

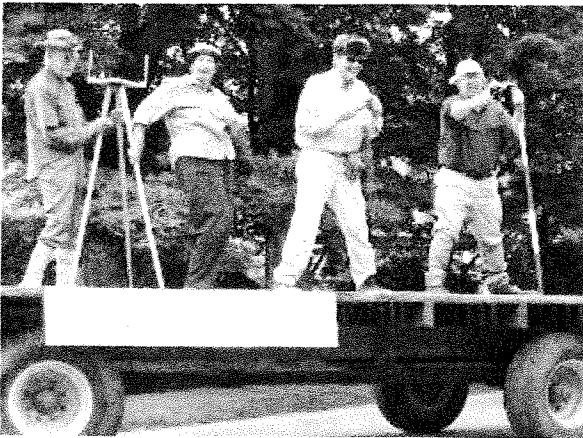
Société d'histoire de Georgeville

Georgeville Historical Society

Newsletter - Fall 2008

GHS enlivens the Canada Day Parade

This year the GHS float celebrated the first land survey of our area in 1792. John Boynton had got an original chain that would have been used then, and he was joined by Jean-Pierre Lefebvre, Rev. Dean Moffat and Valerie Pasztor to give a spirited re-enactment of the surveying techniques!



GHS Canada Day Float

Walking Tour of the Southern Part of the Village

On a fine July evening last summer, we welcomed twenty history buffs who gathered at the village pond and led them on a tour of the southern part of the village, asking them to imagine that we were back in 1863, the year in which the Gray Map was published.

We admired the four buildings still standing where they were shown on the Gray Map – the schoolhouse, built in 1849 to replace the brick academy which had burned down the year before; the Foris Wood house of 1824, now Ed Vancour's; the Methodist parsonage, dating from 1847 and now owned by Peter and Loy Denis; and the house built by William Bullock in 1823, currently owned by John Boynton.

The sites of those buildings that no longer exist were also identified – the tannery, the blacksmith shop, and the first Methodist church which was moved down the hill to become part of the Elephantis Hotel and burned in the fire of 1898. We also saw the house sites of Gardner Rolleston (burned in 1898); Captain Goerge Washington Fogg (demolished in 1849, we saw the cellar hole); Amasa Perkins (torn down and replaced in 1941 and now occupied by an imposing new residence); the John Garty Tuck house (originally Abraham Channel's, lost in the 1898 fire and replaced the following year by the house that is now Ruth Partington's); and Dr. Nelson Cheney's (moved by his successor Dr. William Keyes to a location near the Lake and long since vanished). The house occupied in 1863 by J.H.McVey the customs officer was bought by Thomas Macduff who moved it by a team of 12 oxen to Wigwam Point. There it remained for 143 years of ownership by Macduff and his descendants until last fall when it was demolished by its new owners. This part of the village has indeed changed.

GHS/GNS Walk along Old Magoon Point Road

The second GHS walk was scheduled for mid August, but there had been so much rain during the previous two weeks that it was decided to postpone it till drier weather. Fortunately, GNS had not yet fixed a route for their nature walk in September and they kindly agreed to merge our walk with theirs.

18 people showed up at the Hall and we drove along Magoon Point Road to the end where the route makes a sharp left and becomes Camber Road, passing a large family of wild turkeys on the way. We continued southwards along the old track, keeping our eyes open for autumn flowers and berries (18 species were identified) as well as home sites of the early settlers. John Boynton explained how the original survey divided the land into 200 acre lots and told us about the families who had cleared the land and set up farms. It was fascinating to realize that there had been a complete village on Magoon's Point in the heyday of the lime industry. When that collapsed due to competition from a new quarry elsewhere with better transportation facilities, the village rapidly depopulated and nothing remains of the abandoned wooden houses except a few foundation stones ringing the cellar holes. There had at one time been a two-storey stone house but even that is now just a pile of rubble.

We were glad of our foresight in parking cars at both ends of the walk and we gladly piled into cars to return to the Hall. The rain held off until we were safely home again. It had been a very interesting walk and, of course, the company was most pleasant. Our thanks go to John Scott, John Boynton and Steve Moore for researching the whole area and preparing the explanatory pamphlet.

The Magoon Point Cemetery

At the end of Magoon's Point there once was a village that prospered during the nineteenth century due to a thriving lime industry. One of the remnants of the lost village of Magoon's Point is its cemetery, which was abandoned at the beginning of the twentieth century and has been neglected for many decades.

One Saturday morning this fall a small group of Historical Society members met at the cemetery down on the Point to undertake a clean-

up of the site. John Boynton, Jean-Pierre Lefebvre, his son Charles and Steve Moore attacked fallen trees, long grass, golden rod and other unsightly undergrowth which had almost completely obscured the gravestones. In all this took about 12 man-hours of hard work, not a great deal of time, but an important first step in salvaging the old burial ground. A couple of weeks later, Steve returned and spent an additional three hours mowing the uneven terrain between and around the remaining twelve stones, as well as piling up brush and rolling up pieces of old barbed-wire fencing.

The Magoon Point Cemetery now looks more much presentable to the passers-by, more like a cared-for cemetery than just a haphazard grove of trees. Although well-intentioned efforts have been undertaken in the past by distant relatives of individuals buried there and concerned local citizens, a concerted effort of regular maintenance has not been forthcoming.

Steve brought this matter to the November Board of Directors meeting and it was agreed that GHS should commit to a program of annual upkeep. A modest sign will be erected bearing the name *Magoon's Point Cemetery* and the coordinates of GHS identifying the Society as the caretakers.

Hopefully, with our help, the cemetery will not fade away completely, lost to the vagaries of time and neglect as have too many abandoned cemeteries in Canada.



Magoon Point Cemetery after its recent clean-up

Notes from the Directors

This year we have a record breaking GHS membership with 162 paid-up members. This total includes 26 new members to whom we extend a warm welcome. ›

65 members have internet connections so we can use email for some communications and save ever-increasing postage costs.

We are looking into the possibility of having our own GHS Web Site where we can post upcoming events. Worry not though, we will still continue to publish this newsletter on good old-fashioned paper, unlike the *Christian Science Monitor*. We mail our newsletter out to local newspapers and other historical societies.

Oral History Workshop

At the beginning of November, our Society and the Stanstead Historical Society co-hosted an interesting workshop on oral history at the Murray Memorial Hall . It was given by Dr. Peter Southam, History Department, University of Sherbrooke.

I expect that most of the 16 people who attended, like me, thought that it was a very straightforward procedure to sit down with a recorder and collect a tape-full of reminiscences of the good (or bad) old days from some elderly relative. Not so. Peter Southam outlined for us the importance of planning and researching before ever approaching the interviewee.

First, since we were all coming from historical society or archive backgrounds, it was important to decide upon the objectives of the oral history project: what did we want to investigate and at what time and place (for example, the coming of electricity to Georgeville in the first half of the twentieth century.) He stressed that there should be some end-product in mind such as a book or presentation. Then we should research the subject thoroughly and find people who might have personal memories of those events.

He said that the interview should be conversation between the interviewer and interviewee/narrator, guided along by the interviewer's gentle, yet probing, questions. It is vital that the narrator feels totally at ease, forgets all about the recording equipment and begins to enjoy telling the story. The interviewer must have empathy with the narrator, and somehow has to develop the ability to listen intently and look encouraging, while planning the next question, to know when to change the subject or when to let a pause develop as memories are searched for extra, valuable information. I now listen to interviews

on the radio with a new, critical intensity and admire the skills of someone like Eleanor Wachtel on CBC.

Afterwards, the interviewer must archive the recording, ideally with a full transcript and personal data about the narrator so that the information can be available to other researchers, perhaps decades in the future.

Anyone who is interested in assisting with the GHS oral history projects or who can suggest some sources of good narratives, should contact valerie.pasztor@mcgill.ca or phone 819-868-4314.

Ad Hoc Committee on Planning

In response to concerns expressed by members of the community regarding past and potential threats to the aesthetic and heritage character of Georgeville village and surrounding areas, an ad-hoc committee was struck to examine planning issues. Through a meeting with Steve Otis, planner for the MRC Memphremagog, it was learned that the Municipality of Canton de Stanstead is one of the few under their jurisdiction which does not have a "Plan d'implantation et d'intégration architecturale", widely known by its acronym PIIA. This additional set of guidelines to deal with building permit applications allows for more subjective aesthetic, contextual and heritage criteria than does the existing building code. The PIIA commissioned by our municipality in 2002 was judged inappropriate and shelved. Recently, the committee sent letters to all the municipalities under MRC Memphremagog requesting copies of their PIIAs and information regarding their satisfaction with these guidelines in dealing with current planning issues. Responses are beginning to come in and should provide valuable information as to the type of PIIA which might best fulfill the needs of the Canton de Stanstead.

Quiz Answers

1. Moses Copp; 1833; Georgeville Village(Bullock)-Cemetery (3)
2. Mountain Maid; George Washington Fogg (2)
3. Roz & Peter Smith; Moses Copp; ca. 1816 (3)
4. Georgeville Consolidated School (1 point)
5. The Outlet Road (1)
6. On St. George's Church parking lot; Rev. Edwin Peake; 1891 (3)
7. Caroline America Everett Beach Davidson; MacPherson Cemetery (2)
8. The first hill on Magoon Point Road going out of the village (1)
9. Sugar Loaf and Hog's Back; Mont sugarloaf and Mont Elephant (2)
10. The east "half" of the Price apartment building;
On right field of the baseball diamond; 1944 (3)
11. 1899 (1) Total points 22

Georgeville History Quiz

Test the knowledge of your family and visitors this holiday period. Much of the information is available in Georgeville history books, other facts may be have to be searched out from historical plaques, gravestones and maps. Have fun!

1. Who was the first settler in Georgeville? _____
When did he die? _____
Where was he buried? _____

2. What was the name of the steamboat launched in Georgeville in 1850?
Who was her first Captain? _____

3. Who are the current owners of the oldest house remaining in the Village?
Who built it? _____
In what year? _____

4. What was the original name of what is now the Murray Memorial Centre? _____

5. What was the name in the early 1800s of what is now Chemin Georgeville?

6. Where was the first Methodist Church located? _____
Who was its first minister? _____
When was that church replaced by a new building? _____

7. Who was the lady with five names? _____
Where is she buried? _____

8. Where is Bullock Hill? _____

9. Known locally as Mount Elefantus, how is it named
On federal maps? _____
On provincial maps? _____

10. Which building on Copps Square was formerly the Quinn Store?

Where was it previously located? _____
When was it moved? _____

11. When was the original watering trough at the junction of
Chemin Channel and Chemin Magoon Point constructed? _____