A WORD FROM THE CHAIR

Dear Friends of the Société historique de Saint-Boniface (SHSB),

Work is Progressing Diligently

As we write this newsletter, the COVID-19 pandemic is still raging. After having worked from home for a few weeks, the Centre du patrimoine's staff recently returned to the Centre which remains closed to the public.

They are once again processing genealogical research requests and can better respond to archival research requests. Some archival processing projects, such as the description of cassettes and slides as well as updates to the archival database describing the Centre's collection at archivescanada.ca website, are moving forward more quickly now due to the temporary closure of the Centre. You will also notice new entries in the website's blog and in the “Au Pays de Riel” section, for example, a text by Bernard Mulaire on Catherine Mulaire, née Lacerte (1843–1922).

We have even launched an oral history project on the experiences of Francophones and Métis during the COVID-19 pandemic! Events, decisions, actions and feelings recorded during this difficult period will inform researchers, students, the media and the public in the future.

A New Face at the Helm of the Centre du patrimoine

On May 1, 2020, Janet La France succeeded Gilles Lesage as executive director. We reiterate our thanks to Gilles for his dedication and the immense legacy he leaves to the SHSB. In addition, we are grateful for the special attention with which he passed the torch to Janet. We are pleased to report that we will continue to work with him as a volunteer, as he has already committed to participating in archival research and processing projects. Among other things, he will continue to support the Canada Research Chair (migrations, transfers and Francophone communities) team from the Université de Saint Boniface, much to the delight of the Chairholder, Professor Yves Frenette.

For her part, Janet is familiar with the Centre du patrimoine where she has worked since 2006. She brings a wealth of experience to her new role as executive director. The Board of Directors and staff are pleased to welcome her in her new role.

A certified genealogist, Janet has a long-time interest in Métis and Fur-Trade history. In addition, she has developed strong organizational skills, accrued over the years by conducting genealogical research for clients and accepting administrative responsibilities at the Centre. Among other things, she has trained staff and volunteers and has often been called upon as a genealogist to deal with sensitive situations around issues such as identity, family, disability and cultural affiliation. An avid reader of history publications, Janet seizesthe archived opportunities for professional development. She has attended workshops held by the Association for Manitoba Archives and is now enrolled in a course on current archival practices offered by the Archives Association of British Columbia.

Welcome to Halley Ducharme and Marcel DeGagné

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I also welcome Halley Ducharme, who replaces Janet as the Centre's genealogist, and Marcel DeGagné, who assumes the responsibilities of administrative assistant.

Have a good read!

Michel Lagacé

A CAISSE FOR supporting our cultural heritage.

Learn more about our Community Sponsorship Program at www.caisse.biz
Janet La France

“I feel ready for a new challenge and a greater leadership role. I am passionate about genealogy, but I have the will and ambition to broaden my horizons and contribute more substantially to the development of the Centre du patrimoine, which I believe is key to the vitality of Manitoba’s Francophone and Métis community.”

Marcel DeGagné

“I was looking for a job aligned with my skills in a Francophone environment, where I would have the opportunity to meet many people—I like interacting with people! The archives interest me keenly and I immediately felt welcomed by the Centre’s staff, volunteers and clients.”

Halley Ducharme

“I grew up in the Métis community of Saint-Laurent—I was looking for a job that touched upon both my Métis heritage and my French language. My work at the Centre du patrimoine meets these goals. It is fulfilling to help people find their family roots. In addition, I am extremely interested in history.”

MIGRATORY ROUTES OF THE RELIGIOUS

Simon Balloud is a lecturer in history and a researcher at the Université de Saint-Boniface: “Since the fall of 2019, I have had the great pleasure of exploring the SHSB’s archival collections as part of a postdoctoral fellowship in the research partnership Trois siècles de migrations francophones en Amérique du Nord, 1640-1940. (Three Centuries of Francophone Migration in North America).”

As part of his research project entitled Les missionnaires français dans l’Ouest canadien (1845 1940) : migrations, transferts et expériences (French Missionaries in Western Canada: Migrations, Transfers and Experiences), Mr. Balloud consulted the archives of French religious congregations at the Centre du patrimoine: the Sisters of the Saviour, the Sisters of Our Lady of the Missions, the Canons Regular of the Immaculate Conception and the Oblates of Mary Immaculate.

“These fonds contain valuable documents, as they allow us to reconstruct the missionary and migratory journeys of French religious women and men in Western Canada (1845–1940) and to capture the individual and collective experience of the latter, especially through their correspondence and their contacts with various local populations. I want to thank the SHSB team for being so available and for their professionalism, with a special thought to Julie Reid and Gilles Lesage.”

To learn more about Simon Balloud, see: https://migrationsfrancophones.ustboniface.ca/postdoctorant/ and https://lhpm.uqam.ca/simon-balloud/

EMERGING DEVELOPMENT PRIORITY: A NEW WEBSITE

The Centre du patrimoine’s website is the largest gateway for its users. However, the technology used to build the current site is outdated and vulnerable: it is increasingly difficult to modify and add to it. As a result, the Centre is taking steps, including funding requests, to build a new website that is more secure, easy to maintain, robust and user-friendly. This new site will cost between $31,500 and $47,500, not including the transfer of content from one site to another. We are therefore once again calling upon our benefactors to help us achieve this key project.

You may also support the Centre du patrimoine by contributing to the SHSB Fund. The Manitoba Heritage Trust Program would amplify the impact of your donation by up to one dollar ($1) for each two dollar ($2) donation. Thanks to you, the Centre could raise up to $35,000 in matching funds by March 31, 2021. Take advantage of this opportunity!
1870 | MANITOBA

An exhibition on the founding of Manitoba, which includes a permanent display at the Salon Empire, a web component, and a travelling component, will be launched virtually on the SHSB website and Facebook page on June 24. Look it up! This date is especially significant because it marks the 150th anniversary of the ratification of the Manitoba Act of 1870 by the Legislative Assembly of Assiniboia. This document had been brought back from Ottawa by Father Joseph Noël Ritchot, or as the Métis called him, “Père Ritchot”, for its approval. The Act was proclaimed on July 15th of 1870 when Manitoba became Canada’s fifth province.

The exhibition’s curator, Annie Langlois, comments: “Today, Manitoba reflects Canadian society, where diversity and cultural pride are valued. But at the time, the long-established inhabitants, mostly Métis, the recent immigrants and the Canadian government each saw the fate of the River Red Colony under a different light—the founding of the province was not smooth. Those values that provoked turmoil and passions at the time are also the ones that led to the Manitoba we know today.”

From the Hudson's Bay Company's rumoured sale of Rupert's Land and the North-West upon which the Red River Colony was located, to the ratification and proclamation of the Manitoba Act of 1870, this exhibition presents some of the Centre du patrimoine's priceless archival documents, all available online, tracing the history of the province's creation.

The SHSB thanks Canadian Heritage, Sport, Culture and Heritage Manitoba and Caisse Groupe Financier for their financial support of this exhibition curated by Annie Langlois with the assistance of Thomas Bres and presented at the Centre du patrimoine until the winter of 2021.

The SHSB thanks Division scolaire franco-manitobaine (DSFM), its partner in the realization of the educational component of the exhibition According to René Déquier, Deputy Superintendent: “The DSFM is immensely proud to host the travelling exhibition 1870 | Manitoba in its schools. This initiative is aligned with its strategic orientations, especially that of developing its students' sense of belonging to their community. The exhibition, which presents some of the main events and personalities that led to the foundation of Manitoba, will be an asset, among other things, in the high school Franco-Manitoban history course the DSFM has recently developed. Finally, the DSFM thanks the Centre du patrimoine for the constant addition of online educational resources that serve its students and the community.”

“Caisse Financial Group is proud to be the official sponsor of the SHSB’s exhibition on the 150th anniversary of the Province of Manitoba. We strongly believe in the importance of sharing our history and we are pleased that our contribution to this project has aided the Centre du patrimoine in the purchase of much needed dehumidifiers to preserve its archives.”

Joël Rondeau,
CEO of Caisse Groupe Financier
THANK YOU TO OUR DONORS:
DEHUMIDIFIERS NOW COMMISSIONED!

The SHSB is deeply grateful to its loyal donors, including several religious congregations, who support the Centre du patrimoine's activities and continue to grow its Heritage Fund and Religious Archives sub-fund.

Last fall, the SHSB appealed for help to replace the Centre du patrimoine's two failing dehumidifiers. Thank you for your generous response! Due to your remarkable support, a $30,421 grant from Canadian Heritage, Caisse Groupe Financier's sponsorship of the 1870 | Manitoba exhibition, and contributions of $7,500 from both the Thomas Sill Foundation and The Winnipeg Foundation, the new dehumidifiers that meet national standards for the preservation of archives were installed in early April.

For more information on what is happening at the Centre du patrimoine and the SHSB, check out our website at www.shsb.mb.ca, including our blog at www.shsb.mb.ca/en/blog.

And remember to visit our Facebook page!

To donate to the SHSB, click on Donner pour durer (shsb.mb.ca/en/Donate) at the bottom of our website's home page or call us.

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