



## Société d'histoire de Georgeville

## Georgeville Historical Society

Newsletter – Fall 2016

### SUMMER EVENTS

#### Canada Day Parade



The Canada Day Parade float sponsored by the Society featured the Bigelow Pioneer Garden. GHS Directors Valerie Pasztor and Martin Bosch played the roles of Hanna and Levi Bigelow who owned the Union Hotel which occupied the site where the Bigelow Garden is now situated. The Georgeville Historical Society sponsors and manages the garden.



The float won first prize for presentation.

#### Annual General Meeting

The annual general meeting of the Georgeville Historical Society was held on July 10 at the Community Hall. This year is the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of St. George's Anglican Church and as guest speaker, Dr. Valerie Pasztor, a past-president and director of the GHS, provided a research-based presentation on the history of the church.

## **Historical Artefact Fair**

Members of the community were invited to bring historical items of interest to the Community Centre on July 19 where they were displayed. They were encouraged to explain the significance of each item either personally or in writing. More than 25 items were produced for display, ranging from Camp Arrowhead books to a painting of Birch Bay prior to settlement, from a bread maker to a bed warmer from Boynton House.



**Deane Moffat and Judy Bachelder examine a bed warming pan at the Artefact Fair.**

## **Studio Georgeville**

Throughout the summer, the Studio mounted an exhibition that included a number of activities highlighting the Bigelow Pioneer Garden. For example, eight plants from the Garden were exhibited along with artistic renderings of the same plants.

The event also included a flower arranging competition and the sale of plants and seedlings.

## **THE GHS LIBRARY & ARCHIVES: A PLACE TO CALL HOME**

At long last, a place to call home. Thanks to the generosity of Jacques Valiquette, the Georgeville Historical Society is moving its collection of artifacts and archival material to Jacques' carriage house. He has invited the GHS to use the spacious upper floor, well insulated and bright with natural light, as a secure site for its archives and also as a working centre.



**Jacques Valiquette arrives with four strong men and a trailer to move GHS artefacts from Valerie Pasztor's barn to his coach house.**

“We are enormously grateful to Jacques for recognizing that our archives have matured to the point that they cannot be effectively used, scattered as they are in various places,” said Stephen Moore, president of the GHS.

John Boynton's research, one of the cores of the GHS collection, was recently moved from his house to the rear room at the United Church. It is now in the carriage house. Here it has been joined by several thousand photos,

many of Georgeville's 1997 bicentennial celebration, that were threatening to drive Judy Bachelder from house and home. All will be integrated in coming months with the Society's major collection of books and archives currently in the process of being moved from John and Janet Scott's house under the expert supervision of Gretchen Hatfield.



**Following a September Board meeting, the directors visited and celebrated the newly-acquired storage and exhibit space.**

Jacques Valiquette, one of the founders of the GHS back in 1993 is now again a director. Stephen Moore added: "We hope to be able to welcome members to an open house at the Library and Archives before long in the new year."

## A DATE TO REMEMBER

The annual Remembrance Day ceremony will take place at the Georgeville Cenotaph at 10.45 am on Friday, November 11.

## ST. GEORGE'S CELEBRATES 150 YEARS

More than 150 people filled the beautifully restored St. George's Anglican Church on the

morning of August 28 for a service to celebrate its 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

### GHS OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS

#### Executive

President	Stephen Moore
Vice-President	Judy Bachelder
Secretary	Christian Hurlow
Treasurer	Diane Partington

#### Directors

John Atkin	Martin Bosch
David Cox	Aileen Desbarats
Heather Kovacs	Joyce McTavish
Deane Moffat	Valerie Pasztor
John Scott	Jacques Valiquette
Lorne Waid, Jr.	Keith Wilcox

Members Emeritus	Adelaide Atkin
	Bernard Drew

Bishop Bruce Myers, the Co-adjutor Bishop of Quebec conducted the service. He was assisted by the Ven. Dean Ross; his brother, the Rev. Lynn Ross; the Ven. Edward Simonton, Archdeacon of the St. Francis Deanery; and Postulant Gene Ross. Sarah Hoblyn directed 20 members of the Georgeville Occasional Choir.

Following the service all were welcomed to a reception at the Murray Memorial Hall. Pierre Reid, the MNA for Orford, addressed the attendees and read a letter of congratulations from the Premier of Quebec.

A presentation was made to the architect, Clair Moore, Toby Rochester and John Hoblyn in recognition of their extensive work on the restoration project.



**Bishop Bruce Myers conducted the celebratory service with the assistance of these special guests.**

## **THE JOURNEY OF ROBERT AND ALYS SLATER TO GEORGEVILLE**

*[The following article is based on extracts from a presentation by Dr. Peter Slater on August 10 sponsored by the Georgeville Historical Society.]*

The only home my parents ever owned was the former Hutchins' family house in Georgeville, bought, I think in 1950, when my father was a professor of theology at McGill University and a colleague of R.B.Y.Scott. The Scotts invited them here one weekend and they fell in love with the village. The place next door was for sale, a New England-style two-storey wooden, cream-coloured clapboard house, across

McGowan Road from the Davidson barn.

How we ended up in Georgeville is a story which starts in the north of England and gets us to Montreal via Burma, Australia, New York, and an interim in Boston, finally Georgeville during the decades before, during and after World War II.

“We” are Robert and Alys, parents of John and Peter, aka John Graham Lawson Slater and Christopher Peter Robert Lawson Slater.

Robert and Alys hailed from Northumberland, England. My father was an orphan who grew up in his maternal grandfather's home. My mother Alys was one of the first four women to graduate from Durham University in medicine. Deeply religious, inclined to mystical poetry, she felt called to be a missionary and went into medicine with a view to serving others.

My parents met when Robert was a dashing young curate in a slum parish on Tyneside, who organized one of the first Boy Scout troops to take miners' sons into the country on weekends. She invited him to address the university student Christian association. On the fourth time of his asking, she finally accepted his proposal of marriage.



Soon after their wedding, in the late 1920s, they sailed for Rangoon, Burma (now Yangon, Myanmar). He accepted the post as Lecturer in Logic at Rangoon University so that he could be chaplain to its Christian students. Taken to their monasteries by his Buddhist students, Robert became a pioneer in Buddhist-Christian dialogue.

My older brother was born in Rangoon, but I was born during home leave in Newcastle because with me our mother needed to have a Caesarean. My earliest memories include church parades on Sundays in Maymyo, the military hill station on the Burma Road, built to truck supplies to Chiang Kai-shek's forces, after the Japanese blockaded the Chinese sea ports.



**Robert, Alys and their two sons**

When the Japanese invaded Thailand, instead of going home to England, we took ship for

Australia. My brother and I were sent for the duration to an Anglican boarding school in Adelaide, South Australia. Our only link to it was that the headmaster had gone to Cambridge. Our mother replaced the radiologist on the staff of the Royal Adelaide Hospital, who had enlisted in the army. My brother, who became a country doctor in northern Ontario, always believed that she died early of cancer due to exposure to radiation at that time, before its risks were fully recognized.

My father was "mentioned in dispatches" for taking charge at one river crossing when monsoon rains carried away several rafts and some soldiers tried to commandeer the last one. According to the report, swearing in un-padre-like fashion, he seized a revolver and threatened to shoot them if they didn't let the women and children go first. He teamed up with a Chinese doctor, whose orderlies came back for him whenever he lagged behind. Emaciated, when rescued he weighed less than ninety pounds. He was sent to recuperate for six months on a house-boat in Kashmir.

Our mother had not told us that, for several months, our father was reported missing in action. When he surfaced in India, she left to join him, earning her passage as a ship's doctor. My brother and I, aged 14 and 10, were left with two elderly spinsters, no relation, whom she had met in church. They were our guardians for the next four years until, as teenagers, we took ship to rejoin our parents when they migrated to Canada in 1948. Long separations were normal for missionaries. Of the fourteen trunks we packed for the month-long journey, the only one to arrive intact was the one with our Dinky toys and Hornby trains.

When the war ended and owed a year's army

pay with leave, Robert Lawson Slater pooled that with a graduate scholarship to go to Union Theological Seminary in New York. In two years, he completed a doctorate, writing a dissertation on the paradox in Buddhist and Christian discourse. His diploma was signed by Dwight Eisenhower, then President of Columbia University. Living in graduate student quarters, Alys joined a wives' literary group, comparing thought of German and English poetry with Hannah Tillich, the wife of Paul Tillich, an internationally famous political refugee and professor of theology, later at Harvard.

From New York, Robert Slater won a job at Huron College in London, Ontario, as Dean of Residence. It came with an apartment. For \$5,000 a year, he taught Theology, History of Doctrine, Philosophy of Religion, Ethics and Comparative Religion. Among the students were Joseph Fricker and Art Brown, later bishops in Hamilton and Toronto. My brother and I were horrified to leave the sunny beaches of South Australia, arriving in Canada in March, when the streets are at their sloppiest. The move meant that our mother lost her profession as she didn't feel up to writing the Canadian qualifying exams in medicine. She threw herself into being a house-mother for the students in residence.

McGill needed Anglicans to balance all the United Churchmen on its faculty, so R.B.Y. Scott, the Old Testament professor and interim dean, arranged for Robert to be offered the chair in Theology. Two years later, Robert Slater was also appointed Principal of the Montreal Diocesan Theological College, where McGill Anglican candidates for ordination lived, attended chapel and received practical training for the ministry. This job also came

with a residence and Alys Slater renewed her role as unofficial house mother.

For Anglicans, Montreal used to be the "low church" evangelical diocese while Bishop's University educated the "high church" Diocese of Quebec postulants. However, in 1953, they rebelled and moved *en masse* to McGill, doubling enrollment. Among the evangelicals from the Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship were Stuart Martin, who served a year as Senior Student and Keith Dickerson, both of whom later retired to Georgeville.

The Hutchins house had lots of rooms for my father's study and guest bedrooms. It was diagonally across from Jack and Addie Atkins so whenever anything needed fixing, my father summoned Jack. Jack humoured him because my mother and Addie became fast friends. Whenever my father was too impossible, Alys retreated to Addie's kitchen where they talked poetry. Addie, one of the village beauties, was won by Jack when he returned from the service.

In those days, the year-round residents were the Georgeville families: McGowans, Hornbys, Bachelders, Robinsons and others, who made their living there. Then there were summer families, the Williams, the Steeles, the Scotts, mostly Montrealers. Grannie Heath's boarding house catered for shorter-term visitors and the McGowan House, for fishermen. There were two stores: Graingers', the post office where we bought meat, and Keats', now the village store, which specialized in fresh, home-grown vegetables. The McTavishes delivered milk to our door.

In the late 1950s, when Harvard University was offered millions to establish a centre for the

study of “world religions”, provided they hired a professor approved by the donors, they tried to lure Wilfred Smith from McGill. He declined but recommended his colleague, Robert Slater. He became the first professor and founding director of what became part of the Harvard Divinity School in 1958.

When he reached the mandatory retirement age at Harvard, my parents “retired” permanently to Georgeville. As long as his eyesight lasted, he served without remuneration, apart from expenses, as priest in charge of St. George's

Among new Georgeville parishioners from Montreal, my parents became close friends of Tim and Margaret Durley. Before he died of a heart attack, Tim served a stint as church warden. When my mother was dying of cancer, she made Margaret promise to “look after Bob.” This she did faithfully, checking on him daily. Eventually they married and she moved into the Hutchins house.

When the stairs became too risky for him, they moved into her bungalow and the Hutchins house was sold. In the modern fashion, the new owners tore down the old building, putting an architecturally superior structure where the garden was and a manicured garden where the house was. To this day, I feel sad driving past. But my father believed what he learned from the Buddhists in Burma: we should not set too much store on material things.

## **FORGOT TO RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP?**

You can join the Georgeville Historical Society or renew your membership -- \$10 for an individual, \$15 for a family – by sending your cheque, made out to the Georgeville Historical Society, to Judy Bachelder at 4600 Chemin Georgeville, Canton de Stanstead, QC. J0B 1T0.

**Stories and photos for future newsletters are always welcome.**

This Newsletter was prepared by David R. Cox. Photographs by Judy Bachelder and Maureen Cameron.

