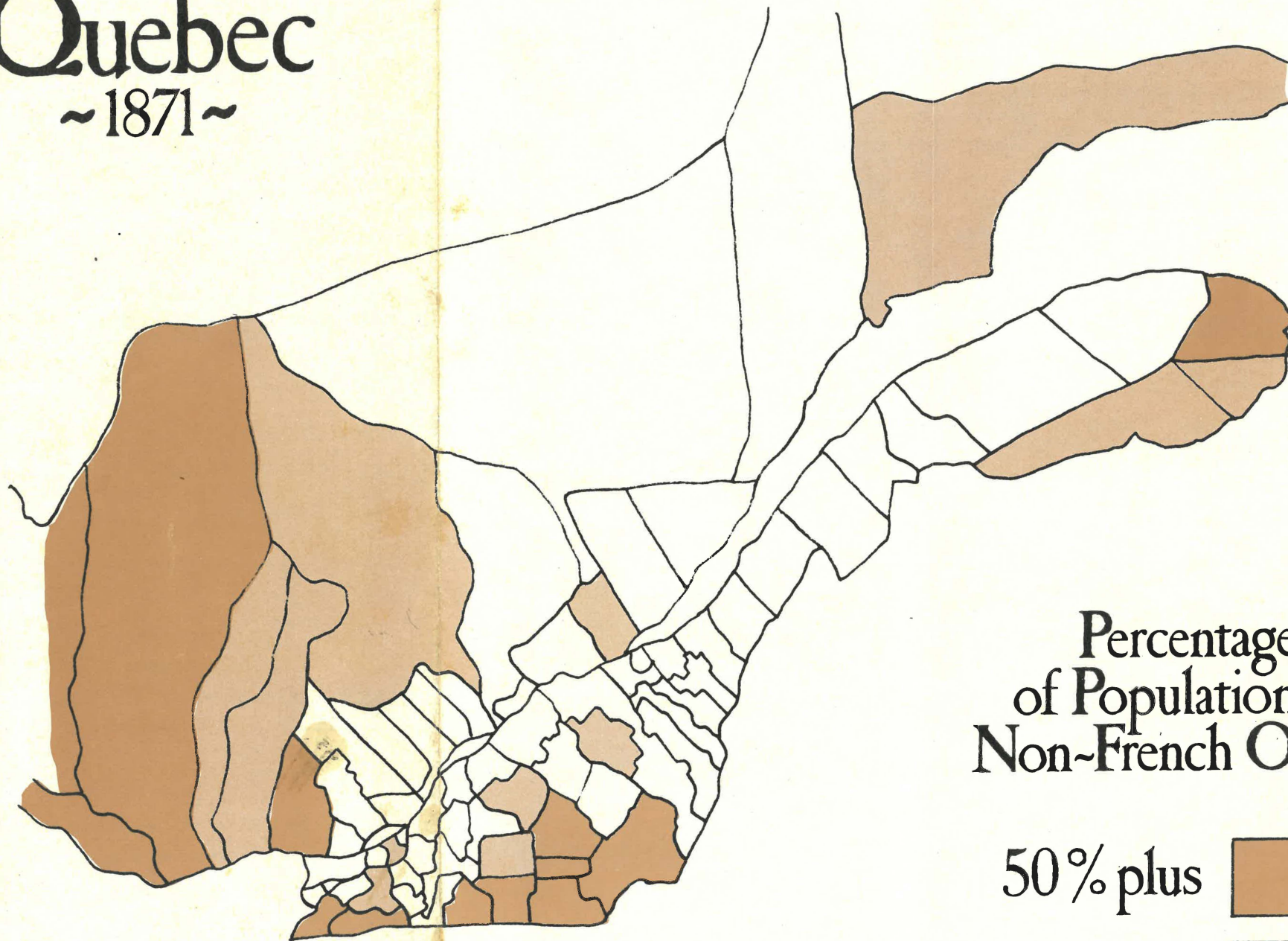


Quebec

~1871~

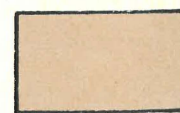


Percentage
of Population of
Non-French Origin

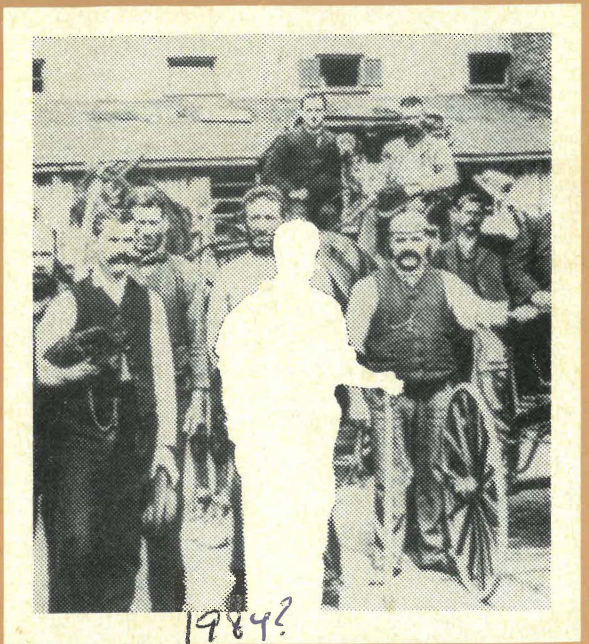
50% plus



25-49%



Help us
complete
the picture!



The Alliance
Local History
Resource Guide



Why a Local History?

The English-speaking people of Quebec have a long history in this province - over two hundred years. We pioneered many areas of Quebec, including the Townships, the Ottawa Valley, and the Gaspé. We have also played major roles in Quebec's cities.

While the "English" could be found in large numbers in the "ruling" elites, many more who worked on farms and in factories spoke English as their mother tongue.

Unfortunately, many people are not aware of the role we've played in building this province. Our story has, in large measure, not been told. Alliance Quebec would like to help change this situation.

Getting started in Local History~

The first stage in local history consists of learning where historical material is, gathering what is available, becoming familiar with it, and putting it into some sort of order. This prepares the ground for the next step - deciding the important questions you want to ask about your community. That step leads to further research, and then to the final task of putting it all together.

Taken in stages, history is not difficult. In fact, even in the earliest stages, you will be able to produce results interesting to yourself and to others.

Ideally, it would be best to work in a group with each person specializing in one of the areas of research described. This enables members of the group to compare ideas and to share discoveries. However, each of the "getting started" sections could be usefully tackled by someone working on his own.

With a will to get started, the rest is easy.

Getting started in Pictorial History~

Photographs, useful for historical displays, are even more useful for historical research. While written documents can describe the past, photographs can recreate it.

1. Begin with a set of 5X7 index cards. On these, carefully record all you can learn about each photograph - one photo per card. **Do not write on the photograph.** Information to be recorded might include date of photo, name of scene, name of photographer, name of individuals in the scene, and so on.

2. Store photographs in a box with the appropriate index card in front of each photo.

3. When the photographs become too numerous for easy research, sort them into categories such as town buildings, church groups, domestic scenes, and so on. Which categories you select will depend on the nature of your own collection.

4. Make friends with a photographer. Every community has at least one "camera bug". You will find such a person a valuable member of your research group to copy photos which their owners do not wish to donate to a collection, and to make copies for display purposes.

5. Where does one find old pictures? Apart from spreading word to friends and friends of friends, try a letter to your community newspaper. In fact, the newspaper may have a sizable collection of its own.

Getting started in Oral History~

Oral history is the art of gathering information by interviewing people who have participated in the period that interests you. It is a most useful method for gathering information that might otherwise be lost.

Essentially, there are three kinds of information to be gathered in this way:

a) Genealogical: Where did the ancestors of the interviewee come from? Where are his descendants and relatives? This information is a clue to migration and social mobility.

b) Biographical: What were the conditions of the interviewee's childhood? What school was attended? For how long? Why? What occupation was chosen? Why?

c) Historical: This category covers activities the interviewee experienced such as school life, work, and recreation

While one interviewee may be a useful source in all of these categories, it is best to confine each interview, or each set of interviews, to just one category.

1. Get a set of 5X7 index cards. On these, carefully record the subject's name and address, and the date of the interview. Use the cards to record your questions and the gist of the answers. A tape recorder is a big help. If you use one, be sure to record your name, the subject's name and address, and the date of the interview on the tape.

2. Before the interview, decide on a topic and develop a few opening questions. After the interview, review what was done with a view to raising further questions. These further questions will be of two types:

a) Taped responses may suggest interesting areas for further discussion with the interviewee.

b) Since even the best of memories may be faulty or may need a little jogging, review is necessary to double check first

recollections.

A school used this technique to reconstruct a picture of life in its district in the 1920's. It worked so well that the interviews were edited and published in an inexpensive, booklet form.

N.B. Before any interview material is published or made public in any way, the interviewee must sign a release form. These forms are available from Alliance Quebec.

Getting started as Community Archivist

In the insect world, there is a creature called the honeypot ant. It spends its life hanging from a cave ceiling while the other ants stuff it with food. This food it converts to nectar in its huge belly, and the other ants feed off it through the winter. Every community needs a honeypot ant, someone stuffed with information about where historical data can be found. Luckily, the work is more interesting than that of the honeypot ant - and does not require one to become so unattractive.

1. Obtain a set of 5X7 index cards.

2. Visit local churches to find out what documents are available to researchers. Use an index card for each category of document, making note of the years covered and the sort of information contained.

3. Do the same for local schools, municipal offices, and businesses. Try to find out what happens to old documents. Are they simply destroyed? Or are they sent to some storage place? If it is the latter, note the address.

4. Check local libraries for books and articles about the community. Record their titles and locations on your index cards.

5. Researchers will also be interested in private collections of documents (letters, farm records, photographs). Record relevant information about these on index cards just as was done with other sources. A useful aid in this process might be a letter to your local newspaper, letting the community know what you are doing.

Getting started with the Census~

The census is the easiest and fastest path to an outline history of your community. Compiled every ten years since 1871, the Canada census lists most of the features of your community that can be counted - religious groups, national origins, crops, manufactures and occupations. For the years before 1871, check volume IV of the 1871 census. It has statistics going back to the 17th century. Now, to get started:

1. Select any volume from 1871 to 1911. (These are the easiest to work with). Settle down to look through it for twenty minutes or so. Get used to it. In the sections for Quebec, look up your county, your community.

One problem to be aware of from the start is that local boundaries may change from census to census. The census for 1931 contains a useful guide to such changes.

2. Decide on your first area for research: National origins, for example, is a good starting point.

3. Get a set of 5X7 index cards. Use these to chart the numbers of people of each national origin in your community as well as the total population. **Be sure to label each card clearly.**

4. Express the numbers for each census as percentages of the total population. Study the results. Make careful note of years in which there appear to be significant changes. These will be important in shaping questions for future research.

5. Repeat the process using a different topic - religious denomination might be a good one at this stage. Later, move on to crops, or manufactures, or to any other area you find of interest.

6. With your carefully labelled statistics and your notes, you now have the makings of an excellent outline history of your community - and a sense of the important questions to be examined.

7. Once you feel confident, consider looking at the years before 1871 and after 1911. Earlier census records tend to be frustratingly incomplete, and later ones infuriatingly detailed. However, your experience in steps 1. to 6. will find you ready for them.

For further information contact:

LOCAL HISTORY PROJECT
c/o Alliance Quebec, 1411 Crescent, suite 501
Montreal, Quebec, H3G 2B3
Tel.: (514) 849-9181

or: Complete and mail the following coupon

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c/o Alliance Quebec, 1411 Crescent, suite 501 Montreal, Quebec, H3G 2B3	
<input type="checkbox"/>	I am interested in being a member of a local History Committee
<input type="checkbox"/>	I am or have been involved in study of Local History
<input type="checkbox"/>	I am willing to have my name included in a list of Local History resource persons
NAME	_____
ADDRESS	_____
CITY/TOWN	_____
POSTAL CODE	_____
TELEPHONE (R)	_____ (O) _____