping at the site, as well as publicity and fund-raising. Of course, the search for volunteers is ongoing. At the end of November the Committee vacated its office space at the building site in the village, obtaining permission from the Municipality of Lapêche to store surplus materials and equipment in the yard for auction in the spring. Our sawmill was advertised for sale in November and sold to the highest bidder at a reasonable price.

During the year the Committee was able to raise \$118,000, which has gone a long way towards paying the heavy costs of moving and erecting the bridge. We were helped by federal Student and UI programs to hire workers, as well as a major cash donation from the National Capital Commission, and several large contributions from area business and individuals. (The Historical Society provided \$6,000 in the form of an interest-free loan.) We are compiling a complete list of all contributors to the project, to be inscribed in a book for permanent deposit in the Historical Society Archives. In addition, the names of donors of \$1,000 or more will be engraved on a plaque to be erected at the bridge site. The Committee estimates that it will need to raise another \$65,000 to fully finance work on the bridge and its approaches.

Since its erection, we have been reminded that the new bridge has a two-fold claim to the history of the Gatineau region. Not only is it built to the main specifications of the original 1915 Gendron Bridge and other "Town style" wooden bridges in the area, but it is built with lumber remilled ourselves from recycled boom logs used in the days of the historic log drive on the Gatineau River.



#### Speakers' Program

**Bruce Lister** 

Members meetings are held monthly except during the summer. Bruce Lister succeeded Jeff Atkins as Program Chair early in the new year. Our thanks to both of them for arranging an interesting list of speakers:

January 15	Larry	Dufour,	History	of	St.	Stephen's
_	Churc	h, Chelse	ea (this m	eeti	ng w	as actually
	held in	n the chu	rch).			

# February 19 Annual General Meeting. Speaker: Joanne Fortier, National Capital Commission, "The Archaeological Excavations at Leamy Lake."

March 18	Cameron Pulsifer, Canadian War Museum,				
	"Richard Rowland Thompson	and	the		
	Queen's Scarf."				

April 15	Annual Dinner at Larrimac Golf	Club
	Speaker: Tom Greenberg on the hist	ory of
	the Golf Club.	

May 13	Marcel	Beaudry,	Chairman,	Capital
	Commis	sion: The r	ole of the NC	CC in the
	Outaoua	nis		

Sept. 16	Michael and Sandy Crawley, "The Story of
	Crawley Films."

October 20	Jim Burant, National Archives of Canada,				
October 20					
	bilingual meeting to which members of the				
	Société de l'histoire de l'Outaouais were				
	invited: "Painters of the Outaouais/ Peintres				
	de l'Outaouais."				

# November 18 Gunda Lambton unveiled her latest book (written with Venetia Crawford), "The Wildest Rivers - The Oldest Hills; Tales of the Gatineau and Pontiac."

#### **Publications**

Gudula and Duncan Marshall

#### Distribution and Sales

The Historical Society of the Gatineau sells its publications directly by offering them for sale at meetings and events, and by request to members and the public. Members receive a copy of each year's *Up the Gatineaul* as part of

their membership package. The publications are also sold through some dozen local merchants in Chelsea and Wakefield, and an equal number in the Ottawa area. Those currently available for sale include *Up the Gatineaul* (including previous volumes), *Hurling Down the Pine*, and *Touring the Two Chelseas*.

Overall sales income in 1996 (\$2,589) is within 5% of the previous year, and the current volume of *Up the Gatineaul* (No. 22) sold about the same quantity as in previous years. Sales of back issues increased significantly this year (from \$402.80 to \$654.50). There is a continuing interest in earlier volumes, and our stocks of some of the earlier issues were fully depleted, while we continued to receive requests for them. The HSG looked into procuring reprints, and arranged for the University of Ottawa Press to produce "Reproduction Issues" of nine early volumes which had been out of stock. Some booksellers reported that more people appear to be doing research into their family history and are keen to get acquainted with previous land uses and names of property owners.

Sales of *Hurling Down the Pine* also increased. This book sells particularly well to tourists and we have an ample supply for the next few years. *Wakefield and its People*, by Norma Geggie, has sold well to a local market, but is now out of stock. Norma is considering the merits of producing a revised edition, some time in the future. *Historical Walks: The Gatineau Park Story* is also out of stock. However, author Katharine Fletcher is currently working on a second edition, which she expects will be available this spring.

#### Other activities

Gunda Lambton, a life member of the Society and author, has written a book, *The Wildest Rivers - the Oldest Hills: Tales of the Gatineau and Pontiac*, co-authored with Venetia Crawford. The HSG supported Mrs. Lambton's application to the Quebec Ministère de la Culture et des Communications for a grant towards material resources and secretarial help in producing this book, and has provided a loan towards its publication costs. The book was launched in November and is available in local stores. (The HSG is not involved with its distribution. However, copies can also be obtained through Voyageur Publishing/Voyageur North America in Canada at 5 Richmond St., Maitland, Ontario KOE 1PO, and in the United States at 812 Proctor Ave., Ogdensburg, New York 13669. Toll Free Order Lines are phone [800] 268-2946 or FAX [800] 444-5899.)

In 1993 Mrs Lambton received an Award of Honour from

the HSG for writing on history and folklore; readers of *Up* the *Gatineau!* may note the many articles she has contributed to this publication.

In late spring 1996 Vincent McSheffrey had inquired about publishing assistance for his book (get title) and had given Stuart Geggie a manuscript for a preliminary assessment in June. It was not then in publishing form, and the Society's offer in September to review the manuscript for consideration for a loan in accordance with its publication guidelines was outpaced by Mr. McSheffrey, who had already proceeded with publication! This book is available at local stores.

In support of the interest in past issues, the Index to *Up the Gatineau!* (which now covers volumes 1-12) is being updated, to coincide with issuance of the 1997 *Up the Gatineau!* 

We would like to thank Hilda Gillen for all of her efforts to ensure that Society publications were distributed across Ottawa outlets, both this year and for many previous years. Hilda has indicated that she would like to retire from this activity, and the HSG is seeking a volunteer to handle the Ottawa distribution of our publications. Is there a volunteer out there who would be willing to visit a dozen Ottawa book stores two or three times a year on behalf of HSG publications?

#### The Next Issue

... of the Newsletter will contain the 1996 Financial Statements, plus reports on Maclaren House and the Wakefield Mill, and our work on Cemeteries.

#### Membership

Membership in the Historical Society has shown negative growth in recent years. As of March 1996 the Society had 23 group members, which includes historical societies, libraries, newspapers, etc. (most of which are simply on our mailing list, for reciprocal exchange of newsletters, etc.), and 242 household memberships (this category does not specify the number of people per household). However, it was determined that of this number there were forty who had not renewed their membership. There was, therefore, the possibility of a much lower membership figure. Furthermore, it was found that the Society had carried several members for a full year.

To bring the memberships into line, every overdue membership was contacted; by the end of April individuals had either paid or been removed from the mailing list.

Now I am happy to report that the 1996 year-end figures show excellent positive growth, with 24 group and 264 household memberships. This total of 288 memberships indicates that this year our growth factor has been six percent. Let us all encourage our friends and neighbours to join so that this trend may continue.

The Newsletter is published regularly by the Historical Society of the Gatineau. Contributions and comments are always welcome. Editor/compiler is Jay Atherton (827-1703). Distribution: Rae Moore, Marjorie Evis, and Fred.

Jay ATHERTON

#### List of Members (31 Dec. 1996)

Aylmer Heritage Association
Aylmer Museum
Brockville Historical Society
Chelsea Municipal Library
Chelsea Recreation Dept.
Cumberland Historical Society
Grenville Historical Society
Heritage Canada Foundation
Heritage Ottawa
Metro Toronto Library Board
Ontario Genealogical Society
Ottawa Historical Society
Ottawa Historical Society
Ottawa Public Library

Ottawa Valley Historical Society

Outaouais Alliance
Outaouais Creators
Pontiac Archives
Pontiac Historical Society
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Sociéte d'histoire de l'Outaouais
Stormont, Dundas & Glengarry
Historical Society

The News
Wakefield Municipal Library

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Blake WATSON Louise WATSON

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Adrien WILSON
Chris WILSON
Mary WILTON
Theresa WINFIELD
Robert & Barbara WOODS

Don WRIGHT
Mrs. Edith WRIGHT

Mrs. Moiya WRIGHT

Historical Society of the Gatineau Box/C.P. 485, Chelsea (Québec) J0X 1N0