

# SOCIETY PAGES

NUMBER 49 ■ Summer 2016 ■ \$2.00



- A BRITISH SUFFRAGETTE IN COLLEGE HALL
- IRON BARS & BOOKSHELVES: OUR NEW BOOK
- THE LEGACY OF OUTGOING PRESIDENT SOVITA CHANDER

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# SOCIETY PAGES

NUMBER 49 ■ SUMMER 2016

## CONTENTS

Letter from the President	1	Sovita Chander
From the Executive Director	1	Barry McCullough
Outgoing President: Sovita Chander	2	Diane Kameen, et al.
<b>Transactions</b>		
Emmeline Pankhurst in College Hall	3	Jack Bryden
<b>Library Pages</b>		
On The Shelf in 1916	4	Britta Gundersen-Bryden
New Acquisitions	6	
<b>Miscellanea</b>		
Iron Bars & Bookshelves	7	Patrick Donovan
Wolf Parade, EP4	8	Barry McCullough

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<b>Monday</b>	<b>CLOSED</b>
<b>Tuesday</b>	12:00PM-8:00PM
<b>Wednesday</b>	12:00PM-4:00PM
<b>Thursday</b>	12:00PM-8:00PM
<b>Friday</b>	12:00PM-4:00PM
<b>Saturday</b>	10:00AM-4:00PM

Front cover: "Arts Alive," celebrating Anglophone Culture, on the chaussée des Écossais.  
(Photo: Morrin Centre.)

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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.  
ISSN 1913-0732

## LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT



I feel honoured to have been chosen as President of the Society and would like to thank Council for entrusting me with this role. I would also like to thank Sovita Chander for four wonderful years at the helm of the Society. These years saw the Morrin Centre blossom from the potential we all knew it had.

I am very excited to take it even further.

The 2016 Literary Feast is already set to be a memorable evening. We are honoured to have two distinguished guests: Mr. Roch Carrier, author of the seminal children's book, *The Hockey Sweater*, as well as his most recent work, *Wolfe and Montcalm*, will be the keynote speaker. Throughout his long and storied career, Mr. Carrier has been made an Officer of the Order of Canada, has been National Librarian of

Canada and had his work featured on the back of the Canadian five dollar bill. The evening's Honorary President will be Mr. Yvon Charest, President and CEO of Industrielle Alliance. Mr. Charest is an avid reader and is very active in philanthropic circles, making him a natural fit for our annual fundraising dinner. Guests will also be treated to a great meal. Tickets for the event are already available, and those interested should contact the Morrin Centre as soon as possible because they are already going fast.

As summer hits full stride, so too does the Morrin Centre's rentals season. Rentals are an important part of the Centre's self-generated revenue. With spaces as varied and unique as ours, the Centre really can be the ideal setting for almost any type of event, from weddings to business meetings to conferences. Contact our Rentals Coordinator to plan your event.

Wishing you all a fantastic summer,

Barry Holleman

## FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



On Canada Day weekend, the Morrin Centre, in collaboration with the English Language Arts Network, hosted the second annual Arts Alive festival. Friday night we hosted Ben Wilkins with opener Jane Ehrhardt, while on Saturday Lily Thibodeau warmed up the crowd for a fantastic performance by

Pascale Picard. Sunday afternoon, we moved things outside to the chaussée des Écossais, where visitors had a chance to check out artists and community groups, some of whom put on workshops. Throughout the afternoon the appreciative crowd was entertained by the music of Vibrant Voices, Gilles Sioui, Rob Lutes and Randall Spear. In total over 1,100 people participated in Arts Alive weekend, making it one of our busiest weekends ever.

While Arts Alive wrapped up our cultural programming for the summer, the Centre isn't slowing down. This summer, the building will be full of visitors steeping themselves in the unique history of the building. If June traffic is any indication (it was the busiest June the Centre has ever seen!), we should be in for a busy summer. In addition, summer wedding season is about to kick into full gear.

Summer is also the time of the year when we are planning the activities for the next year. One of these is the My Morrin initiative. Funded by Canadian Heritage, the project will put some of the Morrin Centre's programming into your hands. The call for project proposals ends August 1st, so don't miss your chance!

As always, stay tuned to our Facebook page and sign up for our newsletter to stay on top of everything happening at 44, chaussée des Écossais!

Have a great summer,

Barry McCullough

## TRANSACTIONS

## SOVITA CHANDER

## BUILDS THE MORRIN CENTRE INTO A CULTURAL LEADER

By Diane Kameen, former Vice-president

with contributions from Elizabeth Perreault, Frederic Blouin and Lorraine O'Donnell

At the AGM on March 30, Sovita Chander stepped down as president of the LHSQ after a very busy four-year mandate. Sovita's leadership style—greatly appreciated by everyone she meets—is professional and positive, yet quiet and unassuming. It is my personal impression that she never backs down from a challenge. This observation can be corroborated by two facts: firstly, she is one of only two women to preside over the Society in its entire 192 years of existence, preceded by Rosemary Cannon (1977-1980, 1985-1989). Secondly, and perhaps more impressively in my view, she was willing to take the helm following David Blair's term as president when the Society was in the midst of perhaps its most significant transition in its long and illustrious history.

Her legacy will be to have built the Morrin Centre into a leading cultural organization with a vision for the future that she helped to articulate, and is set on three pillars: heritage, education and the arts. Thanks to this new communications concept, it has been easier for both English- and French-speakers alike to understand the Society's unique past and how the different functions of the building have led to a variety of activities and services thriving under one roof.

During her tenure, visits to the Morrin Centre have exploded from 15,000 yearly to an astonishing 43,000. Francophone attendance is now reaching 40% at key events, proof positive that the Centre is playing a vital role as a bridge between communities. School group visits have also more than doubled over the last four years, resulting in thousands of students being



introduced to the history of the English-speaking community of Quebec and the historical significance of the Morrin heritage site. The “We are One” youth initiative, initiated under Sovita's term with financial support from the Movement Desjardins and the Department of Canadian Heritage, is bringing students from Francophone and English-speaking high schools together to work on a unique program that is having a direct impact on our communities.

Sovita's passion for literature has also allowed the Morrin to flourish in the arts realm, primarily through the ImagiNation Writers' Festival. She was always available to greet the writers, artists and presenters and say a few well-chosen opening words at that annual event and at countless others. She increased the visibility of the Centre by taking an active role in various discussion tables and boards, including the Jeffery Hale Foundation and the Quebec Community Groups Network.

While she knows how to focus on the bigger picture, Sovita is also meticulous and attentive to detail. Her expertise in the technology field was invaluable when the Centre redesigned its website. She was a goldmine of information when it came to developing a solid business plan because, in addition to all her other qualities, she's a startup expert. I am very happy to report that everything accomplished under Sovita's reign has resulted in an increase in government grants.

Sovita Chander will be remembered as a visionary president who took the necessary actions to assure the longevity of the organization. We wish her well in all her future endeavours. ■

## TRANSACTIONS

## CONTROVERSY AT COLLEGE HALL

By Jack Bryden

Emmeline Pankhurst, the British Suffragette, was invited to speak at Morrin College on March 1, 1916. Canada and much of the world had been at war for more than a year. The evening before, she had spoken to a large audience at Columbus Hall in Place d'Youville. That first night Pankhurst had focused on the importance of the war (WWI), the important role of women in that war, and her support for conscription of all eligible males in Britain and Empire. She had also passed the hat to raise funds for Serbian war orphans.

The large audience at Morrin College wanted to see the famous leader of the militant British suffragettes and to hear about the fight to win the vote for British women. Those filling the hall would have known about the recent violence associated with this small, fragile-looking woman. Quebecers were aware from the newspapers that suffragettes had smashed windows in London, detonated bombs and set fires in churches across the United Kingdom. Emmeline Pankhurst had been jailed and released several times by British authorities. Everybody in the audience probably had strong opinions about her before they arrived.

After introductions, Pankhurst stood and quietly clarified that the civil disobedience campaign had been put on hold at the beginning of the war. According to the *Quebec Chronicle* reporter present that day, she quickly explained that her visit to Quebec "had not been intended for the purpose of interesting Quebec women in the question of votes for Women." Mrs.

Pankhurst then stated that "she hoped that when the time was ripe, the women of Quebec would start a movement in this direction." Mrs. Pankhurst was obviously trying not to be inflammatory that day. She advised that the militant tactics used in London may not be appropriate in Quebec, and that when it was time for change in women's rights in Quebec, the movement should be inclusive and not just be led by an isolated "clique". She suggested that the audience probably had "distorted or sensational" views about the suffragettes and that her audience at Morrin College may not appreciate that the British women's movement had had to resort to militancy because peaceful demonstrations had not worked.

By this time, those in the audience who were hoping for controversy may have started to feel disappointed. However, Pankhurst couldn't resist addressing Quebec's gender politics. She explained to the crowd that suffragette work everywhere was for the "social and moral uplift of young girls." She also commented on the recent Quebec decision to ban women from practising law.



Emmeline Pankhurst in Prison, 1908

Six days after her presentation, on March 7, 1916, the Quebec newspaper *L'Action Catholique* devoted a significant portion of its front page to a large-print editorial criticizing Mrs. Pankhurst's speech. There would have been no problem had she only talked about the war, it said, but she seemed to have come to Quebec to preach about the political emancipation of *the sexe faible*. Women of Quebec did not need

## TRANSACTIONS

Pankhurst to raise their social and moral sensibilities, and they already had high social and moral standing in their role as the moral centre of the family and guardians of home and hearth. The editorial concluded that Pankhurst's stated concerns about Serbian orphans were only a pretext for lecturing Quebecers about the vote for women.

This was not the only reaction of its kind. Many outside Quebec were also concerned in 1916 that changing women's rights would destabilize family life, and even

more disapproved of the militant tactics used by the suffragettes. However, an American non-militant suffragist of the time wrote that the British militants had "planted in the minds of people the world around the fundamental thought that women are people. To raise half the human race to consideration is an achievement. The world has condemned, but it has thought."

If a college's role is to invite debate and discussion, Morrin College did a good job on March 1, 1916. ■

## LIBRARY PAGES

## ON THE SHELF

## WHEN MRS. PANKHURST CAME TO TOWN

By Britta Gundersen-Bryden

Audience members in College Hall listening to Emmeline Pankhurst in 1916 were probably avid readers. But exactly *what* titles might they have been reading?

**New Acquisitions, 1900–1913**

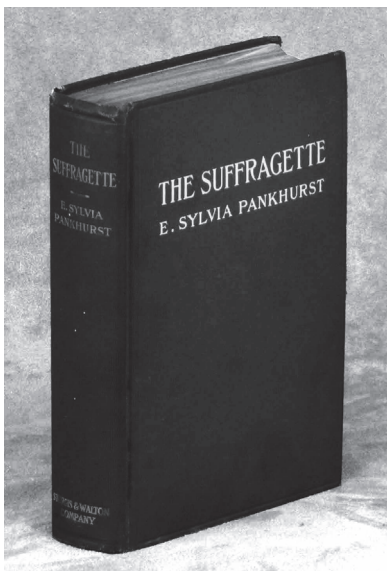
On New Year's Day, 1914, the Literary and Historical Society published its "Hand List of Additions to the Library, 1900–1914." The title page included the still-apt motto: "Infinite Riches in a Little Room."

Many of these books were classified as "Questions of the Day" (Canadian, Imperial, Economic or General).

"Canadian Questions" included titles such as W. R. Lawson's still-in-print classic, *Canada and the Empire* (1911). "Imperial Questions" titles focused on the Empire's colonies in Africa and India.

A few acquisitions foreshadowed the Great War, including *Germany in Arms* (1913) by Crown Prince Wilhelm of Germany, *What Germany Wants* (1912) by W. N. Wells and *Pan Germanism* (1913) by Roland G. Usher; but most history, biography and military titles looked backwards to the Victorian Age and before.

Books on social issues covered the labour movement, rights of citizens, race relations, the plight of the poor, democratic institutions, "social hygiene," eugenics and, not surprisingly, women's rights and suffrage.

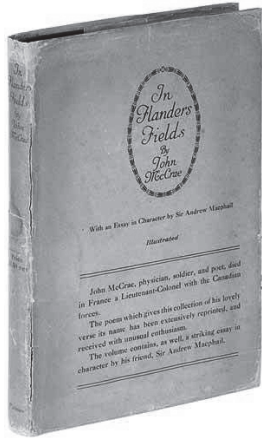


Mrs. Pankhurst's listeners may have checked out *The Woman Who Toils* by Marie van Vorst (1903) or *Sex Antagonism* (1913) by Walter Heape. They may have reached for *The Subjection of Women* (1869) by John Stuart Mill (who was ahead of his time). There was undoubtedly a waiting list for *The Suffragette, 1905-1910* (1911) by Mrs. Pankhurst's daughter E. Sylvia Pankhurst. Suffrage nay-sayers would have found their positions bolstered by *Woman Adrift: the Menace of Suffrage* (1912) by Harold Owen and *The Unexpurgated Case Against Woman Suffrage* (1913) by Almroth E. Wright.

As today, fiction made up the bulk of the Library's collection. Thomas Hardy, Mark Twain and Rudyard Kipling each had more than fifteen titles on the shelves. There were novels by Balzac and Charlotte Brontë, Leo Tolstoy and Anthony Trollope, H. G. Wells and Edith Wharton. There were also multiple novels by now-obscure writers like G. A. Henty and Harold Bindloss.

## LIBRARY PAGES

## What a Difference a War Makes



By March 1916, Canada was fully engaged in World War I. The Book Committee's non-fiction selections shifted away from progressive social issues to books about the conflict.

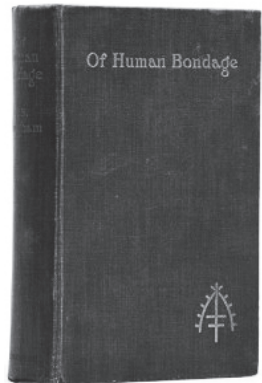
Acquisitions in 1916 included many about areas directly affected by the war, including Russia, Serbia, and the Balkans. There were two books on Belgium (including *Belgium the Glorious* [2 Vols.] by "Well

Known Authors."). *The Diplomacy of the War of 1914* and the full set of "The Times" *History of the War* were acquired.

For readers wanting to know about Canada's adversary, new 1916 titles included *Germany in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century*, *The Evolution of Prussia* and *Prussian Memories 1864–1914*.

*In Flanders Fields and Other Poems* by Canadian John McCrea was published in 1919 but the poem itself was first published in 1915, and was likely available in Library periodicals.

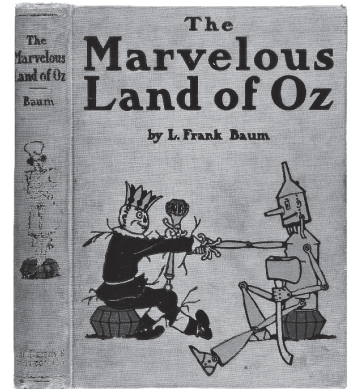
## Fiction at the Forefront



Imagine Mrs. Pankhurst touring the Library during her visit; she may have found W. Somerset Maugham's *Of Human Bondage* (1915) and Ford Madox Ford's *The Good Soldier* (1915). John Buchan's *The 39 Steps* began thrilling readers in 1915, and D. H. Lawrence's *The Rainbow* (1915), which had been banned in Britain, was available in North America.

Library readers waited eagerly for the next Tarzan adventure and Sherlock Holmes mystery; #7 in the Holmes series, *The Valley of Fear*, was published in 1915. Zane Grey's westerns took readers as far from the war as possible and Elizabeth Gaskell's many novels took them back to a gentler time.

Series were popular with young people, too. They followed the adventures of the Bobsey Twins, Anne of Green Gables and Pollyanna. They were enchanted by L. Frank Baum's *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* (1900) and his sixteen subsequent stories about Oz (as an aside, Baum supported women's suffrage and his 1904 book, *The Marvelous Land of Oz* features the girls and women of Oz who took to the streets, knitting needles in hand, to fight for gender equity).



## And Today?

If today's Library classified titles as in 1916, a category called "Questions of the Day: Women" would include:

*Literature of the Women's Suffrage Campaign in England* (2004), ed. Carolyn Christine Nelson;

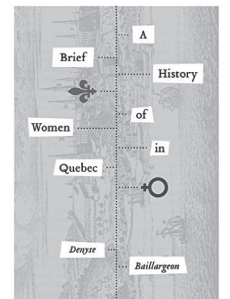
*With All Her Might: The Life of Gertrude Harding Militant Suffragette* (1996) by Gretchen Wilson. Harding was a New Brunswicker who was, at various times Mrs. Pankhurst's bodyguard, the publisher of *The Suffragette* newspaper and private secretary to Mrs. Pankhurst's daughter, Christabel; and



*What I Remember* (1924), by British Suffragette Millicent Garrett Fawcett (Library's Special Collection).

For a Quebec perspective there is *A Brief History of Women in Quebec* (2014) by Denyse Baillargeon.

Sylvia Van Kirk's *Many Tender Ties: Women in Fur-Trade Society, 1670-1870* (1980) and Jean Barman's acclaimed *French Canadians, Furs, and Indigenous Women* (2015) give historical background to another "Women's Question" that is important today.

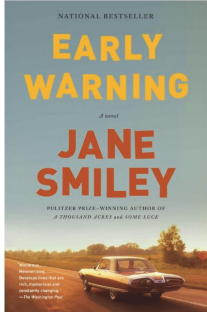




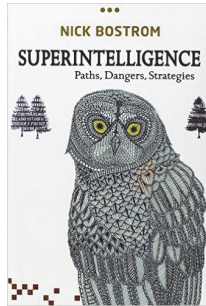
LIBRARY PAGES

NEW ACQUISITIONS

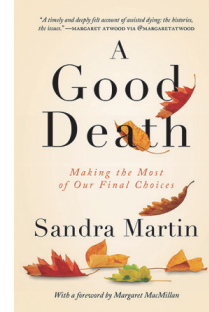
Here are a few of the recent additions to the Library collection. To reserve a title, please contact the Morrin Centre Library at **418-694-9147** or visit our online catalogue at **www.morrin.org**.



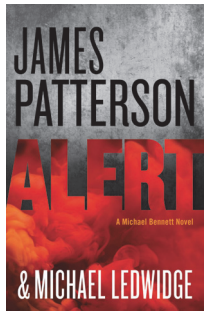
**Fiction**  
*Early Warning*  
Jane Smiley



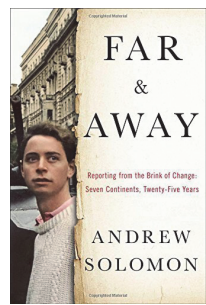
**Non-Fiction**  
*Super-intelligence*  
Nick Bostrom



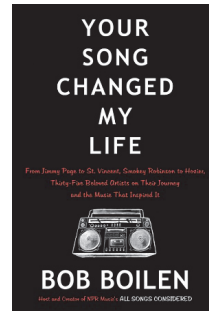
*A Good Death*  
Sandra Martin



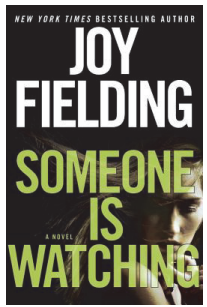
*Alert*  
James Patterson & Michael Ledwidge



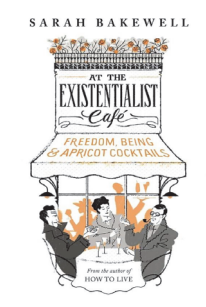
*Far and Away*  
Andrew Solomon



*Your Song Changed my Life*  
Bob Boilen



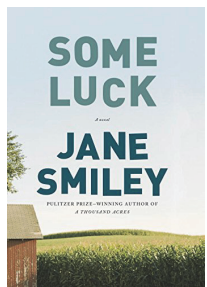
*Someone is Watching*  
Joy Fielding



*At the Existentialist Café*  
Susan Bakewell



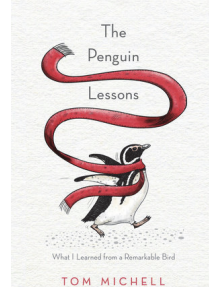
*The Argonauts*  
Maggie Nelson



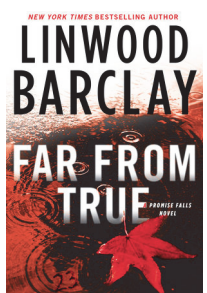
*Some Luck*  
Jane Smiley



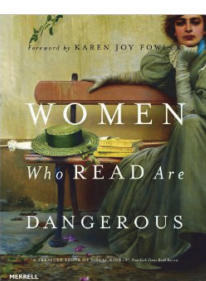
*Paternalia*  
Jude Stewart



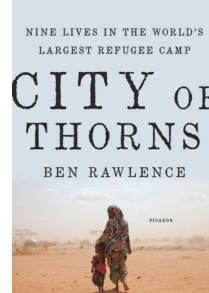
*The Penguin Lessons*  
Tom Michell



*Far from True*  
Linwood Barclay



*Women who Read are Dangerous*  
Stefan Bollman



*City of Thorns*  
Ben Rawlence

## MISCELLANEA

## THE MAKING OF IRON BARS & BOOKSHELVES or THE LONG AND WINDING ROAD

By Patrick Donovan

The Morrin Centre has often been called “Quebec’s best-kept secret.” This has become a bit of a cliché. With the Centre taking on an increasingly public profile, it’s also become increasingly false.

But there was a time when this was true, even for members of Quebec City’s English-speaking community. Until recently, there was no sign outside the building to even indicate what it was. Given that someone tried to burn the library down in the 1960s, it’s no surprise that many people wanted it that way.

I grew up in Quebec City, attended English-language schools, and didn’t even know the place existed until my late teens. I first set foot in the building around 1993, when I was in CEGEP. I was dragged along by a friend who had read about the free tours.

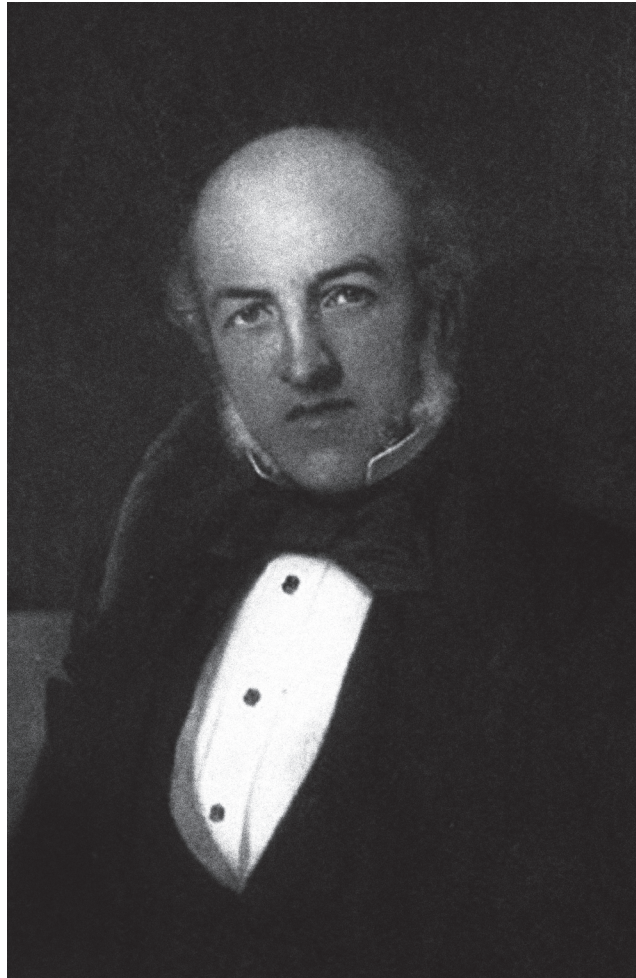
It was a different building back then. The green wallpaper in the entrance hall was peeling. The walls of the jail cells were crumbling, and some squatters had spray painted “LED ZEP WAS HERE” over one of the doors. College Hall was a mildewy room wrecked by water damage. And then there was the library: piles and piles of books, many of them old and crumbling, on the shelves, next to the shelves, on the windowsills, everywhere. None had call number labels, but the elderly woman behind the counter knew what was where. The library was still a wonderful place despite its worn pink 1980s wall-to-wall carpeting and flickering fluorescent tubes.

I fell in love. I remember a small hand-calligraphed sign that read “With your help we can survive.” A few coins sat in the box next to it. It would take more than this to save the building. I was in love, yes, but it felt more like being in love with a terminal patient.

Fast-forward ten years to 2003 and the Society had changed its focus from mere survival to revitalization. The name “Morrin Centre” had already been decided on, and there were dynamic people pushing this project. I was doing a Masters degree in Historic Preservation and asked Lorraine O’Donnell, who managed the project at the time, if there was a way I could link up one of my required research projects to the needs of the burgeoning centre. I wanted to research the gory tales of the prison, but was told library clerk Christine Veilleux was already doing this. Also, Don Fyson was the local expert on crime and criminal justice. I then suggested studying the Literary and Historical Society, but Louisa Blair and others had done work on this. They’d even produced an original draft for an unreleased book that had

been intended for the Society’s 175th anniversary. “Nobody’s researching the College, though,” said Lorraine.

“That’s because it’s boring,” I felt like saying. “It was an unremarkable third-rate provincial school that fizzled out after a few decades.” I didn’t say this, of course. Although it didn’t seem like the most interesting



**Joseph Morrin: Philanthropist? Scoundrel?  
Or something in between?**

## MISCELLANEA

research prospect, it was the only unstaked claim, so I took it.

As it turns out, my initial dismissal had been wrong. Researching the College took me through the fascinating history of education in Quebec in the nineteenth century. Looking through different sources, I came across some incredible stories that raised many new questions. Was Joseph Morrin the selfless philanthropist he'd been made out to be, or was he a scoundrel who made money off the backs of people suffering from mental illness? Had he really intended to found a College, or had he been manipulated? A closer look at those who taught courses at Morrin College revealed the man who gave his name to the gold rush town of Dawson City; a Quebec City native who gave his name to a copper-mining Mexican border town; and a scholar who wrote the late Princess Diana's favourite hymn. Then there was Morrin College student Salem Bland, pioneer of the social gospel movement, and one of the founders of what became the New Democratic Party. And women. Morrin College gave women access to the same Bachelor of Arts program as men some sixty years before Université Laval. There are great

stories behind some of these women, like Margaret Fraser, who led a military hospital in France during World War I.

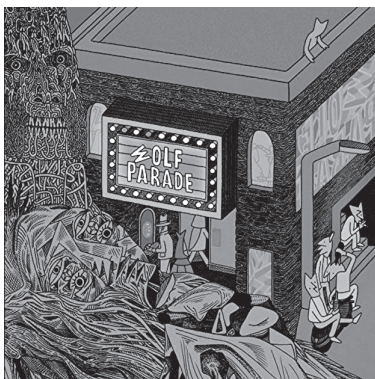
Thirteen years have elapsed since I first started researching Morrin College and the release of *Iron Bars & Bookshelves*. My co-authors Donald Fyson and Louisa Blair began researching their respective sections even earlier. All of this coalesced into a book project sometime around 2008, but then we had to seek out funding, find publishers, write the sections, get images, write captions, etc. All this to say that it wasn't hastily written over two weeks, but well thought out and meticulously researched.

A long and winding road, but one that finally reveals many of the "best-kept secrets" that should be out there. ■

*Iron Bars and Bookshelves, released in June 2016, is available for sale at the Morrin Centre and at all good booksellers. Aussi disponible en français sous le titre Barreaux de fer et bibliothèques.*

## MUSIC REVIEW: WOLF PARADE, EP4

By Barry McCullough



Remember Wolf Parade? For those of you who don't, Wolf Parade was formed in Montreal in 2003 during an incredibly fertile period for the independent music scene in the city. They had a successful run until calling it a day in 2011. Band members, including its two driving forces and alternating vocalists, Spencer Krug and Dan Boeckner, have stayed busy with other well-regarded projects such as Handsome Furs and Divine Fits (Boeckner) and Moonface (Krug).

After a five-year hiatus, the band is back with the cleverly-titled EP 4 (They have four other EPs, lovingly

referred to as EPs 1 through 3).

Clocking in at a shade under thirteen minutes, their comeback salvo isn't a long one. The first song, the Boeckner-sung "Automatic," sounds exactly that, giving one the feeling that these guys could crank out gems like this in their sleep. It could easily find a home on either of their last two records. Krug belts out the next two tracks, the 80's synth-driven "Mr. Startup" and the pulsating "C'est La Vie Way." Vocal duties shift back to Boeckner for the last track, mostly up-tempo "Floating World."

While the album doesn't really break any new ground, it's comforting just to know they've gotten the band back together again. They have tour dates scheduled throughout the rest of the summer, including a couple in Montreal. We can only hope that this is the beginning of another successful and fruitful run. ■

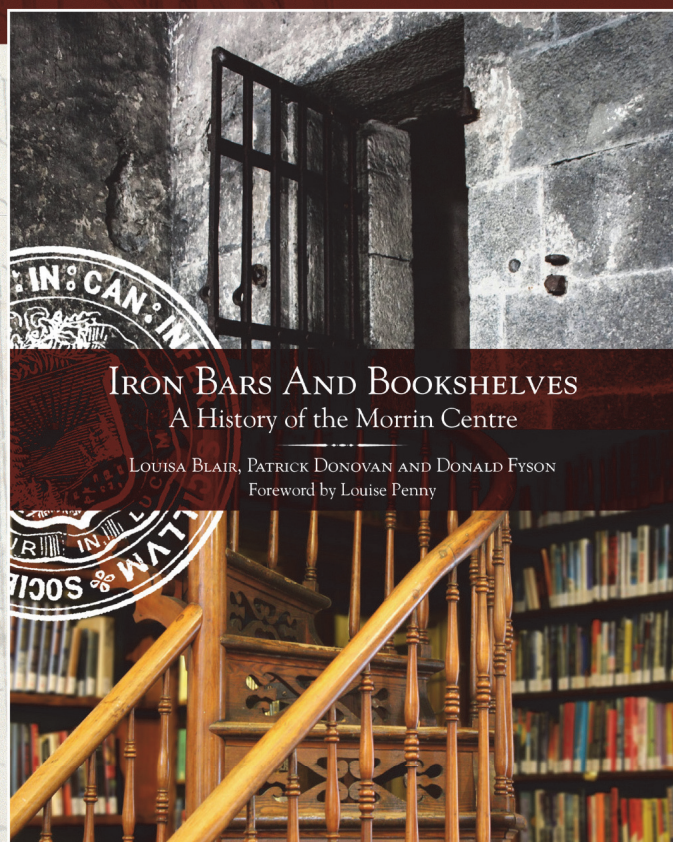


# UNCOVERING QUEBEC CITY'S TUMULTUOUS HISTORY

## IRON BARS AND BOOKSHELVES A History of the Morrin Centre

LOUISA BLAIR, PATRICK DONOVAN AND DONALD FYSON

Foreword by Louise Penny



The Morrin Centre is at the heart of Quebec City's history. It once housed Quebec's common jail, the Presbyterian-run Morrin College, and the activities of the Literary and Historical Society of Quebec. Today, it is home to the city's main English-language cultural centre and library.

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