June 21, 2018

City of Orillia Council
50 Andrew Street South, Suite 300,
Orillia, ON L3V 7T5

Dear Mayor Clarke and Council,

As the owner and custodian for the Champlain Monument, located in Couchiching Beach Park, Orillia, Parks Canada began a restoration and repair project in 2017 to address problems and deficiencies identified in 2015. This work includes repairs to the base staircase and plinth, along with conservation work on the bronze statues and embedded plaque. The completion of the staircase and monument base will occur as planned with completion this summer.

The restoration project, and the 400th anniversary celebrations held in 2016 have raised the public and media profile of the monument. Concerns over the monument’s representations of Indigenous peoples have been raised by members of the public and by Indigenous communities to Parks Canada and the City of Orillia over this time period.

Parks Canada, alongside the City of Orillia, has been involved with a stakeholder working group to discuss the reinstalltion of the Champlain Monument and additional interpretation opportunities to develop a balanced and representative reflection of history of both Indigenous and non-Indigenous perspectives.

At this juncture, Parks Canada will place the Champlain Monument project on hold and will not be proceeding with the reinstalltion of the monument itself until further consultation can occur regarding an appropriate path forward. To this end, Parks Canada is requesting that the City of Orillia establish a joint committee, consisting of members from both of our organizations and other key partners and stakeholders, to pursue consultations and to develop a plan for both the Champlain Monument and the surrounding park lands, including possible education or art installations, for the Summer of 2019. With your endorsement, the committee’s role and terms of reference will be created jointly and will provide recommendations for both the Council of the City of Orillia and Parks Canada.

Building respectful, strong relationships with stakeholders and Indigenous peoples continues to be a priority for Parks Canada, and I am certain that through the leadership of both of our organizations a positive outcome can be realized.

Sincerely,

Jewel Cunningham
Director, Ontario Waterways Field Unit
Parks Canada Agency
Wendake, March 26, 2018

Mayor Steve Clarke
City of Orillia
50 Andrew Street South, Suite 300
Orillia, Ontario L3V 7T5

Subject: Champlain-Huron-Wendet Monument

Dear Mayor Clarke,

Kwe,

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the City of Orillia for engaging our Nation in the discussions surrounding Parks Canada’s monument depicting Champlain’s encounter with the Huron-Wendet Nation in Orillia. I believe in a meaningful and respectful bilateral relationship between our official authorities and, in the current context, I must stress the importance of joining our efforts in developing constructive educational initiatives that reflect and showcase our common history on our ancestral lands in the heart of Huronia.

As you know, delegates from the Huron-Wendet Nation Council attended the meeting in Orillia on March 20, 2018 to discuss the steps to be taken in the Champlain-Huron-Wendet monument issue. During that meeting, it was made clear that our Nation speaks for itself and does not support the re-installment of Parks Canada’s offensive and degrading monument in Orillia’s Couchiching Beach Park. Not only would such an action undermine and challenge reconciliation efforts with Indigenous Peoples, but it would also perpetuate a disgraceful perception of our Peoples as being submissive, subservient and obedient to the French Crown while portraying them as an inferior class of citizens. Indeed, it is important to remember that the Huron-Wendet Nation saved Champlain from certain death, and in no way does this degrading and preposterous statue reflect the strength and diplomacy of our ancestors or their status as visionary allies to the French, nor does it accurately portray history. We want our youth and all citizens to have an opportunity to learn about our past based on accurate educational tools and displays. There are many possible alternatives, and we encourage the City of Orillia to seize the opportunity to make things right.

In 2015, the Huron-Wendet Nation took part in Champlain’s 400th anniversary celebrations in Penatanguishene. Our participation aimed to set the facts straight. To be more specific, it was to highlight that Champlain came into this region to understand the diplomacy and commercial rules established in North-Eastern North America by our people. As a result, with local authorities, we successfully celebrated the opening of a magnificent park called the “Champlain-Huron-Wendet Park” that local residents and visitors can enjoy today. Decisions about the Park’s features were
made as partners as part of a respectful and meaningful bilateral engagement process. We do not expect any less from Parks Canada and we are requesting your support in this matter. Further engagement in finding alternatives to Parks Canada’s monument in Orillia must be considered.

However, we do understand that it is Parks Canada’s decision whether to reinstall their monument on this piece of land. Rest assured that the Huron-Wendat Nation will take the necessary steps to convey this position to Parks Canada’s officials to prevent this travesty from happening again.

I remain available should you want to discuss this at your convenience.

In Peace and Friendship,

Konrad Sioui
Grand Chief
April 10, 2018

Konrad Sioui, Grand Chief
Huron Wendat Nation
255 Chef Michel Laveau Street
Wendake, Quebec G0A 4V0

Sent via e-mail to: administration@cnhw.qc.ca

Dear Grand Chief Sioui;

Re: Champlain Huron-Wendat Monument

This is to advise you that your letter dated March 26, 2018 respecting the above was presented to a meeting of Council held on April 9, 2018.

At that time, Council received the correspondence as information, and directed that a copy be forwarded to the Parks, Recreation and Culture Department.

Regards,

Janet A. Nyhof, CMO, AOMC
Deputy Clerk

JN:lk

Copy to: Ray Merkley, Director of Parks, Recreation and Culture
April 2, 2019

Parks Canada
Office of the Director, Ontario Waterways
2155 Ashburnham Drive
Peterborough, Ontario
K9J 6Z6

Attention: Jewel Cunningham
c.c: Mayor Steve Clarke, City of Orillia

Thank you for your recent letter inviting us to participate in the deliberations regarding the Samuel de Champlain Monument that was located in the Terry Fox Circle, in Orillia.

The need for repair and some modifications to this artistic tribute to the early 17th century meeting of the intrepid explorer Samuel de Champlain with the then inhabitants of the Orillia area is understandable. However, to change the nature of the sculpture could only be described as trying to rewrite history.

Now, any artistic work can be interpreted in many ways. The way we look at something in 2019 may well differ from the way things were seen in 1919. We think history is fixed, we should learn from it and not try to make it over into OURstory.

Over a century ago, a group of dedicated citizens from many back grounds researched all the available documentation, and then the commissioned artist himself (the one who did the sculpture) spent years researching material from early 17th century time period to come up with a design compatible with the best understanding of the relationship of the subjects with each other.

If we try to look at the facts as best we know them: Champlain was a great explorer, very broad minded for his time and always looking over the horizon. We think the artist captured that in his pose. We also know that he well respected the inhabitants of the area, fought with them and who after all fed him all one winter. It is reported that they saved his life when he became very ill after being wounded in a battle with them against the Iroquois.

The Cleric in the sculpture a symbol of the future Missionaries that would come to the land over the next 3 centuries to successfully bring Christianity not only to the indigenous people but to all the new inhabitants. In the sculpture the artist captures the listeners as being open, independent, but perhaps not too interested.
Were the inhabitants awed by the clothing, weapons and new ideas of these visitors? Most likely, just as we are when a totally different culture or famous person arrives in our mist. Again, the artist captures this but tries to not make the onlookers submissive.

Perhaps, the reason people want to change the sculpture is due to its name. If we think of it as the depiction of the meeting of two cultures in Orillia in the 1600’s -- of the locals, the explorer, and the missionary then our viewing is very different than hero worship of Champlain with admirers.

Do not change the sculpture, a wonderful work of art but if change is necessary, then change the name to something more appropriate to the picture being portrayed. Or at least put up better plaques and perhaps an audio file that can accessed by Wi-Fi.

Thank you again for your consideration and for allowing us to present our viewpoint.

Sincerely

Knights of Columbus, Orillia Council # 1428
Vernon March, a Brit, still in art school, was commissioned to create this monument. When it was dedicated, I think in 1930, indigenous leaders were among the dignitaries. Looking at it as a sculptor, I can see Vernon March's reverence for the indigenous people....they sit, yes, at the foot of the monument, strong, muscular, beautiful, accessible, and astonished at the greed of the fur trader, and the fierce priest, interlopers in their beautiful lives. And we stand beside them and look astonished too. Meanwhile, M. Champlain, way overdressed for a canoe, is the one receiving pigeon droppings. Vernon March went on to create the War Memorial in Ottawa. Have a look at that. Orillia has a treasure in its midst, a...

The Ottawa memorial is magnificent. I am hoping Orillia will rethink what they have done and rectify as soon as possible. Very good synopsis by you. Do you think it appropriate for you to send this to the...
there is a committee established to work on this solution...I have thought of calling the mayor...but there have been challenges regarding the interpretation of this sculpture for years, and I have written letters to the Orillia newspaper in the past. Just don't know how deeply I want to go...

I think all we can do is comment. It is an Orillia problem to solve. I do hope they realize your interpretation of the sculpture and also the historic grandeur of Samuel de Champlain. He belongs to all of history and to me is a true hero.

Thank you for the interesting fact based discussion. I feel it is respectfully presenting the situation as it was in history. A very different discussion than that going on over Confederate monuments in the US. One of the most blatantly awful is the one of a Doctor who was considered the father of gynecology for developments in obstetrics outside a maternity hospital. He developed his techniques operating in slave women without anesthesia.
Of course Champlain is a hero...but this sculpture is about a moment of change in the lives of the indigenous people...for economic and religious reasons, their lives would never be the same again, and it is a very eloquent depiction of that. The men on the lower tier are the people of the land, and we can place our hands on their hands and express regret.

well said, very eloquent

It speaks of humanity, not humiliation.

Good on you

Why do we have to go down this path of finding reasons to object to the history of our country. ‘It is what it is’.....this has happened to our
regret.

5d Like Reply

well said, very eloquent

5d Like Reply

It speaks of humanity, not humiliation.

5d Like Reply

Good on you

4d Like Reply

Write a reply...

Why do we have to go down this path of finding reasons to object to the history of our country. 'It is what it is'.....this has happened to our neighbours south of us, and all it has caused is Division.....we don't need to fall into that destructive path for Our Country.

4d Like Reply

Write a reply...

This whole thing is most distressing.

4d Like Reply

Write a reply...
Commissioned to create this monument. When it was dedicated, I think in 1930, indigenous leaders were among the dignitaries. Looking at it as a sculptor, I can see Vernon March's reverence for the indigenous people...they sit, yes, at the foot of the monument, strong, muscular, beautiful, accessible, and astonished at the greed of the fur trader, and the fierce priest, interlopers in their beautiful lives. And we stand beside them and look astonished too.

Meanwhile, M. Champlain, way overdressed for a canoe, is the one receiving pigeon droppings. Vernon March went on to create the War Memorial in Ottawa. Have a look at that.

Orillia has a treasure in its midst, and those who view it with an open heart see the real story that the sculptor is telling us about the 'white men' the 'conquerers' in this scenario.

[Comment]

well said, very eloquent

5d Like Reply

[Comment]

It speaks of humanity, not humiliation.

5d Like Reply

[Comment]

Good on you!
March 28, 2019

Mayor Clarke and the Champlain Working Group,

Thank you and your Group for the ability for me to make my presentation on March 1.

In part, this letter is commentary on what I heard at the meeting.

Also, at the time of that meeting, I had not yet seen the Samuel de Champlain Monument Discussion Paper or Questionnaire. My concerns below regarding Language Contextualization was prompted the Questionnaire. Although the early 20th century wording of the plaque is stated verbatim, I am concerned that 21st century readers of this century old text may lack contextualization as to how our language has evolved.

I had asked Jacqueline to advise of the dates of the other presenters as I would appreciate hearing them.

If I could make another presentation on matters raised herein, I would be grateful.

Discussion Paper

In not having read the Discussion Paper prior to my presentation regarding the who, what, why, when, where of Orillia’s Monument, from my perspective, this description offered insufficient insight to our Town of 6,828 as of the 1911 census¹. The 1920s marked a difficult period for Orillia. Tudhope’s factories were largely empty, OTACO was in receivership, and this Town had a declining population. Yet, in the 1920’s, we unveiled in the form of the nation’s largest bronze statue as a “Symbol of Goodwill”. Whereas the Discussion Paper cites “tourism” and the advent of the “white race”, a more descriptive source would be Hale’s Champlain Monument at Orillia booklet. It’s foreword (left) that states the advance guard of “white civilization” and “the promotion of good feeling between the

¹ Orillia’s Champlain Monument, French-English Relations, and Indigenous (Mis)Representations in Commemorative Sculpture, pg 216.
English and French-speaking people of Ontario and Quebec.” Hale’s comments of “inter-racial” then referred to the English and French, whereas in today’s parlance, that would be “inter-cultural”. This is significant in an era when “white” and “race”, as also found in the Questionnaire, have become such inflammatory topics. I will have more on this under my section on Language Contextualization.

The Discussion Paper is correct in stating that First Nations people lacked the right to vote. This misleading however, as of the date given of 1913, neither did non-First Nation women. The singling out of First Nations is misleading to the readers of the Discussion Paper. The right for non-property-owning men to vote only started to be change in Canada in 1900, and not fully enfranchised until 1948. Initially, if one man paid more rent, they were more likely to have the right to vote than those paying lesser, or no rent. The Discussion Paper unfairly states, “(The Indian Act) took away the rights of Indigenous people to vote.” Most residents of Ontario did not have the right to vote in 1913; none had that franchise ‘taken away’.

‘Native Voting’ would not be enshrined by the Province of Ontario until the term of Premier Frost. His father was Mayor of the Council that initiated the Champlain Monument. As Mayor, W.S. Frost designed the Orillia crest featuring the ‘native’ canoeist. As a community, I feel that we were comparatively progressive and accomplishments to be proud of.

Yes, Orillia’s Champlain Monument’s design is dated, but Monument builders of the early 20th century should not be faulted for creating Monuments reflective of the artist stylings of the early 20th century.

**Reputation**

The adjacent photo shows Ottawa’s Champlain Monument by Hamilton MacCarthy as it appeared from the 1920s to the 1990s. Samuel de Champlain is on top of the pedestal with the Anishinaabe canoeist at the base. The canoe, however, was noticeably absent.

The following quotation is very significant. The Monuments section of the Government of Canada website states, “...In 1918, MacCarthy created a bronze sculpture of a kneeling “Indian,” originally envisioned to be seen kneeling in a canoe. Group funding of the sculpture, however, ran out of money needed to fabricate the canoe and as a result only the “Indian Scout” was placed on the pedestal at the base of Champlain’s monument.”

As a canoeist, of course he is kneeling. This was a budgetary shortfall, not an intended message of subservience or deference.

Foreseeable misunderstanding festered for decades over this work. The First Nation member depicted became known as the “kneeling Indian” and, as such, became an obvious, and quite
*legitimate* irritant to inter-cultural relations. Even knowledgeable professors or other commentators in the present day fail to contextualize the intent of this “kneeling Indian” as a canoeist. For example, in Michael Stevenson’s detailed article *Orillia’s Champlain Monument, French-English Relations, and Indigenous (Mis)Representations in Commemorative Sculpture*, he makes no mention of the canoe as was intended by the sculptor. Stevenson’s comment on this feature is “Anishinaabe scout crouched deferentially at the feet of the Champlain statue on Nepean Point (Ottawa)”2 The scarcity of bronze during the final year of WW1 is overlooked. The reputation of cultural deference is propagated.

The canoe was an essential part of the narrative of trade and exploration. Nothing of European design would match the ingenious functionality of the birch-bark canoe. In contextualizing the narrative of Ottawa’s Champlain Monument, the canoe was certainly as important as this geographer’s astrolabe. It should not have been left omitted, or its absence unexplained, over the following decades.

To some degree, the rebranding, re-purposing and recontextualizing in the 1990s may have helped alleviate the *rightful upset* with First Nation communities, however the damage done to the reputation of the creators, and of the sculptor, resultant from decades of public relations mismanagement by Ottawa, was not even attempted to be repaired. The reputation of Ottawa’s Monument will likely persist as even the Government of Canada website lists this forlorn canoeist as the “kneeling Indian”.

Orillia has its own challenge with reputation; that is the descriptor of “cowering”.

I have heard “cowering” used by a presenter in the confines of your Group, and, in the Aug 2017 Toronto Star article that prompted my initial letter to you. “Cowering” is inconsistent with the historical fact regarding the French in Huronia 1615-16. At the request of the Wendat, a dozen, or so French entered the lands of the Wendat Confederacy which was home to 20,000 to 30,000 to secure a trade deal and to solidify a military alliance. With the Wendat outnumbering the French by no less than 1,000:1, this notion of them being fearful of the French defies reason.

There is confusion regarding the Christianity face with some asserting that the Jean de Brébeuf, a Jesuit, is depicted in the Monument. The Jesuits did not arrive in Huronia until after Champlain’s sole sojourn to this region. Stevenson wrote, “Photographs of multiple portraits and busts of Brébeuf and Father Isaac Jogues, who were martyred by the Mohawks in the 1640s, clearly served as inspiration for March’s depictions of the Recollect figure—Joseph Le Caron, one of Champlain’s companions in 1615—in the “Christianity” panel of the Champlain monument design.”

Of the French in Huronia in 1615-16, only three names have survived into the present day, namely Etienne Brûlé, Joseph le Caron, and Samuel de Champlain. Le Caron, and one dozen French arrived in

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2 Orillia’s Champlain Monument, French-English Relations, and Indigenous (Mis)Representations in Commemorative Sculpture, pg 227,
June 1615. Champlain, credited as being the ‘explorer’, arrived in Huronia as guided by Brûlé his sole French companion during that voyage and Champlain’s interpreter.

Contrary to the power-dynamics that would be associated with “cowering”;

- Friar Le Caron had no converts to Christianity.
- Brûlé was a convert to the lifestyle of his Wendat and Algonquin hosts.
- Champlain was well known to have a respectful relation with his Wendat allies.

“Cowering” is inconsistent with the Wendat figures depicted by Vernon March. Unlike many examples of post WW1 public art, only the most skilled of sculptors were able to cast facial detail that enabled one to attempt to read the thoughts of those depicted. Most cenotaphs that I have found across Ontario, are expressionless and convey no more insights than store manikins. March created an exquisite work of art.

I request that readers of this letter to look at the photos herein, or from other sources, for examples that validate this descriptor of “cowering”. Are any of these men ‘cringing in fear’, as the cowering denotes? Regarding the Wendat figures on the Christianity face, they appear to be in pensive thought while listening to the story of the Bible. Hale’s booklet states, “…it is therefore only fitting that the right hand group shows a robed priest with uplifted cross in one hand, and open breviary in the other, while at his feet are seated two stalwart Indian braves into whose ears the story of the Gospel is being poured. In the face of the priest is all the benevolence and zeal with which those early teachers were fired, and in those of the listeners one reads

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3 The Champlain booklet infers that Jean de Brébeuf is represented on the Christianity face of the Monument. Stevenson wrote, “Photographs of multiple portraits and busts of Brébeuf and Father Isaac Jogues, who were martyred by the Mohawks in the 1640s, clearly served as inspiration for March’s depictions of the Recollect figure—Joseph Le Caron, one of Champlain’s companions in 1615—in the “Christianity” panel of the Champlain monument design.” Orillia’s Champlain Monument, French-English Relations, and Indigenous (Mis)Representations in Commemorative Sculpture, pg 223

4 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/%C3%89tienne_Br%C3%BBl%C3%A9
with the struggle of mind which preceded the acceptance of the message”. In looking at these pictures, you may agree that although they appear discerning, these Wendat men do not appear convinced by any evangelical effort.

The commerce side shows reciprocal trade of items with both parties exchanging furs and trade axes – both articles of value. The trader is reaching for the pipe being offered as an expression of peaceful exchange. Weapons such as the gun on the trader’s back was not being offered as an article of trade – at least not by the French. In contrast other monuments of the era such as the Brant Monument in which all figures have weapons, the Orillia Champlain Monument does not emphasize the indigenous figures’ association with weaponry.

There are three French included in the Orillia’s Monument. Two of which, Champlain and le Caron are specifically identified as the figures cast by March. It is left untold as to whether the trader is Brûlé, the adventurer whose arrival in Huronia preceded Champlain’s arrival by years. In June 1610⁵, Brûlé (1592-1633) told Champlain that he wished to go and live with the

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⁵ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/%C3%A9tienne_Br%C3%BBl%C3%A9
Algonquins and learn their language as well as better understand their customs and habits. He would live among the Algonquin, Wendat, and Seneca until his death at the hands of the Wendat. In his travels, Brûlé would be first European to see four of the five Great Lakes and be first to visit many First Nations. Considered a turncoat to the French, Wendat, English, and Seneca, he lived a life of remarkable adventure that remains absent from the narration of the Monument. Why are we, and our predecessors, such poor story-tellers?

Within the existing artist expression, both faces of Orillia’s Monument have worthwhile stories to tell. Your Committee can recommend a long overdue understanding and appreciation of the Monument. Unlike Ottawa’s Champlain, the issues with our Champlain Monument are far from fatal to its ongoing integrity. Contextualization and interpretation are required by properly understanding it though.

I remain optimistic that your Committee will not create the equivalence of Ottawa’s “kneeling Indian” by separating the component parts of our Monument along with a similarly undeserved commentary of ‘deference’.

Language Contextualization

Online dictionaries list a tomahawk as “a light axe used as a tool or weapon by North American Indians” and an axe being “a tool typically used for chopping wood, usually a steel blade attached at a right angle to a wooden handle”. The differences herein are “weapon” for a tomahawk, “steel blade” for axe. The website “Fur Trade Tomahawks” has the style of ‘axe’ depicted in the Champlain monument as a Biscayne Trade Axe. In reference to Iron and Steel artifacts, this website states “Terms that mean one thing in the 18th or 19th century, can mean something entirely different today”. To the Wendat who lived in communities with 8 m tall palisaded walls of up to one kilometer in length, an axe would be of extraordinary utility that the present day understanding of a weapon like a tomahawk would not.

The English language has evolved and will continue to do so. The meaning of words said at one point in history, may not have the same meaning at different times in history. The very land upon which the Champlain Monument was erected previously was the site of an institution whose name shows such evolution. Levels of mental capacity where once categorized by terms that today are used as sharp insults. These former medical terms of ‘Moron’, ‘Imbecile’ and ‘Idiot’ were used in the 1870s when Orillia’s “Asylum for Idiots” stood along our waterfront. As ‘correct’ language has changed, those once acceptable terms are undeniably inflammatory in the present day.
When Columbus first reached the Caribbean Islands, he mistakenly thought that he had reached India, hence the inaccurate label was ascribed to indigenous North Americans. Acceptable alternatives to “Indians” have changed a multitude of times, and sometimes in different ways in differing locales.

Some words develop added meanings. Bewildering commentary can even be found for the theme to the Flintstones referencing “gay-old time”. It is unlikely that in the 1960s that Hanna Barbara would have foreseen people in the future having consternation with these lyrics.

Two minor examples of change over the past century are “good will” as cast on the Monument in the 1920s would now be spelt as goodwill, and “English speaking” would now be commonly hyphenated.

Far more significant is the changed meaning of the word “race” as it appeared on the bronze plaque.

Books that I have from that the early 20th century, or earlier, often use the word race when describing surprisingly small cultural groups. For example, the Irish ‘race’, the Scottish ‘race’, the English ‘race’, the French ‘race’, and so on. In the introduction to Hale’s booklet, he refers to “inter-racial” in the context of French and English as differing races. ‘Race’ was then more an identifier of groups that one had kinship with, more so than the present-day notion of ‘race’ being more of a connection through biology.

One of my 19th century forefathers, nicknamed ‘Fighting’ John James Mitchell, was a cantankerous resident of Oro Township of Scottish origin. His nickname resulted from his frequent skirmished with Irish families near Prices Corners. Another forefather, my maternal great grandfather John Clarke is likely seated in the center of this photo of the Orillia Company Simcoe Foresters circa 1866. As this picture denotes, it was at the time of the “Fenian Raids” into Canada by Irish Americans following the American Civil War. My Clarke ancestors actually had a ‘hide-out’ built in the bush behind their farm on the 10th of Oro in case of such feared attacks by these Irish-American invaders. In 1866, some 20,000 men were mustered through local militia in this pre-Confederation Canada. Such animus between these old-world ‘races’ were prevalent in our locale and nation early in our history. The anniversary of the Battle of Ridgeway on was commemorated annually on June 1 until 1931 when Prime Minister Bennett created Nov 11 for Remembrance. The story of the attack of those battle-hardened Civil War veterans into Canada against a largely volunteer ‘Canadian’ militia of farmers and students no longer fit the popular political narrative after WW1. Politics won out over history. In 2016, the federal government had no representation at the sesquicentennial commemorations to the Battle of Ridgeway.

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6 Vronsky, Peter, Ridgeway: The American Fenian Invasion And The 1866 Battle That Made Canada (The History of Canada)
The 19th century racial-divisiveness among immigrants from the various parts of the British Isles was largely reconciled by the post-WW1 era when the Champlain Monument was unveiled. However, relations with French Canadians were strained. Regarding commemorations, Robert Shipley wrote in, *To Mark Our Place – A History of Canadian War Memorials, “In the century before the First World War, the impulse to commemorate incidents and outstanding individuals from the past posed potential problems for French Canadians”*. The statement on the plaque citing “A symbol of good will between French and English speaking people of Canada” was meant as a tangible step towards the 20th century of the goal of such reconciliation with French Canada. Even though the French entered Ontario a century and a half before the English, it is my opinion that Hale intended “white race” to denote the commonality with the French to whom animus had grown. This is vastly different than the way the readers of the Discussion Paper or Questionnaire will comprehend the words “white race” in the absence of time period contextualization.

The Champlain booklet states an objective of “promoting good relations between the two provinces, and between the races which people them” in reference to English and French ‘races’. As a tangible example of ‘good relations’, when costs surpassed the $20,000 budget, the Province of Quebec offered $5,000 towards Orillia’s Monument. Of that initial $20,000, the Province of Ontario, the Town of Orillia, and the County of Simcoe pledged $2,500, $1,500 and $1,000 respectively.

Although not inclusive of First Peoples, at this stage of our Country’s development, the collectivisation of peoples who Rodolphe Lemieux describes as once being “bitter foes” was in keeping with the goal of ‘Progress’ as was adopted by the same Council that undertook the Champlain Monument. Again, if Hale used “inter-racial” a century ago in the same context that we would now use “inter-cultural”, the combining of these once ‘bitter foes’ by a single term that joined these cultures together, should be considered positively as the combination of once competing cultures.

The well-intentioned 21st century readers of the Discussion Paper will rightfully recoil when reading the term “white race”. Responses to “white race” in the Questionnaire will be justifiably harsh. As the Discussion Paper and Questionnaire both lack period contextualization of language, the responses will be unjustly biased against Orillians of a century ago, the sculptor, the original Champlain Committee, and their proud accomplishment, The Champlain Monument at Orillia. I would suggest that Working Group take such foreseeable partiality into consideration when reviewing responses.

The story of Champlain may yet be different on the 500th anniversary. Hopefully, the next interpretation of the evolving Champlain narrative will hold the First People in the elevated esteem deserving to them during a 22nd century commemoration. I foresee that the 21st century will be marked by both reconciliation with First Nations, and the redefining of our communities based upon the Ontario’s rapidly broadening demographics. It is necessary, however, to leave both the 300th and 400th anniversary commemorations in tact for the 500th anniversary statue – *what ever it might be* - to be more fully understood.

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7 Shipley, Robert, *To Mark Our Place – A History of Canadian War Memorials*, p 36
8 Orillia’s Champlain Monument, French-English Relations, and Indigenous (Mis)Representations in Commemorative Sculpture, pg 230
Respectfully, the terminology of any plaque you chose today may still give grounds for misunderstanding in the future. The meaning or words will ceaselessly change as our language ceaselessly evolves. How many times in our life-times has the ‘correct’ terminology to identify our respected friends and neighbours among First Peoples changed? In the using the past to predict the future, further ‘correct’ language will come and go? Interpretative plaques can be – and will be changed – by your successors. Respect, however, should be given to the originators of the Champlain Monument at Orillia by leaving their creation unchanged and their wording, and fully intact.

One person at the March 19th Open Forum said the Champlain Monument was our ‘David’. I agree; it is. A fig leaf should not be used to alter the nakedness of Michelangelo’s art.

Another commentator at that meeting offered the equivalence that Da Vinci’s ‘Last Supper’ should not be cut into pieces. Obviously, that would absurd.

Let March’s work remain completely in tact as a truly outstanding example of early 20th century art. Use interpretative board(s) to explain the intent of the design, wording, and a 21st century critique. Please leave it to your successor’s interpretative boards to recontextualize that original 20th century text for 22nd century readers. Their lens will be different than ours. Why should we in the year 2019 think to have the final say in altering a work of art that was intended to remain for centuries?

How will our successors view 20th century ‘art’ if morphed into something motivated by 21st century political messaging?

Bruce
April 12, 2019,

Mayor Clarke and the Champlain Working Group,

At last evening’s Public Workshop, I had the pleasure of happening to sit beside [REDACTED]. His roots in Orillia stem back over two centuries to the union of his French fur trading Gaudaur forefather with his wife from the [REDACTED] family. Jacqueline may have commented at one point regarding me shaking my head regarding one aspect of her introductory comments regarding terminology. To her, I apologize if that caused a distraction. It was insightful to listen [REDACTED] utterance of “That is not true” in response to a far more substantive point of Jacqueline’s being that members of the Rama community “not being allowed” to participate in the Champlain unveiling.

Twenty or so, years ago I became historian for the Kiwanis Club of Orillia. This Club was chartered in 1924, one year prior to the Champlain unveiling. Its roster included WW1 veterans, Doctors who volunteered their services for veterans at Orillia Soldiers Memorial, and leaders of the war effort on the ‘home front’. Some of the latter were members of the Champlain Monument Committee in 1914. The story coming down through Kiwanis sources was the First Nation members of Rama were invited but chose not to participate. Orillia’s 300th anniversary commemoration followed that of Penetanguishene in 1912 where “Amongst a cast of hundreds, two large canoes entered the bay paddled by neutral Ojibwa Indians. In the first was Iroquois Grand Chief André Staats and the five head Sachems of the Iroquois Confederacy: Mohawk, Oneidas, Onondagas, Cayugas and Senecas. In the second canoe was Huron Grand Chief Ovide Sioui from Quebec.”1 Regarding Orillia, 250 re-enactors were required. That may have surpassed the population of Rama. Members of the Kiwanis, and many others, were called upon to wear customs as part of the commemorative celebration. As with Penetanguishene, the participation of local First Nation members were sought.

A salient point of the Discussion Paper and Jacqueline’s presentation was the notion that the voting rights were “taken away” from indigenous communities. That is quite misleading. As I detailed in my correspondence addressed to Mayor Clarke dated March 28, I commented on the Discussion Paper that in 1913 not only did ‘natives’ not have the right to vote - but neither did women. Possibly, some non-property owners at that time also never had the right to vote. It would take roughly five decades for the ‘native’ voting to be enacted by Premier Frost, the son of the Mayor Frost who initiated the Champlain Monument. Progress often occurs slowly. From the starting point of Responsible Government in the 1840s, it would take over seven decades for women to vote. It is not my intent to deny systemic inequity under the Indian Act, but the Discussion Paper is incorrect in the matter of voting being “taken away”.

Jacqueline intimated that the inscription of goodwill between French and English may have been included ‘to get money from the Quebec Government’. That is unfair. Although I do not have the source at hand, but the was a book on the history of French Canadians in which it was cited that a rapport was reached between Orillia and the Quebec Government around the time of the planned 1915

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1 Dupuis, David, A Neglected & Forgotten Historic Site! The tradition and tragedy of Champlain’s Cross at the Huron village of Atouacha: “the two-landing place”
https://penetanguishene.civicweb.net/content/pdfstorage/65DF5AE771C04C6B955C787BA73DA419-Champlain%20Cross%20Site%20Backgrounder.pdf
unveiling. In my March 28 letter, I point out that after the cultural upheaval of Conscription, the Province of Quebec had pledged more the Champlain Monument than the combination of the initial pledges of Ontario, Simcoe County and Orillia combined. I have found in discussions or presentations by your group that goodwill is mentioned only as a cursory point, or as last night, as cultural opportunism by the Province of Quebec.

With the approaching deadline of the end of April for your committee, I find it troubling that my March 28 letter as sent through the Mayor’s Office has not been circulated, nor even read by the addressee. Similarly, in speaking with the community members, I found that none of my previous correspondence to your committee was shared with them. This is disappointing.

I realize that this is last minute, if there is any way to amend the presentation for the Public Workshop tomorrow, it would be appropriate.

Regards,

Bruce
Concerning the Champlain Monument

Orillia is my hometown and my wife and I now live just outside of town. When I lived in Orillia and walked in the park, almost daily, it was difficult not to cringe when seeing the monument even after years of walking by it. It wasn’t so much Champlain himself that troubled me, even though the depiction is grossly inaccurate and ‘inflated,’ it was and is the two side statues. When I wrote a song called, ‘tear the statue down,’ about this monument in 2013 I could have chosen either the ‘missionary/priest’ side of the statue or the ‘trader’ side to write about... both are equally reprehensible. What does it say about our present day mind-set if we allow this monument to remain? It is not justifiable simply as an historical piece of art absent of deeper implications and meaning. Art is meaning and it affects every viewer instantly when seen. Thus, it shapes our mindset, unconsciously and/or consciously in the present, as to what is acceptable in society, especially if it is portrayed in a public space. It is not just simply innocuous history and art as some proclaim. History is not just in the past. It is present in each one of us as we walk in our daily lives. And art shapes our world view, our general disposition and sense of life. It is not simply just symbolic; the symbolic affects the ‘actual,’ it affects our perspective and everyday life. In 2016 I met an Indigenous man from British Columbia, named [blank], in front of the Champlain monument and struck up a conversation with him to find out how he felt about it. He felt hurt and was offended. This is how this inaccurate historical artwork in a public space directly affects someone in a negative manner today. Is this how we want to treat people and greet visitors to Orillia? My wife and I and our [blank] children and others I have talked to, who are non-Indigenous, are offended by this monument. These are indigenous and non-indigenous perspectives with one commonality: our feeling and response is human in scope beyond these so-called perspectives. It is a universal response to injustice. In the art we display in a public space we will either foster a culture of unconscious bias or a culture of common respect.

Would this statue be allowed to remain if it were any other ethnic group, race, or minority depicted in the manner the Wendat are? Definitely not. European ‘colonizers’ caused indelible suffering to indigenous peoples hundreds of years ago. We cannot pretend history didn’t happen and brush it away under the carpet and we cannot undo history. But let us not perpetuate this suffering now due to indifference. We can do what is right in the present.

This monument was conceived of and created in the early to mid 1920’s. Its oppressive and subjugating depiction was unquestioned and acceptable as a given as part of the zeitgeist of that time. But this is 2019. More than 90 years have passed. For a caring, egalitarian society to emerge we must collectively reflect on the shortcomings of our past. Now, in Canada, we live in a time where we seek to be inclusive of all races, cultures, ethnicities, and minorities. That is our richness and strength; to honour all that is the best in all of us, in all our similarities and in our unique differences.

We live in a time where we talk of “truth and reconciliation” and this is a good thing for it frees all of us in a healing movement, both the oppressed and the oppressor. For in facing our collective past we allow ourselves to open and share and bring into the open all that has been hidden. Will truth and reconciliation just remain rhetoric or will action be taken? Now is the time for healing. We are facing this now as a nation so it is either now or never.

This all being said, what is the way forward? Do we as Orillians and Canadians, and most importantly as human beings, wish to continue with any legacy of injustice and ignorance? In full, clear conscience it is obvious that this monument cannot be reinstated. It is an inaccurate and offensive portrayal of history... so how can we portray historical events in an accurate and constructive manner in a monument or monuments that reflect the prevailing attitude of today, not of 1920’s Canada?
What can we come up with that honours the past of ‘the original ones,’ the indigenous people that walked on this land long before any Europeans? Furthermore, can we reflect the arrival of the Europeans, specifically Champlain, only if there is a will to do so, with the approval of any First Nations groups invested in this project?

I would like to present just a few possibilities among the many that will almost definitely come forward.

One suggestion is a series of smaller life-size statues/monuments depicting the life of the Wendat, with an ‘historical walkway’ weaving through the statues and culminating in a grand, larger monument where the previous Champlain monument stood overlooking Lake Couchiching. These monuments could depict the fishing weir at the narrows, farming activities, hunting practices, the attire, various crops (‘the three sisters’), the games and sports played, religious practices, possibly a depiction of the dwellings of the time and so-on. Also, it could include several monuments: possibly in an accurate portrayal of Champlain being welcomed by chief Daronto; and another of French fur traders in exchange with the Wendat and/or so-on... again, only if there is the will to do so. The large monument could embrace the present by having a semi circle gathering of a visible cross section of all ‘groups’ that represent Canadians today looking forward to an historical Wendat family (mother, father, girl and boy). This would be a symbolic, inclusive, presentation of Canada today, a nation of many peoples living together, and it would show respect in embracing and honouring the past of the first nations’ people of whom we owe so much.

A monument walkway of such would honour the ways of indigenous peoples, our collective history, and present. These are just possibilities of what could be done.

In the Champlain Monument Discussion Paper presented by the committee it highlights the need “for an appropriate path forward for the Champlain monument that is respectful and representative of both indigenous and non-indigenous perspectives.” As stated, such a ‘walkway of monuments’ would honour both the first peoples and those who followed up to and including the present. It would be a display that embraces our acceptance of both our collective history and present. To fund this there could be cooperation at the community and business level and with various governmental agencies. There could be fundraising gatherings, events, and concerts right here in Couchiching Park with both indigenous and non-indigenous involved. A project of this nature would not have to be completed all at one time but could be accomplished in stages as funds became available to complete another statue.

If this is a time of true reconciliation what could be better than sharing this common cause and goal so as to bring forth factually depicted historical artworks that we can all respect and be proud of both today and tomorrow. It would be a symbolic gesture and a concrete action to usher in a future based upon equality and mutual respect. Think of the unveiling of monuments that all Orillians, all Canadians, and all visitors could be proud of, embrace, and want to come and visit and behold.
What does the Champlain Monument mean to me as a resident of Orillia?

I remember as a child, visiting Orillia as part of a school trip and going to the Champlain Monument. Even then, I was interested in history and the different philosophies of the world. The Champlain Monument had an effect on me then and it still does.

I am a survivor of religious childhood assault, and even then the Champlain Monument showed me submissive indigenous men at the mercy of a Jesuit priest with a French explorer in all his glory lording over them. It didn't bring me any pride in being a Canadian non-native person then, and it does even less now that we know more about residential schools and the abuse that took place at them.

That being said, there's no doubt the Champlain Monument is a grand sculpture. Historical sculptures do have a place in our society but they have to be balanced with our true history. My thought on this during the past year, has been to place the Champlain Monument on the grounds of the old Huronia Regional Centre, as part of a cultural project. That project could include Champlain's Monument, and a tribute to the residents who were abused at the HRC. The next would be to portray the progress we have made to address the horrendous colonial assaults, as well as the abuse of the vulnerable. That has been part of our history. The next could celebrate the wonderful cultures around us that make up this beautiful region. I don't know if the city and province have thought of this approach as a potential use of the lakefront of the HRC. I think it would be appropriate and allow residents who chose to attend the site of the Champlain Monument to do so. It would allow those who wanted to attend a public beach and relax to do so without having this reminder lording over them.

This may sound silly to some of you, but so be it. When I moved to Orillia every time I went to Goulbourn Beach Park and saw the Monument it reminded me of a terrible history. It reminded me of abuse. Unless you've been there, you wouldn't understand it. I think it should not be in a community park where people should be able to go, relax and get away from the trials and tribulations of day to day life.

As a survivor and a history student, I don't dwell on the past. I can't change it. I can learn from our joint history and do my part in moving forward. The Champlain Monument should be part of a larger effort that portrays a painful history and does everything in its power to move forward as a nation that is truthful, honest and fair.

Peggy

April 11, 2019
Hello,

Thank you so much for giving me a copy of your discussion paper re: the Champlain Monument. It is both thoughtfully presented and suggests ways of moving forward with which we can all live.

Interestingly enough, as you heard by the end of today’s meeting, the two most common suggestions revolve around:

a) a repositioning of the figures on the monument so that there is a clearer pictorial representation of the compatible and respectful relationship shared by the Huron-Wendat and Champlain, during his explorations in the area around Orillia.

(Champlain himself, in his notes, writes about that very issue. Who knows what would have happened to him, had the native community not looked after him when he became ill!?)

b) create a ‘Walk through History’ signpost pathway, giving the opportunity to tell what happened and what was intended by the monument. Perhaps other art pieces could be included on that pathway.

When I was selected to participate on the Working Group, I had in fact, made the ‘Walk through History’ suggestion as part of my written proposal. I guess Carl Jung’s theory on the ‘Collective Unconscious’ was working here today, because I heard so many comment on that possibility….Great minds and all……

I am so happy to hear from you, that you, in fact submitted your paper to other members of the Working Group for thoughtful consideration. Our task now is to review the comments, suggestions, and artwork received from: the two workshops, from written submissions, from commentary, and from feedback, in order to develop a report which will be given to City Council and to Parks Canada regarding our findings through the processes mentioned above.

Whatever the final recommendations are, I hope that you can derive a sense that you have made a valuable contribution to both the process and potential outcome of the need to more truthfully and respectfully represent the relationship between the Native Community and Champlain at the time of the explorations.

Warmest regards,

Sue [redacted] EdD, PhD

"Gratitude is a memory of the heart....."

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Good morning [Redacted]

FYI, please see the below email and attachment.

Thanks.

Dear Parks Canada, Mayor Clark and Councillor Lauer,
The public comment period for the Champlain monument closed today at 4:30 pm. I had not realized there was a time cut-off and, as a result, I was not able to submit my comments. I would respectfully ask that they be included. I have attached them here and below.

Cheryl [Redacted]

Comments:
The Champlain monument is a mark of shame for Orillia. The monument’s textual inscription celebrates the “advent into Ontario of the white race.” Its sculptural figures are an allegorical representation of the imperial ideology of a white “civilizing mission,” in which Indigenous
men show their submission and subservience to clothed European representatives of commerce and Christianity. The monument is an artifact of our twentieth century history that shows how the city of Orillia was organized on discriminatory and hierarchical ideas of racial difference. The Champlain monument was produced at a time when ideologies of racial difference were growing in Canada and internationally. It was a time of anti-Semitism in Canada and in Europe, as we all know too well from the Holocaust that followed. It was a time of anti-Chinese mob violence in Canadian cities. It was a time when systemic anti-Indigenous policies were developed and implemented in our region and across Canada, including compulsory residential schooling for many Indigenous children in order to pursue an assimilationist, “civilizing mission” like that depicted in the Champlain monument. For its historical significance as an artifact of twentieth century racial ideologies, it is important that the textual inscription and other components be preserved and displayed in the city, though not re-erected in their current celebratory form.

Orillia is not and has never been a “white” city. If the city were to endorse the return of the Champlain monument in its original form, it would be making a shameful declaration that it endorses and supports white supremacy and Indigenous oppression.

Adding another artwork to the Champlain monument, if the monument is returned in its original form, is not a sufficient response to counteract the public endorsement of racial hierarchies returning the monument would make. An extraordinary commission would be needed to achieve an artwork on a comparable scale and artistic quality. To be done well, it will take considerable time and money: a fundraising drive and international competition that matches that of the Champlain monument itself. Moreover, any new public art should stand for itself, and not be tied in a submissive position to the Champlain monument.

I support those who recommend retiring the monument’s inscription and sculptural figures to a museum where they can be placed in their historical context and no longer publicly celebrated. I also support separating the various figures of the monument, as was done with the Champlain and “Indian scout” figures at Parliament Hill. But I am concerned that the figure of Champlain will be re-erected on the plinth with the offending side-panel allegories removed. This approach would be an erasure of our shameful twentieth century history, not a public acknowledgement of it. Champlain should be placed at the same level as the other figures, preferably near the ground. The three sets of figures should also be placed apart from each other, so that each could be confronted as a separate work, with new textual inscriptions that pursue public education in the service of truth and reconciliation.

The public discussion about the Champlain monument to date has shown that many people in Orillia deny our city’s twentieth-century history. Many vocal commentators have confused the historical period of the monument with the historical period of Samuel Champlain himself, saying that to change the monument is to erase “history,” by which they mean Champlain’s travels not Orillia’s racism. Yet there is very little public celebration of the Francophone history in our region in Orillia today. If it has significance—and I believe it has great significance—then it should be actively learned and remembered for what it was. The allegorical scenes on the Champlain monument are not an accurate historical representation of Samuel Champlain’s relationships with Indigenous people, as his journals clearly show. Nor are they an accurate representation of French imperialism at the time of his travels. Bringing the figure of Champlain down to ground level and separating it from its didactic original monument could provide an opportunity for the region to learn more about its complex history.

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specifically expecting, even from known senders.
Comments Concerning
the Champlain Monument
in Couchiching Park Orillia
March 8, 2019 at 10:30 AM
Orillia City Hall

PRELIMINARY STATEMENT

TWO THINGS THAT I HOPE TO DO TODAY:
1. I'm going to tell you my connection to the Monument as I grew up in Orillia.
2. I want to make clear the actual statues, although I want them brought back, are not as important as the public EDUCATION around this whole issue. We need to learn from History.

My name is Ted ... and I am ... As well, I am ... I want to record the stories of our local history. History is all around us with many stories are yet to be told.

Thank you for allowing me to speak on behalf of Orillia's Champlain Monument. It has been a feature of Couchiching Park for generations. There are few people, very few, who may possibly remember that the Band Stand used to be on that very site. The Monument was put there as a symbol of reconciliation between Canada's French and English peoples after WWI. The placing of the Monument was a major event of the 1920's in this regard. I think you know the history of its inception and so I won't repeat it.

It was a symbol of Orillia when I was growing up. Playing around it and climbing on it were part of my childhood. As a small child, I remember being some what frightened of the over sized figures. I had no idea what it was supposed to mean or symbolize.

It was in Orillia's publications and when people saw it, even a small child, we knew it meant Orillia. “Sam Plain” as we called it in our youth was just there. Many stories were told concerning things that happened around it. During the Second War and the first Mariposa Folk Festivals, there were tales to be told. Most families likely could tell you a few things that happened near “Sam”. Maybe they might not want to share the family lore. That's why many in or from Orillia still want it there.

Well, who am I? I was born in ... and raised in the Orillia area. That is in Atherley and on a farm just off the ... Road. I have lived here most of my life and raised my children here. I'm a retired ... teacher who has taught all grades and also has been a teacher librarian. I taught in ... and ...

I taught Canadian History at the Elementary level about explorers, the English and French conflict in North America, Confederation and Canada's early European development in Ontario, Quebec and the West.

There was not too much understanding of how the original people were moved off their lands. It just was done. Little was taught about Indigenous people and how they might have felt about that. It was a conquest of people, their land and their culture.
For decades I was oblivious to this fact of life. Even though I interacted with and knew many Indigenous people. Only in this century have I developed an awareness after the National media and the Indigenous people themselves made all Canadians aware of conditions on Reserves. (Poor housing, bad water, lack of jobs and RESIDENTUAL SCHOOLS). There is none so blind as those that won't see.

The Champlain Monument was built in 1920's and placed in Couchiching Park. There was a great opening dedication in 1925. Representatives from all levels Government were there. There was a large crowd of the general public there for the celebration.

There were costumed white actors dressed as period Frenchmen and Native “Indians” acting out the coming of Champlain. But no “real” Indigenous people in places of honour. They were depicted around the statue and some even served as models for the sculptor. BUT again there were no Indigenous people there!

The indigenous story was not told. In fact the plaques showed great disrespect to them in their wording. The plaques told the history Champlain, fur traders and the missionaries. The Indigenous people were very minor to the story and if at all depicted in largely disrespectful terms.

Here we are in 2019. It's time to make the Monument tell the full story of what happened when Champlain came to town in 1615 and again in 1925. It's time for the Monument in the Park to be a symbol to all people. It's time that we all learn our history. We need to know and understand what history can teach us now and in the future so that we learn from our mistakes. We are on the path of reconciliation of not just the French and English but of our Indigenous peoples with all of Canada.

I believe the Champlain Monument should come back. The Monument could come back the same as it was with new plaques telling story as we see it now. It could be re-configured with new story boards. Or? It could be taken away and that would tell people that nothing happened and the First Nation's stories again are not worth telling.

As a teacher, a father and a grandfather, I dream of seeing myself taking my Grandchildren to the Monument telling the historic story of our peoples and what happen there. I dream of seeing teachers taking their classes to the Park using Monument to help teach the stories told there.

In conclusion:
the Monument is important to me
but not as important as the stories that it could tell.
History is all around us
Don't misplace it!
FYI.

Thanks,

[Redacted]

Orillia, ON L3V 7T5

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From: JACK [Redacted]
Sent: Saturday, October 27, 2018 9:54 PM
To: [Redacted]
Cc: [Redacted]
Subject: Fw: Champlain Monument..Orillia

On Saturday, October 27, 2018 5:01 PM, JACK [Redacted] wrote:

Dear Hon. McKenna,

Practically every day I walk through Couchiching Beach Park. It is the pride of Orillians with its pristine kept gardens, its own green house, its wonderful swimming & recreational facilities for old & young, its picnic areas with the main pavilion - "Wiichipeda" or Welcome, its outdoor concert centre, its original snack bar (1929), its docking facilities (400 slips), and new million dollar boaters' centre. Its new ramps & adequate parking facilities for trailers attract hundreds of fishermen. Its layout to host an annual Scottish Festival, Boat & cottage show, CANADA DAY festivities, Labour Day parade & games, Civic Holiday events, Terry Fox Run, the N. Ont. Triathlon, Ramada Celebrations.

It always amazes one on a Monday how neat & clean the park is thanks to Orilla Parks Dept. with the support of Mayor Steve Clarke & Ward Councillors Tim Lauer & Pat Hehn.

But MISSING, LAST FALL, THIS SUMMER & FALL is the treasured STATUE of SAMUEL DE CHAMPLAIN, given to the CITIZENS of ORILLIA in 1935...

It has towered for 93 years over the Park & Events. People of ORILLIA grew up with this proud symbol and the empty area where the Statue stood is an eyesore, and right in the centre of the Park. The sign still hangs on the fencing around the messy, unkempt area—a blight to Orillia—saying Statue to be
THE CITIZENS of ORILLIA want the precious statue of Champlain with the priest and celebrating first nation men returned to its rightful place in Couchiching Beach Park. We are hopeful of your support as we know you have made it known you do not feel historical monuments should come down.

Thank you in advance for your consideration to this response and reply to this letter.

JACK

Citizen of Orillia
An open letter to Mayor Steve Clarke

Re: The Champlain Monument

Mr. Mayor:

It would seem that the "Working Group", with yourself as a member, will soon be completing a report on your deliberations on the Samuel De Champlain Monument, as requested by City of Orillia Council and Parks Canada. It is noted that the group will also be considering the results of a public survey which closes today (4/30).

Mr. Mayor, you will recall at a recent meeting of the "Working Group", I shared with the group the wording of a PETITION which was duly signed by Citizens of Orillia and sent through the Offices of Bruce Stanton to the Hon. Catherine McKenna, Minister of Environment/Parks. She returned the PETITION, commenting that she would be making a decision after receiving the report of the "Working Group "and
Orillia City Council.

The petition was brief, "Restore the Champlain Monument, refurbished and with the original configurations, to its rightful place in Couchiching Beach Park".

From the Toronto Daily Star, Aug 16, 2018, "an unlikely champion for a common sense response came from federal minister Catherine McKenna, responsible for Parks Canada. McKenna does not support removing historical monuments. "I personally believe that it's important that we recognize our history--the good and bad."  McKenna floated the idea of erecting other statues nearby that tell other sides of a story.

Mr. Mayor, you are the representative of the citizens of Orillia and also a member of the "Working Group" This could be a difficult challenge as you must be aware of the position of a large number of CITIZENS. You were quoted in Orillia Today, "Clarke sees room for both the monument and an interpretive piece that truly reflects the Indigenous history."

The "Working Group" has worked diligently to satisfy the wishes from each of the of the stake holders and the surrounding community.
Mr. Mayor, you must respect and satisfy the wishes of the citizens of Orillia whom you represent.

Respectfully submitted,
Jack Orillia Citizen

CC:
Petitioners and friends
Bruce Stanton, M.P.

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FYI, please see the below email from Marcel:

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From: Marcel
Sent: Saturday, April 13, 2019 8:57 AM
To: MAYOR EMAIL
Subject: Fw: Monument

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From: Marcel

Subject: Monument

I have attended two sessions of the city’s workshops on the Champlain Monument and I have many concerns about what is happening here. It seems to me that no one is interested in the history of its creation or the community of town leaders that worked so hard for many years to make this exceptional sculpture happen. I have read the minutes of the committee that is available to view online on the Orillia Library website. I have viewed the publicity that went out all over the world after the celebrations. It was a huge undertaking by our leaders like Hale, Miller, Mulcahy, Frost, Tudhope and many others. They formed sub-committees of advisors from the art experts of the day, a committee of area Mayors, Reeves and school board leaders from every town in the area including Barrie and Midland. The committee that selected the best sculpture from the 22 entries included the best art experts in the country. The directors of the National Gallery in Ottawa and Montreal Museum of Art. Two Toronto founding members of the R.O.M and Toronto Art Gallery. Canon Green who taught and encouraged Franklin Carmichael while pastor of St James Church in Orillia. These were the leaders of the times. Led by the local leaders who built cars and the first private power plant in the country. Not a lightweight among them.

None of this seems to matter to this working group. The agenda seems to be about change and
reconciliation led by a committee of non-historians and that concerns me. It concerns me that two of the working group have never been to Orillia. They have never stood in our park beside the monument and experienced the grandeur of the size and strength of these figures. Incidentally no one has mentioned that a monument built to feature Champlain has seven figures with the oversized Champlain on top and two frail looking white men and four strong, muscular natives at the bottom. The news story that went out around the world ended with the line “The figures of the Indians have excited great admiration. They are much larger than life size.” Three white men and four strong native figures do not suggest anything but respect and inclusion to me.

The agenda should be about building not tearing down. It should be about adding stories and more art to the site. My own opinion is if the monument is not put back intact then it should not be put back at all. It could be a huge embarrassment to our City if we do not get this right. Champlain alone on a pedestal could become a joke with visitors asking “Why does that cowboy with the spurs have a sword?” I can see the national media running stories about how the leaders of our community allowed this to happen and did not get it right. Thousands of Orillians at home and many thousands more from across the country that grew up here will be outraged. Most people I talk to think that it is Rama that wants to change or remove the monument. I know that not to be true but reconciliation in our community could be set back many years if not forever if we do not get it right.

The working committee needs to take stock of what they are doing and focus on how to enhance the monument when it is reinstalled without change. At the last meeting I saw a lot of division among those attending with what seemed to me to be encouragement to incite change from those directing the meeting. If we get this right and create more stories and art in the area around the Monument, I will be the first one to proudly promote photos and stories about how the leaders of our area are as progressive today as they were 100 years ago.

Marcel

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FYI.

Thanks,

From:
Subject: FW: Letter to the Editor
Date: October-22-18 8:11:53 AM
Attachments: image001.jpg

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From: JACK
Sent: Friday, October 19, 2018 11:34 PM
To: Bass Lake
Subject: Fw: Letter to the Editor

To: Supporters of PETITION to have the Monument put back up
NOTE: The following letter was sent earlier in the week to the weekly newspaper ORILLIA TODAY....IT WAS NOT PUBLISHED by the paper..It is Obvious that the Politicians want it kept quiet until after the elections..It is a mystery WHY ORILLIA TODAY also wants it kept quiet

LETTER-TO-THE-EDITOR Orillia Today (10/19)

The Samuel de Champlain Monument
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Just days to the Orillia Municipal Election.
The Mayor and candidates for Council are probably relived as the topic of the 'monument' has not arisen in any debates.
None of them has lately had to answer to the question of whether this historical treasure should be placed back on its newly constructed platform in Couchiching Beach Park, a place where it has stood majestically for 93 years.
The note posted by Parks Canada is still there: "The refurbished Monument will be replaced in July, 2018 to its place in Couchiching Beach Park." This is now mid-October, 3 months later.
To quote the headline in the Toronto Star, Sept 15th, "Indiginous people and town representatives are wrestling with what to do about a monument to Champlain " This was news to most Orillia citizens.
The Mayor had told Council that Parks, Canada had put a hold on the monument being returned to its
place, "because of concerns."

Your newspaper had front page pictures and stories: "City to tackle delicate Monument Issues". There were stories two issues in a row. That was about 6 weeks ago, and as quickly as the topic appeared, it seemed to completely disappear. Could it be that there was an election coming up?

Now there have been 6 weeks of silence from politicians and news media on the monument topic. My humble opinion is that the CITIZENS of Orillia are concerned about it mightily.

Jack

[Name redacted]
Mayor Clarke and Council,

Thank you for your correspondence dated June 21, 2018.

I respect that the Champlain Monument restoration project is under the jurisdiction of Parks Canada as is the title to property upon which the Monument is located. As a local history buff, I am pleased that Parks Canada, the City of Orillia and Parks, Recreation and Culture staff, appear to be working co-operatively on the very laudable project of the Champlain Monument restoration.

The purpose of this letter is to; share historical insights on the ‘archeological’ legacy on municipal land in Couchiching Beach Park of the foundation of the asylum; to correct a misunderstanding expressed in your letter of June 21; and, to request that the City request Parks Canada to be diligent in restoring land to the original condition whereby the thin layer of soil covering the foundation remain as it was prior to their use of City land.

As marked on this 1867 map, this L-shaped building identified as the ‘Lunatic Asylum’ ran parallel to the grid pattern of Orillia streets running 30 degrees west of true north.

The ‘Lunatic Asylum’ (c1870) as looking NNE. After being razed in the 1890s, the Champlain Monument would later be erected on top of an eastern portion of the foundation footprint. Although Central School was built over two decades later, the southern facing walls of both buildings are likely comparable in size at 100’ in length. With the asylum being L-shaped, it would likely be a larger structure with its eastern face also being 100’.

On the map below the blue line denotes longer side of the Parks Canada’s property

Couchiching Beach Park & Parks Canada property line (Simcoe County Maps)

The former 1860’s Fraser’s attempted Pub/Hotel (later asylum) as likely viewed in this photo from the stop where Laclie and Neywash intersected at what was then the water’s edge
measuring 50’. Based upon the 1867 Village of Orillia map and adjacent photos, the red line is my estimate of the approximate location of the asylum using 100’ for both the north/south axis and east/west axis.

Respectfully, your statement of June 21 of the foundation being “located on the outskirts of the construction site” is unquestionably contradicted by the adjacent photos dated 2018-06-27.

The photo in the top left clearly shows the grid pattern of the foundation walls of the former asylum even eight decades ago! It would stand to reason that those patches of dried grass on the thin soil covering the foundation had be recurring since the asylum building was razed in the 1890s. Clearly, this grid pattern is not new, and its existence would not be unknown to experienced City staff. Logically, it would have been City staff advising Parks Canada and its contractors about peculiarities of City property offered as a worksite, and not, as you suggest, City staff reportedly consulting Parks Canada regarding the location of the asylum foundation. City staff should be the experts on City land – not Parks Canada. If this preservation of this fragile legacy had considered, and the protection of the foundation had been sought, clearly establishing the work site to the east of the monument instead of the west, would have accomplished this.

As suggested, I will reach out Jacqueline Soczka to find out a contact a Parks Canada. I am unclear, however, as to the purpose of a citizen being directed to Parks Canada regarding a construction site on Municipal land. My request to you as Mayor and your colleagues on Council is to take responsibility for the public lands being used as a construction site and the protection of the fragile soil that will be uncovered from underneath the tons of screenings. Hopefully this 120 year old legacy will survive for future citizens to see evidence of, and to reflect upon, the diverse stages of our local history.

Regards

Bruce
A view from the Asylum looking south-west towards Orillia
July 24, 2018,
Mayor Clarke,

In the 1920s as Orillia’s fellow communities went to extreme lengths to look back upon the recent loss of their fallen, Orillia stood out from all others by what we did – and by what we did not do.

Now, in the summer of 2019, under the stewardship of your Council and staff, we as a broader community who overwhelmingly wish to see the Champlain Monument unchanged, are vastly further away from this objective with the Monument removed and its re-installation in doubt. Over one century ago, the Champlain Monument was conceived and designed by Orillians with a culturally laudable goal of reaching beyond our municipal borders to extend the message of goodwill between French and English-speaking people of Canada. This was a prophetic and progressive gesture during the turmoil of the early years of the Borden Government which was further exacerbated by abyss that Canada tumbled into with War in August 1914. As I have tried to emphasize in my earlier correspondence, Orillia was true to the motto of ‘Progress Orillia’ as adopted in 1912 by, what I consider to be the single best Council in our municipal history. It is tragic that your Council did not challenge the ill-considered comments expressed in the Toronto Star, and to not publicly defend the fact that the Wendat men pictured here are not “cowering”. They were cast to convey their pensive thought of the complex notion of Christianity as then being shared by who the Recollet Friar LeCaron - who The Star casually referred to as the “Missionary”. As I previously mentioned, LeCaron, upon whom the European on the Christianity face was modelled, was the person responsible for the first dictionary of the Wendat, Algonquin and Montagnais languages and first to teach reading and writing. Whereas Dr Michael Stevenson feels the European on the Commerce face is Brebeuf, I interpret that casting to be a person who actually travelled with Champlain - Etienne Brule. That intrepid Frenchman fully lived the lifestyle of his adopted indigenous world. Of any 16th century European explorer, Champlain (a Protestant) was the most accepting of the idea of integrated multi-culturalism. These were good people, with noble intent. In a 17th century context, they were exemplary. Why is such positive messaging not being conveyed?

Will you be the Mayor in office as such history may be removed? Will your Council be part of the dismembering of the physical embodiment of the motto of ‘Progress Orillia’ as adopted by your predecessors from 1912? Will you, Council, and staff fail to defend the physical legacy of
inter-cultural goodwill as conceived by W.S. Frost, J.B. Tudhope, Robert Curran, Erastus Long, David H Church, and the quintessential Orillian, C. Harold Hale?

As I will contextualize below, as our fellow communities were creating some marvellous tributes to their fallen from The Great War during this ‘golden-age’ of memorials. Orillia unveiled one of the most significant monuments in Canada with a very different intent. Instead of casting in stone or bronze tributes to our war dead, Orillia continued with the pre-war design and an intended messaging at the unveiling of inter-cultural goodwill. Please note that the molds were not cast until after the War. No other community did the same. Among prosperous communities, there were very few without significant public memorials to their community’s fallen – with the notable exception of Orillia.

The unveiling of the Champlain Monument in 1925 remains as the largest gathering in our community and it was certainly part of our post-war commemorations. As Orillia’s present cenotaph only came into being in the mid-1960s with the building of the Harvie wing at OSMH, could the Champlain Monument have been our ‘cenotaph’ for the four preceding decades?

I feel that it may be insightful for you and your colleagues to appreciate just how unique our community was, and also to appreciate extent to which all of our fellow communities handled their memorializations following WW1.

Post WW1 Commemorations by Other Communities

Smaller nearby communities such as Beaverton and Sunderland and funded quite respectable tributes formed in either stone, or Italian marble as used by the hamlet of Cannington.

Orillia’s direct peers, Barrie and Lindsay commissioned one of the finest sculptors - Emanuel Hahn – to create their highly expressive statues. Hahn’s daughter, Orillia’s recently deceased Qennefer Browne once told me that her father would have been a member of the Group of Seven if there were sculptors allowed.

Midland’s cenotaph is uncommon with its specific dedication to mariners. Meaford’s and Collingwood’s unique bronze statues were modelled on actual local veterans. A rare creation in Meaford depicts a soldier in a very uncommon action pose. Collingwood’s bronze soldier is depicted bugling the melancholy tune ‘taps’ which is common at military funerals.
Communities that were somewhat larger than Orillia such as Peterborough, Oshawa and Guelph created astonishing works of commemorative art.

Peterborough commissioned Walter Allward, the exceptionally gifted artist who would later create the breath-taking Vimy Ridge memorial dedicated to mourning mothers. His message in Peterborough was clearly one of opposition to war. Interestingly, Allward had such respect for the controversial German-born sculptor Hahn that he bequeathed the very carving tools Allward used to design the Vimy memorial to the father of the late Orillian, Qennefer Browne.

Oshawa’s memorial – largely funded by J.B. Tudhope’s contemporary Sam McLaughlin - is impressive due to its imposing scale and the inclusion of square stone inserts in the base. The inserted stones came from; each allied country, each major battle field, numerous destroyed European cathedrals and places of higher education, Westminster Abby, stone brought by General Byng from Vimy, Virginia granite hand picked by Past President Woodrow Wilson, and even stone cut from the Egyptian pyramids!!! Despite the scale of this Town’s endeavour, according the 1921 census, Oshawa’s population was remarkably then only 11,940.

Guelph was an older and better establish community than Orillia and with 18,178 residents after WW1. Guelph was twice the size of our Town. Alike Oshawa, they also commissioned Alfred Howell to create their thought-provoking memorial. The soldier, in their memorial, is being directed to look at his own name in a scroll, with another person who is presumably St Peter being too distraught to look. From afar, the bronze character appears to be a crucifix yet both the ‘Jesus’ and ‘St Peter’ representations are female!

The most avant-garde and arguably pro-feminist cenotaph, of which I am aware, has an Orillia connection.
An Orillia connection to Sault Ste Marie

None of the communities I have mentioned thus far had yet reach a population of 21,000 by the time of the first census following WW1. The ‘Soo’s’ population had barely surpassed that number coming in at 21,094. Their incredible commemorative statue located in front of their Courthouse was named “Triumph of Right over the God of War”. It was also commissioned to Alfred Howell.

Our leading citizen nicknamed ‘Mr. Orillia’ was C Harold Hale – the editor of The Packet. His counterpart in Sault Ste. Marie was the Orillia-born James Curran – the editor of Sault Ste Marie’s local paper. Both were avid historians and tireless promoters of their Towns. The Curran family’s Orillia News Letter was at one time was the direct competitor to the Hale family’s The Packet. James Curran’s brother Robert probably still holds the record as Orillia’s longest serving Mayor. Robert Curran was a member of Council of 1912 that brought us “Progress Orillia” and the concept of the Champlain Monument.

One reason I have gone to this extent in describing post-war memorials, was to provide an example from the 1920s of a “cowering” male. To my mind, this is a representative depiction from the 1920s of what the casting in bronze of a “cowering” male would look like which in NO WAY is comparable to the Orillia Champlain Monument – despite that description in The Star.

In the Soo’s culturally challenging cenotaph, Howell placed a naked male depicting the ‘God or War’. He is cowering beneath what is named the ‘Shield of Right’. In a seemingly pro-feminist depiction in this 1920s artwork, this ‘shield’ is held down beneath the foot, and at the tip of a sword’ held by a woman. In her other hand, she is triumphantly holding a sprig of maple leaves. Sault Ste Marie’s Cenotaph certainly makes a statement.

James Curran asked the famed British author and poet Rudyard Kipling to write an inscription for the Sault Ste Marie Cenotaph. In the dedication to the book Fighting Men about the Orillia Company of the 157th Battalion during WW1, author, historian, former Premier and son of Mayor Frost (1912), Leslie Frost quoted Kipling’s words

TO THE ORILLIA COMMUNITY

From little towns in a far land we came
To save our honour and a world afame
By little towns in a far land we sleep
And trust those things we won’t you to keep.

Rudyard Kipling
Written for the Sault Ste. Marie Cenotaph

Under Premier Frost, many progressive societal changes came to be, including; OHIP, many social services, greatly expanded post secondary education and, using period terminology, ‘native’ voting.
As with the Champlain Monument, the message of the cenotaph at Sault Ste Marie went far beyond local commemoration but served to express a then pressing politically motivated sentiment.

What did Orillia do following WW1?

Small to mid-sized Ontario communities created amazing range of works of commemorative art during the 1920s! Other commemorations were also diverse.

Unlike virtually all fellow communities, Orillia did not create a ‘war’ memorial. What we did do was far more significant! Keep in mind that part of our post-war remembrances was the unveiling ceremony of the Champlain Monument.

As a point of reference, possibly some of these works would have cost more than the $34,000 raised for Orillia’s Champlain Monument, but even those marvellous creations of these other communities none had more than two characters in bronze, none used more than two molds, whereas Orillia having seven characters and three molds. Apart from Vernon March’s other major work, the National War Memorial, with a $100,000 budget and 22 bronze figures, I am not aware of any memorial with as many bronze characters as Orillia’s outstanding Champlain Monument.

Please consider the following:

• Roughly $100,000 was invested in our Soldiers Memorial Hospital. Together with services volunteered by local doctors, our veterans had the only free medical care in the country. (Seven in ten of ‘Orillia’ Company of the 157th Battalion were killed or injured – roughly twice the national average)
• Roughly $100,000 was invested in the Orillia Patriotic Fund thus distinguishing our Town as having the only municipally administered fund in Canada that provided financial assistance to families of our fallen. (One in five of the 157th’s ‘Orillia’ Company died in service - double what most other communities lost)
• Imagine also that during the war years, ‘Orillians’ (as pointed out to me by Fred) contributed the unbelievable sum of $1,138,150 towards the purchase of war bonds to support the national effort.
• It is likely that few other communities would have incurred the same loss of life, the same burden of care, and the same drain on financial resources, as Orillia. Yet despite this and MOST RELEVANT to our discussion today Orillia may well have been the only community in Canada during this tumultuous post-war era to unveil a major bronze statue whose theme was in part inter-cultural goodwill.

The Champlain Monument was a creation by Orillians that intentionally reach across provincial and cultural borders in an effort to bridge the gap between two embittered cultural groups of European origin - being French and English. When the Champlain Monument was conceived prior to The Great
War, our young country was at risk of being torn apart by along cultural lines. Councillor Harold Hale was known for thinking nationally yet acting locally. It was that outstanding Council of 1912 who brought us the motto of “Progress Orillia”. It was during that era of conflict between French and English, that Champlain Monument and the unveiling ceremony, were to be an embodiment of the ‘Progress’ on the civic crest under which you and your fellow Councillors now strive to serve our broader community.

It is tragically ironic that the Champlain Monument was rare, if not unique, in having a goal of inter-cultural reconciliation – especially when one century later this proud creation of your predecessors is being cited as being a symbol of inter-cultural division.

It is my opinion that the City has failed in spreading the narrative on how the Monument came to be in 1912, conveying the messaging of Champlain, Commerce & Christianity as designed, celebrating the origin of the motto of Progress as adopted in 1912, and defending the legacy of previous Council.

After reading one of my previous letters to you in which I was defending the Champlain Monument, my daughter [REDACTED] very astutely commented, “J.B. Tudhope would be proud of you”. That was very meaningful to me. Orillia has phenomenal heritage to be celebrated. I feel however that uninformed criticism of the Champlain Monument is also inherently criticism of its creators. Respectfully Steve, on the matter of the Champlain Monument, how do you feel that Council would rate using [REDACTED] measure?

Sincerely

Bruce [REDACTED]
Reflecting on 2019 ....The Champlain monument has been down since Fall of 2017 & a sign from Parks Canada still hangs on the fencing ...".Monument away for refurbishing..it will be back up „July 2018".…….Time flies....a COMMITTEE is now meeting to discuss its restoration. Orillia Council is represented by the Mayor & Councillor Lauer.

OF INTEREST

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August, 2015....Tornado ravished through Couchiching Beach Park...20 mature Maple Trees destroyed..several close by the Monument but not a branch touched Champlain...He is the Guardian of the Park & City...The following week-end was to be the annual TERRY FOX Run...Head-Line in the Orilla Packett.".Park closed for season"...With the HELP of hundreds of volunteers and the FULL Support of the Orillia Parks Dept-----it was a mammoth job but the Park was cleared and the Terry Fox EVENT went forward with added enthusiasm. It is said that several persons observed a smile on Samuel's face. The Samuel de Champlain Monument has stood for near a century as a symbol Orilla's goodness & strength.

On Jan 1, 2019, at 3:15 PM, JACK > wrote:

JANUARY 1, 2019......Happy New Year...Our current MP for Simcoe North ..BRUCE STANTON...has many positive & encouraging statements in the current Orilla Matters...among them "RESTORATION of the CHAMPLAIN MONUMENT , ORILLIA "

CC: Petition Supporters /friends