

## THE ST. GEORGE'S CLUB FONDS

---

Cara O'Connell  
*Bishop's University*

The St. George's Club fonds contains source material detailing the organization, operation, and activities of the Club. The source material dates from the year of the Club's inception, 1890<sup>1</sup>, and ends in the year that the Club was disbanded, 1983. The fonds' content provides information on the different sections of the Club's history organized by the following series: Charter and By-Laws (1937–1980), Minutes (1922–1981), Accounting and Financial Documents ([1914?]-1981), Titles ([1890?]-1960), Correspondence with the Members (1914–1981), Lists of Officers and Members ([1955?]-1981), Documents Related to the Club-House (1914–1975), Guests Registers (1925–1983), and Miscellaneous Documents (1915–1982). The fonds also contains three photos, six plans, and three artefacts, including a Club ballot box. V. W. Newton of Sherbrooke, a former member of the Club, donated the fonds to the Eastern Townships Research Centre in two accessions in 1985 and in 1988.



## **Origins of the St. George's Club and its Administrative Structure**

The Club was organized and incorporated in 1890 under Article 5481 et seq. of the Revised Statutes of Quebec. The Club took an active interest in the business and enterprise of Sherbrooke. Its purpose was to promote social relations among its members as well as to provide its members with the advantages, privileges, and accommodations of any other gentleman's club. Discussion of politics and/or religion was strictly forbidden within the Club. Land was acquired for a clubhouse and the house was erected by a syndicate of six members who undertook to advance the necessary money for the purpose, and to hold the property for the club until such time as it was in a position to raise the amount required to take over the property. According to the 1921 charter, the capital-stock of the company was divided into 15 000 shares- shares of \$5 each. To be fixed at the sum of \$75 000. Management was run by the Executive Committee (President, Vice-President, and Secretary-Treasurer), as well as an elected Board of Governors (later changed to the Board of Directors) and various committees. The Club was disbanded in 1983, seven years short of its centennial.

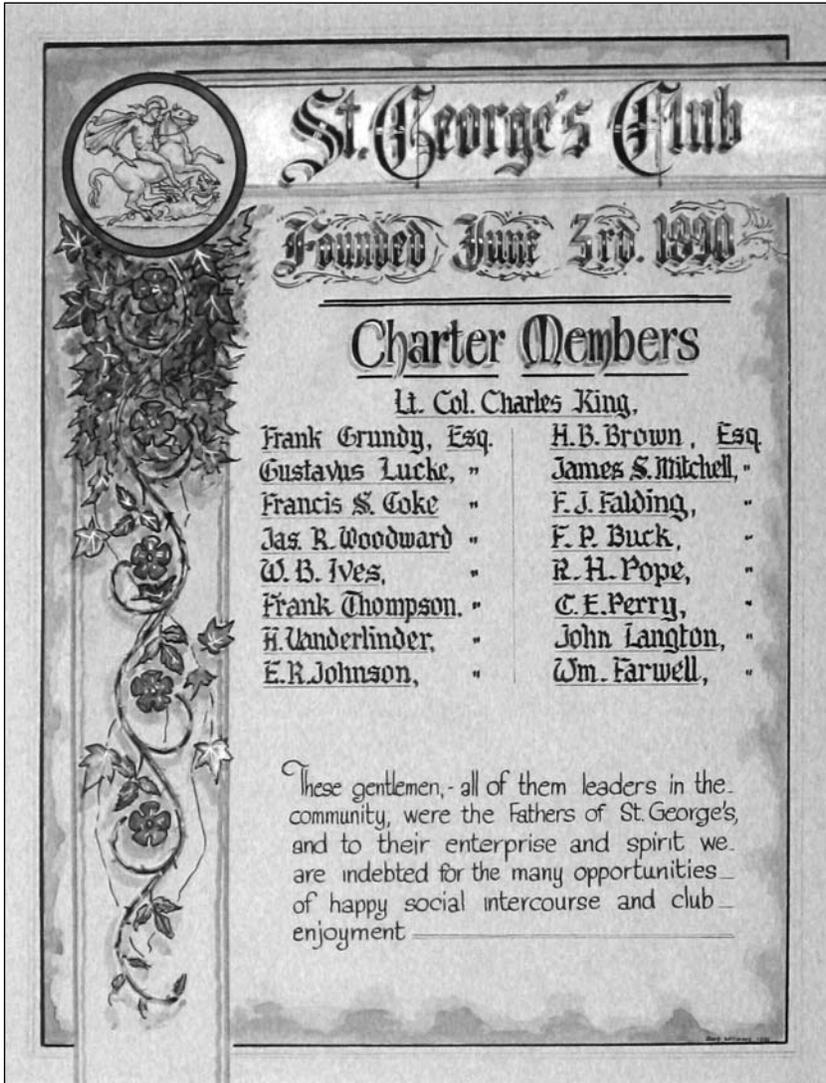
## **St. George's Club Charter and By-Law History**

The fonds contains a printed booklet outlining the organization, structure, by-laws, and by-law amendments of the Club in 1947. This gives us an idea of what the Club was like at this point in its history. Some pertinent information follows:

The corporate name of the company was to be St. George's Club Incorporated. There were seven membership categories: Resident members (residing within ten miles of the Club), Non-resident members, Temporary/Transient members (temporarily residing in Sherbrooke), Affiliated members, Life members (upon recommendation of the Board of Governors), Privileged members, and Honorary members (for example, widows of deceased members).

The Board of Directors consisted of ten members elected at the annual assembly of the Club or a similar meeting of Club members during the year. Five of the Directors were to retire each year and five other qualified members were to take their places. A meeting of the Board was to be held on the fourth Monday of each month in the Club House at 8 pm.

The fee to enter the Club was \$75 for resident members and \$40 for non-resident members, both in addition to \$5 for one share of



stock. In 1963 the annual dues were \$100 for resident members and \$55 for non-resident members. In 1974 annual charges went up. Each male resident was charged \$250 per annum.

Each candidate for membership had to be at least twenty-one years old. The person also had to be vouched for by two members in good standing. Before the application was put to a vote, it went to the Board of Governors for approval. The Board had the right to reject the application without giving a reason. Balloting was held on two consecutive days, and had to be at least a twenty-member vote. A

candidate who was refused membership had to wait six months before reapplying.

In 1980 the by-laws were once again amended. Some of the amendments included:

The seal was inscribed with the words: St. George's Club (1973) Inc. Club St Georges (1973) Inc.

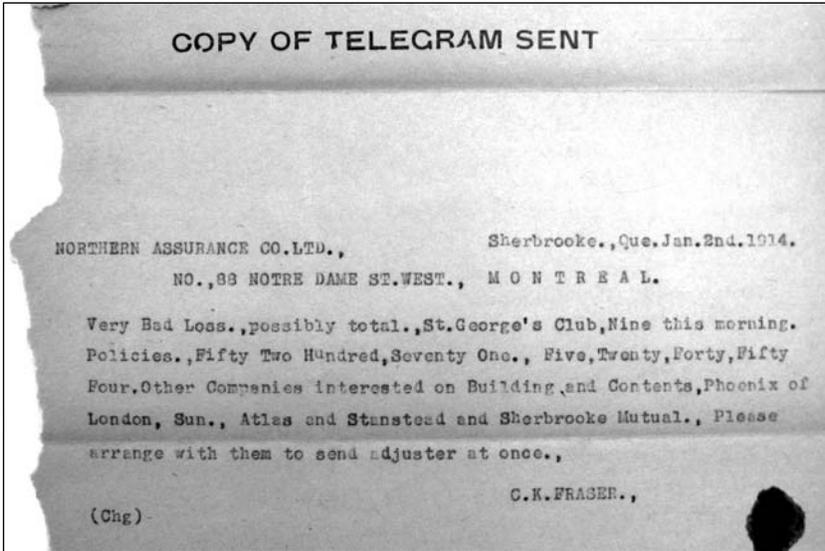
The Board of Directors was to consist of seven members elected at the annual assembly, or a similar meeting of Club members during the year, for three years. The Directors elected in 1980 decided who among them would have one, two, and three years.

There were also three additional categories of membership: Corporate members, Wives, and Associate members.



### **The 1914 Fire**

In 1914 the Clubhouse and all its contents were completely destroyed in a fire. It was estimated that a new house could be built and furnished for approximately \$20 000. The President and Secretary-Treasurer of the Club sent out an announcement asking for a sum of \$12 000 to \$15 000 dollars before undertaking construction. This money was raised through stock subscription. The Club was capitalized at \$25 000 and divided into one thousand shares of \$25 each



to endeavour to obtain subscription of fifteen thousand dollars. Members were asked to buy stock to aid the cause. The stock was made payable by four instalments, 25% upon allotment and 25% in three, six, and nine months thereafter respectively. The Club members were able to use Mrs. A.N. Worthington's house while construction was underway. The new clubhouse opened in February 1915. The clubhouse address was 325 Dufferin Avenue in the Old North Ward of Sherbrooke.

### **Women and the St. George's Club**

Women were not admitted to membership of the St. George's Club until they were permitted to enter as guests in the 1970s. The St. George's Club Inc. Regulations Regarding Ladies' Privileges (revised 1 June 1972) provides an idea of what it was like for women at the Club:

1. Ladies may use the front entrance, main lounge and dining room at all normal times.
2. Ladies may use upstairs lounge and other facilities on that floor after 3 PM at all normal times.
3. Ladies are permitted in the bar on Saturday nights and on other nights when there are special events such as buffets.

—The House Committee.

### **Clubhouse Activities and Services**

St. George's Club offered several services to its members. Service hours were from 7 AM to midnight. The Club steward and a group of Club servants attended to Club members. Under no circumstances were members to enter any service department of the Club. House rules covered an assortment of issues and materials within the Clubhouse including complaints and suggestions, damage of property, the cloakroom, baggage, bedrooms, billiards and cards, and books and periodicals. In 1964 the Clubhouse's restaurant hours were: breakfast 7–10 AM, lunch 12:30–3 PM, and dinner 7:30–10 PM. The Bar was open 11:30–3 PM and 6–12 PM. The Clubhouse also offered accommodation services. One of the house rules from 1964 was that no member had the right to occupy any specific bedroom. There were also games rooms, living rooms, and reading rooms as well as a swimming pool at one point. The Clubhouse was well furnished with pictures, vases, table linen, and fireplaces. Cigars, wines, and other alcoholic beverages were available to the members and their guests. Finally, the St. George's Club organized activities and events for its members such as concerts, lectures, banquets, and balls.

To conclude, the St. George's Club fonds provides valuable information on the history of the Club including detailed information on its administration, finances, structure and organization, and the services it provided to its members.

### **NOTES**

- 1 The exact date of the earliest document is not known although it is probable that the documents date from 1890.