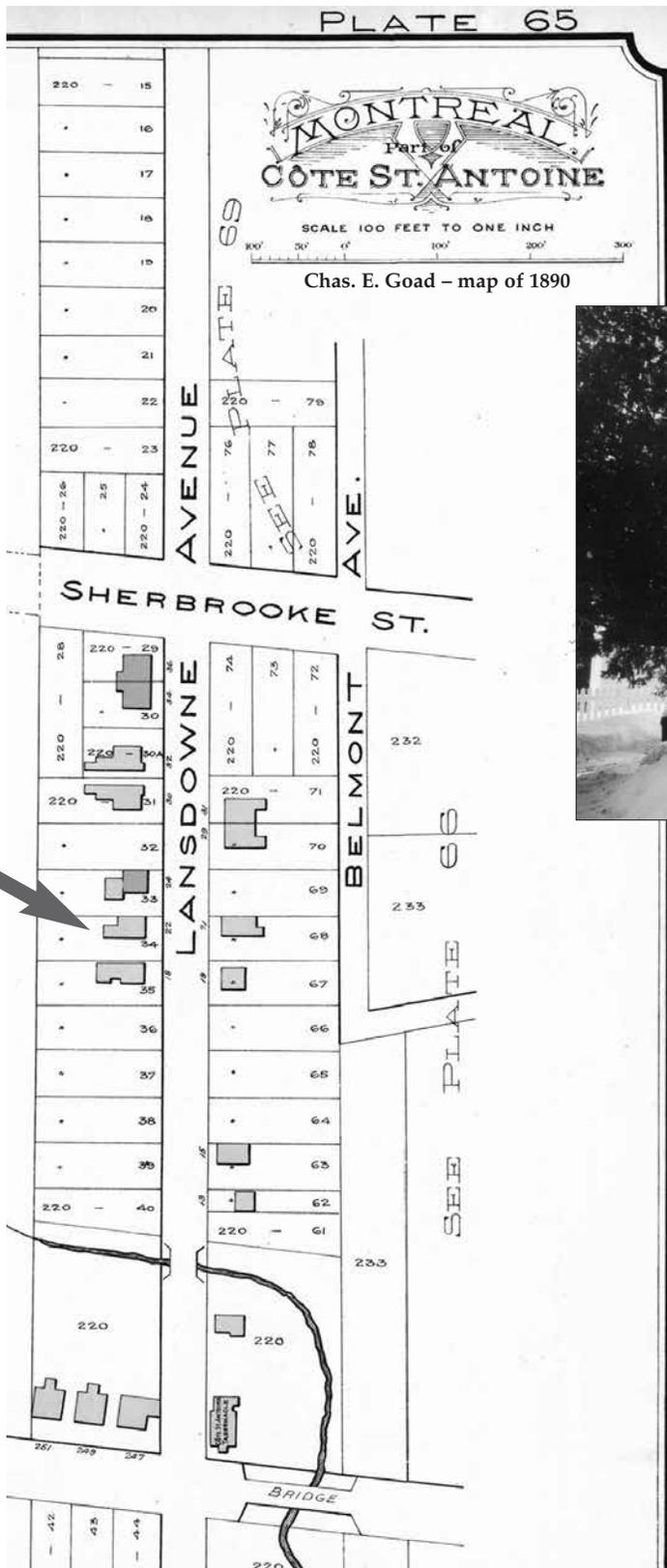


The Westmount Historian

NEWSLETTER OF THE WESTMOUNT HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

VOLUME 5 NUMBER 1

SEPTEMBER 2004



1890 Chas. E. Goad maps assist in dating early homes.

This newsletter includes details of the 1890 maps by Chas. E. Goad, in addition to the printed word and photographs, to provide a more complete idea of the area at the time that a house was built.



photo: Westmount Historical Association Archives.

370 LANSDOWNE AVENUE, PRE-1879

Lecture: Meghan Masterson and Doreen Lindsay

One of the few wooden houses remaining in Westmount stands at 370 Lansdowne Avenue below Sherbrooke Street. No architect has been identified and no date of construction has been found. Because of the type of construction and the fact that a house is shown at approximately the same location on an early map (Hopkins, 1879) of Westmount, then called Village of Côte St. Antoine, we estimate that the house was built pre-1879.

An early map of Westmount (1890) by Goad shows a bridge crossed a stream which ran through the south end of Lansdowne Avenue toward the Glen, and a Methodist Tabernacle Chapel, built in 1885 was at the corner of Lansdowne and Western avenues, now de Maisonneuve Boulevard.

Distinguishing features of this seven-room country house are the double French doors opening from the living room directly onto a wide front verandah running across the front of the house and around the left side. The original ver-

continued on page three

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EDITOR:
Doreen Lindsay

CONTRIBUTORS:
Caroline Breslaw
Barbara Covington
Doreen Lindsay
John Sancton

WESTMOUNT HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION
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WESTMOUNT HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION
P. O. Box 198 Victoria Station
Westmount, Quebec
H3Z 2Y6
(514) 925-1404

E-MAIL:
info@westmounthistorical.org

WEBSITE:
www.westmounthistorical.org

ISSN:
1496-4066

GRAPHIC DESIGN:
Studio Melrose
310 Victoria Avenue, #105
(514) 488-7366
info@studiomelrose.ca

60th Anniversary Celebration of Westmount Historical Association



President Doreen Lindsay, past-presidents Dr. Hélène Saly, Aline Gubbay, and Flora-Lee Wagner celebrated our 60th anniversary on February 19th at 6:30 pm in the Westmount Room of the Westmount Public Library. To mark the occasion, members had gathered together before the first scheduled spring lecture.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

This year, the Westmount Historical Association celebrated sixty years of many individual efforts of accumulating and preserving historical information about the history of Westmount. Past presidents Dr. Hélène Saly, Aline Gubbay and Flora-Lee Wagner stood beside me as we shared an anniversary cake with our members. Past president Sally Hoof sent her best wishes in a letter from Prince Edward Island.

Since 1944 when Alice Lighthall inspired her fellow Westmounters to "obtain and classify all historical and similar material which might be available and useful," the WHA has been collecting and filing photographs, letters, certificates, personal items, documents, and maps of our past to enrich our knowledge and to remind future generations of what they are inheriting. Her enthusiasm for collecting and preserving history is renewed each year when new people join our association.

Every time a person gives an item of historical value to our archives, every person who researches a detail of our history for our lecture series, and every volunteer who assists our archivist is continuing the search for the past which the WHA began sixty years ago.

While researching information for our next lecture series about green spaces in Westmount, I realized that the founders of our association were also deeply aware of conserving green spaces within the city. They had been involved in acquiring land on the top of Westmount mountain in 1940 (Summit Park), developing the Murray Park land on the slopes of the mountain (renamed King George Park in 1939) and continuing to develop Westmount Park on the plateau below Sherbrooke Street as well as maintaining many other green spaces. I sincerely hope that the information we present about the development of our parks will help history buffs to gain a greater overall understanding of the development of Westmount.

Doreen Lindsay

370 Lansdowne... *continued from page 1*

tical wood wallboards and the wide wood ceiling boards remain in the kitchen at the end of a short hallway at the back of the house. The original wooden staircase leads up to the second floor. The two front bedrooms have dormer windows facing the street.

For many years the land belonged to the St. Germain family, one of the original French Canadian families who farmed along Côte St. Catherine Road. In 1874 they sold lot 220 to Mr. Francis Dolan who subdivided it into 100 smaller lots with a road up the middle. This was referred to as Dolan Avenue until 1889 when it was renamed Lansdowne Avenue. James Edward Hawkins bought the house in 1895 and his family continued to live there for 48 years. Between 1943 and 1981, there were only four owners until purchased by its present owners, Karen Marks and Brian Puddington. Two writers who were renting the house previous to 1981 invented the famous game of Trivial Pursuit.

Doreen Lindsay

EDWARD MAXWELL HOUSE, 1895-96 184 CÔTE ST-ANTOINE ROAD

Lecture: Alison Sorbie and Christopher Dunkley

In 1895-96 Edward Maxwell built a home for himself and his bride, Elizabeth Ellen Aitchison, adjoining his father's house on Côte St. Antoine Road. They lived there with their first two children for only nine years before moving into one of four houses that Edward built on Peel Street in Montreal. Maxwell had just returned from studying architecture in Boston in the office of the influential American architect H.H. Richardson. When designing his own house, he included classical references, Palladian windows, and a Dutch gable. He set two Arts and Crafts sunflower ceramic plaques into the red brick exterior to repeat an insert on the front of his father's house. Both houses share a common stone foundation with the fourth 1840 Metcalfe Terrace house that had burnt down.

The floor plan is asymmetrical. To the left of the front entrance is a curved door opening into an oval room with built in wall shelves and a modest wood fireplace. Straight ahead from the front door, two steps lead down to the living room with its floor to ceiling white marble fireplace dominating the west wall. The carved marble relief over the mantle was designed by the Montreal sculptor George Hill. A short stairway leads down one floor to the kitchen beneath this room.

Maxwell was born in Montreal in 1867 and died here in 1923. Other Westmount houses are 39 Rosemount (1896), 35 and 37 Côte St. Antoine (1897), and the McNicoll residence at 2 Forden Avenue (1904). In 1904 he designed The Royal

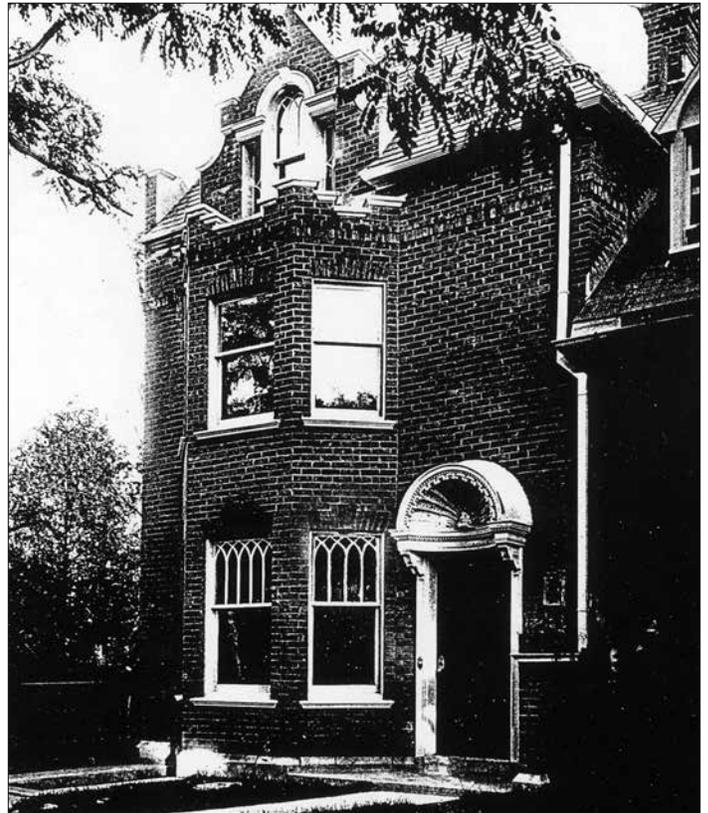


photo: Westmount Historical Association Archives.

Bank at the corner of St. Catherine Street and Greene Avenue and the Bank of Montreal (demolished) on Greene Avenue at de Maisonneuve. Among his many architectural commissions were the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts (1912) on Sherbrooke Street and the Henry Birks and Sons Jewellery Store (1893-94) on Phillips Square in Montreal. He also did the addition to Windsor Station in Montreal and the central tower of the Chateau Frontenac in Quebec City. Private projects included over eighty country houses.

Doreen Lindsay

Architectural definition – *Quoin*



From the French coin or coign or coung, corner, and before that from Latin cuneus, wedge. Originally a stone dressed on two sides at an angle, wedge-shaped as a voussoir in an arch. Quoin is used in this sense in printing, shipping and gunnery. Consequently, in construction a quoin is a stone specially selected and dressed to be laid at the corner of a masonry wall.



photo: John Bland Canadian Architectural Collection, McGill University

PERCY ERSKINE NOBBS HOUSE, 1914 38 BELVEDERE ROAD

Lecture: Susan Wagg

Percy Erskine Nobbs trained as an architect in the Arts and Crafts tradition in Scotland where he was born in 1875. In 1903 he came to Montreal as Director of the Department of Architecture at McGill University. He continued to teach at McGill until 1940. His first project was the McGill University Union (1904) which now houses the McCord Museum. Over the years, he designed many buildings for the university. His firm, Nobbs and Hyde, was also responsible for such Montreal projects as the New Birks Building (1911) and the Drummond Medical Building (1929). Nobbs projects incorporated local materials, vernacular architectural traditions, and fine craftsmanship.

Nobbs built his own home in Westmount at 38 Belvedere Road between 1913 and 1915. The date 1914 is inscribed on a plaque above the front door, which also includes the initial 'N'. The tall, asymmetrical red brick house sits on the mountainside, commanding a marvelous view of the St. Lawrence River and beyond. The fine brickwork, wrought iron fencing, plain interior and large window openings reflect Nobbs training. His home featured William Morris wallpaper and one fireplace had William de Morgan hearth

tiles. He lived in the house with his wife and two children until his death in 1964.

Nobbs was very interested in town planning. He believed that new buildings should fit in their surroundings. In the 1920s he designed several model housing projects in Westmount. One comprised five homes on The Boulevard at Mount Pleasant Avenue (1921-25). A second was Grove Park Estate (1924-29), a group of brick houses with steeply sloping roofs on the north side of Sherbrooke Street. These groups of Nobbs domestic work emphasized comfort, light, and pleasant views. Both schemes showed that good housing could be built for a moderate price.

Nobbs unique design for a pair of wrought iron gates at 12-14 Sunnyside Avenue (c. 1921) has finials crowned by tulips in different phases of growth from bud to maturity. The superb handcraftsmanship of the work reflects the Arts and Crafts tradition Nobbs valued so highly.

Caroline Breslaw



Chas. E. Goad map of 1890

JOSEPH-OMER MARCHAND HOUSE, 1914 486 WOOD AVENUE

Lecture: Peter Lanken and Caroline Breslaw

J-O Marchand (1872-1936) was the first Canadian architect to study at the Ecole des Beaux-arts in Paris, and the first to receive a diploma from the French government. When he studied there from 1893 to 1902, the Ecole was considered to be the greatest architectural school in the world. It lent such prestige to the young architect that immediately upon his return to Montreal he was given important commissions for public buildings. In 1903 he started the transformation of la Chapelle du Grand Seminaire on Sherbrooke Street. In 1904, with his partner Samuel Stevens Haskell, he designed la Maison-Mere de la Congregation de Notre-Dame, now Dawson College. This complex with its Romanesque entrance portico surmount-



photo: Westmount Historical Association Archives.



ed by a copper dome and its concrete structure sheathed in yellow brick from Ohio, was startlingly modern for the time. It became the model for many other institutional buildings in Montreal.

In 1914 Marchand completed his own house at 486 Wood Avenue in Westmount. Its façade of burnt red brick features a tall mullioned window lighting the grand salon within. The twenty foot high walls of his fine, formal room were lined with crimson Sanderson damask. The mantle over the fireplace was carved from pierre de Caen. Four steps leading up to the dining room are flanked by twin Solomonic columns of wood. A gallery above the entrance hall surveys the room which was once filled with art and antiques brought back from Europe. Through the front window Marchand could look across to the orchards of the Sulpicians, or down the street to his completed Mother House.

In 1925 la Congrégation de Notre-Dame commissioned Marchand to design the Institute Pedagogique on Westmount Avenue, intended for the training of teachers. Two long wings of yellow brick stretch out from a central, classical portico. Marchand completed his fourth and last Westmount building, the Fortier House at 52 Sunnyside Avenue, in 1930. The asymmetrical façade is once again of yellow brick. The living room at the rear overlooks the city and the river below through an overscaled window reminiscent of his own house.

Caroline Breslaw

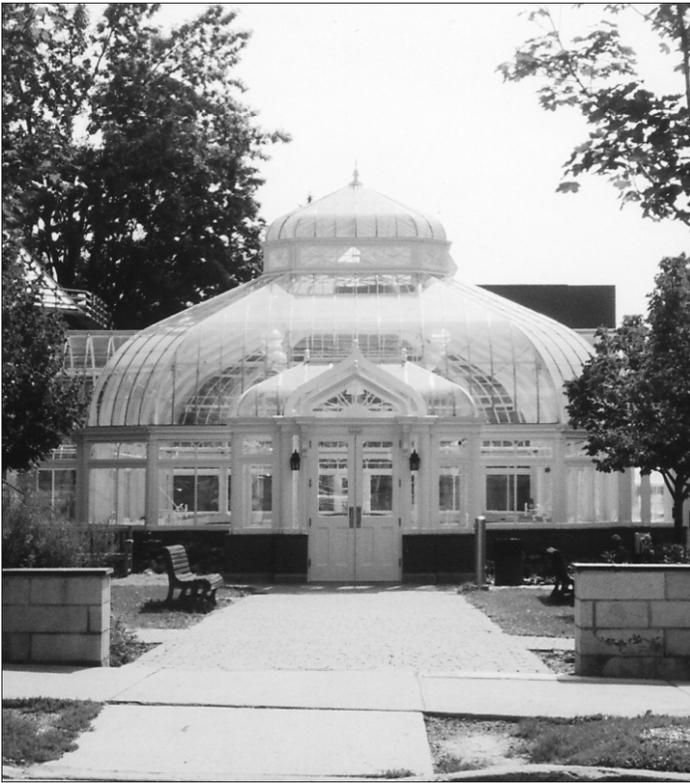


photo: Westmount Historical Association Archives.

Restoration of Westmount Conservatory

Constructed in 1927 by the firm Lord and Burnham, our local conservatory has just undergone a complete restoration by Beupré and Michaud architects.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, MAY 29, 2004 6:00 PM

Westmount Room of the Westmount Public Library

Members gathered together for the Annual General Meeting half an hour before the scheduled May lecture in the Westmount Public Library. The president Doreen Lindsay gave a short review of the years activities followed by a treasurers report by David Freeman and a members report by Elisabeth Henrik, (138 members). Then the election of the Board of Directors for the coming year 2004-05 was held. John Sancton, on behalf of the search committee read the list of proposed names and they were accepted unanimously. Doreen Lindsay president, Carolyn Breslaw vice-president, David Freeman treasurer, Anne Barkman, recording secretary, Barbara Covington archivist, Elisabeth Henrik members director, Meghan Masterson website (new) plus Joan Clark, Peter Lancken, John Sancton, and Archibald MacLeod (new).

UPCOMING EVENTS

Restoration of the Westmount Conservatory, 2003-04

Sunday, October 3, 2004 at 2:00 pm

Westmount Public Library

There will be a talk by Beupré and Michaud architects, who are responsible for the recent restoration of the Westmount Conservatory which was constructed in 1927 by the firm Lord and Burnham. Some modifications were made in 1930, 1966 and 1967 and again in 1971. The conservatory is essentially a metal construction, resting on a masonry wall and covered with glass panels supported by a wood frame. The original design featured a central island around which the public could walk. Early photographs show that the metal and wood structure was originally painted white. The use of curved metal bars and glass panels creates an elegant interior space which is transmitted to the general profile of the Conservatory.

Presentations will be in French and English. Admission is free but space is limited. Passes are available beginning September 24 at the Library or Victoria Hall.

Exhibition of Architectural Drawings and Photographs

September 24 – October 10, 2004

Westmount Library, Victoria Hall and
The Conservatory

An exhibition of architectural drawings of the Conservatory and photographs of the Conservatory, the Library and Victoria Hall may be viewed within these buildings.

Two Solitudes: Myths and Realities

Saturday, October 16, 2004

Collège Maisonneuve, 3800 Sherbrooke East, Montreal

A conference at Collège Maisonneuve in Montreal will present 30 years of Anglophone and Francophone perspectives of Quebec history between 1837 and 1867. They will discuss Rebellions, Responsible Government and Confederation. This is a joint venture between The Quebec Anglophone Heritage Network (QAHN) and the Fédération des sociétés d'histoire du Québec (FSHQ)

Conference including lunch is \$30.00

For more information phone 1-877-964-0409 or email home@qahn.org

NEW ACQUISITIONS

THE FALSE CHEVALIER, or THE LIFEGUARD OF MARIE ANTOINETTE, by W.D. Lighthall. Montreal: F.E. Grafton & Sons, 1898.

Donated by Helen Meredith.

JEWES OF MONTREAL AND THEIR JUDAISMS: A Voyage of Discovery, by MacKay L. Smith. Montreal: Aaron Communications, 1998.

Donated by the author.



MONKLANDS THEN, VILLA MARIA NOW: The Story of a Convent School Which Grew from the Estate of Sir James Monk to a Modern, Private High School by Helen Lanthier. Montreal: Congrégation of Notre Dame, 2004.

Donated by the author.

PERCY ERSKINE NOBBS: Architecte, Artiste, Artisan = PERCY ERSKINE NOBBS; Architect, Artist, Craftsman, by Susan W. Wagg. Kingston: Montreal: McGill-Queen's Press: McCord Museum, McGill University, 1982.

Donated by the author.

TRAF: A History of Trafalgar School for Girls, by Margaret Gillett. Montreal: Trafalgar School for Girls, 2000.

Donated by Barbara Winn.



Argyle School Pin, engraved 1927.

Donated by Mrs. F. Victor Elkin (Rosetta Wolff), who attended Argyle School 1923-26.

Baby's Birthday Book, entries dated 1897-1926

Donated by Alison Sorbie.

Silver Spoon, Montreal St. James Club.

Donated by Doreen Lindsay.

DONATIONS RECEIVED

Alan Barrett

L.M. Blume

Thomas Brady

Patricia Claxton

Barbara Donaldson

Judy Mappin

Westmount Family Day in Westmount Park

Saturday, May 29, 2004

The Westmount Historical Association set up an information table in Westmount Park which was enthusiastically maintained by Doreen Lindsay and Anne Barkman all day from 10 am to 3 pm. John Sancton gave his support in the morning followed by Elizabeth Henrik and Joan Clark in the afternoon. It was overcast and windy so we closed up about 3 am as did most other booths.

We provided pamphlets with membership forms for people who might wish to join. A red binder of information about our lecture series was helpful in explaining our ongoing talks and another binder with information about the Hurtubise House helped to explain our oldest house. We sold four packages of Hurtubise cards at \$10.00 each and one at \$2.50. We also sold five of our balcony and door posters at \$5.00 each. There were requests from people on how to research their own home. A teacher from Westmount Park School who has done research with her students, asked for a walking tour of the area.

It was a very good opportunity to publicize ourselves to a wider public and to inform people about our activities.

Doreen Lindsay

FALL LECTURE SERIES, 2004

Green Space in Westmount – Westmount has three large parks – Summit, Westmount, and King George (Murray) plus six local parks and ten designated green spaces.

Westmount residents have always valued green space and have put forth much effort over the years to guarantee that they have trees, flowers, playgrounds and space near where they live. Many individuals have been active in developing this urban nature over the years. We will be looking at their accomplishments in our series of talks on "Green Spaces" in our Fall Lecture series.

Thursday, September 23, 2004: The Summit, 1940

Speakers: Elsie Mitchell, leader of bird watching trips to Westmount Summit for 15 years, director of the Province of Quebec Society for the Protection of Birds. Tracy Hesse, MA in Landscape Architecture, University of Montreal, Landscape architect and architect.

Thursday, October 21, 2004:

Changing Horticultural Visions in Westmount Parks.

Speaker: Cynthia Lulham, commissioner of Sports, Culture and Recreation. Co-founder of the Westmount Horticulture Society.

Thursday, November 18, 2004:

King George Park (Murray Park) 1920's

Speakers: Caroline Breslaw, vice-president of the Westmount Historical Association. Doreen Lindsay, president of the Westmount Historical Association

Thursday, December 16, 2004:

Westmount Park (Victoria Jubilee Park) 1890

Speaker: Ron Williams, former director of the School of Landscape Architecture, University of Montreal, and practicing landscape architect and architect.



"Monklands," built for Sir James Monk circa 1800. La Congrégation Notre-Dame established Villa Maria in 1854.

photo: Westmount Historical Association Archives.

FROM THE ARCHIVES

MONKLANDS THEN, VILLA MARIA NOW: The Story of a Convent School Which Grew from the Estate of Sir James Monk to a Modern, Private High School, By Helen Lanthier. 2004.

Villa Maria School is celebrating its 150th anniversary. It is a well-known local institution, located in beautiful grounds on the Westmount border, just northwest of Westmount and Claremont avenues. There were and are many scheduled activities to celebrate the anniversary, including an Open House in May, Alumnae Reunions, Musical Concerts, etc. One of the celebrations, in May, was the launching of a book about the history of the school, by Helen Lanthier, a former pupil and teacher. She has graciously presented the Westmount Historical Association with a copy of the book for its collection.

The volume not only tells the history of the school, but it also describes the architecture and history of the original building, which now comprises the central section of the school. In the 1780s William Dummer Powell, a Loyalist, purchased a portion of the Décarie land grant but unfortunately ran into financial difficulties and in 1795 was forced to sell the land at auction. It was purchased by

James Monk, Chief Justice of the Court of King's Bench in Lower Canada who, at the same time, purchased two pieces of adjoining property and called his new estate Monklands. He built a residence in the Palladian style at Monklands, which was known as Lord Monk's country estate, several miles from the center of Montreal, set among beautiful woods and farmland.

In 1844 the Crown leased and enlarged the property, which then became the official residence of the Governor General of Lower Canada, or Canada East for five years. During Lord Elgin's term as Governor-General, Monklands became the centre of social events for the élite of Montreal. However, in 1849, political turmoil and moving the Capitol to Toronto, ended Monklands' time as the Governor-General's residence.

In 1949, Sebastien Compain sublet Monklands from the Monk family and turned it into a popular country hotel. The hotel was very successful, but in 1854 Compain agreed to cancel his lease, with suitable compensation, so that Monklands could be purchased by the Sisters of the Congregation of Notre Dame who wished to establish a boarding school for girls.

During the 1800s, wealthy families in both Canada and the United States were

searching for an excellent boarding school for their daughters, The Sisters of the Congregation of Notre Dame, whose foundress, Marguerite Bourgeoys, had established the first school in Ville-Marie, provided this school of academic excellence at Monklands, or, Villa Maria as it was then called. Students came from many locations, including the United States and South America, and received the very best education that could be provided. The Sisters also took advantage of the country setting of the property to run a farm, establishing orchards from which they harvested apples and grapes. The food produced by the farm was used in the school kitchens, thus proving the Sisters were not only excellent educators but also self-reliant administrators.

Villa Maria has remained a school to this day, although it no longer operates as a boarding school, but as a private high school with over 500 students in each of the French and English sectors. There have been many additions to the original Monklands building, and there are current plans to make further enlargements in the future, allowing Villa Maria School to keep up-to-date with the social and educational demands of the 21st century.

Barbara Covington