

AMONG OUR ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

Among its associate members, the Canadian Historical Association includes two Quebec societies, one of which focuses on regional history—the Société historique du Saguenay—and the other on corporate history—the Société Alphonse-Desjardins. Both have a unique history and list of achievements which attest to their vitality and their role in promoting history. We are pleased to offer a brief description of them.

THE SOCIÉTÉ HISTORIQUE DU SAGUENAY

The Société historique du Saguenay was established in 1934 by Mgr. Victor Tremblay at the instigation of Mgr J.-Edmond Duchesnes. Its primary objectives are to spread awareness of the region's history and ensure the conservation and development of its heritage. Originally part of the Séminaire de Chicoutimi, which was long the source of its primary contributors, its premises have been provided by the Université du Québec à Chicoutimi and the Fondation Sagamie of the UQAC since 1974, in exchange for services to the academic and regional community. Today, it is one of the leading societies in Canada. Its combined collections and archives amount to more than one linear kilometre. It has twice loaned a portion of its collections to other organizations: the Archives nationales du Québec in Chicoutimi (1977) and the Société d'archives Sagamie Inc. (1996). In 1990, its archives department was certified by the Quebec Department of Culture and Communications. In 1996, under an agreement with the Société d'archives Sagamie, the certification was transferred to this organization.

The pride of the Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean population is legendary. The Société historique du Saguenay has played a major role in cultivating this pride through its public activities and active involvement in disseminating knowledge. As far back as 1938, it provided the region with a flag and a regional anthem, and declared June 11 as Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean Day. In 1954, the government of Quebec granted its request to commission the Notre-Dame du Saguenay statue, by sculptor Louis Jobin, to grace Cape Trinité for the purposes of religious worship, and obtained the 200 acres of land on which the monument stands. Ten years later, in 1964, the work was classified an historical monument. These achievements owe credit to the Society, which also has rights to the trading post site of Métabetchouan in Desbiens, particularly the powder magazine and the Jean Dequen monument. Later, in 1975, it founded the Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean museum, and made an ongoing contribution to the Carnaval-Souvenir de Chicoutimi. In 1980, it obtained an order from the provincial government to make the *ouananiche* (inland salmon) the wildlife emblem of the region. It later instituted a regional pride week and a founders' day, and participated at every opportunity in anniversary celebrations.

All of this vibrancy is also reinforced by the Society's role in disseminating knowledge through its journal *Saguenayensia*. Established in 1959 and published regularly ever since, this journal is one of the most long-standing of its kind in Canada. Its success is closely linked to its location in educational establishments which have supplied both its readers and contributors. When the Société historique du Saguenay operated out of the Chicoutimi Seminary, the journal could rely on contributions by Seminary priests and students who used it as an original tool for teaching regional history. Since 1974, it has opened its pages to UQAC professors and students to become a multidisciplinary journal on history and genealogy, but also on archeology, demography and geography. Its circulation is very broad. It can be found in the region's universities, colleges and schools where it is used as a basis for teaching regional history. Since it is also concerned to publish research findings, researchers now regard it as an indispensable tool in their work. Little wonder that the journal will soon be celebrating 40 years of publication!

To reach the Society or obtain more information, please write or telephone: La Société historique du Saguenay, 930 Jacques-Cartier Est, P.O. Box 456, Chicoutimi, QC G7H 5C8, tel.: (418) 549-2805.

THE SOCIÉTÉ ALPHONSE-DESJARDINS

Established in 1979, the Société historique Alphonse-Desjardins is a non-profit organization devoted to the history of the Mouvement des caisses populaires Desjardins and its founder, Alphonse Desjardins. It centres on an accomplishment today heralded as one of the crowning glories of Quebec's financial history. Its services are primarily intended for Caisse populaire members, executives, employees and other components of the Mouvement, including its contributors in Quebec and elsewhere, but also for researchers and the general public seeking more information about the company's history and key players. Its mandate is to safeguard and manage the legacy left by Alphonse Desjardins and his successors, and to help expand the field of history within the entire Movement through an ambitious research and reflection project inspired by Public History.

The origins of the Société historique Alphonse-Desjardins date back to 1939 when the daughter of Alphonse Desjardins, Albertine, donated the family home to the Fédération des caisses populaires Desjardins du Québec. Concerned to perpetuate the memory of her father and his work, she was able to preserve within the institution certain articles of furniture and work tools that harkened back to the early days of the Caisses populaires. The "little museum" is managed by people interested in heritage.

In 1979, the institution's desire to enhance the moral legacy and heritage of its founder took concrete shape. That year, the

Fédération des caisses populaires Desjardins de Québec hired a few people to prepare a report on the Alphonse Desjardins house, which it owned. On November 1, the Society was created. It was mandated to oversee the conservation and use of Alphonse Desjardins' property, primarily his house. The Society was also responsible for raising awareness and perpetuating the name and accomplishments of the founder and promoting the conservation, compilation and dissemination of information on the birth and growth of the Mouvement Desjardins. Its first task was to restore the building for eventual use by the Mouvement Desjardins.

With the opening of the House in 1982 and its designation by the Quebec Department of Cultural Affairs, the Historical Society became a provincial institution funded by the Confédération des caisses populaires et d'économie Desjardins du Québec. From a simple steering committee at the outset, with no budget, premises or employees, the organization evolved into a genuine society, with permanent staff responsible for developing and coordinating the activities of the House. The House itself is first and foremost an information centre, then an interpretation centre, now visited by more than 15,000 people a year.

In 1984, the Society was ready to fulfill the second part of its mandate: to raise awareness and perpetuate the name and achievements of Desjardins and promote the conservation, compilation and dissemination of historical information on the birth and growth of the Mouvement. A decision was made to create an historical consulting department and to hire an historian specializing in corporate history, whose work would assist different institutions within the Mouvement to study their respective history.

This project came to fruition in 1985. The following year, the next step was completed when the Confédération's Board of Directors decided to mandate the Society to embark upon a vast project documenting the history of the Mouvement Desjardins. Officially launched in 1988, this project was to be accomplished in stages, following the chronological history of the Movement, enabling a second historian and many outside contributors to be hired. It led to the publication of a first book in 1990 (looking at 1900-1920), and a second in 1994 (1920-44). Based on a vast range of documents, these books are a reminder of the Movement's origins and its development within the socio-economic circumstances of the times.

Lastly, the Society's achievements also include a compilation of *Reflexions d'Alphonse Desjardins* (1985), participation in work for the 14th congress on the entrenched values of Desjardins (1986), the publication of many articles in the *Revue Desjardins*, participation in the 90th anniversary activities to commemorate the establishment of the first caisse populaire, the development of an oral history project and the *Guide pour la mise en valeur de l'histoire des caisses Desjardins*. These achievements demonstrate the vibrant energy of this young Society, which also actively participates in training the volunteers and permanent staff of the Caisses Desjardins.

For more information about the Society's activities, please write or telephone: La Société Alphonse-Desjardins, La Maison Alphonse-Desjardins, 8 avenue Mont-Marie, Lévis, QC, G6V 1V9, tel.: (418) 835-2090; toll free 1-800-463-4810; fax.: (418) 835-9173.

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY ORAL HISTORY RESEARCH OFFICE

The Columbia University Oral History Research Office, the oldest and largest oral history archive in the world, has become a center and academic site for scholars to reflect upon the multiple and diverse uses of oral history to document the lives of individuals in communities, across localities, cultures and nationalities. We seek two annual fellows, as well as two shorter term fellows of six months or less. Priority will be given to international fellows for the shorter residences. Fellows will be provided with stipends, will have access to the Oral History Research Office Collection, the resources of Columbia University's libraries, individual office space, and will participate in monthly seminars as made

up of scholars, public and community historians as well as weekly seminars devoted to fieldwork issues. Application Deadline: February 15, 1998. Contact: Mary Marshall Clark and Donald J. Grele, Oral History Research Office, Box 20, Butler Library, Columbia University, New York, New York 10027. Phone (212) 854-2273; Fax: (212) 854-5378; www.columbia.edu/cu/libraries/indiv/oral.