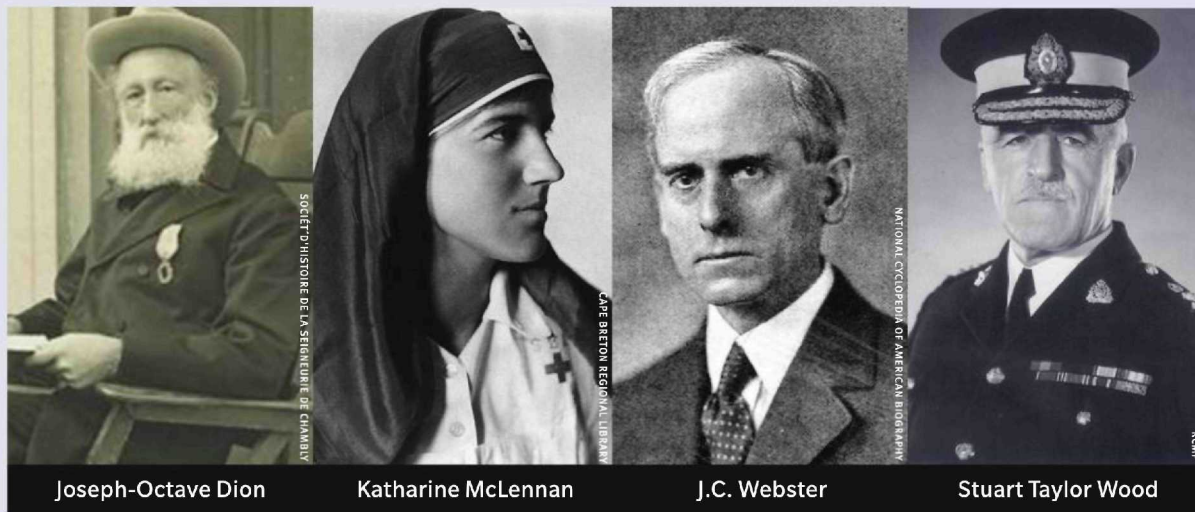


Heroes of historical preservation



Historic sites don't save themselves. It often takes volunteers with a passion for preservation to ensure that historically significant places don't get demolished, paved over, or otherwise erased. Here are some of the people who have helped save our National Historic Sites.



Joseph-Octave Dion

Katharine McLennan

J.C. Webster

Stuart Taylor Wood

Joseph-Octave Dion (1838–1916) **Fort Chambly's live-in guardian**

Joseph-Octave Dion grew up next to the ruins of Fort Chambly, which was originally built along the Richelieu River to protect the colonists of New France from the Iroquois. Dion moved to Montreal, where he pursued a career in journalism. When he eventually returned to his hometown, he was alarmed at the fort's decline — people were removing stone blocks and using them to build homes and fences. Dion began raising funds, organized guided tours, and in 1875 published the first history of Fort Chambly. He also moved onto the grounds of the fort, where he lived for three decades. The federal Department of Public Works eventually provided funds to overhaul the fort, and Dion became the project's overseer.

Katharine McLennan (1892–1975) **Louisbourg's champion**

Many people campaigned for the restoration of the Fortress of Louisbourg, but one person who stands out is Katharine McLennan — a member of a wealthy, well-connected family who vacationed on land adjacent to the ruins of the eighteenth-century French fortifica-

tion. After returning from overseas service as a nurse during World War I, McLennan took on the task of reviving Louisbourg, collecting French artifacts, establishing a museum, constructing a scale model of the town site, and lobbying for federal recognition of the ruins. At the time McLennan began her work, the once-mighty fortified town in Cape Breton was reduced to sheep enclosures and had fallen prey to souvenir hunters. Today it is a top historic destination, visited by thousands of tourists annually.

J.C. Webster (1863–1950) **Renowned doctor turned historian**

J.C. Webster was a prominent physician who practised and taught in the United States, pioneering new approaches to obstetrics and gynecology. Plagued with chronic health problems, he abruptly ended his medical work in 1920 at age fifty-seven and returned to his hometown of Shediac, New Brunswick, where he began a second career as a historian. Webster and his wife Alice Lusk Webster, an accomplished art collector, amassed a huge collection of artifacts that was eventually donated to the New Brunswick Museum. Web-

ster also purchased the land under which New Brunswick's Fort Beauséjour was situated, later donating it to Canada. A chairman of the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada, he spearheaded the establishment of museums at the forts of Beauséjour, Louisbourg, Gaspereaux, and Anne.

Stuart Taylor Wood (1889–1966) **Visionary Mountie of Fort Walsh**

Stuart Taylor Wood developed a passion for mounted police history from his father, Zachary Taylor Wood, who served with the NWMP during the Northwest Rebellion and the Yukon gold rush. The younger Wood joined the force in 1912, eventually rising to the top post of commissioner. He established the first RCMP museum in 1933–1934. In 1942, he purchased from a rancher the site of old Fort Walsh — the former NWMP post at the forefront of bringing order to the West. He rebuilt it to conform as closely as possible to the 1875 original and used it to raise the RCMP's famed black horses. After Wood died in 1966, the fort was turned over to Parks Canada as a National Historic Site. 🐎

—Nelle Oosterom