

# The

# H·A·L·C·Y·O·N

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE FRIENDS OF THE THOMAS FISHER RARE BOOK LIBRARY

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## The Early History of the Quebec Gazette

*As every kind of knowledge is not only entertaining and instructive to individuals, but a benefit to the community, there is great reason to hope, that a NEWS-PAPER, properly conducted, and written with ACCURACY, FREEDOM, and IMPARTIALITY, cannot fail of meeting with universal encouragement; especially as it is allowed by all, that such a paper is at present much wanted in this colony... Our design therefore is to publish in English and French, under the title of THE QUEBEC GAZETTE, a view of foreign affairs, and political transactions; from which a judgment may be formed of the interests and connections of the several powers of Europe: We shall also take particular care to collect the transactions, and occurrences of our mother-country, and to introduce every remarkable event, uncommon debate, extraordinary performance, and interesting turn of affairs, that shall be thought to merit the notice of the reader as matter of entertainment, or that can be of service to the publick as inhabitants of an English colony.*

With this address of "The Printers to the Publick", on June 21, 1764, the *Quebec Gazette* was established by William Brown and Thomas Gilmore in the city of Quebec, as the first newspaper to be published in the colony.

William Brown, a Scot, had emigrated to America at an early age, was educated in Virginia, and then learned the printing trade in Philadelphia. In 1758 he went to work for William Dunlop of Philadelphia and there met Thomas Gilmore. The two men became interested in setting up shop

together. Brown wrote to Governor Murray in the new British colony of Quebec about the possibility of founding a newspaper, and in August, 1763, Brown and Gilmore signed a partnership agreement to carry out the venture, each putting up capital of seventy-two pounds. Brown travelled to Quebec, arriving there on September 30, 1763. In the meantime Gilmore went to Britain to buy printing supplies—type from the London firm of William Caslon, Sr., and press, ink and paper from Kendrick Peck.

The initial prospectus, sent throughout the colony, set forth the aims of the two printers

*Our Design is, in case we are fortunate enough to succeed, early in the Spring to settle in this City, in the Capacity of Printers, and forthwith to publish a Weekly News-Paper; which, as the present Condition of the Country*

*renders it in a great Measure necessary, we purpose to publish in French and English: This Method will afford a Weekly Lesson for Improvement, to every Inhabitant willing to attain to a thorough Knowledge in the Language of the Place, different from that of his Mother Tongue, whether French or English. And as in a Paper design'd for general Perusal, it will be necessary to add some Things of general Entertainment, therefore, as we have Opportunity, shall present our Readers with such Originals,*

THE  
NEW-YEAR  
VERSES

Of the PRINTERS LAD, who carries about the *QUEBEC GAZETTE* to the CUSTOMERS.

JANUARY 1, 1767.

**T**HE old Year now is past and gone,  
The new, its Place supplies:  
Thus a new Monarch mounts the Throne,  
Soon as the old one dies.

I **S**IT, on its early, infant Stage,  
With rapid Speed begun;  
Nor does it now, tho' worn with Age,  
With slower Motion run.

It comes unask'd to e'er'ry one,  
Yet none its Flight can stay;  
But swift as Thought, 'tis past and gone,  
And steals itself away.

It steals our Hours and Days and Years,  
And Youth, and gay Delire,  
The Charms that blooming Beauty wears,  
The Flames those Charms inspire.

Towers, and Cities great and fair,  
With Strength and Beauty crown'd,  
And Temples rising high in Air,  
It moulders to the Ground!

The Sculptor's and the Painter's Art,  
That seeming Life can give,  
And Form, and Colour can impart,  
That seems to think, and live.

The noblest Works of Human Powers  
It slices in its Way,  
Their most admired Parts devours,  
And makes their Charms its Prey.

Ev'n Life with all its flatt'ring Views,  
It shortens as it flies,  
And with incessant Strokes pursues  
The Victim till it dies.

Nations, who once their Power could boast,  
Whose Armies spread the Plain,  
By Time are in Oblivion lost,  
And scarce their Names remain.

Thus Time on earthly Glory preys,  
And Ruin spreads around,  
And to Forgetfulness conveys  
This, & that were once renown'd:

Yet there are happy Men whose Name,  
Whose Glory ne'er shall die,  
But wafted on the Wings of Fame  
To Time's last Stage shall fly.

To bless the Realm those Men are, who,  
Sagacious, wife and just,  
The Dread and Curse of Freedom's Foes,  
Whose Pride is laid in Dust.

Their Praise some Poet shall rehearse,  
Warm'd with celestial Fire:  
If his *doublet* animated Verse  
Shall wake the living Lyre.

All these, of endless Praise secure,  
Time's Ravages may see,  
Their Names for ever shall endure,  
Till it shall cease to be.

Not so the News Boy's humble Lot,  
His Services once o'er,  
Are disregarded, and forgot,  
And seldom thought of more.

Permit him then, his Labours past,  
To sing in humble Lay,  
E'er Time has from Remembrance call,  
And stole their Prints away.

Afflict by no friendly Muse,  
To grace his humble Strain,  
The tuneful Nine would all refuse  
The Service with Disdain.

His own dull Head and labouring Brain,  
His Verses must indite,  
And his tir'd Hand the Toil sustain,  
His Labours past to write.

Each Week he trotted thro' the Street,  
In Spite of Heat and Cold,  
Tho' Storms tempestuous on him beat,  
Or Thunder o'er him roll'd.

Nor Winds, nor Rains, his Course could stay,  
Till all his Task was done,  
Intrepid he pursu'd his Way,  
And on his Circuit run.

When all the Land in Silence sleeps,  
(By Taper's glimmering Light)  
All Night a painful Watch he keeps,  
And times his aching Sight.

With prying Eyes, and list'ning Ears,  
Despising Sloth and Ease,  
He curls the bell he fees and hears,  
With studious Care to please.

Whatever remarkable he found,  
Important, strange, or rare,  
He to his Patrons carried round,  
Nor did his Labour spare.

But more Particulars to tell,  
Would turn your News Boy's Brain,  
And to such Length his Verses swell,  
They'd ne'er be read again.

He now, with kind Acceptance, prays,  
His Verses may be crown'd,  
And many happy New-Year's Days,  
Delight his Friends around.

And that not one of them may know,  
A Want to make him sad,  
Or generous Prefect below,  
To make the News Boy glad.

*The earliest known New Year verses of the Printer's lad, dated January 1, 1767.*

*both in Prose and in Verse, as may at once please the Fancy and instruct the Judgment: In this Respect, our Paper will be considered as the Channel of Amusement, as well as of real Improvement and Intelligence.*

It called for three hundred subscribers; initial response was one hundred and forty-three. To keep the firm solvent the printers took on government printing, receiving fifty pounds (increased in 1769 to one hundred pounds) annually from the government for printing official announce-



QUEBEC, ff.

By the Honorable GUY CARLETON, Esq; Lieutenant-Governor and Commander in Chief of the Province of QUEBEC, Brigadier-General of His Majesty's Forces, &c. &c.

## A PROCLAMATION.

WHEREAS His Majesty has been most graciously pleased, by His Commission under His Royal Sign Manual, dated at Saint James's, the 7th Day of April, 1766, To constitute and Appoint Me Lieutenant-Governor and Commander in Chief in and over His Province of Quebec, and Territories thereunto belonging: And forasmuch as it is necessary for the Peace and good Government of the said Province, that all Officers within the same should continue in their several Offices and Employments; I have therefore thought fit, by and with the Advice and Consent of His Majesty's Council, To issue this Proclamation, hereby Ordering and Directing, That the said Officers do continue in their several Employments, until further Orders, of which all Persons concerned are required to take Notice.

GIVEN under my Hand and Seal at Arms, at the Castle of Saint Lewis, in the City of QUEBEC, this 24th Day of September, in the Sixth Year of His Majesty's Reign, and in the Year of Our LORD, 1766.

GUY CARLETON.

By the Lieutenant-Governor's Command,  
J. GOLDFRAT, D. Sec<sup>r</sup>.

GOD SAVE THE KING.

*The first official publication of Guy Carleton, a proclamation dated September 24, 1766, announcing his appointment as Lieutenant-Governor.*

ments and also became job printers, producing announcements, advertisements, playbills and books.

Gilmore died in 1773 at the age of thirty-two. After legal problems between Gilmore's widow and Brown, documented in the *Quebec Gazette* of August 12 and 19, and September 2, the partnership was formally dissolved in January 1774 and Brown became the sole proprietor. Brown was joined by his nephew Samuel Neilson who had emigrated to Quebec from Scotland at the age of fourteen to apprentice in his uncle's shop. Brown died four years later in 1789 and Samuel, who had inherited a considerable sum of money, bought the printing shop and the newspaper. Neilson himself died of tuberculosis in 1793 and the firm was inherited by his sixteen-year old brother, John, who had joined him in 1791. At first business was conducted under the guardianship of Alexander Spark, who for some time edited the *Gazette*, then John took over the firm when he came of age in 1796.

The *Quebec Gazette* was published weekly from June 21, 1764 to October 31, 1765. The Stamp Act, which placed an undue financial burden on the fledgling firm caused a hiatus in publication. On October 31, 1765 the following bilingual announcement appeared

*These are to acquaint the Publick, that the Printers hereof, by Means of the small Number of Subscribers which they have at present, occasioned by the Stamp-Act, are obliged to discontinue publishing the GAZETTE from this Day!!... All*

*Kinds of Printing will be carried on at the Printing Office (during the Winter Season) with Care and Expedition. There is no Stamp-Duty on Hand-Bills.*

Publication was resumed on May 29, 1766, continuing to November 30, 1775. The American invasion of Quebec again forced the paper to cease. "The Printer finding it impossible to continue the publication of this Gazette, begs Leave to return the Publick [sic] his most sincere thanks for their encouragement hitherto, to wish them better times, and to assure them of his readiness again to serve them as soon as it may be in his power." Two issues were printed in March, 1776 on the Siege of Quebec and the newspaper resumed on August 8, 1776, headlined "The Resurrection No. II", continuing until its demise in 1874. Bilingual, the paper usually consisted of four two-column pages, English on the left, a French translation on the right. In addition to the weekly issues, extra numbers with announcements or news were sometimes published between regular publication days. Occasional supplements to the regularly published newspaper, of 2, 4 or more pages were published when the amount of printed material overwhelmed the 4-page format. Subscription price was three dollars a year.

The newspaper office was profitable as most of the work was paid for by advertising or by government authority. The paper became the unofficial government gazette publishing ordinances, proclamations, and announcements under the authority of the governor or government

officials. After 1789 the proportion of non-governmental matters—news, essays and items of local interest increased. Articles from European newspapers, especially those dealing with events in France and political events in Europe were printed as were features on political events in the colony. By 1792 Samuel Neilson's improvements had raised the number of subscribers to four hundred and seventy-five.

The volumes of the *Quebec Gazette* donated to the Thomas Fisher Library in 1989 by Louis Melzack consist of four hundred and five numbers bound in four volumes of contemporary 1/4 calf with marbled boards, and form an almost complete run from number 1, June 21, 1764, to number 417, December 31, 1772. Forty-two supplements are included. Of outstanding importance in these particular volumes are the number of early imprints produced by the Brown-Gilmore printing press which have been bound in. An examination of Marie Tremaine's *A Bibliography of Canadian Imprints, 1751-1800* demonstrates that the fifteen broadsides and leaflets printed from 1763 to 1769 are among the rarest of Canadian incunabula. They include the broadside, probably printed in Philadelphia, announcing the imminent publication of the *Quebec Gazette* which Brown distributed in the colony, the second recorded copy known; acts of the newly established British government; Carleton's announcement of his appointment as Lieutenant-Governor; the only copy known to exist, and the first of the annual New Year's verses of the printer's lad, carried by the boy who delivered the newspaper, previously unknown. Five leaflets documenting the legal wrangling of an early Quebec firm, Barkly & Hay, are bound in; although documented in Tremaine, no copies have been previously seen.

The *Gazette* has always been an especially rich source of information about early printing in Canada as the Neilson business included a strong bookselling and stationery component. The newspaper advertised the products of its own press and also books and pamphlets for sale at the Printing Office. These particular volumes will be of immense value to scholars as the record not only of the earliest political and social events of the new colony, but also of the intellectual development of its people.

Sandra Alston  
Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library





## Early events in the 1990-91 season

Two Fall meetings have attracted large numbers of members and their friends. On September 24, the exhibition of John Edison's collection of Churchill material was opened. As Richard Landon wrote in the introduction to the catalogue:

*...This collection is the result of concentrated bibliophilia exercised over many years by Mr. Edison. Such a knowledgeable and committed private collector, with a spirit of generosity, is able to contribute to the literary, historical, and bibliographical resources of academic institutions, and thus help to create research possibilities for scholars now and in the future. We hope that this exhibition and catalogue will provide a stimulus for such work.*

On October 23, more than than 80 people were entranced by Marie Korey's talk, "Les Femmes Bibliophiles". Earlier this year, Ms. Korey was guest curator of an exhibition on women book collectors held at the Grolier Club in New York. Her illustrated talk dealt with the collectors represented in that exhibition.

### Notes from the Editor

Thanks to Veronica Fisher for the design and layout; and to Philip Ower for the photographs. Comments/suggestions to the Editor, Alan Horne, University of Toronto Library (416 978-7644).



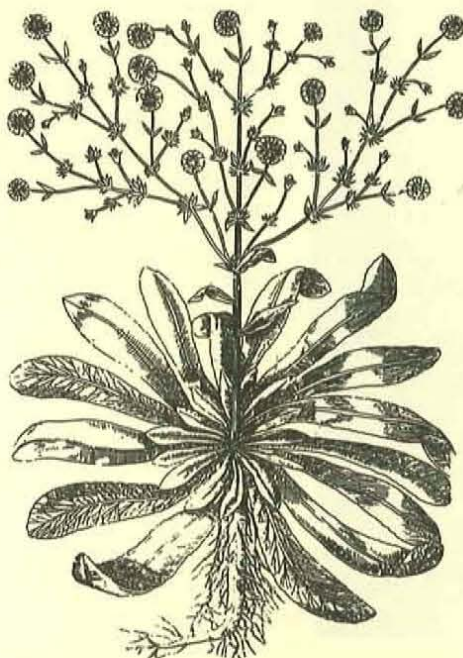
*John Edison (left) greeting a friend at the opening of the Sterner Years exhibition on the life and works of Sir Winston Churchill.*



## Cichorium Hortense

One of this year's more unusual acquisitions is a sixteenth-century woodblock depicting the chicory plant. The block, one of a series of over one hundred that have survived to this day, was used to illustrate several editions of Pietro Mattioli's highly popular commentary on the *De materia medica* of Dioscorides, a Greek physician and botanist of the first century A.D. Dioscorides's great compendium of medical plants had been the mainstay of pharmacology for fourteen centuries, and its influence continued well after the invention of printing. It was particularly popular during Mattioli's lifetime, with over eighty editions appearing during the course of the sixteenth century.

Pietro Andrea Mattioli was born in Siena in 1501. He obtained a medical degree at the University of Padua in 1523, and practised in Rome and Perugia before settling in Trento in 1527. In 1554 he was invited to the court of the Holy Roman Emperor in Prague where he served



*Cichorium domesticum (chicory)* This woodcut of a chicory plant was designed by Giorgio Liberale and Wolfgang Meyerpeck for the 1561 Prague edition of Pietro Andrea Mattioli's *Commentarii in ex libris Petri Dioscoridi de materia medica*, one of the great series of sixteenth-century herbals. It has been printed from the original wood block by William Roeder in July 1990 in an edition of 125 copies for the Friends of the Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library. This copy is number 4/2.

*One hundred and twenty-five numbered prints, each measuring 12 3/4" x 8 1/2" have been made by Will Rueter from the original Mattioli block for Friends of the Fisher Library. The block was printed in black on Japanese hand-made paper, with text in green and brown. A copy of these delightful prints would make an original gift — for yourself, or for others! They are available to Friends in recognition of an additional \$100 donation to the Fisher Library (tax receipt issued).*



Archduke Ferdinand and later the Emperor Maximilian II. Returning to Trento in 1570, he died there of the plague in 1577.

Although Mattioli wrote a number of medical books, his scientific reputation rests principally on his commentaries on Dioscorides. His name first became associated with that of Dioscorides through his Italian translation of the *De materia medica*, published in Venice in 1544. The popularity of this translation, evidenced by the rapid succession of editions in 1548, 1550 and 1552, encouraged Mattioli to produce in 1554 an authoritative Latin version of Dioscorides, with extensive commentary and woodcut illustrations designed and executed by Giorgio Liberale and Wolfgang Meyerpeck. A second, much revised and enlarged Latin edition, which included 133 new illustrations, was issued at Venice in 1558 by Vincenzo Valgrisi, the distinguished printer of illustrated books. As Mattioli's stature as a medical botanist grew, further Latin editions appeared in 1559 and 1560, followed by translations into French (Lyon, 1561), Czech (Prague, 1562), and German

(Prague, 1563). The Czech version is of particular interest, by virtue of its illustrations produced from new woodblocks, again designed by Liberale and Meyerpeck, that were considerably enlarged for use in folios, and more technically accomplished than those of previous editions. The same illustrations were used in the 1563 German translation, and in the 1565 Latin version printed by Valgrisi, to which were added a further three hundred illustrations of plants and more than a hundred of animals. Another six editions were printed at Venice in either Italian or Latin, with illustrations produced from the same blocks, the last edition being that of 1604.

The fate of the blocks during the seventeenth century is unknown, but 154 illustrations of trees and plants printed from them re-emerged during the eighteenth century in a botanical work by Henri Louis Duhamel du Monceau (1700-1782) entitled *Traité des arbres et arbustes qui cultivent en France en pleine terre*, published at Paris in 1755. Subsequently the blocks used in the French work were lost. The remainder, however, stayed in the possession of Duhamel du Monceau's heirs until the mid 1950s when they were sold and dispersed. In the 1980s, one hundred and ten of the original blocks were acquired by the London bookselling firm of Bernard Quaritch Ltd. and were offered for sale. Item 502, described in the Quaritch catalogue as *cichorium domesticum*, was acquired by the Library earlier this year.

The block, made from pearwood, measures 220 x 156 mm. and is 21 mm. at its thickest part. The image covers the entire surface of the block right to the edges, and despite a few signs of worming (mostly in the non-printing background), is in excellent condition. On the back of the block the words "CICHORIUM HORTENSE" are engraved, above which there is a paper label, attached by Duhamel du Monceau, reading "cichorium sauvage".

Survivals of sixteenth-century woodblocks are rare. Besides the Mattioli woodblocks, the

most notable similar survival from this period was the original illustrations from Vesalius's *De humani corporis fabrica* (Basel, 1543), which were unfortunately lost forever in the bombing of Munich during World War Two. The Mattioli woodblocks, therefore, remain the only series of large folio illustrations known to have survived to this day. The Fisher Library is thus fortunate to have in its possession one of these splendid examples of botanical illustration and woodblock artistry.

Philip Oldfield

Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library



The

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University of Toronto Library  
Toronto, Ontario M5S 1A5

## Programme for December 1990 — April 1991

### Wednesday 12 December 1990

Nick and Joy Hunter will give readings of Christmas as described in literature. Special seasonal "fare" will be provided in lieu of the usual wine and cookies.

### Wednesday 23 January 1991

Dr. Howard Collinson (Assistant Curator, European Department, Royal Ontario Museum) will talk on early woodcuts

### Thursday 21 February 1991

Colin Franklin (British antiquarian bookseller and bibliographer) will talk on 18th century editions of Shakespeare.

### Tuesday 19 March 1991

Guy Debenham, Canadian wood engraver, will talk on "The Hidden Art of Bookplates".

### Thursday 18 April 1991

Opening of an exhibition on the work of Eric Gill (British stone-cutter typographer and wood engraver), and a talk on "Eric Gill the Artist" by Joshua Heller, antiquarian bookseller from Washington D.C. and specialist in private press books and illustrated books.

*The Fisher Library's woodblock and a Latin edition of Mattioli's commentary on Dioscorides, printed at Venice in 1558 by Valgrisi.*