

Report of the Annual Meeting

Rapports annuels de la Société historique du Canada

Report of the Annual Meeting

Report of the National Historic Sites Division National Parks Branch

Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources

Volume 41, Number 1, 1962

URI: <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/300606ar>

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7202/300606ar>

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Publisher(s)

The Canadian Historical Association/La Société historique du Canada

ISSN

0317-0594 (print)

1712-9095 (digital)

[Explore this journal](#)

Cite this document

Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources (1962). Report of the National Historic Sites Division National Parks Branch. *Report of the Annual Meeting / Rapports annuels de la Société historique du Canada*, 41(1), 118-121. <https://doi.org/10.7202/300606ar>

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REPORT OF THE
NATIONAL HISTORIC SITES DIVISION
NATIONAL PARKS BRANCH

Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources

One area of historic endeavour neglected on a national scale has been the systematic documentation of Canada's old buildings.

The need for accurate and complete information on old buildings became acute in 1955 when the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada was first authorized to recommend the preservation of buildings because of their antiquity and architectural significance, in addition to their historical importance.

Confronted with a lack of basic data which they could evaluate, or even draw upon for a set of architectural criteria, the members of Canada's senior historical advisory board recommended a National Architectural Inventory. They were supported by the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada which had become concerned with this gap in historical research and, independently, had reached the conclusion that such an inventory,

carried out professionally on a national scale with the support of the federal government, was vital if Canada's priceless architectural relics were to be preserved.

This winter the National Historic Sites Division is undertaking the pilot studies preliminary to a National Architectural Inventory.

At Quebec City, Halifax and Niagara-on-the-Lake research historians and architectural consultants will test procedures recommended for the job by Professor Anthony Adamson, of Toronto, vice-president of the Architectural Institute of Canada, and developed by Consulting Restoration Architect Peter Stokes and A. J. H. Richardson, head of the National Historic Sites Division Research Staff. Professor Adamson was engaged to advise the federal government on the means to carry out such an inventory practically, economically and effectively.

From this winter's pilot studies, the procedures will be re-assessed and revised in the light of the results and experience gained. Then, equipped with a standard form for recording historical and architectural data on old buildings, teams of local researchers supervised by architects will be able to commence the Inventory. The National Architectural Inventory, approved recently by Honourable Walter Dinsdale as a continuing program of the Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources will provide incalculable benefits. By 1967, Canada's Year of Centennial, it is hoped several thousand of our nation's historical buildings will be partly documented, and of these, several hundred in complete historical and architectural detail. The master files will be retained in the Public Archives of Canada where Dr. W. Kaye Lamb says they will be available according to standard Archives practices to Government agencies, historians, architects, as well as other individuals and organizations interested in authentic historical restorations, or just architectural history will find the records immensely valuable. However the prime purpose of the Inventory will be to provide comparative data to the members of the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada who advise the Minister of Northern Affairs and National Resources what buildings reach the magic classification "of national historical importance".

Progress toward the National Architectural Inventory has been a major achievement of a year when the National Historic Sites Division has been unusually active in carrying out an expanding federal program of identifying and marking historic sites and enhancing the educational value and public appeal of historic parks by restoration and interpretive presentations.

Furnishings and decor were introduced in the interior of Woodside, the boyhood home at Kitchener of the late Right Honourable W. L. Mac-

kenzie King, to restore its appearance to that of a typical family home of the late-Victorian period. Critics say it is Canada's best historic house museum.

At Fort Wellington, Prescott, Ontario, a restoration of the officers' quarters is nearing completion. The largest reconstruction completed during the year was the Palace Grand Theatre, a replica on the actual site of the famous theatre of Gold Rush days in Dawson City. In addition, the "Keno", a well known Yukon riverboat was restored and dedicated as a National Historic Site on the banks of the river in Dawson where she was originally registered.

Fort Rodd Hill, a former British coastal defence at Esquimalt, B.C., and the historic Fisgard Lighthouse, adjacent to it, were opened to the public in June as a National Historic Park.

Plaques were unveiled during the year at the Adelaide Hunter Hoodless homestead at St. George, near Brantford, Ontario; the Old Government House at Fredericton, N.B.; the Discovery Claim near Dawson as well as one commemorating the gold-rush days in Dawson; the Sir Charles Tupper home at Amherst, N.S.; and to the development of Red Fife wheat at a site near Peterborough, Ont.

A monument of distinctive design, created by the Canadian artist and sculptor, Arthur Price, to symbolize the achievements of the Arctic mariner, Captain Joseph Bernier, was unveiled at L'Islet, P.Q.

Plans were approved to construct a historical museum at Lower Fort Garry National Historic Park, Manitoba. The museum, from the outside, will be a copy of an original Hudson's Bay Company frame building that was located on the site, yet its interior will be fitted out as a modern museum on the theme "What the fur trade has meant to the development of Canada".

Faced with an unprecedented amount of proposals for national historic sites, the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada held two meetings, one in May, the other in November. A number of recommendations were made to Honourable Walter Dinsdale, Minister of Northern Affairs and National Resources, to whom the Board acts as a historical adviser.

To replace J. P. Palmer, Saint John, who resigned due to the pressure of other duties, Lieutenant-General E. W. Sansom, C.B., D.S.O., of Fredericton, accepted an appointment to the Board as the representative of the Province of New Brunswick. Dr. James J. Talman, chief librarian of the University of Western Ontario, succeeded Dr. A. R. M. Lower, Kingston, as one of the Ontario members.

The other members of the Board remain unchanged. They are: Dr. C. Bruce Fergusson, Halifax (chairman); Dr. W. Kaye Lamb, Ottawa; Professor Donald G. Creighton, Toronto; R. E. Taylor, Charlottetown; Richard Y. Secord, Winterburn, Alberta; Professor Margaret A. Ormsby, Vancouver; Professor W. D. Smith, Brandon; Clifford P. Wilson, Ottawa; Major C. G. Dunn, Quebec City; Arnold L. Agnew, Prince Albert; Edward B. Foran, St. John's; Professor Marcel Trudel, Quebec City. J. D. Herbert, Chief of the National Historic Sites Division, is Secretary.