



• Pieces of the puzzle: Monique Spaziani and Jacques Denot

placency in Denys Arcand's *Le Déclin de l'empire Américain*.

He is enthusiastic about *Revolving Doors*. "The movie subject is an extremely particular one. It is a puzzle. It is made of tiny pieces coming together. Some characters never meet on the screen. I never play with Monique Spaziani (Celeste) although she is my mother. By the time I appear on screen, Celeste is in her late seventies. I don't get in touch with Celeste at all."

Undaunted by the noon heat outside, Mankiewicz is working with a group of 50 extras inside the 'Silent Movie Theatre'. Dressed in time-period costumes, the extras are seated in the aisles at the left of the theatre. The scene is a community charity concert in the town of Campbellton. The extras are given instructions not to applaud too early after the announcer's introduction, but to wait for the figure to appear on stage. After several takes, the director seems content. The figure of Celeste appears from behind the stage curtains. She takes her seat at the piano. Cut.

It is 1:30 p.m. The crew breaks up for lunch. Mankiewicz lingers on in the theatre, consulting with the cameramen. Details have to be worked out for the next "very important scene."

Hasmick Egian •

Upper Canada Homestead

Fifty minutes outside downtown Toronto, north of Highway 401, is unspoiled country. Just short of Georgetown, a mile-long dirt road leads to the 200-acre Scotsdale Farm leased by Settler Film Productions from the Ontario Heritage Foundation. We reach a clearing where, knowing that a 19th-century homestead and farm lie beyond, an old carriage standing as testimony to the past is hardly surprising.

The growing community of trailers surrounded by pink flamingos, a bathroom sink, several johnny-on-the-spots

and a gravel parking lot look out of place. An old-fashioned horseshoe toss is being prepared for the crew's amusement.

Further down the road, another clearing reveals part of the recreated community of Scottish settlers who carved out a life in Canada in the early 1830s. A tall two-storey log cabin faces a smithy and rising above these wooden structures are bright lights, light reflectors and a boom microphone. A camera dollies along a track built perpendicular to the buildings.

For 26 weeks a year, the way of life of *The Campbells* becomes that for most of its 30-member cast and crew.

This area, the actual site settled by the immigrant Scottish families, boasts a full working, winterized farm and log house. The barn is supplied with chickens, geese, sheep, horses and Grace, a prehistoric-looking Highland cow. There are also streams and marshes, two bridges, a river and a quarry.

Scotsdale Farm is in use for winter exteriors, but all interior scenes are shot in a converted school in Etobicoke.

The idea for a pioneer family adventure series was developed by producer John A. Delmage with Fremantle International, a distribution company and investor in the series. Scottish Television, part of the British ITV network and a U.K. broadcaster, and CTV, the Canadian licensee, are also investors, along with Telefilm Canada.

The Campbells serves to fill a need seen by producers on both sides of the Atlantic. The story of the widowed Dr. James Campbell, played by British actor Malcolm Stoddard (BBC's *The Voyage of Charles Darwin*) and his three children, played by John Wildman (*My American Cousin*), Amber-Lea Weston (*Hangin' In*) and Eric Richards (*Romeo and Juliet on Ice*), brings a significant Scottish and Canadian historical period to life.

Between 1830 and 1840 tenant farmers in the Scottish Highlands were evicted by the landowners who were converting the area to what they hoped would be more profitable sheep pastures. For many of the evicted, Upper Canada seemed to offer an exciting opportunity for a new life.

Delmage acknowledges that *The Campbells* may be described as a Canadian *Little House on the Prairie* "but without the syrup."

"We believe it has a wonderful shelf life," he says. "We don't stretch the credi-

bility of the period at all. We do our research and remain accurate to the social climate and mores of the time. We are not doing a documentary, nor being tutorial, but we do remind people of who Bishop Strachan was, for example."

Two story editors and Delmage commission the scripts for the weekly show. Schedules are tight. The scripts, submitted to CTV and Fremantle for approval, are written only a week before shooting. Each episode is produced on a tight \$250,000 budget.

The budget and time constraints pose particular challenges to Ruth Secord, the costume designer, and Seamus Flannery, the production designer.

Secord began her career in the theatre and studied theatrical design at the National Theatre School. In 1978 she worked on her first features - *Quintet* and *In Praise of Older Women*. This experience, she says, careened her into television where, for six years, she worked solely on CBC series (*The Great Detective*, *Seeing Things*) and productions (*Love and Larceny*, *Chautauqua Girl*), proving she is no stranger to period pieces.

Flannery studied at the Ontario College of Art, then worked at the CBC for seven years in the 1950s. After 14 years as a producer in England, including two as executive producer and head of production at the Rank Organization, Flannery wanted to get back to the grassroots of the business.

"I returned to Canada, became an art director and put my past as a producer behind me."

Working on a period piece isn't the biggest challenge for Secord and Flannery. "I have worked on period pieces from as early as the 10th-century Crusades to as far ahead as the 22nd century," says Flannery.

Secord adds that 1830s Canada is a difficult period to do only because "it's never been done before. You can't just go out and find clothes for people to wear. I design everything. The cutting is contracted out."

With \$1,000 for episode per costumes, "it's impossible, but I do it," Secord continues. "I'm a good shopper and I make do with things I don't particularly like. And there are compromises: we have different people appearing week after week in the same clothes and we make clothes that must go through all the seasons."

In today's scene, Cedric Smith, a neighbour arrives on horseback at the remains of a shed still smoldering from a spectacular fire staged the night before.

True to the times, this hot sunny day does not allow for any loosening of the collar or of anything else. Handsome in his grey wool frock coat, stock tie and top hat, Smith is a properly attired gentleman, no matter the weather.

The women are outfitted in high-necked, long-sleeved blouses and full-length skirts. Amber-Lea, as 14-year-old Emma Campbell, is similarly attired and also sports a large bonnet tied neatly under her chin.

One concession to modern times and a low budget is made. "Women at that time wore up to five petticoats," says Secord, "but our actresses wear only one, made to look like several."

A concern particular to designing for television serials, continues Flannery, is the place of work in turning written words into visual statements. Oddly constructed descriptions which can't be



• Fall preparations in Upper Canada

translated visually cause rewrites and delays.

"In TV we have between five days and one hour (lead time)," he says, "barely time to do the work we're directly responsible for, let alone liaise with other creative departments."

"The problems of being a designer are inherent in the script. If information is wrong, it must be corrected."

For example, light at night must be by candles; kerosene hadn't been created yet, so the Campbells wouldn't have oil lamps. Ditto for rainwear; rubber was not yet being manufactured, so when it rained everyone got wet. When it rains on location, everyone gets wet.

Being ever vigilant to the scripts is as much a part of the designers' jobs as creating the actual designs. "Five per cent of my job is building lovely sets," says Flannery. "Ninety-five per cent has nothing to do with being artistic."

"What is admirable is that the producers are doing something of quality," Flannery adds. "It is also a very brave thing to do. 1830s Canada is very peculiar. I've been here two and half years and I'm willing to fight tooth and nail for the series. I believe it is one of the best shows coming out of Canada. The show is successful; the public likes it. If you do quality productions, the public will like it. And *The Campbells* bears this out."

Producer Delmage certainly knows his audience. *The Campbells* represents one of the two top-rated Canadian shows for CTV attracting, on average, 1.1 million viewers per week. Season three will air this fall.

Leslie Goodson •