



### Hidden facets of the Macdonalds' life revealed in a brand new virtual exhibition

June 2019

The Canadian Heritage of Quebec (CHQ) is pleased to announce the online release of the exhibition "*Villa Les Rochers: Summer Residence of Sir John A. and Lady Macdonald*", presented on Virtual Museum of Canada's (VMC) website ([www.virtualmuseum.ca](http://www.virtualmuseum.ca)). This new web space, hosted in VMC's site, reveals unknown facets of the Macdonalds' daily life.



Villa Les Rochers, Sir John A. Macdonald's summer residence near Rivière-du-Loup, c. 1885. Photo courtesy of Library and Archives Canada.

From 1873 to 1890, John A. Macdonald stayed with his family in a summer residence in Rivière-du-Loup, far from the hectic and stressful pace of political life in the national capital region. The villa, named *Les Rochers*, was acquired in 1882 by his wife, Lady Agnes Macdonald. This property was built on a hill along the St-Lawrence River where Sir John A. was able to benefit from the fresh ocean breeze to regain his health. Lady Agnes enjoyed the picturesque area where she could indulge freely in her hobbies: fishing and watercolour. She particularly loved the charm and tranquility of a small neighbouring community known as Saint-Patrice, where she became actively involved in various parish activities. During his summer vacation, Macdonald continued to serve as a political leader, welcoming ministers, notables and businessmen to the villa. Thus, *Les Rochers* became a focal point for Canadian political issues such as the development of Western Canada and the construction of the transcontinental railway, to name a few. The Macdonalds' presence in Rivière-du-Loup attracted many high-society vacationers to the region, which became a popular summer resort known as the "Summer Capital of Canada".

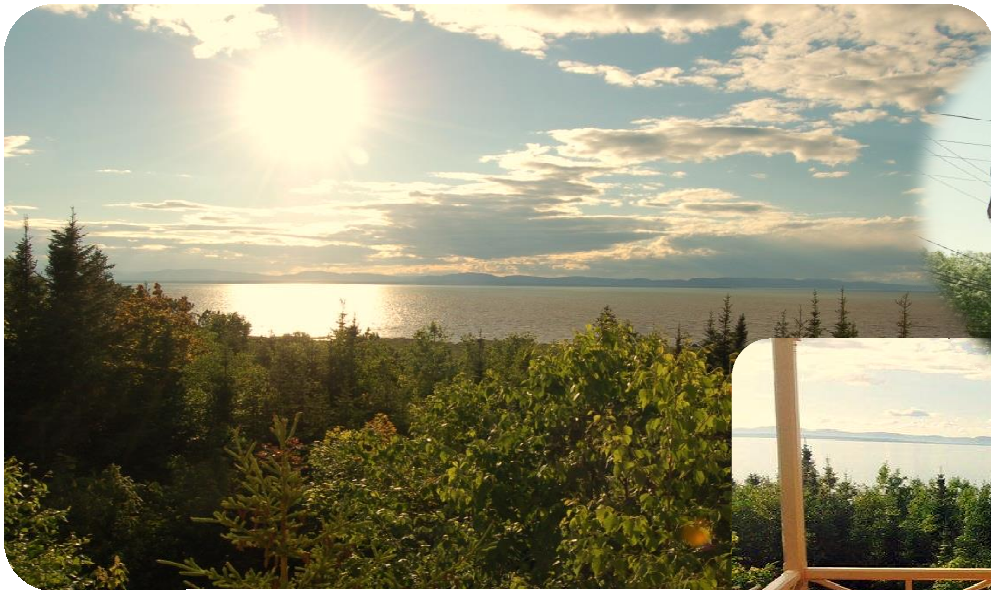
In 1981, The Canadian Heritage of Quebec acquired the villa *Les Rochers*. Since 1996, this house has been operated as a Bed and Breakfast in partnership with the local community. In June 2015, the property was designated "National Historic Site of Canada" by the federal government.

Beautifully illustrated, the narrative audio exhibition "*Villa Les Rochers: Summer Residence of Sir John A. and Lady Macdonald*" is complemented with video clips bringing historical heritage to life. With just a few clicks, you will have access to a large number of bilingual documents such as:

- hidden facets of the Macdonald family life on a daily basis
- photos from public and private archival collections
- rare artefacts
- several watercolour paintings by Lady Agnes Macdonald
- exclusive views inside the Villa *Les Rochers*

The exhibition “ *Villa Les Rochers: Summer Residence of Sir John A. and Lady Macdonald*” is an absolute must-see for history and heritage buffs. Immerse yourself in the spirit of summer holidays spent at Rivière-du-Loup and enjoy our remarkable collection of historical documents, photo gallery and videos: [www.virtualmuseum.ca/community-stories\\_histoires-de-chez-nous/les-rochers/](http://www.virtualmuseum.ca/community-stories_histoires-de-chez-nous/les-rochers/).

The opportunity is also offered to all to live a unique experience: an unforgettable stay at Villa *Les Rochers*, where you will discover this historical house’s past and where the Macdonalds lived memorable moments. Come and enjoy the invigorating air of Rivière-du-Loup, watch the whales in the St. Lawrence River and catch breathtaking sunset views from the huge outdoor veranda. A journey from the past to the present that is definitely worth the detour!



Sunset over the St. Lawrence River in Rivière-du-Loup



View of the St. Lawrence River from the veranda at *Les Rochers*

For more information about our activities, please visit our website : [www.hcq-chq.org](http://www.hcq-chq.org) and our Facebook page : [www.facebook.com/HeritageCanadienQuebec](https://www.facebook.com/HeritageCanadienQuebec).

For further information, please contact:  
Mr. Jacques Archambault, Executive Director  
The Canadian Heritage of Quebec  
Phone: (438) 381-4567  
Email: [management-direction@hcq-chq.org](mailto:management-direction@hcq-chq.org)