



# THE ROYAL BANK OF CANADA MONTHLY LETTER

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## *Things to Remember*

THE HISTORY OF CANADA is in the long and continuing procession of all the people who passed this way before us and left memories of themselves and their works and the places they knew. Remembrance of them is being given a front seat at Canada's centennial celebrations.

Museums, preserved and restored buildings, tell the story of men and women pitted against the wilderness, without conveniences or comforts, and often with little hope that conditions would improve. Their valiant lives are shown in their handicrafts and documented by letters, deeds, grants of land and old portraits, things which enchant the eye and inspire the mind.

These thoughts are close to the hearts of many Canadians. Reports have been published of some fifty museums being organized as centennial projects, nine of them major new buildings. In addition, pioneer homes are being restored, and some gathered together into villages. All these will summon up remembrance of things past and help us to understand how Canada became what she is, our present circumstances, and how we may project the advances of the past into the future.

### *Museums*

In these days, museums are not looked upon as stodgy dull centres. It is not enough to assemble a collection of naval and military relics, of stuffed birds and animals, of native soup bowls and arrows. Most museums of this kind are pathetic and dusty, more reminiscent of death and the tomb than of the stirring times which they are supposed to recall.

Museums are now finding it possible to educate in an interesting way. Mr. J. D. Herbert, Director of Manitoba's Museum of Man and Nature, writes: "A museum is an institution that seeks to educate by explaining the nature, significance and relationships of things chosen to illustrate the wonders of nature and the works of man."

Dr. R. Glover, Director of the Human History Branch of the National Museum of Canada, sees the purpose of the museum as fourfold, and these four duties interlock: (1) to collect objects of scientific or

historic interest pertaining to Canada; (2) to "conserve" those objects, which means to maintain objects in good condition or restore them as far as may be possible; (3) to conduct research, much of which is based on the study collections; (4) to educate by a wide variety of means: the publication of scientific and popular works, exhibits, guided tours, and public lectures, including films.

### *Canada's museums*

There are, roughly, four types of museums in Canada: the National Museum, provincial museums, local museums and special museums.

In the National Museum the principal displays are recreations of the natural settings of Indians and Eskimos and of Canada's wildlife. It has exquisitely-worked and well-designed dioramas of life in all periods of Canada's history. Its scope encompasses the whole country, its people, and its natural history. It collects a wide assortment of objects, ranging from microscopic organisms to huge war canoes and totem poles; it records all available information about these specimens, and it preserves them for this generation and those to come. It is one of the great research museums of the world.

Provincial museums are, of course, interested principally in their own environment, but they must go outside it on occasion for objects which contribute toward understanding local conditions.

This is illustrated in a small way in the New Brunswick Museum. The landing of the United Empire Loyalists at Saint John on May 18, 1783 was a matter of the utmost importance not only at the time but as the beginning of development that is still going on after nearly two hundred years. But that event cannot be understood if we start in a vacuum, so the Museum has collected letters, ships' papers and objects with which the Loyalists were associated in their previous dwelling places.

The most important section of the Newfoundland Museum, and a valuable contribution to knowledge, is its Boethuck Collection. This commemorates the

indigenous Indians of Newfoundland, a vanished race whose last survivor, Nancy Shanawdithit, died in 1829. These were the people, says the *Encyclopedia of Canada*, whom the Europeans shot down at sight — the French even paid a bounty for their destruction — on the principle that “there is no good Indian but a dead one.”

Centennial Year will see the Quebec Museum displaying “French Canadian Arts”. This is to give an over-all picture of painting, sculpture, jewellery, drawing, decorative arts and folklore arts from the beginning until today.

The Royal Ontario Museum is Canada’s biggest, and it is among the three or four largest in the world. Its three acres of galleries in the main building describe the structure of the earth, its animals past and present, and the march of civilization from Babylon to early Canada.

Manitoba has, as its centennial project, the “Museum of Man and Nature”. This concept gets away from the stereotyped split between natural history on the one hand and human history on the other. It portrays man and nature as parts of an indivisible whole — in other words, man in his environment, linking together the past, the present and the future in one great unifying theme.

The Western Development Museum in Saskatchewan has several branches, each of which displays early farm machinery and articles once common to every household. A start has been made on reconstruction of a pioneer village. The Saskatchewan Archives Board, with preservation of government records as its primary function, has broadened out to the collection of historical records.

The new Provincial Museum and Archives of Alberta, scheduled for opening in October, will be a free public institution which will portray Alberta by collecting, preserving and exhibiting significant natural and historical items.

British Columbia has under construction a large new Archives-Museum complex.

### *Local museums*

The local museum has the function of showing the life and times of its town or county. To be fully meaningful it should demonstrate the process of development from pre-pioneer days to the present. Little things are important: the Albert County Museum in New Brunswick displays a name-quilt used in fund raising for a community hearse — a pertinent exhibit within the context of telling the county’s history.

The great strength and the pulling-power of the local museum is its concentration on what is local. It owes it to its visitors to give them a coherent story, attractively told, of how and why this particular community originated and developed. As Mr. Herbert remarks, it is possible to entertain and educate at the same time, or to do neither: “The choice you make will determine whether you run a museum, a midway or a mausoleum.”

### *Special museums*

Some local museums specialize in periods or subjects, for example the U.E.L. Museum at Adolphus-town, the Brant Historical Museum, the Bell homestead at Brantford, and the South Simcoe Pioneer Museum, with its 5,000 implements. The rectory of the church at Batoche, Saskatchewan, has been established as a museum telling the story of the Northwest Rebellion.

There are special museums, big and small, covering the development of various human activities: the National Aeronautical Collection, Ottawa; the Canadian War Museum, Ottawa, and the Canadian Railway Museum at Delson, Quebec. The Canadian Railroad Historical Association is devoted to the collection and preservation of records and rolling stock relating to rail and inland water transportation.

### *Restored houses*

Life as it was lived a century ago is best seen in the old houses restored and furnished by devoted local women’s groups and historical associations. As the visitor walks through their doors he enters the life and times of the people who lived there.

A house of particular interest because of its many associations is that of Simeon Perkins, in Liverpool, Nova Scotia. Colonel Perkins was a merchant and ship-owner who came with the United Empire Loyalists in 1759 and built this house in 1766. Here is Perkins’s desk, from which he managed activities ranging from the West Indies to Labrador; here is that unusual piece of furniture about which many have read but which few have seen — a trundle-bed. A trundle-bed is one that rolls under an ordinary bed and can be pulled out for use. The Perkins Hearth Cook Book, containing many excerpts from the Colonel’s diary, is being reissued in its fourth edition as a centennial project by the Zion Guild in Liverpool.

Not many miles away is Uniacke House, built by an Irish adventurer from Cork who became a member of the Nova Scotia Council and Attorney General. A unique feature is that the closet doors have holes drilled in them to admit cats in pursuit of mice.

Although he was influential in Nova Scotia government, Judge Thomas Chandler Haliburton is most popularly recalled as the author of a series of stories about Sam Slick, a smart Yankee peddler of clocks. Haliburton has been named “the father of the American school of humour.” His house has been preserved, and in it you may see one of the original Sam Slick clocks, with wooden works.

In 1705 Claude de Ramezay built his château in Montreal. After the conquest it was the official residence of the governor-in-chief of British North America. In 1775 the American Continental Army made the château its headquarters. In 1776 there came to it Benjamin Franklin as an envoy to stir the French Canadians to revolution. Benedict Arnold occupied the château for several weeks. It has been preserved

so well that the mark of the old reception dais is still to be seen on the salon wall.

Ontario has dozens of pioneer homes. At Orillia is the Stephen Leacock Memorial Home. It contains original furniture and a number of Leacock's manuscripts, books and letters.

The quaint and charming home of William Lyon Mackenzie, leader of the rebellion of 1837, is in Toronto. Laurier House in Ottawa was the residence of two prime ministers. "Chiefswood", at Middleport, was the birth-place of the Indian poetess E. Pauline Johnson. The McFarland House, near Niagara-on-the-Lake, was built in 1800, and served as a hospital during the War of 1812.

In far-away Yukon, you may visit the log cabin home of poet Robert Service. Signatures of visitors from all over the world are to be seen in the register on the rickety desk where the author wrote his poems.

### *Churches*

The pioneers paid great attention to religious observance, and their church buildings stand as memorials to their piety.

At Barrington, Nova Scotia, is the oldest non-conformist, non-denominational church building in Canada, built in 1765. The grandson of one of its clergymen became Archbishop of Canterbury. Near by is a memorial to the grandmother of John Howard Payne, who wrote "Home Sweet Home". St. Edward's Church, at Clementsport, erected by the Loyalists in 1788, has many relics.

In Montreal, Notre Dame de Bon Secours (the Church of the Sailors) was founded in 1657. Damaged by two fires, the church was replaced by the present building in 1772. Quebec City has many ancient church buildings, but of special interest is Notre Dame des Victoires, erected in 1688 near the site of Champlain's original house.

The original mission founded on the site of Prince Albert, Saskatchewan, in 1866, is now a museum. The English River Mission of the Church of England, in Saskatchewan, built in 1850 of logs cut locally and windows brought from England, is still in use.

### *Restored villages*

Attracting scores of thousands of visitors every year, the restored pioneer villages across Canada are our most popular link with our past.

In these villages history drops its textbook guise and reveals itself not as a scholarly record of political struggle and economic development but as the story of people.

Port Royal Habitation, in Nova Scotia, has been restored in accord with Champlain's plan for the original of 1605. Visitors enter a room furnished as it was when Marc Lescarbot sat there writing a play in 1606, the first drama ever presented in North America,

and the community room, where Champlain instituted the Order of the Good Time.

Chambly Village, near Montreal, is part of the seigniorie granted to Jacques de Chambly in 1672. In it are the St. Hubert house, built in 1760, the Maigneault house, built of four-inch-thick planks, morticed to a frame of hand-hewn timber, and the Lareau house, built on its present site in 1775.

Upper Canada Village, near Morrisburg, Ontario, is a living museum portraying the evolution of life in the province from 1795 to 1860. More than forty buildings, many of them brought here from the seven villages now flooded by the St. Lawrence seaway and power projects, have been refurnished with authentic furniture of their time. Among the houses is one that is truly historical: built before 1783, it was the residence of John Graves Simcoe, the first governor of Upper Canada. Around this fireplace he met with the five members of his executive in 1792 and hammered out the institution of Civil Government. Here, too, are a Glengarry log school, immortalized in stories by Ralph Connor, and two churches, one an ancient log structure and the other brought on trucks from Moulinette, one of the flooded villages.

Near by is an imaginative and beautiful memorial to the pioneers. Before their churchyards were flooded, burial stones were removed. Stones and bricks from the demolished buildings in the valley were brought to this place and used to build several pleasant garden courts. The gravestones were set into the walls.

Farther west, crumbling stonework beside the River Wye marked the site of Sainte-Marie until a few years ago. In 1940 the Jesuit Order acquired the property and sponsored archaeological investigations, and in 1964 the government of Ontario began reconstruction of the settlement. The earth was removed a spoonful at a time to reveal the mouldering remains of the palisade and buildings. Today the visitor sees many buildings faithfully reproduced.

There are other historical villages in Ontario, including Fanshawe, Muskoka, Jordan, Kitchener, Rockton, St. Joseph Island, and Black Creek.

On a sixty-acre site near Calgary, Alberta, has been reconstructed a prairie settlement of the 1890's. Original buildings have been brought here and re-erected — a North West Mounted Police barracks, a smithy, a ranch, a post office, a barber shop, a bank, a church, a general store and many others.

British Columbia has its Barkerville, where gold flowing from creeks in tens of millions of dollars in the 1860's created the largest settlement west of Chicago and north of San Francisco. The town is being rebuilt as it looked during the gold rush.

### *Forts and battlefields*

Canadian military efforts have been in self-defence, and there are big and little forts and martello towers in every part of the country, testifying to the determination of Canadians to defend their land.

Stone by stone, the mighty fortress-city Louisbourg is rising from its ruins on the Atlantic coast of Nova Scotia. The first French settlers came here in 1713, and by 1755 they had a fortress-city with more than 300 homes and 5,000 people. The fortifications cost so much that King Louis XV said he expected to awake some morning in France to see the walls looming on the horizon.

No other place in America has seen so much fighting or so many sieges as has Fort Anne, Nova Scotia, where building started in 1635. Visitors may enter the powder magazine, built of stone shipped from France in 1708. The original door is still in place, supported by one French and one English hinge.

Quebec City is full of memories. Its walls, completed in 1832, cost \$35 million, and its gates are attractive. There are houses in which Montcalm lived, and one in which report has it he died after the Battle of the Plains of Abraham. Tablets mark the place where, on the last day of 1775, the two founding races of Canada united for the first time to defend their country. A combined French-English garrison beat off an American revolutionary force led by General Richard Montgomery and Benedict Arnold.

The first Fort Chambly, Quebec, was built in 1665 by a captain in the Carignan Regiment. By 1711 the solid stone structure, the walls of which remain today, had replaced the wooden fort. The Americans captured the fort in 1775, and upon retiring in the following year destroyed everything that would burn. Fort Lennox, on Ile-aux-Noix, near Montreal, was built by the French in 1759, and for nearly a year held up the British advance from the south. Rebuilt in 1775, it was used as the American base for an advance on Quebec. In 1812 the British built the present fort and occupied it until 1869.

One of Canada's most impressive war memorials, because sensitive thought went into its construction, is at Crysler Battlefield, near Upper Canada Village. The battle, in which a British-Canadian force of 800 routed an invading American force of 4,000 that was marching on Montreal, was fought on Crysler's Farm, now flooded. By a stroke of genius, the top soil from the battlefield was trucked to high ground and built into a mound. The memorial, an obelisk built by the Government of Canada in 1895, was brought out of the valley and erected on the mound.

Fort Wellington, at Prescott, has been partially restored. From it, in the War of 1812, British and Canadian troops sallied out to capture Ogdensburg, and in the invasion of 1838 to repel the Americans under Von Schoultz.

Fort Henry, at Kingston, was started as a block-house to protect the naval dockyard. When Colonel John By began construction of the Rideau Canal to provide a safe inland passage from Lake Ontario to Ottawa and Montreal, the stone fortress was raised to guard the canal's Ontario end. Wholly restored, the fort offers many souvenirs of the past century.

Fort York, Toronto, was established in 1793, and played a prominent role in the War of 1812. Fort George, at Niagara-on-the-Lake, was built in 1797 and destroyed by the Americans in 1813. Its block-houses have been restored, and its powder magazine still stands.

When Sitting Bull and the Sioux under his command crossed the boundary into what is now Saskatchewan after the Battle of the Little Big Horn, the North West Mounted Police established a detachment at Wood Mountain. From this post, of which one building has been reconstructed, a handful of police controlled the proud and powerful Sioux Nation.

Fort Steele is being rebuilt a few miles from Cranbrook, B.C. Some twenty houses and buildings have been restored.

### *Sites and plaques*

The use of historical plaques is justified when nothing but the site of a building is to be found.

The national and provincial plaques mark places where diligent research has placed an "X" to say that here a man died bravely, and there a treaty was signed or a battle fought.

These plaques should be easily read. Some, like our national markers, may be artistically pleasing, but their small raised lettering is hardly decipherable. They fail in their duty to communicate.

Without buildings, but still a memorable spot marked by a plaque, is the site of the Parliament Oak at Niagara-on-the-Lake. On May 1, 1793, there was passed on this spot the Seventh Act of Parliament, freeing the slaves in Upper Canada. Thus Canada became the first British possession to provide by legislation for the abolition of slavery, 79 years before slavery was abolished in the United States.

Cemeteries, too, have their tales to tell of the heroic past. In the old burying ground at St. Andrews West in Ontario is the grave of Simon Fraser, great explorer, the first to descend the Fraser River. Here, too, is a memorial to Miles Macdonell, who was superintendent of Lord Selkirk's Red River Colony in Manitoba.

Thought kindled by all these memorials will inspire Canadians in their second century as a united nation to actions worthy of such forefathers.

On the occasion of the Centenary of Confederation, everyone who can do so will wish to visit the Legislative Building in Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island. There is the room in which delegates discussed the Union of British North America.

A plaque on the wall reads: "In the hearts and minds of the delegates who assembled in this room on September 1st 1864 was born the Dominion of Canada." A plaque on the table marks the spot where the Articles of Confederation were signed.