

NEWSLETTER

DECEMBER 1979 Vol. 7, No. 11 John Leaning, President Jennifer Roddick, Editor

ISSN 0708-0506

JANUARY MEETING

Have you ever wondered what a "LACAC" is?

On Monday, January 14th at 8:00 p.m. Pamela Craig, Planner & LACAC Co-ordinator for Ontario Ministry of Culture and Recreation will present "Local Architectural Conservation Advisory Committees (LACACs)". Using slides of buildings and properties with which LACACs in Ontario have been involved, Ms. Craig will explain why they were set up, how they function, what they have achieved, their future plans, etc.

A member from Ottawa's LACAC will also be present to explain what our Committee has been doing, its priorities and plans.

So, for answers to all your questions on LACAC, meet us at the Fraser Schoolhouse Gallery, 62 John Street, New Edinburgh on January 14th.

LAURIER HOUSE TOUR

Despite the dismal evening, about 40 Heritage Ottawa members braved the rain November 22nd to attend a guided tour of the intriguing Laurier House.

Many thanks to our guides, Valerie Proctor, Curator and Bob Evans, Assistant Curator, who provided members with a personalized history and amusing anecdotes for each room.

The home was constructed by an unknown builder in 1878 for John and Eliza Lesley, immigrants from Aberdeen, Scotland. When John died the house was bought for The Lauriers who lived there from 1897 to 1921. On Laurier's death, it was willed to Mackenzie King who remodelled the house quite extensively, including the addition of wood panelling in the hallway which was carved in Scotland and shipped over piece by piece.

On his death in 1950, King willed the house to the People of Canada.

King was an avid collector of curiosities and the house is filled with knick-knacks of every description. One such collectable was a green velvet chair King used when he attended the coronation of George VI.

The chair bears the royal insignia and was kept in his bedroom.

Also in his bedroom, one finds a "prie-dieu", said to be from the room in Wemyss Castle, Scotland, where Mary, Queen of Scots met Darnley for the first time.

Another interesting artifact is a cast of the death mask and hands of Abraham Lincoln which was given to King by his Cabinet on the occasion of his 72nd birthday.

Interestingly, the furniture in the front room, or salon, is uniquely set up in a circle with King's chair placed in front of the fireplace. The circle may have induced conversation, however, the straight-backed chairs would not appear to encourage the visitor to prolong his stay.

The house is abundant with silver knick-knacks, cutlery, picture frames, and ornaments - all of which tarnish easily. It is rumored that a certain, elderly cleaning lady in the employ of DPW comes to the house every day for the sole purpose of polishing this silverware. It is said that she starts at one end of the house and works her way methodically to the other end. When every piece of silver has been polished, she starts again, from the beginning.

As well as mementos of Laurier and King, there is one section of the house dedicated to The Pearson Era. In 1974, former quest quarters were redesigned into a replica of Pearson's own study as it was at the time of his death. The light wood panelled walls are completely covered with framed originals of cartoon drawings depicting events during Pearson's career.

The room is full of memories, obviously cherished by Mr. Pearson. His warmth of character is evident through his choice of treasures.

The enjoyable evening ended with conversation and mingling over coffee and biscuits.

Jennifer Roddick

WHILE THEY LAST!

"The East Block", a hard-cover publication written by R.A.J. Phillips, past Chairman of Heritage Canada, is available at the Schoolhouse Gallery. Cost is \$5.00.

There are only a few copies left and this will be the last printing. If you would like to purchase a copy please contact Stella Kirk at 745-0551.

HERITAGE CANADA CONTEST

Heritage Canada is sponsoring a contest for the best letter to a newspaper editor or member of parliament on the subject "Holiday in February -- Heritage Day".

As prizes, Heritage Canada is offering books by Pierre Berton.

For further information please call their office at 237-1867.

NEW BOARD MEMBER

A warm welcome is extended to Nan Griffiths who joined the Board this month in an ex-officio capacity. Nan, who is also a member of LACAC, is well-known in Ottawa for her work in heritage. We welcome her vast knowledge and expertise.

NOTES FROM LACAC

14 Metcalfe Street

Together with 93 Sparks Street, 14 Metcalfe Street is in danger due to damage discovered during the demolition of the ruins of the Rideau Club. A hurried request to designate these properties under the Ontario Heritage Act has been presented to City Council by LACAC in the hope of saving them from the wrecker's ball.

Designations

LACAC agreed to recommend to City Council the following designations under the Ontario Heritage Act:

- 252 Metcalfe Street
- 324 Somerset Street
- 284-286 Stewart Street

Tax Resolution

City Council has approved a resolution submitted by LACAC on tax treatment of heritage buildings. This resolution will now be submitted to the Federal Government for its approval. At this time, the Income Tax Act appears to give incentives to the demolition of heritage buildings and penalizes renovation with a higher tax for the improvement of the properties.

The book "Heritage Fights Back" by Marc Denhez, Research Director for Heritage Canada, gives an interesting background and description of the laws governing preservation, including tax laws.

Martineau Hotel

The question arose whether or not the Martineau Hotel on Murray Street is still to be considered of heritage value even though a considerable amount of the interior was destroyed by fire. LACAC is of the opinion that the fire did not detract from the heritage quality of the building as the exterior stonework was a major factor in the decision to designate.

Plaquing

Upon designation of a heritage property a plaque will be issued by the Plaquing Committee of LACAC. The solid bronze plaque will contain the name of the house and the date in which it was built. The owner of the property will receive a letter from LACAC Chairman, Georges Bédard giving him/her a choice in location for mounting the plaque.

BOARD MEMBER PROFILE

Julian Smith

Julian Smith, who does the line-drawings for the Heritage Ottawa Newsletter and serves on the Board of Directors, has several strings to his bow. An architect by profession, his work with Parks Canada involves restoration of federal sites such as the Rideau Canal complex and the

production of manuals on restoration techniques. In his spare time his bow is used to make music as a violinist with other musicians in the Ottawa area. In his spare spare time we works on his 85-year old house in the Glebe where he lives with his wife, Betsy, and their two sons, Tristan and Adam.

After a childhood in Montreal, Julian moved to Boston as a teenager. His artisitic talents, which had first come to light when he spent hours as a child sketching happily on the borders of wallpaper left over when his parents redecorated their home, led him to Oberlin College in Ohio, where he studied art and architecture and pursued his interest in music.

In 1969, he accepted a teaching and research position at the University of Madurai, in southern India. Madurai, small and homogeneous, was fascinating because it was built on a 16th century indigenous town plan still discernible to the observant stroller. His experiences in India, where the idea of a cultural landscape is strong, aroused his interest in the continuity of historical traditions in contemporary society and he went on to do graduate studies in architectural design and architectural history at MIT in Boston. While at MIT he cooperated in setting up a course relating historic building techniques to contemporary design. The decision to originate the course arose from Julian's awareness that architecture schools generally fail to deal with either the theory or practice of architectural conservation or the larger question of contemporary design in a historical context.

He joined Heritage Ottawa on his arrival in Ottawa in 1976 and looks forward to seeing its influence grow. Heritage Ottawa's role, he believes, is to open people's eyes to the richness of our existing environment and eventually to advise and inform interested citizens on how to enhance both the use and the beauty of our cultural landscape.

Janice Sutton

SKI TRAILS LOSE THEIR NAMES

The Ottawa Ski Club was founded in 1910 - long before there were any ski tows for downhill skiing, and cross-country was therefore a very popular sport.

Dedicated volunteers from that Club and several smaller ones purchased land in the Gatineau Hills; some from the pioneer Fortune family. Hours of volunteer labour over many, many years went into building trails and lodges. Little remains of the McDonald and McCloskey farms, however, trail signs give us a hint of where to find their old foundations. "Georges" trail named for George Audette; "Franks" for Frank Bedard - both dedicated club members. Burma Road and its beautiful Ramparts Lookout were named for that part of World War II.

Many other names, like Chicken Run, Top of the World, Pipe Dream, Hidden Valley, Merry-Go-Round with its Kicking-Horse Pass, Curve of Destiny and Oogopogo, give all of us who have skied them a great deal of joy. A book entitled "History of the Ottawa Ski Club" by Herbert Marshall describes in detail the trails and their origins.

In the last couple of years the NCC has numbered the trails, colour coded them to indicate their degree of difficulty and published new numbered maps. When people complained about losing the historic names the NCC issued a small separate supplement to the maps. Number Three for instance is "all of Canyon and Fortune Trails, most of Burma and part of Huron" -- very confusing! Even people who do not know the historical significance, say they love and prefer to see the names.

A group of concerned skiers is drawing up a petition against the removal of these historic signs. If you would be interested in adding your name please call 592-1957.

Myrna McNamara

Please send submissions to: The Editor,
44 Carmichael Court, Kanata, Ontario
K2K 1K2 or telephone: 592-4209.

The members of the Board of Directors would like to take this opportunity to wish each of you a very happy holiday season and the best of everything in 1980.

Jennifer