



Société d'Histoire de Georgeville Georgeville Historical Society



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The Passing of Bernard Drew



*The late Bernard Drew
GHS director emeritus*

Last January, the Georgeville Historical Society lost one of its most loyal supporters, Bernard Drew. Bernard was one of the original founding members of the Society when it was formed in 1993, and served as one of its directors until poor health restricted his involvement in the affairs of the organization. Subsequently, he was awarded the title director emeritus.

Bernard was a life-long farmer, residing on the Packard family farm on the East Road with his wife Sylvia and their children Maurice and Judith. In addition, he served as a municipal councilor of Stanstead Township and was the first health and building inspector for the municipality. For many years he drove a school

bus for the Eastern Townships Regional School Board, retiring with a spotless record. He was an elder of Georgeville's United Church and served as the chairman of the village's bicentennial celebrations in 1997.

Bernard was proud of his family heritage, with ancestry tracing back to many of the early settlers of the area, including the Copps, the Packards, the Merrills, the Geers and the Flanders. He was also proud of his community and the history behind it, not the least of which was the involvement of his own family members in its long and storied past.

His legacy as a historian, a community leader and as a friend to all, will endure for years to come.

CROQUET



Green

The GHS hosted its first ever “Croquet on the Green” this past July 19th. Despite a soggy beginning to the day, the sun shone down on some 25 participants who were drawn to the cheerful sight of croquet players in old-fashioned outfits, playing on two courts. The improvised layouts were skillfully designed and set up by Martin Bosch who selected the driest parts of the village green for the playing areas. A striped tent provided shade for on-lookers, who refreshed themselves with cucumber sandwiches, lemonade, iced tea and cookies, as they applauded all the antics of the teams before them.

A dapper Jacques Valiquette at the croquet competition.



Members of the Keet family all decked out in period attire.

There were three prizes for costumes and one for the first-place team. The costume award for “Most Elegant” was won by Suzanne Marcil; the “Most Old-Fashioned” to Jacques Valiquette, and the “Most Amusing” to Bob Irvine. Special thanks is extended to judges David Cox and Russ Williams for making the difficult choices, as many players chose to come in period attire.

The three awards were excellent copies of the 1914 Audrey Stanger photo from the GHS archives, located by Judy Bachelder and reproduced by Anick Valiquette. The winning team made up of Nancy Sullivan, Donna Woolcott and Gus Desbarats shared a larger version of this photo which depicts a group of children pausing in their croquet game at Cedar Cliff.

The event was organized by Gretchen Hatfield with grateful assistance from Martin Bosch and Jacques Valiquette who arranged the two croquet courses, established the rules, as well set up and dismantled the game equipment. Thanks are also extended to Heather Kovacs and Stephen Moore for preparing the sandwiches, lemonade and iced tea.

What made the event such fun was the spirit with which the participants entered into the game – laughter, the sound of mallets, colorful outfits – all under the blue skies of a tranquil Georgeville summer afternoon.



A group of participants testing their croquet skills.

KATE DESBARATS: INSIGHTS INTO RESEARCHING THE TOWNSHIPS

This past summer, Kate Desbarats, Associate Professor of History, Director of the Quebec Studies program at McGill University, and summer resident of Georgeville since birth, made the ultimate sacrifice for the benefit of our historical society. In the second to last month of her year-long sabbatical she gave up one of our rare warm, sunny, late July afternoons to give us an informed and exceptionally interesting talk on researching the Townships. In addition, she came bearing gifts, a complete set of the Dictionary

of Canadian Biography. What a welcome and important addition the Society's library!

Over a period of three hours and in the presence of fifteen or so members of the Society, Professor Desbarats presented us with a thorough overview of every resource available regarding the history of our region, from Canadian and Quebec government documents, to newspapers, registries of births, marriages and deaths, as well as land records, and so much more. Whatever the interest one

might have had, whether it was the record of all the land transactions of one's personal property, or a more general concern for broader issues pertaining to our part of the world, Kate provided us with the tools. She discussed not only the resources available but also techniques and strategies for using those resources. Despite the fine weather outside, no one left the loft prematurely. It was quite an afternoon. Everyone left most appreciative of the expertise and knowledge Kate shared with us.

LAND RECORDS WORKSHOP

On Wednesday, September 20th, GHS director John Atkin led a workshop on access to government registered land records. The workshop was for the benefit of fellow GHS board members in an effort to acquaint them with the online system of land records introduced by the provincial government in the early 2000s and which has been in a continuous process of enhancement ever since. It was hoped that by gaining experience with the website it would enable the directors to achieve a level of confidence in researching their own individual and/or family land records as well as those of interest to the Society.

GHS president Stephen Moore opened the workshop by outlining the evolution of the government's land registry system which was initially inaugurated in 1830, with registry offices established in every county, not the least of which was

Stanstead County's original office located in Georgeville, the former residence of the late John Boynton. Steve went on to differentiate the parallel role of notary records and their relevance to land records.

The rest of the daylong workshop was devoted to hands-on experience at accessing the relatively new online system of land records. By providing different case studies of specific properties, John was able to visually demonstrate the vagaries of the government's program. Before long, the directors in attendance were able to fire up their laptops and tablets to access the files individually, learning in the process the steps necessary to achieve the information desired. Not an easy task given the less than user-friendly characteristics of the government system. Nevertheless, the participants were soon able to navigate the online site to seek out the data

rich files relating to their own individual property holdings, as well as that of their neighbours. Surprising to many, was the raw public reservoir of less than private details of their neighbour's financial dealings, such as the amount paid and/or received for the acquisition/sale of their properties, the details of mortgages held and other relevant information.

Over the years, John has garnered a level of expertise relating to the online system, mostly by trial and error, in the effort to document his own family's dealings with land acquisitions and dispersals. As a result, John is now considerably more knowledgeable about the land dealings associated with his Atkin and Wilcox ancestors, and fortunately, was willing to share his familiarity with the modern government system to the benefit of those who participated in the workshop.



On August.9th, GHS President Stephen Moore led a walking tour of the Bridle Path located on Magoon's Point. The tour consisted of 15-20 members of the Society including interested guests. Despite adverse weather forecasts, the conditions proved favorable, if not ideal for a tramp in the woods.

Starting at the junction of the Magoon Point Road and Camber Road, participants abandoned their vehicles and proceeded southward on foot. On the way, stops were made at two points of interest. The first consisted of the intersection of the Magoon Point Road and the Mail Road, also known as the Green Lane. Here, the relevance of the latter road was discussed as well as the early settlement of the Camber family, members of which still own property in the area. The second stop was at the Colby family's upper gate, where a discussion arose relating to the construction of the stone gate and adjacent wall.

After cresting the nearby height of land on the Magoon Point Road, the tour started down the steep incline leading to the western terminus of the Bridle Path, just a few hundred feet from the rise just crossed.

The tour proceeded down the length of the Bridle Path, in essence the original crossroad bridging the territory between the Magoon Point Road and Jones Road, a function which from the late 1800s has been fulfilled by the existing Camber Road to the north. From this point on, the GHS president pointed out the numerous examples of human habitation, not always evident to the casual passerby. These included the remnants of line fences, the foundations of early houses and outbuildings, the now barely visible fields and pastures and the abandoned orchards of former farms. The president also pointed out the natural features of the landscape that were important to the initial settlers in the area, such as water sources and the roadside forests which were both a hindrance and a vital asset for early settlers.

Upon reaching the eastern end of the Path, tour participants walked down the modern thoroughfare that is Jones Road to the site of the former Magoon Point schoolhouse. Here seated among the remaining stones of the school's foundation, tour participants enjoyed a refreshing lunch basking in the warmth of the midday sun.

• A VALUABLE DONATION •



Adam Sherriff Scott's rendition of the interior of Ben Woodard's blacksmith shop.

The Georgeville Historical Society has recently received an Adam Sherriff Scott painting of the former Benjamin Woodard blacksmith shop. The painting was donated by Shirley Rollins of Ottawa, on behalf of her late husband, Dale Rollins. Mr. Rollins was a grandson of Mr. Woodard, who built the blacksmith shop in 1920. The shop was located behind the house presently owned by the Denis family on Channel Hill.

According to family lore, the painting by Scott was given to Benjamin as payment for some iron work that the artist required during one of his annual summer sojourns to the village during the 1930s.

At the time of the Great Depression, it was not surprising that an artist, even a famous artist, would swap his skills as a painter for things he needed. What is unusual is that a country blacksmith, without perhaps knowing the scope of his client's fame, would accept a painting of his beloved blacksmith shop in lieu of some monetary payment. Fortunately for Georgeville historians, Mr. Woodard had the wherewithal to accept the painting from Mr. Scott, thereby forever capturing an image of the interior operations of the blacksmith shop that is now gone from the village.

Adam Sherriff Scott (1887–1980) was a well-known Canadian artist with a Georgeville connection. Celebrated for his portraits, landscapes and murals, he was a member of the Beaver Hall Group of artists. Scott also had several prestigious affiliations such as the Royal Canadian Academy of Arts, the Pen and Pencil Club of Montreal and the Art Association of Montreal.

He was also a close acquaintance of Sumner Godfrey Davenport, which may account for his presence in the village. *The Biographical Dictionary of Architecture in Canada* lists Davenport as the chief architect for the Royal Bank of Canada from 1920 until 1942. Sumner Davenport lived on Forden Crescent in Westmount, the same street as Robert and Sydney Steele.

As related by Joan Murray (nee Steele) to Jacques Valiquette, Adam Sherriff Scott gave a down payment of \$1500 for two houses in the village. One was the house Joan eventually sold to Mr. Valiquette, the other, the house next door. This arrangement was made during the late 1930s, though sometime later, Mr. Scott felt he could no longer afford the houses and they were subsequently sold to his friend Sumner Davenport.

In Evelyn Water's newly-published *The Beaver Hall Group and its Legacy*, it is noted that during this time, Scott was teaching at the Art Association of Montreal and his own school, the Adam Sherriff Scott School of Art on Bishop Street. Fortunately for aspiring artists in the village, it was also during this period that Scott opted to spend his summers in Georgeville teaching classes in painting.

For his part, Benjamin Woodard (1868-1957) was born at Lovering Pond. As a young man he moved to Vermont where he resided for a number of years and married Mabel Shepard. The couple began their family in the States before relocating to Canada after the turn of the century. Both parents worked at the Glenbrook estate where they lived for several years. They then moved to Georgeville where Benjamin worked as a teamster and

where his wife ran the boarding house at Ellabank. By 1917, Benjamin Woodard was recorded in a directory listing as a blacksmith. Three years later he purchased the old Livingstone house on Channel Hill where he erected his own blacksmith shop behind the house. Besides working in the shop, Benjamin also found work as a stone mason and constructed among other things, the village's war memorial.

Did Mr. Woodard have a creative affinity with Mr. Scott as a fellow craftsman? Is this why he chose to have a painting of his blacksmith shop, the forge as its centerpiece, as an enduring memento for himself and future generations? And for Adam Sherriff Scott, well known for his portraits of the Inuit and other vanishing ways of Canadian life and landscape, wouldn't he have jumped at the chance to paint a workshop such as Woodard's?

Adam Sherriff Scott's 1980 obituary in the *Montreal Gazette* states that his "Artistic Career was Foretold by a Gypsy" and perhaps this romantic idealism guided his life. Evelyn Waters quotes from the obituary, "a self-confessed 'old-fashioned painter', [Scott] would often criticize Picasso and abstract art." Perhaps both Scott and Woodard felt that somehow, their ways of life were changing; and that it was important to record and preserve what mattered to them. This is the effect of art on the human spirit.

Due to the fact that the family has retained possession of the painting since the original exchange

between the two artisans, it may be surmised that it has never been revealed to the public; that the Canadian art community is unaware of the painting's existence.



An exterior view of Woodard's blacksmith shop with the owner standing in the doorway.

Heritage Fair

Part of the GHS presentation at the fall Heritage Fair in Eaton Corner



On October 13th, the Quebec Anglophone Heritage Network in conjunction with Townshippers Association, hosted a Heritage Fair in Eaton Corner, east of Sherbrooke. Included among the participants in the fair were representatives of most of the Township's historical societies not the least of which included the Georgeville Historical Society. Organized and manned by GHS vice-president Judy Bachelder, the Society's display

featured photographs, artifacts and a PowerPoint presentation reflecting the history of the village of Georgeville and Lake Memphremagog.

The day-long event included a morning seminar on the subject of fundraising followed by an open house for the general public in the afternoon. Accompanying the vice-president was the adjacent display of Georgeville's own Copp's Ferry Museum, hosted by fellow GHS Board

members Jacques Valiquette and Gretchen Hatfield. On the opposite flank, was GHS president Stephen Moore who was sporting a different hat, that as representative of the Sherbrooke Snow Shoe Club.

The event proved to be an excellent opportunity for GHS reps to interact with fellow representatives, of the local historical community as well as presenting the work of the Society to the general public.

Stanstead Township's 150th Celebration of Canada's Founding



Bigelow Garden volunteer Judy MacArther & GHS director Keith Wilcox tending the GHS presentation at the 150th celebrations

The Georgeville Historical Society was present at Stanstead Township's celebration of Canada's 150th founding on August 5. Among the items on display were early pictures of Georgeville and Fitch Bay, the history of the lake steamer Anthemis together with artifacts and the story of the Bigelow Garden which will be celebrating its 25th anniversary in July, 2018.

The presentation was prepared by Society vice-president Judy Bachelder who, along with GHS director Keith Wilcox, greeted the public and answered their numerous questions. Bigelow Garden volunteer Judy MacArther tended the garden portion of the Society's display.

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