

Canada Weekly

Ottawa
Canada

Volume 10, No. 20
May 19, 1982

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Historic park traces life of former Canadian prime minister

The Louis S. St. Laurent National Historic Park, dedicated to a former Canadian prime minister, will open its doors to the public this summer.

Located in Compton in the Eastern Townships region southeast of Montreal, the park harbours the house in which former Prime Minister Louis St. Laurent lived and the milieu in which he spent his youth.

The St. Laurent homestead, which covers an area of .46 hectares, stands out as much for the architectural unity of its three buildings as for the way they blend in with the landscaping and the natural features of the site. The property comprises the family residence, a shed, a general store, which was run by Louis St. Laurent's father, and an adjoining warehouse.

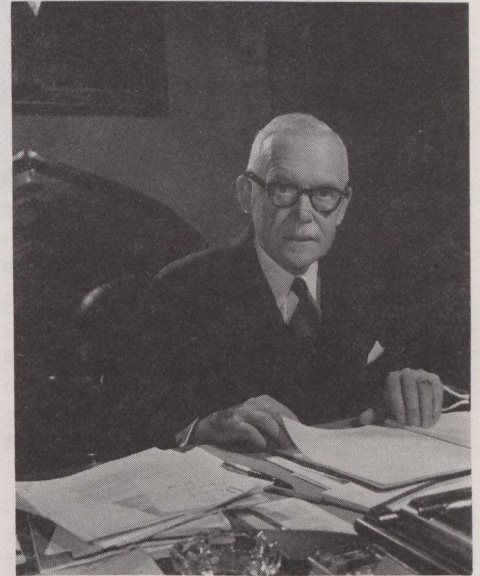
The original wood-frame house, comprising 15 rooms, dates back to the first half of the nineteenth century. The general store, built about 1866, is a simple structure with a veranda running across the front-facing gable end. The outside walls are similar to those of the house and on the inside many of the original shop fittings such as shelves, counters, secretary, clock and central stove, remain unchanged and still evoke the shop atmosphere.

Household effects numerous

The furniture and household objects include more than 3 000 items spanning the St. Laurent family's occupancy of the site in 1881 until the death of the house's last occupant, Lora St. Laurent, one of the sisters of the former prime minister.

The contents of the collection, covering a century, comprise a variety of utilitarian and ornamental objects of the kind formerly found in village houses but only a few personal belongings of Louis St. Laurent remain such as a leather briefcase bearing his initials, his lawyer's gown, inscribed plaques and medals, and souvenirs.

When Parks Canada, the government



Prime Minister of Canada Louis S. St. Laurent (1948-1957).

department responsible for naming historic sites, classified the St. Laurent homestead a "documentary site" its intention was to commemorate the area in an authentic fashion rather than re-creating a fictional setting of a typical milieu at that particular time. With this in mind, Parks Canada decided to restore the homestead maintaining the character and atmosphere of the site wherever possible but also allowing for interpretive displays on Louis St. Laurent to be presented on the site.

Louis St. Laurent

Louis St. Laurent studied law at Laval University in Quebec City and was called to the Bar in 1905. As a young lawyer he gained recognition as an eminent Canadian jurist, renowned for his thorough knowledge and mastery of law.

During the first 25 years of his practice, his clientele included several large firms many of which also invited him to sit on their boards of directors. Because the federal and Quebec governments frequently called upon his services he lean-



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