

A FAMILY HOME AT THE HEART OF HISTORY

Residence of the Desjardins family and first head office of Caisse populaire de Lévis from 1900 to 1906, Maison Alphonse-Desjardins has witnessed moments of major historical importance. It saw the caisse project begin and hosted the pioneers of savings and credit cooperation in North America. These included, first of all, the members of the “initiative and organizational committee” who, in 1900, worked with Alphonse Desjardins to draw up the Caisse rules and regulations, the first members who entrusted Alphonse Desjardins and his wife Dorimène with their hard-earned savings, and finally, the very first collaborators, including a few priests from Collège de Lévis.

Over the years, Alphonse and Dorimène Desjardins also opened the doors of their home to several visitors: journalists, politicians, members of the clergy and others. Some came from English Canada and the U.S. to meet the leading expert on cooperation. This was the case for Canadian university professor Hector Macpherson, seeking information for his doctoral thesis in sociology at the University of Chicago in 1910, and New York journalist Gertrude Mathews Shelby who, in 1919, wrote an article on caisses populaires for Harper’s magazine. These historical, social and family moments surrounding the great, forward-looking project, have made Maison Alphonse-Desjardins a commemorative site of significant heritage and historical value with regards to the origins of caisse populaires and credit unions in North America.

