

Montreal freight forwarding company celebrates 90th anniversary

There are many intriguing facts about a Montreal freight forwarding company celebrating its 90th birthday this year. Its archives hold a treasure trove of unusual books and articles.

In 1909, its founder, Guy Tombs, then working for the Canadian Northern Quebec Railway, wrote *Moose & Caribou*, a whimsical guidebook for sportsmen, as a way of drumming up business.

The company grew out of the Canadian Export Paper Company – its traffic department became Guy Tombs Limited in 1921.

In 1926, the founder's son, L.C. Tombs, wrote a hardcover book, *The Port of Montreal*, as his master's thesis. Its preface was by none other than his professor, Stephen Leacock!

In 1945, the offices of Guy Tombs Limited served as the very first, temporary quarters of IATA – the International Air Transport Association – as the son, then Dr. L.C. Tombs, was the first employee of what is today a huge worldwide organization, still headquartered in Montreal.

"We are proud of our origins," says Guy M. Tombs, the grandson of

the founder and the current president. "It is certainly who we were, but our company has necessarily transformed. My grandfather even worked on a slum clearance project in the '30s and wrote a report on it, and he was one of the founders of Sir George Williams College, today Concordia University. He was a hard-driving personality, sometimes extremely funny but also irascible, and lived to be almost 97.

"I wear a ring with his and my initials on it, and on the inside there is the inscription 'From the C.N.R. Ladies.' Wouldn't I love to know the story behind that – but I don't."

The orientation of the company has evolved over the years. Today, Guy Tombs Limited specializes in the movement of project, breakbulk and military cargoes – but it is also very active in door-to-door container freight and airfreight cargoes.

For many years, Guy Tombs Limited has had a partnership with Ridgeway International Limited, in the United Kingdom, which has a defence logistics focus.

"Our vice-president, Graeme Gibbons, is known to be a particular-

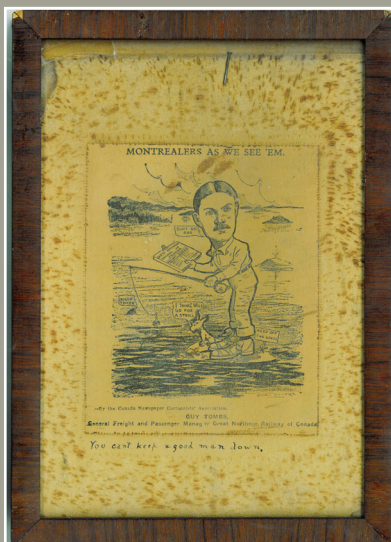


GUY TOMBS
Proud of our origins

ly ingenious logistician who comes up with 'never-thought-before' multi-modal solutions to challenging shipping problems," Mr. Tombs said. "He combines a visceral sense of the topography and geography involved with in-depth knowledge of the various modes of transport available for the equipment to move, often from or into remote areas."

Mr. Gibbons is supported by operations manager Margo Blanco and her team.

"Each day our clients present us with fascinating and unusual shipping problems," Mr. Tombs said. "I am confident we will have many tales to tell for a good while yet."



▶ Cartoon of founder Guy Tombs from 1904. 'You can't keep a good man down' is written at the bottom.

Photos: Guy Tombs Limited



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