

Children's involvement: youth groups

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Throughout its history, the Municipality of Pontiac has seen several youth groups or associations develop on its territory. Having the welfare and the development of their community at heart, these groups have evolved into different local, provincial and even national youth movements.

Scouts and Guides

The Scout movement was created in 1907 by Robert Stephenson Smyth Baden Powell (BP). Formerly in the military, he wished to “transform the art of teaching men to go to war, into the art of showing children to make peace”. In the 1950s, a Cub pack was established in Quyon (primary level) and in 1951 a group of Scouts (secondary level), merged with a group from Wyman who found themselves being without volunteer parents to lead them. In 1953, the Scouts movement had grown to 11,000 youth, grouped in 200 groups or packs. The group of 19 cubs in Quyon was directed by Edmond Perriard, assisted by Raymond Chevrier. As for the Scouts, approximately 30 children were in the group, in addition to a few Guides. This group was directed by Ed Moses, assisted by Laurie MacKechnie¹.

The Quyon Scouts took part in major regional and provincial assemblies. In 1957, the Shawville group was host to a large Scouts rally, gathering all groups from Quebec and Eastern-Ontario². A father-son banquet was organized annually in Quyon to celebrate the activities' year end. At the June 1953 banquet, 100 guests were present, including the mayor of Quyon, J.P. Daley as well as Reverend H.G. Lester. They both gave speeches on the importance of outdoor activities and training for youth citizenship. As for Reverend J.A. Austin, he reminded everyone that the Scouting laws were actually based on the Ten Commandments³.

Sixty years later, if religion is no longer present in the Scout movement, showing young people responsibility and encouraging them to get involved in their community still exists. Being active and the great outdoors remain key for this organization. In 1995, there were a total of twenty-eight Cubs, Bears and Scouts in Quyon, all members of the 1st Quyon Scout Troop. An article in the *Equity* informs us that there was an outing at the Tim Horton's Camp des Voyageurs, where the temperature was at -40; this day was an opportunity for the youngsters to go sliding and to practice using a compass. Headed by Jacques Boucher, the group intends on going to a Scouts

¹ « Quyon Boy Scout and Wolf Cubs Meets », *The Equity*, December 13, 1953.

² « Shawville Rover Crew Hosts Ninth Annual Quebec Moot », *The Equity*, August 29, 1957.

³ « Father-son banquet », *The Equity*, July 2, 1953.

Camp in Otter Lake the following month⁴. Today, the youth of the Municipality of Pontiac is part of the Saint-Paul Scouts organization in Aylmer⁵.

The Calf Club and the 4-H Club

At the beginning of the 1960s, there is a « Calf Club » in Quyon. This group was for young men and women between the ages of 10 to 21 who were interested in agriculture, and in this case, in the cattle industry. They were part of a larger organization, the Pontiac County's Junior Farmers Clubs, and were monitored by the Department of Agriculture and Colonization of Quebec.

In Shawville, another Calf Club existed as well as the Pontiac Steer Feeding organization. Other Junior Farmers' Clubs in the region included the Calumet Island Grain Club, the Pontiac Forestry Club and the Allumettes Island Grain Club. School fairs were also organized in Quyon schools, which were encouraged and supported by the members of the Women's Institutes⁶.

In 1962, Austin Clarke was president of the Quyon Calf Club and in 1969 it was Ronald MacKechnie's turn, from Wyman, to lead the organization⁷. After 1970, there is no mention of this group which seemingly had become a 4-H Club, like many other young farmers' clubs at the time. Moreover, when a group from Pontiac was present at a 4-H exhibit in Ottawa, it was mentioned that one of their cows in the competition won the Austin Clarke trophy, (name of the late president of the Quyon Calf Club) at the « Grand Champion Dairy calf at Quyon 4-H show »⁸.

The 4-H Clubs first were in the United States at the beginning of the 20th Century and have become popular in the Prairies. In Quebec, they were established in 1942 by the Quebec Forestry Association (AFQ)⁹. Their mission was to spread knowledge about nature in general and to get young people interested in the protection and conservation of natural resources. Some of the youth of the municipality and members of the Pontiac Hereford 4-H Club took part in the competitions at the Shawville Fair, the Quyon Fair (that ceased to exist in 2001) and the Ottawa Exposition (Ottawa Ex). During the 1970s and 1980s, an annual banquet was held to reward the young people's efforts and achievements, with various prizes¹⁰. Outings on farms are also organized, such as the one during the summer of 1979 where the youth were invited to

⁴ « Frosty Day at Tim's », February 8, 1995.

⁵ See the [Scout St-Paul](#) internet site.

⁶ Pontiac Archives, Letter of the agronomist D. MacMillan to Arthur Labelle, secretary-treasurer of the Pontiac committee, October 8, 1969.

⁷ *Ibid.* "Austin Clarke elected president of Quyon Calf Club," *The Equity*, April 5, 1962.

⁸ *The Equity*, December 9, 1970.

⁹ For additional information on the history of the 4H Clubs, consult the [Quebec 4-H Clubs](#) internet site.

¹⁰ Debbie Morrison, « 4-H Banquet and awards night », *The Equity*, March 8, 1979.

the McKibbon farm in Beechgrove, to attend the ear-marking of calves¹¹. In 2003, the Pontiac club was host to a 4-H Club from North Vancouver for a week¹².

¹¹ « 4-H Hereford Club », *The Equity*, August 1, 1979.

¹² Paul McGee, « BC 4-H Exchange Kids find Pontiac “flatlands” », *The Equity*, July 9, 2003.