

Heritage talks series spotlights Quebec's English-speaking history

By William Crooks
Local Journalism Initiative

The Quebec Anglophone Heritage Network (QAHN) is marking its 25th anniversary by turning the spotlight on the people and institutions that have preserved the province's English-speaking heritage. The 2025 Heritage Talks series, organized by QAHN Digital Media Specialist Glenn Patterson, will showcase stories of dedicated individuals who built and sustained local museums, archives, and historical societies.

"The impetus for the series is its QAHN's 25th anniversary," Patterson explained in a Jan. 31 interview. "We are a network of members. The realization basically is that, as much as QAHN has its origin story, so does every other organization. Because we're a network of members, we just wanted to put the spotlight on them. What are the stories of the people involved?"

This year's lineup of talks highlights a range of preservation efforts, from military history to Irish heritage, Black community development, and grassroots conservation projects. The series is available via Zoom and Facebook Live, with some in-person events at heritage venues across Quebec.

Stories behind heritage
institutions

One of the upcoming talks focuses on the Baie-des-Chaleurs Military Museum in New Richmond, presented by Executive Director Tom Eden. Eden will delve into the origins of the museum, its key exhibits, and how it preserves the military history of the Gaspé region. Patterson described the museum's role, explaining how it highlights "local contributions to national defence, as well as the experiences of those who served."

Another session will explore the story of Phoebe Hyde, a woman who envisioned turning her family's ancestral home in Hudson into a museum. The Greenwood Centre for Living History now stands as a testament to her lifelong dedication. Historian Karen Molson will share Hyde's story, drawing from personal anecdotes and archival research.

Grassroots efforts to save history

The talk series will also cover the remarkable efforts behind the Fairbairn House Heritage Centre in Wakefield. "This is the story of an 1861 farmhouse that faced demolition twice. A group from the Gatineau Valley Historical Society and folks from the Wakefield area came together and decided that they were going to move this house across the Gatineau River, transform it into a heritage complex," Patterson said. "They completely renovated this building, and now it's open to the

public. They put on programming, concerts, and it's very much a part of community life."

This theme of grassroots heritage preservation extends to the annual Green Season event, which will highlight Irish heritage initiatives in Quebec. One segment will honour Marianna O'Gallagher's work in preserving Irish history in Quebec City, including the creation of the Irish Memorial National Historic Site at Grosse Île. The event will feature presentations from Irish heritage groups and live music by Montreal musician Dave Gossage.

Engaging with Black and Caribbean heritage

QAHN has also incorporated talks focused on Black and Caribbean heritage. Dr. Dorothy Williams will present a session on Montreal's Black community associations, tracing their roots back to the now-defunct Negro Community Centre (NCC) and its role in fostering Black organizations in the city.

Another talk will spotlight the West-Can Folk Performing Company, a group dedicated to preserving Caribbean traditions through dance and music. "It's basically that history of people from places like Trinidad, Barbados, Grenada, coming in the '60s and '70s and basically trying to think of a way to pass on their folk heritage to their children and grandchildren," Patterson noted.

A special tribute in Cowansville

For those in the Townships, an in-person event will be held at the Bruck Museum in Cowansville on April 13, honouring the legacy of Marion Phelps. A longtime volunteer at the Brome County Historical Society, Phelps played a crucial role in preserving local history. "Basically, after she retired being a teacher in the '60s, she volunteered for 40 years," Patterson said, describing Marion Phelps' contribution to heritage preservation.

The event will feature a talk by historian Jim Manson, followed by a community open mic where attendees can share personal anecdotes about Phelps. "This will be a chance for people to remember her contributions in their own words," Patterson said.

Looking ahead

As QAHN celebrates its milestone anniversary, Patterson hopes the Heritage Talks series will continue to inspire interest in local history. "These talks aren't just about the past; they're about how communities have come together to ensure that their stories are remembered," Patterson said in reflecting on the purpose of the series.

For those interested in attending, the full program is available on QAHN's website, with registration links for virtual and in-person events.

Tête-à-la-Baleine photo exhibit coming to Uplands

Record Staff

The Uplands Cultural and Heritage Centre in Lennoxville will host a new photography exhibit featuring the work of Jean-Luc Wolff from Feb. 9 to Apr. 27, 2025. The exhibition, titled Tête-à-la-Baleine, offers a rare glimpse into life in the

remote Lower North Shore village.

A press release states that a vernissage will take place on Sunday, Feb. 9, from 2 to 4 p.m., with free admission and refreshments.

Wolff's collection includes landscapes and portraits that capture daily life in Tête-à-la-Baleine, where the cold climate shapes

the connection between residents and their surroundings. The exhibit may hold particular significance for Lennoxville, which has longstanding ties with the Lower North Shore through generations of high school students who have studied in the region.

Uplands will also resume its regular

activities following a holiday break. The centre will be open Thursday to Sunday, from 10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., offering house tours and special programming, including activities during March Break.

More information is available at www.uplands.ca or by contacting Uplands at (819) 564-0409.



PHOTOS COURTESY