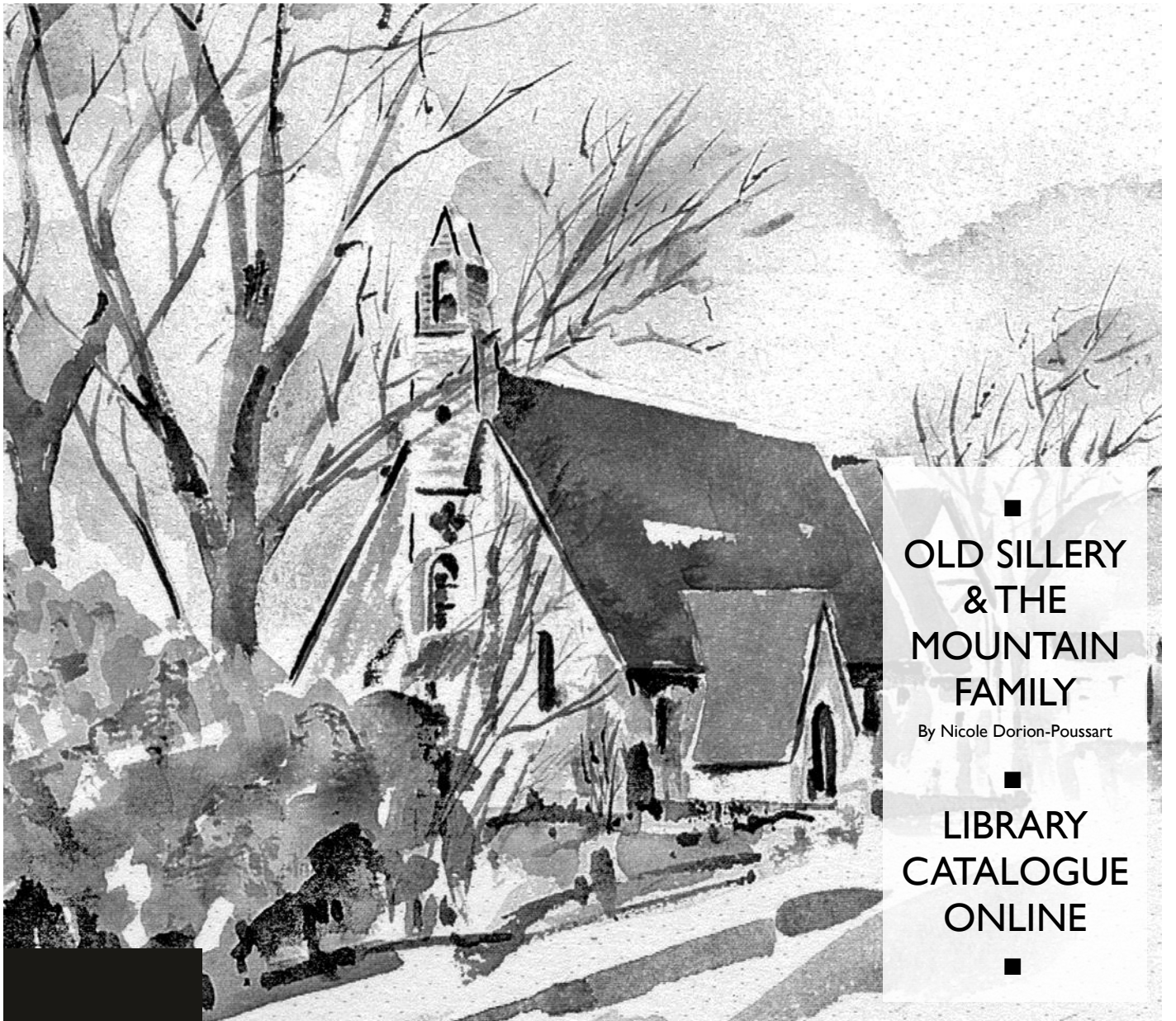


# SOCIETY PAGES

NUMBER 24 ■ SUMMER 2009 ■ \$2.00



■  
**OLD SILLERY  
& THE  
MOUNTAIN  
FAMILY**

By Nicole Dorion-Poussart

■  
**LIBRARY  
CATALOGUE  
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# SOCIETY PAGES

NUMBER 24 ■ SUMMER 2009

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<b>Sunday</b>	12:00PM-4:00PM
<b>Monday</b>	<b>CLOSED</b>
<b>Tuesday</b>	12:00PM-9:00PM
<b>Wednesday</b>	12:00PM-4:00PM
<b>Thursday</b>	12:00PM-4:00PM
<b>Friday</b>	12:00PM-4:00PM
<b>Saturday</b>	10:00AM-4:00PM

PLEASE NOTE: LIBRARY WILL BE  
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Front cover: Detail of St. Michael's Church, Sillery, by Thérèse Moisan.  
Image provided by Nicole Dorion-Poussart.

### EDITOR

**Patrick Donovan**

[patrickdonovan@morrin.org](mailto:patrickdonovan@morrin.org)

### DESIGN

**David Dupuis**

[ddupuis@frmrg.ca](mailto:ddupuis@frmrg.ca)

### PUBLISHER

Literary and Historical Society of Quebec  
44, chaussée des Écossais  
Québec (Québec) G1R 4H3

### PHONE

418-694-9147

### FAX

418-694-0754

### GENERAL INQUIRIES

[info@morrin.org](mailto:info@morrin.org)

### WEBSITE

[www.morrin.org](http://www.morrin.org)

### LHSQ COUNCIL

**David F. Blair**, *President*

**Steve Cameron**, *Vice-President*

**James Haberlin**, *Treasurer*

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**Marie C Tremblay**, *Honorary Librarian*

**Peter Black**

**Louisa Blair**

**William GK Boden**

**Sovita Chander**

**James Donovan**

**Judith Dunn**

**Ladd Johnson**

**Rob Lemon**

**Lorraine O'Donnell**

**Hélène Thibault**

[lhsqcouncil@morrin.org](mailto:lhsqcouncil@morrin.org)

### DIRECTORS

**Patrick Donovan**

*Interim Executive Director*

[patrickdonovan@morrin.org](mailto:patrickdonovan@morrin.org)

**Barry McCullough**

*Director of Administration*

[barrymccullough@morrin.org](mailto:barrymccullough@morrin.org)

**Marie Rubsteck**

*Director of Development*

[marierubsteck@morrin.org](mailto:marierubsteck@morrin.org)

### FULL-TIME STAFF

**Simon Auclair**

*Library Manager*

[lhsqlibrary@morrin.org](mailto:lhsqlibrary@morrin.org)

**Valérie Deslauriers**

*Administrative Assistant*

[info@morrin.org](mailto:info@morrin.org)

**Erin Zoellner**

*Cultural Activities Coordinator*

[erinzoellner@morrin.org](mailto:erinzoellner@morrin.org)

The mission of the **Morrin Centre** is to share and foster English-language culture in the Quebec City region. The Morrin Centre is administered by the Literary & Historical Society of Quebec.

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# LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear members and friends:

This is my first opportunity to welcome Simon Jacobs to his new role as Executive Director of the Morrin Centre and of the Society. Simon comes with an astounding experience in the world of culture. After having been a professional musician with the O.S.Q for over twenty years and following the creation and spear heading of the very successful Shalom Quebec Exposition a celebration of the city's 400<sup>th</sup>'s anniversary, Simon has taken on the leadership of the Morrin Centre team. Please join me in wishing him a warm welcome.

Next month is the culmination of our three year long Capital Campaign, which will be celebrated at what will be the first of an annual event called the Literary Feast to be held on September 24<sup>th</sup>, 2009, at the Centre. Chaired by the Right Honourable Adrienne Clarkson and featuring renowned philosopher and writer John Ralston Saul as the keynote, the evening will be a celebration of the Morrin Centre and an opportunity to raise funds for its future development. If you have not already purchased your tickets, I strongly urge you to do so as the number of places is limited.

Fund raising for the support at the Society and the Morrin Centre is essential for its wellbeing and its future and is a never ending task. I am sincerely grateful to all who have contributed in whatever way and I urge those who have not so make a commitment.

I would also like to thank Francis Cabot, Honorary Chair, as well as Peter Dunn and Evan Price who have acted as co-chairs and have done an extra-ordinary job of coordinating the efforts of the Campaign Cabinet and of making the tough calls. In his capacity as co-chair for Quebec Evan has continually assumed a leading role in coordinating the efforts of staff and members of the Campaign Cabinet and has kept us on task and focused. The results of these efforts are truly remarkable.

I look forward to seeing you at the Literary Feast and I thank you for your continued support.

Yours sincerely,

David F. Blair  
President.



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## NEW! MORRIN LIBRARY CATALOGUE

<http://library.morrin.org>

Our new easy-to-use library catalogue is now online!  
Browse our catalogue from home or at the terminal in our library.

### Find a book in four easy steps:

- 1) Go to <http://library.morrin.org> and click on [Library Catalogue](#)
- 2) Type in the author, title or publisher you're looking for,
- 3) Click on "[Search](#)"
- 4) Find the book you are looking for on your screen.
  - a) note the call number and pick it up at the library,
  - b) check the box next to the title, scroll up to enter your name and e-mail, and click on "[Request to borrow checked item\(s\)](#)"



# Interim EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

## SUMMER 2009 UPDATE

by Patrick Donovan, Interim Executive Director

Dear Society members and friends :

I would like to say what an honour it is to have been chosen to be the Executive Director of such an illustrious and historic organisation. Having been involved in the music business as a violist with the OSQ since 1989, this may seem quite a radical change to have taken, trading my instrument for a pen. On the other hand, you will realise that as musician, I too was working with historical and cultural document, only they were written in another language. To be honest though, it is through my work having both initiated and carried out the research and production of an exhibition on the Jewish History of Quebec City that I realised that I was drawn to the promotion of historical subjects. Also having worked as President of the Jewish Community and with my current role on the board of Directors of the Voice of English-Speaking Quebec. I feel that I have the incredible chance now to work on helping the community I live in. It is interesting that by 'community' I am not just referring to one linguistic group, but see my role as that of a facilitator open up and help bring together the different cultures that make up this beautiful city of Quebec.

I would like to thank my predecessors for the incredible work that they have put into making the Morrin Centre the place it is today. While I did not have the chance to work together with France Cliche while she was the Executive Director of the Morrin Centre I am constantly reminded of the work that she accomplished in making the Morrin Centre into the beautiful restored building that it is today with all of its diverse programmes. I know that France will be a tough act to follow.

Also we have now lost Patrick Donovan, who has now moved to Montreal to pursue his doctorate in History. For those of you that don't know, Patrick was almost single handed the custodian of the historical memory of the Morrin Centre and his presence will be sorely missed, as were his abilities as the Director of Programmes. While he may not be in the building, he will continue to help out from time to time especially in this capacity of historian. In fact he will be co-authoring a book along with Louisa Blair and Donald Fyson, on the history of the building. This project is being financed by and produced by the Bibliothèque et archives

Nationale de Québec with the financial help of the Webster Foundation. I will keep you all informed on the progress of this project.

### Building Restoration

I have the delightful pleasure of announcing to you that the access ramp and the entrance have now been completed and that the much anticipated elevator is now operational! If you do come in from the ramp you will also notice that we have installed a sculpture alongside the ramp, created by François Mathieu. More about that further in this issue.

I would love to say that the building is now completed and that the restoration work is now behind us. Alas, this is not yet the case although we are close to the finish line. We still have two more project to finish; that of the restoration of the prison cell blocks, located beneath the library and the completion of the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> floors, including the chemistry lab.

We have received a grant from Park Canada to restore and create an exhibition in the cell blocks. The grant itself only covers up to half the cost associated with this project, so I urge you to continue to send in donations to help cover the costs. On that note.....

### Capital Campaign

On September 24<sup>th</sup> we will be wrapping up our Capital Campaign with a cocktail to honour our major donors. This will be followed by the first annual fundraising event called 'The Literary Feast' presided by the Right Honourable Adrienne Clarkson with John Ralston Saul as the keynote speaker. All participants will be treated to a sumptuous meal prepared by the award winning restaurant 'Le Saint-Amour' There are still some tickets left so please contact Marie Rubsteck to reserve as soon as possible.

# 2009 MEMBERSHIP SURVEY

## YOUR SUGGESTIONS: OUR RESPONSE

by Patrick Donovan, Interim Executive Director

Thanks to all members who took the time to fill out our member survey. Those of us who work upstairs in the office don't always have the chance to meet and talk to members as much as we'd like. Surveys like these allow us to take the pulse and sound out your concerns. It's certainly great to hear that most of you had nothing but good things to say about our work. Other had a few comments and suggestions, and here's what we're doing to address them:

**Lighting:** Providing adequate lighting in the library is one of our major concerns. It is also a major expense, which is why we haven't reacted sooner. We want to make sure that our lighting solutions do not detract from the atmosphere of the library, providing warm lighting with discrete equipment that respects the historic fabric of the space. Thankfully, funding for Phase II of the building project was recently consolidated and we purchased over \$50,000 in lighting equipment for the library and building in late March. This will be installed in the coming months.

**Drop-off chute:** Two members suggested a drop-off chute for books during off hours. This is on the plans for the coming lots and should be installed in the summer or fall.

**Online and on-site library catalogue:** Solved! (turn back one page for details).

**Large print book collection:** We are planning on renewing the large print book collection in the coming year, with major purchases taking place soon.

**Weekend newspaper subscription:** We presently have issues of *The Economist* and *The Guardian*, two of the finest news weeklies in the English-speaking world, one conservative, the other liberal. But why not add something Canadian, like the *Globe and Mail*, you ask? Will do!

**Kids' Section:** We are aware that the Kids' section is a mere shadow of its potential. We're working on it. Expect to see big changes in the next few months: kid-friendly shelving, a nice carpet, lots of old Victorian toys, and wood sculptures by former caretaker Ernest Muise, among other things.

**Opening hours:** A member noted that our IPM opening time on Sundays was too late and that we should open at noon. That was an easy one to solve, since it was quietly changed a few months ago. The library opens at noon on Sundays, and we're open even earlier on Saturdays (10:00AM).

**Parking:** Free parking around the library is a recurring concern. We've looked for solutions, and our president even took it up with the mayor. We are presently on a waiting list for parking spots at the *Institut Canadien* next door, but these are mainly on long-term loan to residents and it may take several years before spaces became available to us. For those of you who don't live downtown and are reluctant to use public transportation, we are also undertaking active discussions with the public and academic library systems on developing interlibrary loans; we also offer mobile library services for elderly members who can't make it downtown.

**Possibility of borrowing books through the public library network:** See last sentence of previous paragraph.

**Library personnel:** A few members commented that many current library personnel are not "readers" and cannot recommend books like the staff of yore. There is a certain truth to this. Many are full-time youth volunteers from programmes like Katimavik. While they don't all have the extensive reading culture of a Mrs. Calfat, their unpaid work benefits the library by allowing us to devote more of the library budget to books, collection management, and technical upgrades. Nevertheless, we do take this concern seriously, as providing friendly and knowledgeable service to members is important. So here's what we're doing.

As an immediate response, we've added a section for "Recommended Books" below the Cosmo's hull. This includes staff recommendations (since many of us in the office upstairs do read), but members are also encouraged to ask for a slip at the desk and leave their own suggestions. Bookmarks with reading suggestions (Giller, Governor General and QWF prize winners) have also been created and are available at the desk.

We will also continue to look for passionate book-lovers who wish to spend an afternoon per week

## 2009 MEMBERSHIP SURVEY

volunteering at the desk, chatting with members, and recommending favourite books. If you're interested, or know someone who might be, call library manager Simon Auclair at 418-694-9147. This concern has also been forwarded to the future executive director.

### Suggestions for future events:

Please note that all suggestions for future events, whether inviting a poet from PEI, public lectures of masterpieces, or a new series of debates on public affairs, were forwarded to events coordinator Erin Zoellner, who will take them into account when preparing the calendar.

**Movies at the Morrin:** With all the recent hubbub about the lack of English-language movies in Quebec, this suggestion certainly got us talking. We'd need to find ways to cover the cost of the pricey screening licenses needed to show films, but it can be done. A one-year pilot project might allow us to try it out (now there's a great idea for a future grant application!)

**Books take a long time to come back when we reserve:** This one's a Catch-22. There are no late book

fees, so books do take a longer time to come back than in the public network. Some people want late fees, and others don't. Since this is a touchy matter, we'll put the question to you, our members, in a future consultation.



Will the real Miss Beardsley please say cheese?

**Barbara Beardsley:** The protagonist of our Eclectica virtual exhibit (<http://eclectica.morrin.org>) received a few barbs by members who saw her as an insulting caricature of former library clerks "in incredibly poor taste." Rest assured that this is not the case. Miss Beardsley is not a library clerk, but the fictional curator of an imaginary museum collection. She was single-handedly devised and drawn by web exhibit developer Bill Sullivan, who lives in Ottawa and did not know any of our former staff. Bill wanted to create a good-natured eccentric character and

claims his inspiration was "Mrs. Garrett" (see inset) from the 1980s sitcom *The Facts of Life*.

If this article leaves you wishing you'd had a chance to submit your comments, don't fret. There's still time, as we are always open to your suggestions. Send us a letter, or drop us an e-mail at [info@morrin.org](mailto:info@morrin.org). ■

## Wish List LITERARY CLASSICS

Please help us improve our collection of **pre-1950s literary classics** in the library. We are looking for new editions of the works below for our circulating collection. All our thanks for your kind donations so far, including the many books from this list donated by Miriam Blair.

Elizabeth Barrett Browning, *Poems*  
 Mary Elizabeth Braddon, *Lady Audley's Secret*  
 Charlotte Bronte, *The Professor*  
 Robert Browning, *Poems*  
 Samuel Butler, *Erewhon*, *The Way of All Flesh*  
 Thomas Carlyle, *The French Revolution*  
 G.K. Chesterton, *The Man Who was Thursday*  
 Wilkie Collins, *No Name*, *The Woman in White*, *The Moonstone*  
 Stephen Crane, *Red Badge of Courage*  
 Thomas DeQuincey, *Confessions of an Opium Eater*  
 Benjamin Disraeli, *Sybil*  
 Maria Edgeworth, *Castle Rackrent*  
 George Eliot, *Daniel Deronda*, *Silas Marner*  
 Elizabeth Gaskell, *Mary Barton*, *North and South*

George Gissing, *New Grub Street*, *Henry Ryecroft*  
 Sarah Grand, *The Heavenly Twins*  
 Thomas Hardy, *The Mayor of Casterbridge*  
 William Dean Howells, *Modern Instance*  
 Henry James, *The Bostonians*  
 George Macdonald, *At the Back of the Northwind*, *Lilith*  
 William Makepeace Thackeray, *Pendennis*  
 Christopher Marlowe, *Complete Plays*  
 Christopher Marlowe, *Complete Poems*  
 Herman Melville, *Billy Budd*  
 George Meredith, *The Egoist*, *The Ordeal of Richard Feverel*  
 Henry Newbolt, *Poems*  
 Amalie Skram, *Constance Ring*  
 Edmund Spenser, *The Faerie Queen*  
 Harriet Beecher Stowe, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*  
 Henry David Thoreau, *Walden*  
 Anthony Trollope, *Can You Forgive Her?*  
 John Webster, *The Duchess of Malfi and Other Plays* ■

## TRANSACTIONS

## FROM SOLITUDES TO DIVERSITY

## THE ENGLISH COMMUNITY'S CONTRIBUTIONS TO QUEBEC'S LITERARY TRADITION

Speech by Graham Fraser delivered at the Morrin Centre on December 7, 2008

It is always a pleasure to be back in your wonderful building. When I was living in Québec City, the Literary and Historical Society Library was a favourite retreat from the intensity of the debates at the National Assembly, and a wonderful resource for my family. I had a book launch here in 1984, and used it to draw ministers to this jewel of Old Québec.

It was just over 60 years ago that Hugh MacLennan's novel *Two Solitudes* added an indelible phrase to the language. It was published in 1945, and its sweeping epic of linguistic and ethnic tension suddenly became the permanent template through which English Canadians perceived French Canada.

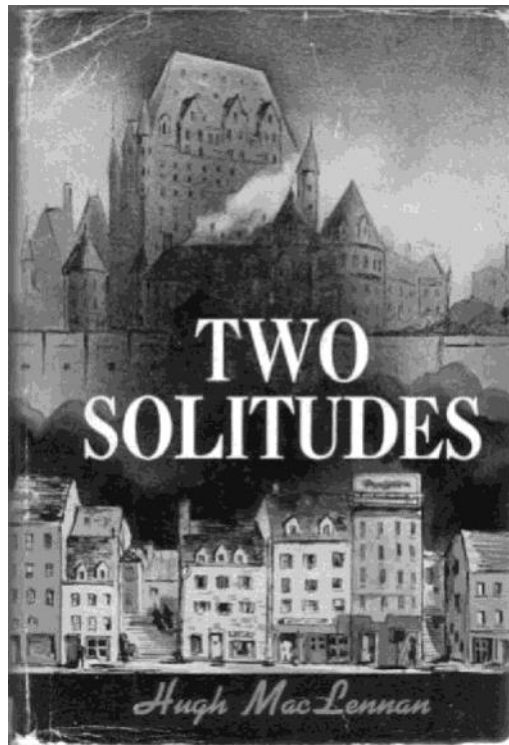
I am not a literary scholar. But I would like to use this opportunity to take a brief look at how English writing in Quebec — and on Quebec — has shaped perceptions of Quebec society. In particular, I would like to look at a group of Anglophone intellectuals who summered in North Hatley beginning in the 1940s, then look at Mordecai Richler before making some observations about the current diversity of English-language writing in Quebec.

Hugh MacLennan, Mason Wade, I.M.B. Dobell and F.R. Scott were all friends, and all of them spent their summers in North Hatley and had a profound influence in shaping modern Quebec and Canada.

MacLennan came to Montréal as an adult; I heard him once say, in the defiantly provocative way he sometimes had, "I am not a Canadian, I am a Nova Scotian." He was a deeply passionate man, fascinated by the contact between French and English, the impact of history on society, the relationships between fathers and sons, and the tectonic plates of social change. *Two Solitudes* entered the language — sometimes in a distorted fashion — as a description of the relationship between

French and English in Canada. Writing during the conscription crisis of World War II, he drew a character — Marius Tallard — who was a nationalist campaigning against conscription in World War I.

Mason Wade — an American who became fascinated with French Canada after writing a biography of Francis Parkman — was a large man, with an excessive appetite and a dark mixture of gloom and enthusiasm. Tall, loud, sometimes cheerfully abrasive, he had a surprisingly gentle seriousness with children.



Interestingly enough, in 1942, when he was working on his history of French Canada (*The French Canadians 1760-1945*), Wade would bring his friends to Bloc populaire rallies, opening up a window on Quebec nationalism that had been hitherto unknown to them. "He would never say so, but he had an understanding of Quebec that we often could not grasp," I.M.B. Dobell told me after Wade's death. She remembered accompanying him to hear Henri Bourassa speak at a rally in Granby in the early 1940s. "He sensed, as we did not, that there was a

possibility that the country might be torn apart by the problem. He could see what was coming."

Dobell herself was a historian, author and, most importantly, curator of the McCord Museum, transforming a collection that had been left to moulder in a forgotten corner of McGill University into a dynamic display of material objects reflecting Quebec's evolving history. In August 1943, Wade told his friends in North Hatley that Henri Bourassa was speaking in Magog on behalf of a Bloc populaire candidate in the Stanstead by-election. Bourassa was about to turn 75, and it would be one of the last opportunities to hear him speak.

So, a group headed over to hear him.

“Bourassa was introduced by a man with blazing eyes, a lock of hair, a high voice filled with passion and hatred,” MacLennan told me almost 40 years later. “I said to Wade, ‘Who in the hell is that?’ ‘That’s André Laurendeau.’ ‘I just put him in a book and mailed him to New York a week ago.’”

To MacLennan, it was the shock of recognition: his character Marius Tallard in the flesh. The two men did not meet then, but five years later, Laurendeau sent MacLennan a copy of a children’s book he had written, inscribed “D’une solitude à l’autre.” And twenty years after the speech in Magog, Laurendeau became co-chair of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism — with Scott as a member.

MacLennan did not only write about Quebec in his fiction. In a number of essays in the 1950s and 1960s, he wrote about the changes that were underway in Quebec society, and how the rest of the country should respond.

In 1960, when only three percent of English-speaking Canadians outside Quebec spoke French, MacLennan made an impassioned plea for bilingualism. “The matter is so important to our national existence that the most radical plans should be considered for improving the situation,” he wrote, noting the twofold benefit of learning French.

“On the one hand, the study of a language like French is rewarding in itself and gives a superlative training to a student in the precise handling of his own language,” he wrote. “On the other hand, an interest in bilingualism may well be the sole measure which can save Canada from absorption by the United States. This country of ours is a dual one or it is nothing: the essence of Canadian nationhood lies in this very fact, that it is a political fusion of the two elements in North American history which refused to belong to the United States.”

In 1966, he called for the creation of minority French-language schools in English-speaking provinces, and the creation of a federal public service where French-speaking Canadians could use their language and be understood.

“It is essential in the interests not only of justice according to the *B.N.A. Act*, but also of an efficient partnership,” he wrote. “A great deal of a man’s ability is left behind him if he has to do business and be judged in a language not native to him.”

At the same time his friend and North Hatley neighbour Frank Scott was wrestling with the debates of the Royal

Commission on Bilingualism, which came to exactly the same conclusion.

Laurendeau was co-chairman with Davidson Dunton, but his real counterpart on the Royal Commission, his intellectual and emotional counterweight from English-speaking Canada, was Frank Scott. Like Laurendeau, he had a subtle mind, political idealism, personal charisma and a poet’s sensibility; also like Laurendeau, he had only reluctantly joined the Commission. As Laval political scientist Guy Laforest puts it in his essay on the two men, “While both were intellectuals involved in the political debates of their society, they were also artists, two figures endowed with a remarkable aesthetic sensibility.” Laforest traces the parallels: both men engaged in the arts and were politically involved, both withdrew from political life somewhat at the end of the 1940s and the beginning of the 1950s, and, at the end of the decade, both were “éminences grises:” intellectual leaders of Quebec and English-speaking Canada respectively.

They shared an erudition, intellectual rigour and sensuality—but while Laurendeau had an almost therapeutic sensitivity, listening to people without judging them, Scott had a cutting sense of humour. “I can still hear that great laugh that made you know he was there at a party even when he was two rooms away,” wrote Michael Oliver in 1997 — twelve years after Scott’s death. He observed that everyone knew a different Frank Scott. “For me he was myth incarnate: the co-author of the Regina Manifesto, the vanquisher of Maurice Duplessis, the man whose name the Montreal Star would not publish, the magician who could put social as well as personal passion into the frame of verse.”

Born in Québec City in 1899, Scott was a Rhodes Scholar who, on returning to Montréal, became engaged not only in English-speaking political and cultural life, but also with French-Canadian traditions. “I could understand Stendhal reading the Code Napoleon to improve his prose style,” he wrote. “One summer to occupy my spare time as a student in a Montréal law office I translated the whole of the Coutume de Paris, the principal source of the Civil Law in Quebec prior to the adoption of her own Civil Code of 1866. The continuity of Quebec’s traditions with old France, and through the civil law with ancient Rome, has always seemed to me a fascinating part of our Canadian heritage.”

Scott was a socialist and a wit in conservative English Montréal when to be a socialist was an outrage and to be witty was outrageous. His laugh was unforgettable;



he was a tall, handsome man, and his mouth often curled with what seemed to be the effort of keeping in the laughter. When it burst out, often loud and raucous, it would fill a room and linger like pipe smoke. His best-known commentary on bilingualism was in a poem first published in 1954, *Bonne Entente*:

*The advantages of living with two cultures  
Strike one at every turn,  
Especially when one finds a notice in an office building  
'This elevator will not run on Ascension Day';  
Or reads in the Montreal Star:  
'Tomorrow being the Feast of the Immaculate Conception,  
There will be no garbage collection in the city';  
Or sees on the restaurant menu the bilingual dish:  
DEEP APPLE PIE  
TARTES AUX POMMES PROFONDES*

What did these four extraordinary people have in common? They were brash, outspoken, provocative intellectuals. They had a deep knowledge of Quebec and Canadian history. They had a profound sense that the future of Canada depended on a creative, dynamic relationship between French-speaking and English-speaking Canada — and each, in their different ways, worked to bridge that gap. But they also lived in a particular era, while the English community in Quebec was still psychologically part of the English-speaking majority, and did not yet consider itself to be a minority.

Two events changed that — and changed their views: the October Crisis of 1970, and the election of the Parti Québécois in 1976. Scott and MacLennan both supported the imposition of the *War Measures Act*. “Democracy has to be able to protect itself,” said Scott. These hooligans are holding up our government, threatening our civil rights. They have to be stopped. And so do the hotheads who are encouraging them. People are afraid, the situation is volatile, and the *War Measures Act* is the only instrument we’ve got, however clumsy, to restore some sense of order.”

For Scott, it meant an irreparable breach with French-speaking writers and poets: nationalists who had previously been friends.

Then, as a result of a nasty brush with two cars near North Hatley in the fall of 1970, MacLennan became convinced that he was an FLQ target.<sup>10</sup> The decades that followed the October Crisis contributed to the emergence of a different kind of writing in English-speaking Quebec; what one might call a “*littérature de combat*.”

Mordecai Richler emerged as a distinctive voice at the end of the 1950s, and presented a very distinctive part of Montréal: Jewish Montréal. Jewish Montréal was not part of the city or the society that MacLennan and Scott had written about. But, as Concordia literary scholar Sherry Simon writes, it had deep roots in the city. “In 1931, there were some 60,000 Yiddish speakers in Montreal, about six per cent of the total population of the city,” she notes. “This community functioned with a considerable degree of cultural independence from the mainstream Anglophone and Francophone majorities.”

The poet A.M. Klein served as a bridge to the English-speaking literary community, a role for which Richler mocked him. Simon observes that Richler wrote a parody portrait in *Solomon Gursky Was Here*: “Klein’s forays into gentile bohemia,” as Richler jokes, “were on the condition that he take the role of ‘Montreal’s Eloquent Israelite,’ an exotic, a garlicky pirate, living proof of the ethnic riches that went into weaving the Canadian cultural tapestry.”

Richler was an equal-opportunity satirist, turning his jaundiced eye with equal ferocity on Jews, WASPs and French-speaking Quebeckers.

He was not alone. In 1979, his friend William Weintraub wrote a bitter satire, *The Underdogs*, portraying an independent Quebec as a totalitarian state taking revenge on the few Anglophones who had not fled. But his bitter exaggeration had much less impact than Richler’s attacks. The novelist abandoned satire to launch a constant series of assaults on the language law.

Always an iconoclast, Richler hammered on one of modern Quebec’s most painful and repressed memories: the support of Quebec’s Catholic and nationalist elites for fascism and anti-Semitism in the 1930s. It was a taboo that made otherwise sensible people quiver with anger. One of his *New Yorker* pieces began, “I was brought up in a Quebec that was reactionary, church-ridden and notoriously corrupt — a stagnant backwater — its *chef* for most of that time, Premier Maurice Duplessis, a political thug — and even its intellectuals sickeningly anti-Semitic for the most part.” He then went on to quote the anti-Semitic remarks made by Abbé Lionel Groulx, *Le Devoir*’s founder Henri Bourassa, Laurendeau and other nationalists of the 1930s — while noting the continued esteem in which Groulx was held in contemporary Quebec. But the remark that most outraged Francophone Quebeckers was in his article published in the *New Yorker*, in which he commented on the traditionally large Quebec families, writing “this punishing level of reproduction, which seemed to me to

be based on the assumption that women were sows, was encouraged with impunity by the Abbé Groulx, whose newspaper, *L'Action Française*, published in 1917, preached la revanche des berceaux [the revenge of the cradles.]”

Richler picked at the scabs of Quebec’s nationalist past, and the reaction was furious denial. Periodically, he would throw in an asterisk, but there was always a barb. “René Lévesque was not an anti-Semite. Neither is Jacques Parizeau,” he wrote. “All the same, Jews who have been Quebecers for generations understand only too well that when thousands of flag-waving nationalists march through the streets roaring ‘Le Québec aux Québécois!’ they do not have in mind anybody named Ginsburg. Or MacGregor, for that matter.”

Ironically, Richler was only known in French-speaking Quebec for his polemics; his fiction had not yet been translated, and there was little or no awareness that he had been just as sharp in his mockery of everyone else, including the Jewish community, which deeply resented his early fiction. He had been, as he wrote in the postscript to the book based on his New Yorker articles, “no less critical of WASP bigotry and English Canadian nationalism than I have been of Francophone follies.”

Richler’s 1992 book *Oh Canada! Oh Quebec! Requiem for a Divided Country* caused an incident. His own sense of pain and the memory that had driven so much of his work of seeing “À bas les juifs [Down with the Jews]” painted on the highway to the Laurentians in the 1940s was masked by a deep and unforgiving anger. He argued in his book that Francophones in Quebec “are still doggedly fighting against injustices that no longer exist.” Others responded that the Quebec anti-Semitism he was attacking no longer existed. Hugh Segal, then Brian Mulroney’s chief of staff, was deeply troubled by the book. “My problem with the thesis that French-Canadian nationalism draws much of its roots from anti-Semitism is that I just don’t think it’s true,” he told me, arguing that the roots of French-Canadian nationalism are much broader than that, and that the Union Nationale even funded Jewish schools. “You’re looking at a guy who went to two levels of religious education in Quebec... up to Grade 11. That didn’t happen in any other province in Canada.”

Richler infuriated many Quebecers, not only because he spoke no French himself, but because his work encouraged the complacent belief in English Canada that Quebec is a harsh, intolerant society. In doing so, it reinforced the sense that English Canada seeks out examples of injustice in order to attack Quebec, while

overlooking its own anti-Semitic past. In addition, there was great resentment about the fact that Richler was able to use the international platform of the New Yorker to vent his mockery and scorn, leaving Quebecers unable to reply.

When novelist, filmmaker and publisher Jacques Godbout was asked to write a piece for the Sunday *New York Times* in September 2001, his anger at Richler, and his sense of finally getting a platform to respond, almost overwhelmed an article written about a Quebec arts festival in New York. What was intended as an essay on Quebec culture and how it had emerged over the years, kept returning to Richler, who had recently died; according to Godbout, Richler had taken advantage of his fame as a novelist in order to embark on “a malicious campaign... in which he denounced, more or less honestly, the project for a sovereign and French Quebec.”

But Godbout was clearly conflicted. Calling him “Quebec’s greatest writer,” he expressed regret that Richler had died before being able to attend the arts festival. “This man who never tired of denouncing the desire of Quebecers to exist in French could nonetheless have kicked off the New York festivities with a blast and could perhaps even have finally apologized, with his timid half-smile, for having described his French-speaking compatriots as raving fanatics.” Unlikely as that might have been, there was something doubly poignant about Godbout’s essay. His account of how Quebec had emerged from its clerical past kept swerving back to Richler — and the argument, which would have baffled most New Yorkers, was totally lost in the trauma of the events of September 11 (as was the festival).

In some ways, Richler was an heir to Frank Scott’s fierce opposition to Quebec nationalism, and his long memory of its admiration for fascism in the 1930s. But while Scott also remembered Laurendeau’s change of heart and his opposition to Spain’s Generalissimo Franco, Richler never acknowledged Laurendeau’s apology (although he quoted from other parts of the book where it was reprinted), preferring to rub salt in his own wounds and stoke his own anger.

But like many polemicists who are hated for what they say, Richler had an unacknowledged impact. The debate over Esther Delisle’s research on French-Canadian nationalism in the 1930s, which provided Richler with the basis for his own polemics, resulted in a series of waves; Jean-Louis Roux was forced to step down as Lieutenant-Governor in 1996 after he was quoted in *L’Actualité* as recalling that he had worn a swastika on

his lab coat in medical school. And in December 2000, the National Assembly unanimously condemned Yves Michaud after he had repeated on the radio a sharp verbal exchange with Senator Leo Kolber in a hair salon, where Michaud had sarcastically suggested that the Jews were the only people in the world who had suffered in the history of humanity, and then vented his rage at suggestions that the Lionel-Groulx metro station should be renamed. Lucien Bouchard cited the Parti Québécois' support for Michaud as one of the reasons for his resignation in January 2001.

Where are we now? What is the current state of the English-speaking minority's contribution to literature in Quebec? And how does it reflect Quebec society?

The most obvious thing is the enormous cultural diversity of that literature. There is popular fiction — like Louise Penny's detective series set in Three Pines, and Michael E. Rose's series of international thrillers starring Frank Delaney, who starts out as a reporter for a thinly disguised *Montreal Gazette* and ends up as a freelance journalist and CSIS operative. There is the Kathy Reich series of novels starring Temperance Brennan, who, like Reich, is a forensic investigator shuffling between Quebec and North Carolina.

Strangely, perhaps, language is more in the foreground in Reich's novels than in those by Rose and Penny. It is as if the two novelists from Quebec had so internalized the province's linguistic realities that they don't notice them — while Reich, an American, observes them with a sharp eye.

In the area of literary fiction, two current books stand out — both by ethnic minority writers.

Nino Ricci's *The Origin of Species* is set in 1980s Montréal, and includes the language debates as part of its setting. It won the Governor General's Literary Award for Fiction.

Rawi Hage's second novel *Cockroach* was short-listed for the Giller Prize and the Governor General's Literary Award, and also won the Quebec Writers' Federation Award.

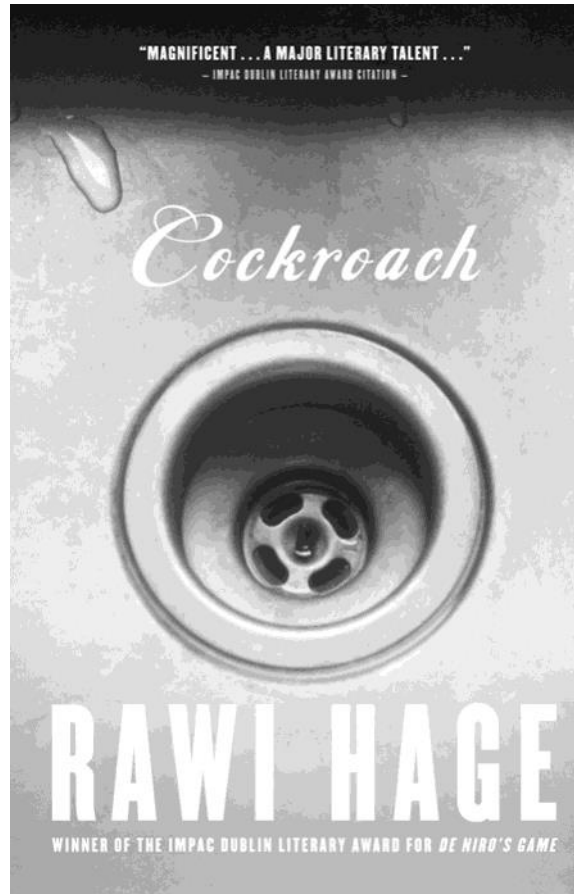
One of the intriguing things about Hage's book is that it is never clear what language the characters are speaking. One of the characters, a social worker, is named Geneviève, which suggests that she is a Francophone; there are French phrases thrown in here and there, which suggests that other relationships occur in that language. The main character also gets a job in a restaurant owned by an Iranian, and many of the conversations here are in Farsi, which the main character does not speak. The drama of French-English duality barely exists, except for the following description of the clientele of the bars on St. Laurent: "All those McGill University graduates love to hide their degrees, their old money, their future corporate jobs by coming here dressed up like beggars, hoodlums, dangerous degenerate minorities. They sit, drink and shoot pool... I have never understood those Anglos, never trusted their camouflage.

Some of them are the sons and daughters of the wealthy. The very wealthy! They live in fine old Québécois houses, complain about money, and work small jobs."

Hage's is the fiction of trauma; the trauma of Beirut and the Lebanese civil war. Interestingly, this is the same trauma that drives the work of Montréal playwright Wajdi Mouawad — who writes in French. Our language debates and disputes fade into the background, barely noticeable in the struggle to overcome trauma and survive in a new world.

That is the new English-language fiction — the new Montréal, the new Quebec and the new Canada. ■

*Graham Fraser is Canada's Commissioner of Official Languages.*



## TRANSACTIONS

FROM MONTAIGNE TO MOUNTAIN  
THE MOUNTAIN FAMILY IN SILLERY

by Nicole Dorion-Poussart



Woodfield villa

Many sites and buildings in old Sillery recall Jacob Mountain's family. These include Mount Hermon cemetery and its entrance pavilion, St. Michael's Church, Bishop Mountain School and the Old Rectory. All were designed according to English architectural traditions. The cemetery and its pavilion are in the picturesque style, the church and the school in the Gothic Revival and the Rectory in the Georgian style.

Surprisingly enough, the origins of the Mountain family are French, and may go back to sixteenth-century philosopher Michel de Montaigne. In *Picturesque Quebec*, former LHSQ president James McPherson LeMoine mentioned that the bishop's grandfather — a Huguenot who took refuge in the village of Thwaite near Norwich, England after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes (1685) — was the great-grandson of the author of the *Essais*. When we examine the life span of the various generations — from Michel de Montaigne's daughter to the bishop's grandfather — LeMoine's assertion seems quite plausible indeed. Over time, the patronymic name evolved from Montaigne to Mountain.

Jacob Mountain was born in Thwaite, near Norwich, second son of Jacob Mountain and Ann Postle. In 1774, he graduated from Caius College, Cambridge University, was ordained deacon by the bishop of Norwich that same year, and priest in 1780. He was made a bishop in June 1793 and appointed to the newly created See of Quebec by William Pitt the Younger.

Bishop Mountain arrived in Quebec in November with his wife Elizabeth and their four children. The family settled down near the Recollet church that had been rebuilt following its destruction during the war of 1759. Catholics and Anglicans shared the space, alternating masses on this site. In September 1796, fire destroyed the church, and the Mountain's residence was heavily

damaged. The family relocated to Sillery in the *Woodfield* estate.

The origin of *Woodfield* goes back to 1734 when Mgr Herman Dosquet de Samos, Bishop of Quebec, built a villa. The Marquis de Montcalm, commander of the French forces in North America during the Seven Years War, established a battery on the site to prevent the British Army from climbing the bluff. But General James Wolfe evaded French surveillance and ascended the cliff during the night of September 12th to 13th. The villa was bombed and heavily damaged. After the conquest, the fathers of the Seminary of Quebec sold the estate to Thomas Ainslie, collector of customs. Ainslie rebuilt the villa and renamed it *Woodfield*, owing to its location in the middle of a wooded area. After a few years, he moved to the city and ceded it to judge Adam Thomas Mabane. When her brother died, Isabella Mabane rented the villa to bishop Jacob Mountain. This romantic poem by his son George Jehoshaphat evokes the beauty of the site:

*O, must I leave thee, Woodfield? Sweet retreat  
From the world's busy strife delightful seat  
Of rural beauty, where with bounteous hand  
Nature hath lent her charms to grace thy land.  
How can I part? How leave thee, charming place?  
How leave the beauties which adorn and grace  
Thy boundaries? Thy rich fields, abundant food  
To cattle lending, and thy verdant wood  
Thy firs, thy venerable oaks, thy shades  
Thy purling rivulets, thy deep cascades  
Forming a pleasant contrast to the eye?  
Thy views, in which no their spot can vie?  
And, now, by cruel fate, severed from thee  
Wherever'tis my destiny flee  
Still, I'll remember thee, O Woodfield dear!  
And stoll on thee will drop a tender tear.*

Westminster sent Jacob Mountain to Canada to anglicize the Canadians, a mandate that James Murray and Guy Carleton had failed to accomplish. In fact, the anglicizing policy implicit in the 1763 proclamation of the Province of Quebec had remained at the level of wishful thinking. But with the promulgation of the Constitutional Act of 1791, the Anglican bishop was now in a favorable position to establish the Church of England in Upper and Lower Canada. To the clergy, the law guaranteed a generous portion of Crown land to build churches, presbyteries and schools.

Jacob Mountain focused diligently in carrying out his task. He took advantage of his presence in the Legislative Council to weaken the authority of the Catholic bishops and monitor their appointments. In the same spirit, he opposed the arrival of refugees from revolutionary France to prevent the Catholic population from becoming larger. And, having rapidly observed the high rate of illiteracy among Canadians (60%), he got involved in education. Convinced that schooling was essential to reach his objective, he spared no effort in creating a network of public schools. He asked Governor Dorchester to open grammar schools and recommended that the teaching of English be provided for free.

In 1801, the government defined a school law, the first since the founding of Quebec. The Royal Institution for the Advancement of Learning (RIAL) was mandated to organize the school system suggested by the bishop. The project was entrusted almost exclusively to Anglicans, and the Catholic clergy took offense and boycotted Mountain's initiatives. Of some 180 grammar schools opened between 1818 and 1837, all closed due to lack of students, the last one in 1846.

Meanwhile, the Catholic clergy developed a similar program by adopting the *Loi des écoles de fabriques* in 1824. This law, and those of 1841 and 1869, initiated a genuine Catholic school system that remained virtually unchanged until the educational reforms of the 1960s.

In retrospect, Jacob Mountain had been the instigator of this school system, without wanting it in this shape, of course. Furthermore, the RIAL that he had founded and chaired from 1818 to 1825 was the source of an institution of higher education, McGill College, that was granted a Royal Charter in 1821.

The first Anglican bishop of Quebec died in June 1825. He was buried in the chancel of Holy Trinity Cathedral that he had built on the site of the old Recollet church.

His son George Jehoshaphat was born in Norwich,

England, in 1789. At age 16, he attended Trinity College in Cambridge with his brother Jacob. Having obtained a bachelor's degree, George Jehoshaphat returned to Quebec and studied under his father's tutelage to become a priest. He then received a doctor of divinity degree from the Archbishop of Canterbury and became third bishop of Quebec.

Like his father, George Jehoshaphat showed a deep commitment to the promotion of education and the Anglican faith. He was a member of the RIAL, first principal of McGill College from 1824 to 1835, and professor of theology. He played a decisive role in the founding of Bishop's College (now Bishop's University). But, unlike his father, George Jehoshaphat never got involved in politics. He was compassionate towards the poor, the sick and prisoners, showing exemplary dedication in visiting Grosse Ile during the cholera and typhus epidemics of 1832 and 1847.

The third Anglican bishop of Quebec died in January 1863 at the *Bardfield* villa, in Sillery. On the day of his funeral, a large crowd gathered at Holy Trinity to pay their tributes. He was laid to rest in Mount Hermon Cemetery under centennial pine and oak trees. A humble Celtic monument reminds us of his passage.

George Jehoshaphat's family had the Bishop Mountain School erected on chemin St. Louis as a tribute to this true friend of education and the underprivileged. Nearby, at the end of a long alley in a wooded area, stands the Old Rectory. This elegant manor, restored by its most recent proprietor, a heritage lover, is also reminiscent of the Mountain family.

Jacob's grandson Armine Wale attended Oxford University College. On his return to Quebec, he was ordained by his father, acted as his chaplain and secretary, and assisted the poor. He was named rector of the parish and church St. Michael, inaugurated in 1854. Armine Wale left Sillery in 1870 to become vice-chancellor of St. Mary and St. Giles Church in England. He was later buried with other members of his family at Mount Hermon Cemetery.

The Rectory, Mount Hermon Cemetery and its entrance pavilion, St. Michael's Church and Bishop Mountain School — all sites and buildings that evoke the memory of the Mountains — display formal unity and a remarkable state of conservation. They are jewels among the exceptional heritage in Old Sillery. ■

*Historian Nicole Dorion-Poussart is the author of Voyage aux sources d'un pays — Sillery, Quebec, Éditions GID, 2007*

## EVENTS &amp; ACTIVITIES

# HAIKU GROUP LAUNCHES ÉCRIS-MOI UN JARDIN

by Jeanne Grégoire, for Haiku Quebec

On May 3rd, at the Roger Van Den Hende Gardens, a haiku poetry book called *Écris-moi un jardin* was launched. Published by *La Couverture Magique*, under the supervision of André Vézina, the profits will go to the *Société des Amis du Jardin Roger Van den Hende*. We were honoured by the presence of Ms. Abigail Freedman, author of *The Haiku Apprentice: Memoirs of Writing Poetry in Japan*, who wrote the preface of *Écris-moi un jardin*.

Many factors make this anthology special. Seventeen authors from the *Haiku Quebec* group, which meets at the Morrin Centre, were involved in the poems. It is one of the few haiku anthologies with both French and English poems on the same theme, and it is the only poetry book written about the gardens.

The book is divided up into four sections, one for each season, with poems describing what the authors felt and saw while visiting the garden during that particular season.

Haiku is a major form of Japanese verse, employing evocative illusions, often on the subject of nature. It captures the essence of the moment in a short three verse poem of 17 syllables or less. Here are a few examples from the anthology:

*pluie de pétales  
sous le vent doux  
magnolia en pleurs*

*bud embroidered twigs  
delicately woven together  
await a bride*

Céline Lajoie (page 49)      Jeanne Grégoire (page 46)

The *Haiku Quebec* group meets once every month at the Morrin Centre and anyone who is interested in trying this form of poetry is invited to participate. ■

(*Écris-moi un jardin* may be purchased at the Van Den Hende Gardens, Environtron Pavillion of Laval University, in Ste-Foy.)

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# FUNDRAISING

## PLANNED GIVING: CHARITABLE GIFT ANNUITY

by Marie Rubsteck, Director of Development

This is the third of a series of articles on Planned Giving, which will deal with Charitable Gift Annuities. The Canadian Charitable Annuity Association defines a charitable annuity as follows:

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