

375 RUE DESCHAMBAULT – MAISON ROY
Unknown, 1905



Gabrielle Roy, one of Canada's great novelists, was born and raised in St. Boniface. The youngest child of Leon and Melina Roy, Gabrielle was born in 1909 and grew up in this two and one-half storey frame house at 375 Rue Deschambault. After teaching school in St. Boniface, she left home at the age of eighteen to study drama in England. She grew discouraged with the interpretive role of the actor, however, and moved to Paris where she began writing articles for French weekly journals. For nearly two years she lived in France, learning about the country and developing her writing skills until the imposing shadow of World War II caused her to return to Canada in 1939.

Settling in Montreal, she continued to write magazine articles. From 1941 to 1943 she authored her first and most famous novel, *Bonheur d'Occasion (The Tin Flute)*. Centering on the effects of the war in the Montreal district of St. Henri, near her home, the novel was dedicated to her mother Melina and was published in 1945, shortly after her mother's death. *Bonheur d'Occasion* won the Prix Femina in France and the Governor General's Award for fiction in Canada,

establishing its author's reputation. Gabrielle Roy never returned to live in St. Boniface, but her fourth novel, *Rue Deschambault (Street of Riches)*, published in 1954, is based on her youth in St. Boniface and includes descriptions of the house. The 1905-vintage home featured a sweeping veranda supported by white Corinthian columns, gabled attic and a large garden.

Gabrielle Roy became an important figure in the development of French-Canadian culture. She died in 1983 at the age of 74 years.