

The Westmount Historian

NEWSLETTER OF THE WESTMOUNT HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

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Hazelbrae, 85 Church Hill



Dower House, 474 Mount Pleasant

Spring Lecture Series:

FROM FARMHOUSE TO VILLA

Our next series of four talks is to take us back through the evolution of Westmount's early housing beginning with a farm house built with fieldstone in 1739 – when there were only six families here. (Page 3)

From the Archives

As a result of the interesting Fall Lecture Series, covering very early Westmount history, the archives have received two interesting books, in French, relating to that period.

Le Collège de Montréal, 1767-1967 / Olivier Maurault, 1967, and **Le Grand Séminaire de Montréal de 1840 ... 1990: 150 années au service de la formation des prêtres.** Edition du Grand Séminaire de Montréal, 1990.

Many thanks for these to Caroline Breslaw.

Three other beautiful photographic books have been donated to us:

Saint-Léon de Westmount, (1901-2001). Paroisse Saint-Léon de Westmount: Trans-Litho Inc., 1999.

Our thanks to Doreen Lindsay.

Le Studio de William Notman: objectif Canada, William Notman's Studio, the Canadian picture / Stanley G. Triggs. Montreal: McCord Museum of Canadian History,

1992, and **The Composite Photographs of William Notman / Stanley Triggs.** Montreal: McCord Museum of Canadian History, 1985.

Our thanks for these two to Gabor Szilasi.

The archives were also the recipient of **The Message in the Bottle** which some may have read about in The Westmount Examiner. The story is that, while renovations were being done to the house at 251 Melville avenue, a bottle was discovered between the stones of a wall. This clear-glass cream soda bottle, manufactured by Wheeler & Co., was corked and inside was a handwritten note:

"Montréal, 1897 premier janvier, Noel Bayard contraction, a construit cette [propriété or project]"

The WHA always is glad to receive donations of documents, photographs or other material relating to Westmount's history. Please contact us by E-mail at info@westmounthistorical.org or by phone at 925-1404.

BARBARA COVINGTON

The Westmount Historian

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

With a new editor, John Sancton, and second in command, Andy Dodge, the pressure has been on for me to write my President's Message. I am more comfortable with a paint brush than a pen but, when I think back over the past year and remember the work that has been accomplished by the Westmount Historical Association, the words come easier.

Under the guidance of Archivist Barbara Covington, our archives have grown, thanks mainly to new donations including collections of one person or family. Philip Dombowsky, our previous archivist, though now in Ottawa keeps in touch and offers his expertise.

We were part of the organization committee for Operation Patrimoine – Ville de Montréal.

The autumn walks were extraordinarily well attended. These guided tours brought many to Westmount from outside our borders and increased the membership of the WHA, as did our exhibition in Westmount Square.

Our lecture series continues with more to come. The spring/summer series excites me: architecture. What a wealth of it we have in Westmount!

The WHA always is open to those interested in Westmount heritage to join us on the board of directors. Our annual general meeting is in May, but there are two seats on the board open now.

To every member, enjoy the coming season.

FLORA-LEE WAGNER, President

Ghosts of Griffintown

Stories of an Irish Neighbourhood

The turnout for the premier screening of the documentary film "Ghosts of Griffintown" by Richard Burman, filled the Westmount Room of the Library well over capacity on Jan. 16.

A film about an area almost entirely gone, there are few remaining memories, such as Leo Leonard's Horse Palace and some row houses. One ghost, "Mary Gallagher", returns every seven years in search of her head.

One former resident told me after the screening that in 1998, on the last Mary Gallagher evening, he met with Mary and toured Griffintown with her. The imagination of the Irish matches their love of this unique Montreal area.

They came here as poor immi-

grants, many not surviving the crossing. The Stone by Victoria Bridge attests to this. These immigrants where laborers. The Lachine Canal was built in large part by Irish immigrants.

Richard Burman captures the sense of humor and the sadness. The openness of the former residents of Griffintown is poignant. No one was afraid to speak from the heart.

This film well documents the heart of Griffintown. You can take the person out of Griffintown, but you can't take Griffintown out of the person. From the Irish grandmother sitting at her kitchen table to the Irish daughter standing by the Lachine Canal, this film is worth seeing.

FLORA-LEE WAGNER

FALL LECTURE SERIES IN REVIEW

EARLY FRENCH *HABITANTS* OF CÔTE ST-ANTOINE

Janet MacKinnon
September 19, 2002

The word “côte” referred to a district, not just a road. Today, the borough limits of Westmount roughly correspond to the original boundaries of Côte St-Antoine. De Maisonneuve granted the first concession in the area to Jeanne-Mance for the Hôtel-Dieu’s use in 1650. Starting in 1698, the area was further divided into 13 concessions along Côte St-Antoine Road. Of these, seven were granted to families who were previously neighbours in the Contrée St-Joseph district just west of Villa-Maria. The first houses along Côte St-Antoine Road were built by: Michel, Louis and Paul Décarie (whose father, Jean Décarie, first purchased land in the Glen Yards in 1675), François Prud’homme, Louis Hurtubise, Honoré Dasny, the sons of Lambert Leduc dit St-Omer, and Louis Langevin. The oldest extant houses are the “pink house” (5138 Côte St-Antoine), the Hurtubise house (561 Côte St-Antoine) and the Décarie house (39 Côte St-Antoine). The first concession granted along the road was to Michel and Louis Décarie in 1698, and it was there that the pink house was built.

Many settlers first built wood houses, and as they prospered, built stone residences. This was true of the Hurtubise family, whose residence dates to 1739. Of the demolished residences, the St-Germain cottage was built at the corner of Lansdowne. In 1730,

Paul Décarie built the patrimonial home in the Glen Yards. The prosperous Leduc residence featured high stone gables and a “Canadien-style” tin roof. For generations, Côte St-Antoine was lauded for its rich farm land, producing an abundant variety of fruits and vegetables.

JANET MACKINNON

THE SULPICIANs AND THE GRAND SÉMINAIRE

Monique Lanthier
October 17, 2002

The Sulpicians became the seigneurs of the island of Montreal in 1663, twenty-one years after the founding of

Ville Marie (Montreal) by de Maisonneuve in 1642. In 1676 they built a mission called Fort de la Montagne at the north-east corner of present day Sherbrooke Street and Atwater Avenue to convert and teach the Indians. Here, in the western round stone tower that served as a schoolhouse, the sisters of the Congrégation de Notre-Dame, founded by Marguerite Bourgeoys, taught both Indian and habitant girls French, religion and skills such as baking.

The Sulpicians granted land to the early French habitants who farmed in the Côte St. Antoine area. A milestone, still standing on the northwest corner of Côte St. Antoine and Forden Avenue, marked the distance from the mission. Land purchased from the Sulpicians was the site of the four original houses of Metcalfe Terrace on Côte St. Antoine Road. Two still stand. In 1905, the order sold an entire city block of their land at the corner of Sherbrooke Street and Atwater Avenue to the Congrégation de Notre Dame to build their sixth Mother House. Today it is Dawson College. Its young architect, Omer Marchand, had previously re-designed the chapel of the Grand Séminaire. The Sulpicians maintained a farm outside the walls west of the Grand Séminaire in what is present-day Westmount. This property was sold in 1927 for a housing development and is still known as Priests’ Farm.

CAROLINE BRESLAW



*Arlington Lane,
old Indian trail*



*West Tower,
Grand Séminaire*

CONGRÉGATION DE NOTRE-DAME

Joyce Roberts
November 21, 2002

The Congrégation de Notre-Dame de Montreal was founded by Marguerite Bourgeoys as a non-cloistered, teaching community.

Born in 1620 in Troyes, France, Marguerite arrived in Montreal in 1653. She opened the first school in a stone stable south of Saint Paul Street in April 1658. In addition to the 3 R's, she taught the young women who came as brides for the early settlers the necessary crafts for a wilderness household. In 1659, the Congregation began with five sisters. To support themselves and others they bought and farmed land in Point St. Charles and on Ile St. Paul. They also opened schools in other locations in New France. The Filles Seculaires de la Congrégation de Notre-Dame were given legal recognition by the Letters Patent of 1671. Marguerite died in 1700.

In 1854, the purchase of Monklands (Villa Maria) brought the CND into Westmount territory. In 1880, they moved into a new Mother House above Westmount Avenue designed by Perrault & Menard.

Unfortunately, this building burned in 1893. The purchase of 4193 Sherbrooke St. in 1898 was the beginning of Saint Paul's Academy, which later moved to Cote St. Antoine offering elementary and high school classes in both French and English. In 1908, the sisters and a college moved into the building at Sherbrooke and Atwater designed by J. Omer Marchand. In 1926, the Marguerite Bourgeoys College moved from Sherbrooke to another Marchand building on Westmount Avenue. In 1982, the Sherbrooke property was sold to the Quebec Government to become Dawson College and the sisters moved to Westmount Avenue.

ELIZABETH HENRIK

NATIVE PEOPLES OF KAWENOTE TEIONTIAKON

Dr. Toby Morantz
December 19, 2002

In Quebec we have two language groups, the Iroquoian and the Algonquian peoples. The Iroquoians were divided into a confederacy of five nations, dating to 1400 and several smaller nations. Today only the Mohawks are represented in Quebec. Mainly farming people who grew beans, squash and corn, they did some fishing and hunting and lived in large villages of two to three thousand people. The St. Lawrence Iroquoian village of Hochelaga, visited by Jacques Cartier in 1535 and located in the Montreal area, was such a village. The woodcut made in 1556 by Baptista Ramusio after descriptions by Cartier shows fifty lodges made of wood covered with bark, each large enough to hold six families. This circular village was enclosed by a wooden palisade in three tiers with only one gate and a gallery for defence. When Champlain arrived in Quebec in 1608 he allied the French with the Algonquian speakers, namely the Algonquins and Montagnais peoples, primarily hunters, trappers and fishermen.

When Westmount was being developed along the flank of the mountain in the 1880's, some of the earlier native trails continued as our roads and the springs were still being used. We have the writings from 1898 describing skeletons found south-east of St. Georges Snowshoe Club on the Boulevard and also on Argyle, Montrose, Mountain and Westmount Avenues. The native peoples were active participants in the commerce of Montreal, using the lands of Westmount as passage ways but this involvement ended with the demise of the fur trade in the early 1800s.

TOBY MORANTZ AND DOREEN LINDSAY

The Hochelagans

W.D. Lighthall writes about the presence of Hochelagans here in our Westmount area in his article entitled Hochelaga and The Hill of Hochelaga in 1924.

Undoubtedly the Hochelagans must have taken great pleasure in the magnificent woods, the immense trees, the beautiful flowers, the mosses and the dells and springs, of Mount Royal, which are such happy memories for many of us who have lived long in the neighbourhood. In later days their descendants of the Mountain Mission loved its beautiful nooks. In the Westmount portion the shade of an

ancient elm of vast size, situated at what is now the Argyle and Sherbrooke corner of the Argyle School grounds, was one of their favourite camping-spots. An unfailing spring on the Raynes Estate at the head of Murray Avenue was known as "the Indian Well"; and the same name was given to another on the Murray Estate just below the Boulevard ... In the wooded Glen below Westmount Park, there existed, a generation ago, a huge tree bearing an early Indian picture carving, thought to be the forms of a man and an arrow.

From the transactions of the Royal Society of Canada, Volume XVIII third series, 1924. Source: Westmount Library