

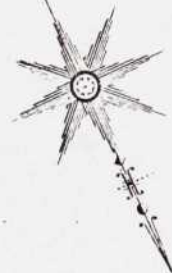
A VIEW OF THEIR OWN The Story of Westmount

Aline Gubbay





North limit of Côte St. Antoine



Villa Maria Convent

68

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CÔTE ST. ANTOINE.

CÔTE DES NEIGES
West limit of Côte St. Antoine

NEIGES



Côte Neiges Road

A View of Their Own

The Story of Westmount

Aline Gubbay

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Preface

After seven years as mayor, I still have some difficulty in putting my finger on precisely what is the genius of this remarkable city. One thing is for certain, it has everything to do with the resiliency, determination, and tolerance of the people who built it and cared for it over the past 125 years. Those who went before us wove an intricate civic tapestry in durable colours, in sometimes unpredictable patterns, using some pretty tough yarn. Aline Gubbay's book goes a long way in explaining just how it all came about.

This book, like its subject matter, is constructed in a more complex way than what would first meet the eye. Through subtle interweaving and juxtaposition, Mrs Gubbay helps the reader understand that the stereotypical Westmounter, so beloved of the media, is an artificial construct. We don't take analysis too easily because we are a study in contrasts. We don't like things too flash, and we do like things well done. We opt for both style and substance. So Mrs Gubbay deftly limns our gentle history and modestly allows the places, characters, and buildings speak to the reader directly. Her carefully-chosen illustrations round out this delicate work of love.

We learn that those who went before us made sure their manifest enthusiasm for tradition never blinded them to innovation. This happy blend carries on: when we had to demolish the lawnbowling clubhouse two years ago, we built a faithful replica...and stuck a huge electrical substation right underneath!

From a synergetic jumble of roots, religions, and cultures came the Westmount we love today. Enough differences to make us interesting; enough sameness to make us whole. This is the story of Westmount's proud builders, soldiers, scholars, merchants, church and temple-goers, athletes, and, yes, even politicians. It's a good read.

Peter Trent
Mayor of Westmount

For

Eric,

Ariel, Maxwell, Joseph, Gabriel and Sarah

Foreword

Not only an honour and privilege to be asked by Aline Gubbay to contribute the introduction to her excellent book, it also is an intriguing delight. Old journalists are not always regarded as “serious” writers, fit enough to have had a hand, however small, in a literary work.

A career as an ink-stained press person, however, can sometimes help make a contribution where history is involved and of which one has some special knowledge as the longtime local community weekly publisher and editor *The Westmount Examiner* and as a resident of these parts over a significant period of the area’s story.

The work Mrs. Gubbay has done here is clearly a labour of love, which she already has demonstrated as longtime president of the Westmount Historical Association. She has shown imagination in the range of persons she has attracted as speakers at the monthly WHA meetings. She has exercised this skill in getting informed persons to relate, from anecdote and experience, their knowledge of earlier Westmount days. The direct quotes which she has garnered for this book are proof for her readers of this talent.

Fortunately, Westmount has an uncommon number of seniors, and other citizens, with uncommonly clear memory and capacity to relate well. It has been said that many families miss out by not recording the recollections of their older members. Mrs. Gubbay has, in a way, acted on such an opportunity to collect herein many significant memories of members of the broader Westmount “family.”

Thus, she has done us all a great service; anyone who cares about this community’s rich history should not only give themselves the pleasure of reading “A View of Their Own” but keeping it in a convenient corner of their home Library as a ready reference and a means of enlightening visitors, more often than not from less fortunate places.

John W. Sancton

Photograph Acknowledgements

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First and last, my thanks to Edgar Andrew Collard for inspiring in so many of us a love for the personal byways of history.

Introduction

Westmount is a small, independent municipality covering some one and a half square miles, entirely surrounded by the city of Montreal. A brisk, 20-minute walk will take you from Westmount's eastern to its western boundaries. Twice that will bring you from the summit of its hilltop to the district's southern borders, for Westmount lies along the slopes of a mountain, an outcropping of Montreal's Mount Royal.

It was in 1874 that a Village Council met to establish a fledgling municipality called "Notre Dame de Grâce," carved out of the amorphous region in the countryside west of the city of Montreal. Twenty years later, after some shuffling of land and changes of name, a new municipality took shape and was granted the name of "Westmount."

Taxes were low, traffic minimal, the air healthy, and there were generous green spaces where children could play and adults could indulge in their favourite sports. Times change. Taxes have risen, traffic is a good deal heavier and the green spaces have shrunk, but Westmount still maintains something of the ambience of a country town with its shaded streets and parks, good municipal services, respected public schools and an accessible city hall.

All this did not happen by chance. Westmount's character was stamped early in its development by leaders with definite priorities, rigorous standards and stern morals. For decades, no liquor was sold and no place

of entertainment licensed within its borders; this at a time when Montreal was the metropolis of Canada, the liveliest, most "wide-open" city in the country.

Westmount acquired a personality unique among municipalities in Canada. Its name evoked an image based on a mixture of assumptions, some of them misleading.

It has often been depicted as a homogeneous area of mainly British background, old-fashioned, elitist and Protestant. This is quite simply wrong. The community has, from its beginning, been a complex society, its citizens involved in a broad range of occupations and interests, with religious affiliations ranging from Roman Catholic to Jewish to Protestant, from Baptist to High Anglican.

This book is not a history of Westmount's social, political or structural changes nor an analysis of its urban growth and community services. These, and other facets of community life are seen, in large part, through the eyes of people who lived through and were a part of these changes. It is more a collective memoir than a recounting of historical facts.

Perhaps the most striking component in the pattern that is Westmount is its flexibility. Belying the critics who mock its supposed rigidity, Westmount has adapted remarkably well to political change and municipal realities. In the hands of its mayor, Peter Trent, it continues to do so while affirming its traditions and its heritage.

1

Kawanote Teiontiakon

On a quiet street at mid-level on the slope of Westmount mountain there once stood a larch tree, its branches spread as if espaliered against a garden wall. Legend has it Indians formed such trees as markers leading to important sites. If so, such a sign in this place perhaps pointed the way to the free-flowing springs of clear mountain water that gushed from the nearby hillside.

These springs were known locally, well into the 20th century, as the "Indian wells," and sections still remain of an Indian trail which led up the slope of the hillside to the springs.

This and other trails were formed in the days when Montreal island was known by its Indian name "Kawanote Teiontiakon," a Mohawk word meaning an island torn or broken by a ditch or fault in the earth's surface. At the time the island was heavily wooded with Indian pathways providing the only access to the interior.

The western part of the island was distinguished by a little mountain — Westmount — some 600 feet high, formed by an outcropping of a larger rise, Mount Royal.

Iroquoians had discovered that the slope of the little mountain, facing south-east, was sheltered from the strongest northern winds, a factor which, together with abundant water from the mountain springs, made for a richly fertile soil where they could cultivate their traditional crops of beans and corn.

The Iroquoians were known to move their villages every 10 or 20 years, often only a few

miles at a time as fields or firewood became exhausted. Several locations on the hillside have been identified as possible sites of these Iroquoian villages. One was the flat, grassy place where Westmount City Hall now stands. This spot, long known as "Garden Point," was beside a broad Indian roadway known today as Côte St. Antoine. At the juncture where the path rose in its curve westward, there still stood at the turn of the century "an ancient elm of vast size" under whose shade, we are told, "the



Section of an old Indian trail leading to the mountain springs. (Arlington Lane)

Indians would gather to meet in compatible tranquillity."

There are tales told of Indian pictographs carved on the trunks of trees. One stood in a wooded gully far down the hillside, and bore a carving representing the forms of a man and an arrow.

Dramatic tangible evidence of an Indian presence appeared unexpectedly, late in the 19th century, when a gardener working in the grounds of St. George's Snowshoe Club on Westmount's upper slopes, unearthed skeletons of two men and one woman.

Immediately, James Harrison, Westmount's Police Chief, wrote to Montreal coroner, E. McMahon, the following account:

July 22nd, 1898

Dear Sir,

I have to report that this morning about 7.30 o'clock, James Quinn, gardener, 315 St. Denis Street, City of Montreal, employed at St. George's Snowshoe Club, W., found the skeleton of a human being lying about 18" below the surface of the earth, some 100 feet east and 60 feet south of the Clubhouse..... I proceeded about nine this a.m. to the Clubhouse with Mr. A.S. Wheeler, an officer of the Club and took possession of the remains which I have dispatched to your morgue in our wagon, driven by Constable Smithers of Westmount, and await any orders or instructions you may have to give.

Signed Jas. Harrison CC

It soon became evident that this was not a police matter, but a mystery for historians and anthropologists to unravel if they could.

Excavation proceeded with great care and over the following months more remains were uncovered, dispersed over several blocks of land. The discovery generated great excitement

and interest. Puzzling questions were raised. Who were these people and what did the finds signify?

Among the first experts to be consulted was William Douw Lighthall, a Westmount resident and a leading authority on North American Indian culture, whose interest in Indian traditions had been recognised by the Mohawks who had conferred on him the title of Honorary Chief of the Mohawks of Kahnawake.

The number of artifacts unearthed indicated a community burial ground, possibly Algonkians, though Mr. Lighthall was cautious about closer identification. More than 100 years later, the finds remain classified under the general grouping of "St. Lawrence Iroquoians."

The method of burial did not conform to the known practices of the Mohawks or Hurons in eastern North America. The shallow graves were aligned in seemingly random directions, some to the north, others to the west. A few skeletons lay under large flat stones set in a clear pattern of an inverted V.

Similar graves, it was learned, had been found in scattered locations in the east but were more common west of the Mississippi among the Illinois, to whom the Algonkians were related. Perhaps, suggested Mr. Lighthall, some of these extended kin had brought their burial practices with them when they travelled along the Ottawa River to trade in the east.

Mr. Lighthall also speculated that the Westmount discovery could indicate the existence of an Indian settlement of which so far nothing more was known. So the mystery remains. An evanescent image of a community which dwelt here long enough to leave a well-marked roadway and several efficient mountain paths, carved symbols on trees, cleared and cultivated portions of the land, and buried its dead with due custom and ceremony.

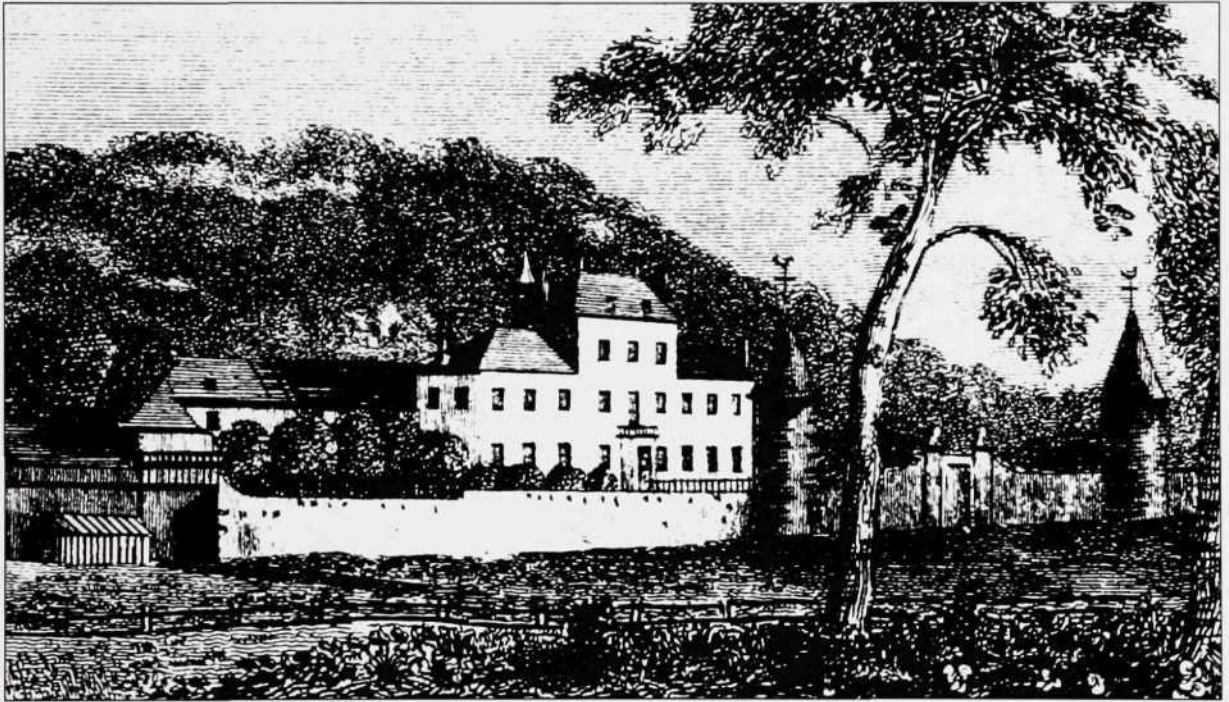
2

La Haute Folie

All traces of Indian settlement had vanished from the vicinity of the little mountain when the first Europeans, a group of Sulpician priests, arrived there late in the 17th century.

led by Paul de Chomedey, Sieur de Maisonneuve.

By the mid-17th century, the Sulpicians held title to the entire island of Montreal which



Fort des Messieurs de Saint Sulpice with the Priests' Farm. In one of the corner towers a young Huron woman taught a class of Indian boys and girls.

The Sulpicians — les Messieurs de Saint Sulpice — were members of an order founded in France earlier in the century by Jean-Jacques Olier, who together with Jérôme de la Dauversière, had dreamed of founding a mission in Montreal. In 1642 their passionate — some said inspired — devotion to this cause became a reality with the creation of “Ville Marie,” a settlement located beside the St. Lawrence River at the foot of Mount Royal,

they administered by granting land estates to seigneurs who in turn divided up their holdings among tenants - censitaires or habitants.

One early grant of land, the Fief St. Augustin was ceded in 1650 by Maisonneuve to his co-pioneer Jeanne Mance, founder of Montreal's first hospital, Hôtel Dieu, and the order of “les Dames Religieuses de l'Hôtel Dieu de Montréal”. This land lay close by the little mountain some three miles to the west of

the settlement of Ville Marie in an area named Contrée-St-Joseph.

Three other tracts of land were ceded here by Maisonneuve. One of these was to Jean Leduc, a stonemason who received twelve arpents in Contrée St. Joseph in 1662 when it was still considered *la haute folie* to settle so far from the sheltering walls of Ville Marie.

This view began to change with the arrival of the Sulpicians when they established a mission to the Indians here. A wooden palisade enclosed their self-sufficient community, known as the Fort de la Montagne. Beyond the palisades, just west of today's Atwater Avenue, more ground was cleared for cultivation and became an extension of the priests' farm, a name that still clings to the area today.

Within a few years, apple orchards produced a rich harvest. One very successful strain was the "Fameuse," a small, rosy red apple, the seed of which, it was said, had been brought from France by Jeanne Mance on one of her journeys there to raise money and support for Ville Marie.

Inside the fort, however, all was not well. The priests had gathered together some 160 men, women and children from a number of tribes — Iroquois, Huron, Loups, Sioux and Algonkians. Old rivalries between the groups were rekindled and friction grew.

Twenty years later, the fort burned down and the priests decided to move the troubled mission. It was relocated briefly on the north shore of Montreal island and later across the river to Oka.

The burnt-out fort was rebuilt on the same site, but with its purpose and its structure changed. As the Fort des Messieurs or "Priests' Farm," it now served as a retreat for priests of the order.

Land and buildings were redesigned under the supervision of l'Abbé François Vicomte Vachon de Belmont, Superior of the order from

1700 to 1732. L'Abbé François was of an aristocratic background — he is said to have been a page at the court of Louis XIV — a man of independent means with an appreciation of the fine arts. The fort became an elegant enclave composed of a small French château and a tranquil garden containing a narrow reflecting pool in the currently fashionable Persian style.



L'Abbé de Belmont

Relations with the native peoples had also changed. Many Indian converts now lived and worked peacefully alongside the priests on the land, and in one of the stone towers which marked the corners of the fort a little school was set up for Indian boys and girls.

Their teacher was a young Huron, Marie-Thérèse Gounansagouas, a former pupil of Marguerite Bourgeoys, the pioneer teacher who established the first school in Ville Marie. Marguerite Bourgeoys herself visited the Sulpician fort and the school in the stone tower in the year before she died. By this time she had founded the order of the Congrégation de Notre Dame in New France, an order whose presence became a significant component in the future municipality of Westmount.

The Sulpician fort with its community of priests and its productive, prospering farm shone as an example to the newcomers of what could be achieved on the land in a few short years. It also provided a possible refuge if hostilities with the Indians should grow too fierce.



Marguerite Bourgeoys

One by one the families arrived, settling along the Indian trail now given the name of Côte St. Antoine. They included names such as Des Carries (sic), Prud'homme, Leduc, Pierre et Jean Hurtubise, and St. Germain.

The settlers put up a milestone which measured the distance from the Sulpician fort. They helped each other build sturdy homes using the stones gathered from the fields as building material. Built in a style they had



Milestone. c. 1700. It measured the distance from the Sulpician fort to the new settlements. It remains today at the N.W. corner of Côte St. Antoine and Forden.

known in their native France, the houses were set close to the roadside for easy access in loading and unloading their carts and wagons.

Most of the men were artisans, recruited from towns of northern France for their skills as stonemasons, millers, brewers, but they soon acquired the new skills nec-

essary to clear and cultivate the land. In winter, after the land had been cleared, the trunks of the trees were gathered, carried down to the water and lashed together on the rim of a frozen lake, Lac St. Pierre. When the ice melted in the spring the lumber was floated through a short inlet to the St. Lawrence River and rafted along the shore for sale at Ville Marie, now renamed Montreal.

Côte St. Antoine Road proved an efficient highway, in use for much of the year. Horse-drawn wagons carried farm produce east, past the Sulpician fort to the harbourfront in Montreal. To the west, it joined other paths

winding their way beyond the river rapids to the western end of the island.

After the historic Treaty of 1701 was signed by Governor-General Louis-Hector de Callières and delegates representing Indian tribes of the entire region, hostilities ceased and freer communication and barter between native peoples and the settlers began to develop. The farmers and their families gained invaluable knowledge from the Indians that helped them survive through the long, hard winters and hot dry summers. They learned how to smoke and salt meat for storage; which herbs and roots to use as remedies for a variety of ailments; how to tap maple trees in spring and the many uses for the sweet flowing sap. They also discovered the comfort of moccasins and the usefulness of snowshoes for tramping over deep snows.

As the years passed, the farms prospered and families grew. Lambert Leduc wed Jeanne Décarie, Louis St. Germain married Cecile Prud'homme. Other men brought home brides from Montreal and Quebec. There were births to welcome, a successful harvest for which to give thanks, religious festivals to observe. A special event was the erection of a tall wayside cross, placed at the highest point along the Côte St. Antoine Road, where today it intersects Lansdowne Avenue. It stood in front of the St. Germain family home and its care and responsibility became part of the St. Germain family tradition.

There still remains one outstanding example of the many farmhouses which once lined the Côte St. Antoine Road. The Hurtubise house, at the corner of Côte St. Antoine and Victoria, was home to eight generations of this family until the mid-1950s. The father of the line, Marin Hurtubise, a bold, impulsive adventurer, died, as many of the men then did, comparatively young. His wife, Étiennette



The St. Germain home with wayside cross stood on Côte St. Antoine at present-day Lansdowne Avenue

Alton, a woman of equal spirit and greater endurance, outlived three husbands and died at the age of 81.

It was Pierre, son of Marin and Etiennette who, with the help of his neighbours, built this

house. The rugged fieldstone walls, steep pitch of the roof, and irregular placement of doors and windows are part of an indigenous building tradition. The basement, in particular, vividly evokes the past when each house was braced to act as its own defense post, with its loopholes in the outside walls through which guns could be fired. There have been additions. The porch is a later extension, an influence which came, it is said, from the West Indies, along with rum and sugar, brought by sailors who arrived with their cargoes during the hottest summer months and described the pleasures of a verandah, a standard feature of island homes.

All the farms are gone now but the landscape remains indelibly marked with their long straight property lines, and the fruit trees that flourish in many a small back garden speak of a soil still richly productive after centuries of cultivation.



The Hurtubise house. Last remaining French-Canadian farmhouse in Westmount. It housed eight generations of the Hurtubise family. Late 17th century. An addition to the right is from the 19th century.

3

The New Landowners

With the end of the French regime in 1760 came a number of changes, notably the influx of English-speaking settlers. For a variety of reasons, the pattern of the old French-Canadian

On one level, the new immigrants strove to acquire property for the same reason as the early French settlers did. Being a land owner in 18th-century England or Scotland, as well as in 17th century France, was for most an impossible dream.

There was, however, a fundamental difference. While the French had taken up their concessions in order to earn their living from the land, the new settlers had occupations other than farming from which they earned their livelihood. Despite that, newcomers continued to cultivate the land and the area retained its rural character.



Home of Ann and Simon Clarke, first English-speaking settlers in the district. Northeast corner, Côte St. Antoine Road and Clarke Avenue. Demolished.

farming community was breaking up. Sometimes the end of a family line was reached with none left to carry on the inheritance. Or a farmer fell on bad times and was forced to sell all or part of his property. Many farms, divided and subdivided over the years, were too small to be even marginally profitable.

The buyers for this land were new immigrants, mostly from the British Isles. The majority arrived with little in their pockets but they soon made their way to a modest fortune in commerce, industry or the professions. Among them were general merchants, retired military personnel, lawyers and police officers. Several were fur traders.

The first English-speaking settler in what is now Westmount arrived in the early 1770s. Simon Clarke, a fur trader, was a member of a loosely linked organization of merchants in the fur trade, called the North West Company. Other members of the company included James McGill and Joseph Frobisher, who built their mansions on the slopes of Montreal's Mount Royal.

Simon Clarke's Westmount home was more modest, but strategically sited. On land bought from the Décarie family, he built his house on the Côte St. Antoine Road shortly before it reached the Priests' Farm, where Indians travelling east with their goods to the

Montreal fur fair would be glad of a stopping place to rest. As a result, the Clarke home became the centre of constant activity, a meeting place for Indian trappers, merchants, members of government and a stream of visitors from across the continent.

One of these was the American, John Jacob Astor, an entrepreneur whose business interests spread across North America and included the fur trade. The basis for the Astor fortune was laid in a single generation by John Jacob who arrived from Europe in 1783, so the legend goes, with five pounds in his pocket, seven flutes and two clarinets. By the time he died in 1848 he had become the richest man in America, leaving an estate worth \$20 million.

Astor had immigrated to America from the small Bavarian town of Waldorf, where his Huguenot ancestors had settled after fleeing France in the 16th century. It was a background he shared with Ann Waldorf, the wife of Simon Clarke, and Astor became a frequent visitor to their home. When Clarke's son John chose to follow in his father's footsteps, he was encouraged to pursue his interests in New York under the direction of John Jacob Astor.



John Jacob Astor, an American with interests in the fur trade. He was a frequent, welcome visitor in the Clarke home.

Astor, known as a shrewd, difficult man, looked favourably on young John Clarke and loaded him with expensive gifts, among them a diamond brooch, diamond studs, and a cane encrusted with jewels. He also commissioned an artist to paint John's portrait.

After some years with the Astor enterprises, John Clarke left to become Chief Factor for the Hudson's Bay Company following its merger



Oil painting of John Clarke given by J.J. Astor to John's father, Simon.

with the North West Company. During a visit to a Hudson's Bay outpost he fell in love with and married Sapphira Spence, the daughter of a Scottish employee of the Bay and an Indian woman.

The marriage was happy but brief.

John brought Sapphira home to his family where she was warmly welcomed, but not many months after her arrival, Sapphira died. Was it a premonition that guided her to point out to her new relatives the place where, if she should die, she wished to be buried? It was a place high on Westmount's mountain, under a spreading tree from which, she said, the view was so beautiful. How strange that her choice should fall on that area that, many years later, was found to have served as a final resting place for Indian men and women centuries earlier.

Many months after Sapphira's death, John Clarke travelled to Europe. In Neuchatel, Switzerland, he met Marianne Tranclar who became his second wife. After a sea voyage lasting two months, they married in Montreal. Marianne continued to travel everywhere with her husband, often under rugged conditions of

barely basic comfort, to Hudson's Bay Company outposts as distant as Labrador. Eight children were born during those rigorous years.

When it was finally time to come home, a road was opened uphill from Simon Clarke's home and there, halfway up the hillside, backed by the rise of the mountain and with fine views down to and beyond the river, John and Marianne built their home which they called "Edgemont." The house, considerably altered, remains standing today on Clarke Avenue.

Simon Clarke died in 1832 at the age of 84. The funeral announcement stated the cortège would travel "From his residence, Clarke Cottage, to the family ground at the foot of the Mountain." This was the ground where Sapphira Clarke had been buried, and which was now consecrated by the Rt. Rev. George Jehoshaphat Mountain, Anglican Bishop of Quebec, to be the Clarke family cemetery.

Recalling her in-laws, Marianne Clarke described their house "with a great cherry orchard on the slope behind ... The orchard in season was a mass of lovely white blossoms and on summer evenings an old lady in a high-backed chair sat under the wide-spreading trees intent on her knitting, while her husband opposite busied himself reading to her."

Marianne Clarke lived to the age of 104. She had known the reigns of five sovereigns — George III, George IV, William IV, Victoria and Edward VII.

Several new estates were established in the early 1800s, reshaping part of the landscape. Among the straight lines defining the divisions between farms established by the French, were properties with curving driveways and avenues, setting patterns for future streets.

The design and size of the new houses were also very different. The French-Canadian farmhouses had evolved their own indigenous

style, shaped by limited choice of building materials, a harsh climate and shared traditions.

The homes of the new settlers appeared, by contrast, almost bizarre in their difference from one another and in their reckless disregard of the snowy winters and sweltering summers of the Canadian climate. The houses no longer clung to Côte St. Antoine Road but stood sparsely scattered up and down the hillside



John Ogilvie (Ogilvie)

surrounded by fields and orchards. To reach them their owners had to clear a private roadway and be able to maintain a carriage.

Northeast of the Clarke house John Ogilvie, another fur trader of the

North West Company, bought a stretch of land in 1805 and named it "Trafalgar," after the naval battle fought and won in that year by Admiral Nelson. The property lay among the fields where General Amherst's troops had camped and where, in 1760, the capitulation was signed by the Marquis de Vaudreuil and accepted by General Amherst. The area, near the summit of the little mountain just outside present-day Westmount bordering along Côte des Neiges, still carries the Trafalgar name on streets and buildings.

Vanished is the small hexagonal tower, built by a protégé of John Ogilvie's, James Gillespie. The latter had served on Nelson's flagship, the "Victory" and was present at the battle of Trafalgar. It was the high point of Gillespie's life and to commemorate the event he built a little tower, placed a small cannon on the roof and for the next 30 years, he fired the cannon every October 21, the anniversary of the battle.

Because of its isolation and its oddity, strange tales circulated about "the little grey



'Trafalgar Tower', widely reported to be haunted.

Tower peering from the summit of the Mountain, beyond the Priests' Farm." It was widely reported to be haunted by the ghosts of a pair of young lovers, murdered by a rejected suitor whose ghost was sometimes seen nearby.

There are tales of encounters with these ghosts. One anonymous young man told of meeting the rejected suitor, "a fierce looking man sharpening a blood-stained axe" who poured out his fearful story and showed the terrified listener a locket he said had belonged to his fiancée.

In 1836, the Trafalgar property was bought by Albert Furniss who remodelled the tower and, in 1848, built a grand Tudor-style summer residence on Côte des Neiges, also called "Trafalgar," a substantial part of which still survives.

In the same year that John Ogilvie was acquiring his Trafalgar estates, William Hallowell, a fellow fur trader, was buying land to the south, along an escarpment today marked by St Catherine Street. This land formed part of the Fief St. Augustin ceded in 1650 by Maisonneuve to his co-pioneer Jeanne Mance, and it was in the parlour of Hôtel Dieu on St. Paul Street in Montreal that Hallowell, "merchant of Montreal", signed the deed of purchase, in 1805, together with the Mother Superior of les Dames Religieuses de l'Hôtel Dieu de Montréal.

William Hallowell married Martha Henry, the daughter of Alexander Henry who arrived with General Amherst's army in 1760. After the troops were withdrawn, Alexander

remained in Montreal to become a fur trader, general merchant and bon vivant, one of the founders of the "Beaver Club," dedicated to commemorating the convivial traditions of the early adventurers of the North West Company.

Along the same escarpment as the Hallowell house was the estate acquired by Judge Badgeley and later, in 1853, bought by the Hon. George Moffat who named the house "Weredale Lodge." Moffat was a founder of Canada's first railway, the Champlain and St. Lawrence, which had its terminus at Moffat's Island. The terminus was in plain view of Weredale Lodge, with its open vista across the river. Today, Weredale Avenue and the sweeping driveway which once skirted the imposing entrance to the house mark the site of Moffat's estate.

Among the most striking of the properties built in the 1830s was "Forden." In 1826 the Lacroix farm was in trouble and the upper part of its land was put on the market in a sheriff's sale. It consisted of a broad swath of land running from the Côte St. Antoine Road up and over the mountain to Côte des Neiges. It was bought by Charles Bowman, a wealthy Scottish importer, founder of the community of Bowmanville, Ontario.

Charles Bowman had travelled extensively in Europe and he chose to build for his new bride a house inspired by the Italian villas he had admired. Situated on a rise at mid-level on the mountain close by present-day Murray Park, it was unlike any other house on the island of Montreal. A central unit was flanked by two small side pavilions, set in a beautifully landscaped garden surrounded by old farm orchards. Adaptations had to be made to adjust the house to the Canadian climate and the pavilions were later linked to the main house by enclosed loggias.



*Elizabeth Bowman
(Mrs. Robert Raynes)*

Bowman bequeathed the estate to his daughter Elizabeth. When she married, she and her husband, Captain Robert Raynes, lived on in the house and raised a family of eight children, five daughters and three sons. Surprisingly, none of the children married. In the late 1940s, the

house was sold and later demolished.

Immediately west of Forden was the property of William Murray, head of the Beaver shipping line and a keen observer of John Young's ambitious plans for Montreal's harbour. Murray bought the Leduc farmland where he built an expansive Victorian house with a broad welcoming verandah, set in

grounds landscaped to take advantage of the open prospect to the river and beyond. He called the fine house "West Mount" because of its location, a name so appropriate to the area that many years later it was adopted for the entire district.



Captain Robert Raynes

Then William Murray's son, Alexander, built his own mansion to the west on the same rise of land. He married an American, a former concert pianist, and their home became a centre of musical activity where visiting musicians were entertained and local musical interests encouraged.

Another large estate was "Rosemount," an exceptionally well-sited property, placed to



Forden, built circa 1830 by Charles Bowman for his bride, 'in the Italian style'. A unique building. Demolished.



West Mount, home of William Murray. When the house was demolished in the 1920s, the land was converted to Murray Park.

catch the sun's maximum warmth and sheltered from the fiercest of the north winds. The house was built for William McGillivray, a North West Company director for whom Fort William in Ontario was named in 1807. He bought the land from the Bouchard family and built a private road leading from Côte St. Antoine Road up to his mansion.

In 1846, the estate was advertised for sale by its owner, Asa Goodenough, manager of the Exchange Coffee House, Montreal's informal Stock Exchange. The announcement stated boldly that the property was "unsurpassed on this continent for salubrity of air, fertility of land and beauty of position." The land was promoted as ideal for development into 36 building lots, from one to four acres each, leaving a principal lot of three acres



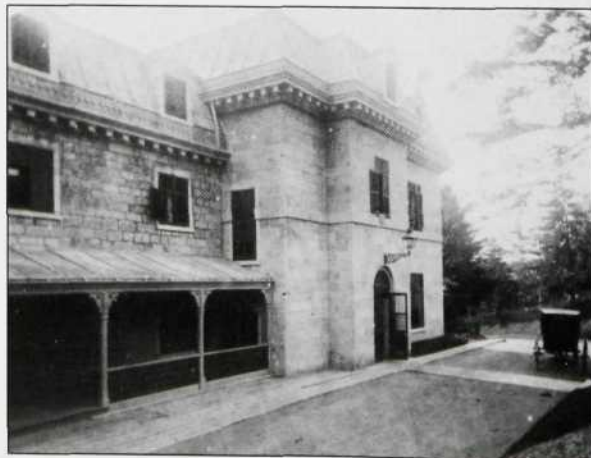
John Young Monument, Rue de la Commune.

with its "three storey cut stone dwelling of 36 by 46 feet, the whole estate being only three minutes walk from the St. Antoine tollgate."

But an economic slump could produce no buyer for this enterprising proposal and the estate was left intact for its next owner. This was Rosemount's best known resident, John Young, an engineer who helped propel Montreal into the front rank as a port. A statue of a frock-coated John Young stands looking over the harbour

where, as Commissioner for 25 years, he supervised the progressive deepening of the river to permit anchorage of larger and larger ships with substantially greater loads of merchandise.

John Young took great pride and interest in his Rosemount property. The grounds were put in the charge of a head gardener, John Archibald, and under his guidance grapes, peaches, plums, apples, pears and cherries were



'Rosemount' built early 19th century. Owned by John Young. 16 Severn Avenue near Mountain.

all brought to a high standard of quality. When William Dawson, Principal of McGill University, issued an urgent plea for trees, saplings from Rosemount's fertile ground were transplanted to the bleak fields of the college campus, newly

into that of a southern plantation home of considerable charm.

One of the earliest of these country estates and one with a dramatic history, was "Monklands," built at the end of the 18th century for Sir James Monk, Chief Justice of the Court of King's Bench. Monklands was an impressive structure approached by a fine avenue of stately maple trees.

The house was modelled on Monk's home in Scotland, whose architect was Robert Adam, the leading Classical Revival architect of his day. Monklands, the core of which remains intact as part of the Villa Maria school, recreates the balanced lines and elegant interior



Braemar in the late 1840s. The double gallery is a later addition. 3219 the Boulevard.

established on the cow pastures of James McGill's estate on Mount Royal.

East of the Rosemount estate was "Braemar," reached by a steep roadway leading up from Sherbrooke Street. It was built in the late 1840s, possibly for the commander of the Montreal garrison. As originally designed by William Footner, architect of Montreal's Bonsecours Market, Braemar was a large square stone house, simply and elegantly proportioned, similar to other contemporary military properties. Its aspect was completely altered over time, first with a single gallery, then with a two-level wooden gallery wrapping the building on all four sides. Though ill-suited to the rigours of the local climate, the gallery transformed the severity of the original facade

decoration typical of an original Adam design.

After Sir James Monk died, the house was leased from his heirs to serve as a summer residence for the Governor-General in the years 1844-49, when Montreal reigned briefly as the capital of Upper and Lower Canada.

Successive holders of the office of Governor-General, Lord Sydenham, followed by Sir Charles Bagot, both died after brief terms in power. The next appointee, Lord Metcalfe, was the first Governor-General to make use of the beautiful house, but even this vigorous man died one year later, in 1845.

In spite of his brief mandate, Metcalfe's name was preserved in the name of a street and in a terrace of four houses of unusual design built in the mid-1840s along the south side of

Côte St. Antoine Road on land bought from the Sulpicians. Two of these houses still stand.

The builder of the terrace was Moses Judah Hays. His merchant father, Andrew, had emigrated from New York north to Montreal in 1763. In 1778, he married Abigail David, daughter of a prominent Jewish family, active in the fur trade, who had helped found the Bank of Montreal.

Their son Moses and his family lived for a while in one of the Metcalfe Terrace houses with the Governor-General's aides-de-camp briefly occupying the others.

Hays, a military engineer by training, helped improve and extend the network of pipes bringing water to Montreal. He also operated a hotel and



Moses Judah Hays, engineer, farmer, theatre owner, magistrate, and police chief.



178 Côte St. Antoine

theatre, sat as a judge in the Court of Special Session and late in life was made Montreal's Chief of Police. When invited to become a magistrate, Hays and a fellow Jew, Benjamin Hart, insisted on being sworn in on the Old Testament Bible, the first men in Canada to succeed in doing so. When he died, in November 1861, Hays' obituary in *The Gazette* read in part, "Mr. Hays was a gentleman who was identified with and originated most of the great improvements which have helped the city to its present maturity and high position."

It was during the time Hays and his family lived in Metcalfe Terrace that one evening in April 1849, a sad and sorry spectacle was to be seen limping its way to Monklands along the Côte St. Antoine Road. The current Governor-General, Lord Elgin, was in his coach, its panels cracked and split, the carriage covered with filth. Elgin was returning from a disastrous Parliamentary session where he had just signed into law the



168 Côte St. Antoine. One of the four houses of Metcalfe Terrace built by Moses Judah Hays.

Rebellion Losses Bill, a compassionate document indemnifying those residents, without regard to their loyalties, whose property had been severely damaged in the

spectacular series of events including, in 1850, a “balloon ascension” — seats \$1, standing 50 cents — claiming it to be the first of its kind in Canada.



Monklands built for Sir James Monk, Chief Justice of the court of Kings Bench. Circa 1800. The house served as the residence for the Governors-General in the years 1844-49.

uprising of 1837-38. Fierce opposition to the Bill had exploded in riots and when Lord Elgin's coach finally dragged its way to Monklands the house was put in readiness for a siege.

But the rioters chose not to venture that far, contenting themselves with a rampage of destruction by the waterfront, including the burning of the Parliament buildings. In the wake of the violence Lord Elgin and his entourage left the city and the capital was moved briefly to Toronto.

Monklands changed hands and began a new life as a country hotel. The owner, Sebastian Campian, brought in as manager a popular celebrity, Henry Hogan, whom he had lured away from Montreal's best known hotel, St. Lawrence Hall.

Campian tried hard to promote Monklands as a family resort. He provided special transport from Montreal and presented a

But the roads to Monklands were in such poor condition, the vacation season so short and the distance from the city so far, that the venture failed. In 1854, Monklands again changed hands. It was bought by the Congrégation de Notre Dame, the religious order established by Marguerite Bourgeoys. True to their founder's vocation the Sisters established a school, the “Villa Maria,” which has continued to grow, in numbers and reputation, to the present day.

By the mid-19th century this sprawling area of farms and estates was beginning to coalesce into a recognisable district but no focal point existed around which its members might gather.

It was in part to meet this need that the Sulpician Fathers bought 30 arpents of land from Eustache Prud'homme, just west of the



Students at the Villa Maria school, administered by the Congrégation de Notre Dame



The Church of Notre-Dame-de-Grâce, 1853.

Decarie farm, and built a fine church in the heart of the farmland.

The church was an outstanding landmark in its rustic setting. Every fall, for many years, the riders, horses and hounds of the Montreal Hunt Club would stream through the fields in front of the church and on through the countryside many miles to the west.

Notre Dame de Grâce met many of the needs of the local French-speaking Catholics, but by now the district included a number of English-speaking Protestants. As the population grew, many secular matters — roads, lighting, schools — required attention. It was increasingly obvious that the time had come for the area to acquire the status which would allow it to administer to the needs of a legitimate municipality.

4

The Village 1

Notre Dame de Grâce 1874-79

On December 9, 1873, a proclamation issued by René Édouard Caron, Lieutenant-Governor of Quebec, announced that from January 1 of the following year a new territorial and civic entity, to be named the "Village of Nôtre Dame de Grâce," would be established to the west of the City of Montreal. This new unit, detached from the municipality and parish of Montreal, measuring roughly 5,000 acres, was carved out of the sprawling territories known as St. Henri des Tanneries. It was bounded to the east by the City of Montreal and part of the property of the "Gentlemen of St. Sulpice;" to the north by the municipality of Côte des Neiges; to the west by the municipality of St. Laurent and Lachine; and to the south by little Lac St. Pierre, also known as Lac à loutre.

This proclamation signalled a profound change in civic management in Quebec. Under the French regime and its seigneurial system, which was abandoned only in the 1850s, both religious and civic authority were invested in the parish. The British system was based on the separation of church and state, with secular legislation operating apart from religious affiliations.

There were now formalities to be observed, a mayor and council to choose, by-laws and agendas to discuss and define. Prosper Sauvage, a farmer, offered the use of a room on the upper floor of his farmhouse, near the junction of Côte St. Antoine and Clarke Avenue as a council chamber for monthly meetings.

The rent was \$50 a year, and here on a bright winter's day in February 1874, the village municipality of Notre Dame de Grâce held its first council meeting.

As their first mayor the council members chose the Hon. Eustache Prud'homme, descendant of Louis Prud'homme, Montreal's first brewer and Captain of its first militia. In



William Rutherford of the first village council in 1874

recognition of the family's honourable service to the colony the Prud'hommes had received one of the early grants of land along the Côte St. Antoine Road. Eustache Prud'homme himself was a distin-

guished public figure and a member of the first Canadian Senate from 1867 to 1888.

Others present at this initial village council included William Rutherford, John Snowdown, Alexander Mills, and a representative of another long established French family, Joseph St. Germain.

William Rutherford's granddaughter, Elizabeth Gyde, later recalled the tradition in which her grandfather and others of his generation were raised. "He was brought up you had a civic responsibility and of course in those days it was all for free so no matter how busy you were you had to give so much time to public affairs. You also had responsibility to your church as well."

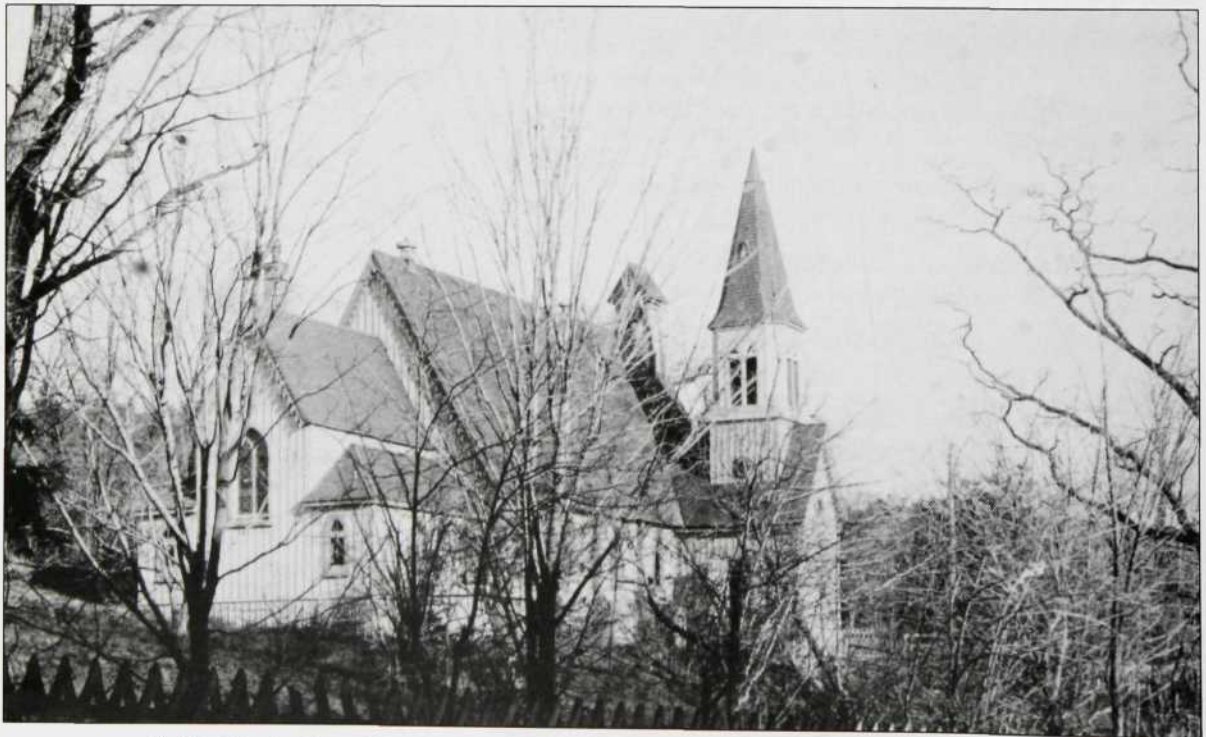
Aside from the monthly council meetings, Prosper Sauvage's upstairs room was already well utilised. In 1869, William Rutherford had rented the modest space for Sunday services and a Sunday school to serve the few Presbyterian families settled in the neighbourhood. Mr. Rutherford's venture was supported by the elders of the Erskine Presbyterian Church in Montreal, and by 1873 there were enough children — fourteen — to fill a small classroom. A Miss Turnbull was engaged, as principal and only teacher, at a salary of \$125 a year, to be in charge of the first Protestant school in the district. Shortly afterwards, a second teacher, Miss Greenshields, was added to the staff.

In the same year, 1873, a group of young men, members of a YMCA branch at St. George's Anglican Church in Dominion Square, declared their wish to undertake a

mission to one of the developing western suburbs. Their choice settled on Notre-Dame-de-Grâce and with St. George's Church as sponsor, they began organising evening services and a Sunday school to which all non-Roman Catholics were invited.

The group's enthusiasm was infectious and a nucleus of members soon formed. One of their number, Mrs. Robert Raynes, came forward with an offer of a grant of land on the edge of her Forden estate and by 1875, a small frame building, 40 by 25 feet, was built, with a capacity for 120 worshippers. The little church was fitted with a fine organ frequently played by one of Mrs. Raynes' five daughters.

The congregation grew so quickly that only two years after it began, the mission was declared self-supporting. St. George's Church withdrew its sponsorship and the new church, named St. Matthias, became the first Protestant



St. Matthias Anglican Church opened in 1875, the first Protestant church building in the village. It was built on land donated by the Raynes family from their estate.

church building in the village of Notre-Dame-de-Grâce.

In 1872, the Montreal City Passenger Railway's horse car service was expanded westward to the outskirts of the new municipality at Atwater Avenue. By 1874, passengers could, for an additional five cents, transfer to an old omnibus which took them a few blocks west to Greene Avenue.

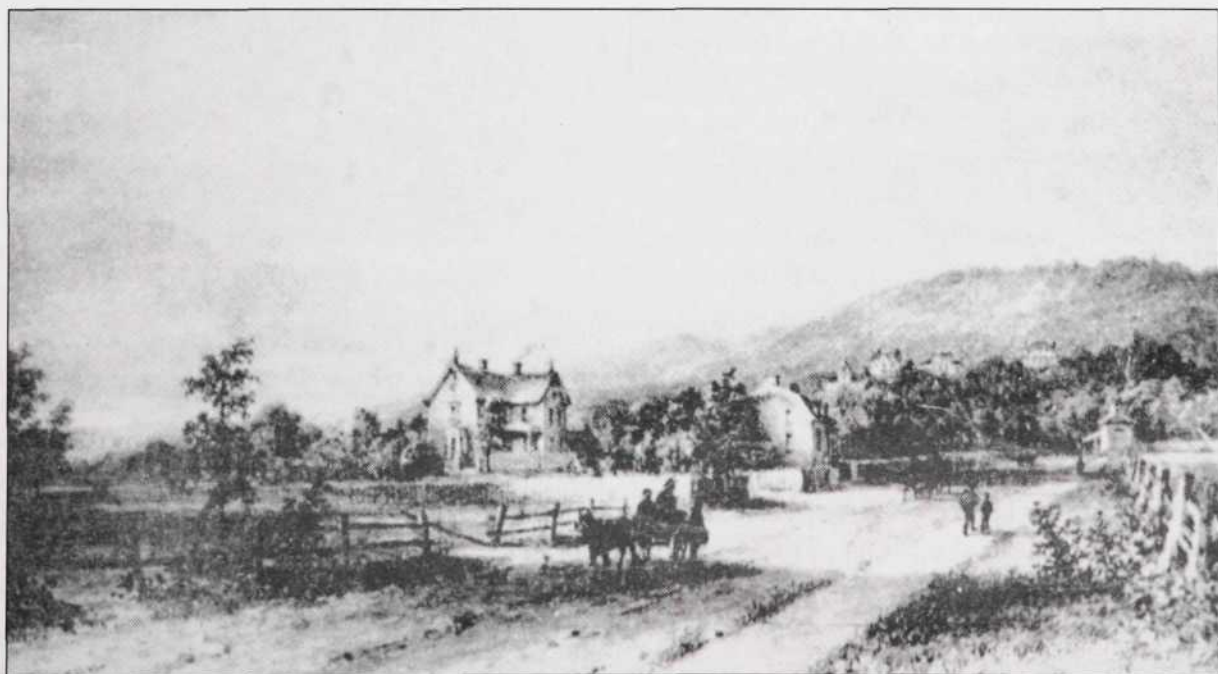
The streetcars were small, pulled by two horses. At the end of the line the driver would unhook the horses, drive them round to the back and hitch them on again. The back now became the front of the car and the horses would drive off, bells jingling on their harnesses.

A painting by James Duncan, an Irishman who settled in Montreal in 1827, shows Greene Avenue in the early 1870's. It includes the tollgate at Greene and Sherbrooke Street that

marked the entry to the village. Some large homes are scattered up the hillside but the overwhelming aspect is deeply rural.

The leisurely tenor of this village life, with its residences scattered among farms, orchards and open fields, and guarded by its tollgates, was abruptly shaken in 1873 by events outside its control. The city of Montreal was in the grip of a speculative expansion. Talk of a great railway system which would open up the country, with headquarters in Montreal, sparked a rush of wild ventures. A land boom seemed a "sure thing" and entrepreneurs were everywhere seeking options to buy. The village of Notre Dame de Grâce, adjacent to Montreal, became a prime target.

One man, William Weir, bought up 9,000 square feet of land below Côte St. Antoine Road at seven cents a foot. A syndicate, with two major partners, Messrs. Voligny and Drummond, acquired land from the order of



The tollgate guarding the eastern boundary of the village is in the middle foreground on the right. Painting of Greene Avenue by James Duncan, circa 1872-74.

Grey Nuns, west of Greene Avenue. A larger syndicate with six members bought land running up from Côte St Antoine Road almost to the summit. An estate recently put up for sale was quickly advertised as "divided into charming villa lots."

But as quickly as it began, the bubble of speculation in Notre Dame de Grâce burst as it did in Montreal. There were rumours of bribes to gain concessions connected with the great railway. The government of Sir John A. Macdonald fell and by the mid-1870s a severe depression had hit the area's economy. Some investors managed to ride out the economic storm, but others lost heavily. In Montreal six banks closed and bankruptcies were common.

In Notre Dame de Grâce, William Curry, a Montreal real estate agent who had paid a first instalment on an \$8,000 parcel of land from the Monk estate, had no option but to transfer it all back to its original owners. The Voligny-Drummond partnership, after spending some \$36,000 on its newly bought property, was forced to return the land to the Grey Nuns. And the six-man syndicate found itself left with more than half its lots unsold.

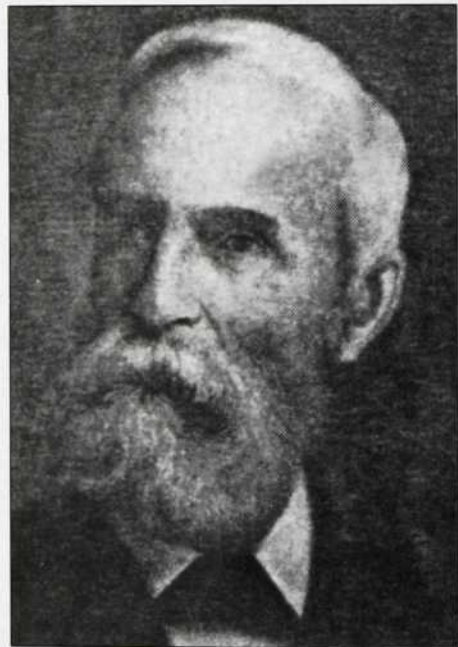
Several new streets were only half completed. A major roadway, Western Avenue — now de Maisonneuve Boulevard — planned to run for two miles along the horizontal dividing line between farms, was never finished.

Throughout this period of volatile real estate activity, the Council quietly got down to work; establishing by-laws, arguing about building standards and zoning, and debating how to finance a police force.

The first by-law set out specifications for wooden sidewalks. These were to be three planks wide, three inches thick and not less than

32 inches in length. By-law No. 2 proclaimed standards — unspecified — of "decency and good morals." And By-law No. 6 set out the division of the district into three voting areas to ensure adequate representation.

The strong temperance convictions of a large part of the Protestant sector were reflected in By-law No. 13 which prohibited the sale of intoxicating liquors, a prohibition which remained intact for almost 100 years.



The Hon. J. K. Ward, Mayor 1875-83, provided leadership through the years of wild land speculation and its collapse.

A tree-planting programme was set up and a comprehensive municipal plan was commissioned from Montreal engineer Joseph Rielle. This clearly showed the council's bias for residential over commercial or manufacturing interests, which were not prohibited but discouraged under restrictions that disallowed "the building of a hospital, slaughter house, soap factory or other work likely to create a nuisance."

In 1875, a new mayor, J.K. Ward, was elected and continued in office for eight years, providing leadership and direction to the community. The same year, the school board bought a house on Stanton Street, a small side street running at right angles off the Côte St. Antoine Road.

Stanton Street School was a two-storey brick building with two classrooms on either side of a centre hall. There were 30 students and two teachers who taught all classes up to the 7th or 8th grade. They were later joined by a third teacher, Miss A.Y. Ramsay.

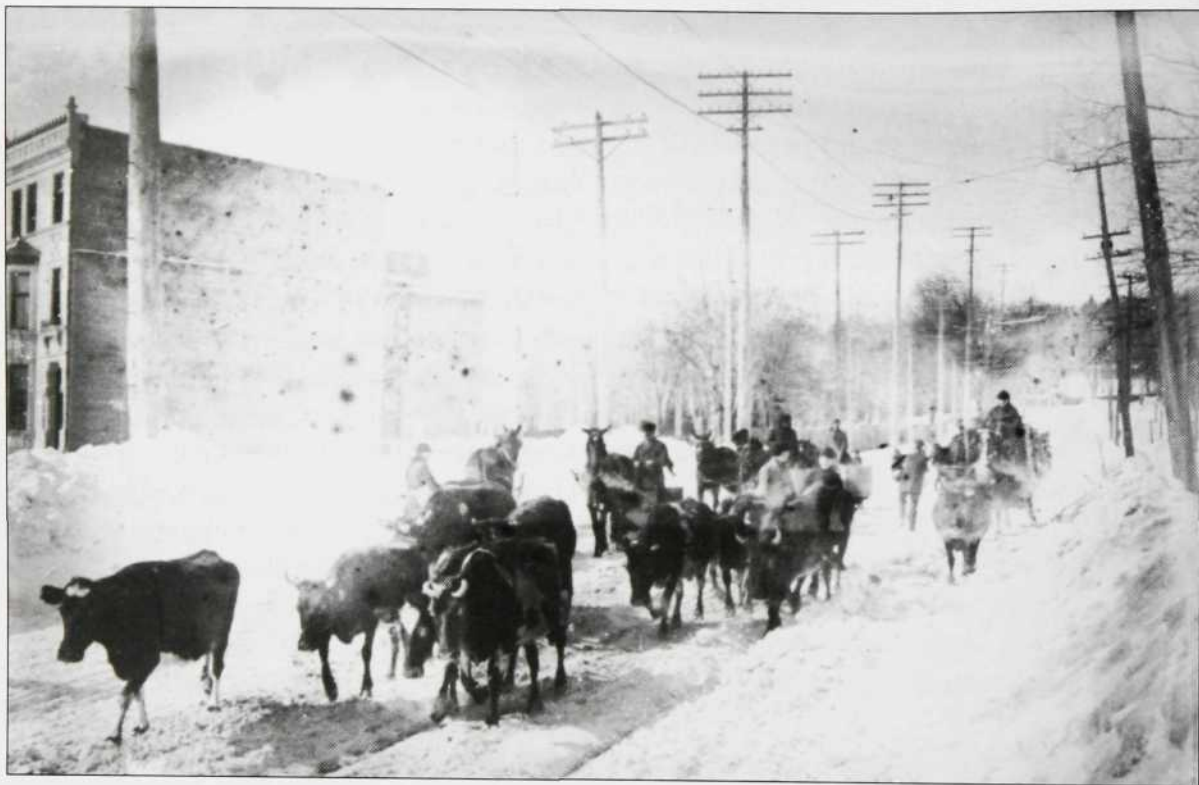
A fledgling police force was established, with P.C. Oliver as the community's first, and for some time only, full-time police officer for a population of some 500 residents. But council watchdogs kept a vigilant eye on life and property. In 1879, Captain Raynes was ordered, by council, to fill in and fence the last of the Indian wells, lying at the western edge of his Forden estate, following complaints that the wells constituted a potentially hazardous attraction to children at play.

The village's main activities were by now clustered within a few short blocks. Council meetings were held in the Stanton Street schoolhouse, only a block west of the old Simon Clarke home. Nearby was the village store, run by Mrs. Martin and her daughters on the ground floor of their home.

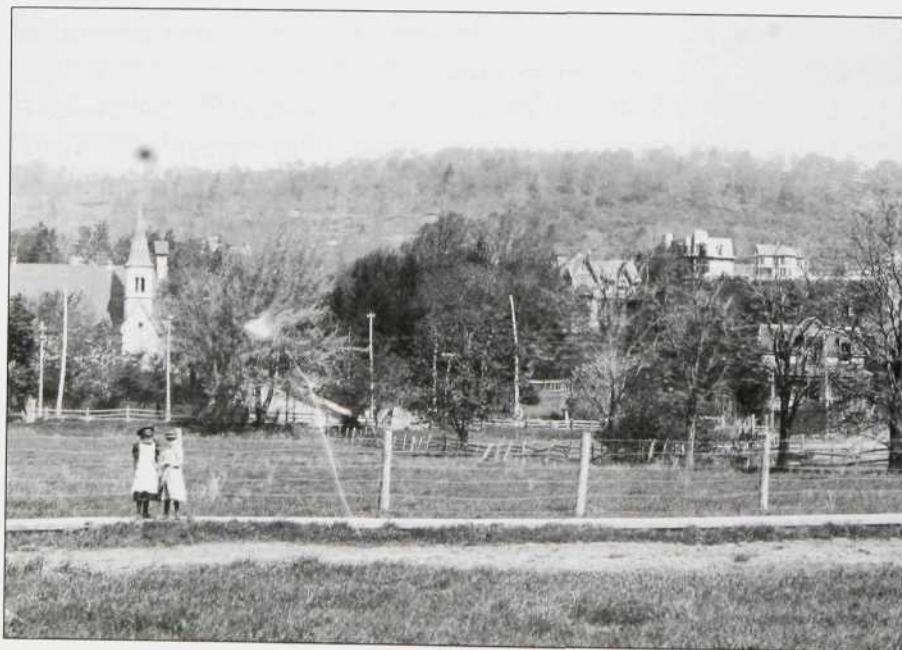
Within sight of both school and store stood the Mackay Protestant Institution for Deaf Mutes. When it opened in 1869 it was the first of its kind in the province. It was founded by two bachelor brothers, Joseph and Edward Mackay from Sutherland, Scotland, owners of a flourishing dry goods business. The Institution's first director was Thomas Widd, himself a deaf mute, who had trained as a teacher in Yorkshire, England. In 1877, when the Institution ran into financial difficulties it was rescued by Joseph Mackay who built a new facility on Décarie Boulevard, where the school still stands.

This concentration of organised activity in the east end of the village involved a small population, largely Protestant and English-speaking. Increasingly it attracted newcomers of similar background.

Agitation grew to have this section of the village recognized as a separate entity. Recognition of a sort came in 1876 when 80 per cent of the 5,000 acres comprising Notre Dame de Grâce was given its own identity as "Notre Dame de Grâce (sic) West" and an area of roughly 1,000 acres was sectioned off to become a new civic entity in the eastern end of the village. This set off a vigorous debate over the new district's name. "Westmount" had its supporters, but their motion did not carry and the new acreage, recognizable as that occupied by Westmount today, emerged as the "Village of Côte St. Antoine."



At milking times droves of cattle could be seen plodding along the roadways.



The area was changing from rural to urban. Church of St. Matthias on the left.

5

The Village II

Côte St. Antoine 1880-89

By the early 1880s the Village of Côte St. Antoine was a rural community of 125 houses and 800 residents. Farms and estates still occupied large areas of land with orchards and market gardens. Cattle grazed in the fields and at milking times they could be seen, herded in droves, plodding along the roadways. Their presence was common enough to require a new by-law charging all owners of cattle with the responsibility of preventing them from straying and disrupting traffic on the roads.

The continuing presence of tolls at the eastern and western edges of the village encouraged the sense of being cut off from the big city. The tollgates, one-storey octagonal buildings stood at Sherbrooke and Greene Avenue in the east and Claremont and Côte St. Antoine Road in the west.

Some estate and farm properties had disappeared, while others had been reduced in size in the real estate fever of the 1870s, but street development plans for the vacant land remained for the most part on paper. There were still wooden planks for sidewalks and ditches for drains. No big city services such as a water and sewage system or gas and electricity were available, though Montreal's first telephone directory, issued in 1880 by the Dominion Telegraph Company, listed four subscribers in Côte St. Antoine.

One anonymous memoir from the late 1870s and early 1880s records that "Our family moved from the City to Côte St. Antoine when it was only a country village ... Stanton Street

School facilities were spartan. The caretaker who lived nearby brought a galvanised pail of water and a tin cup every morning, and this was used by anyone wanting a drink. No one seemed to worry about germs then ... The Post Office was on the Côte Road at Argyle Avenue and was kept in our day by two old ladies on the ground floor of their house, and a very small store with it. This was the first and only store in the village, the nearest being otherwise in the city at Guy Street. The mail was brought by horsebus from the Montreal Post Office ... We lived in a house, one of only two, on Olivier above Western, which was being extended to the western end of the village at Claremont Avenue. Ours were the last houses to get water and gas from Montreal. Those living further west had to depend on wells for water and oil lamps for lighting."

Residents above the Côte St. Antoine Road had access to mountain springs, the "Indian" wells. Below Côte St Antoine Road at the western edge of the village, homeowners got their water supply from a spring at the lower end of the gully known as the "Glen," a wild deep cutting with steep precipitous sides thickly covered with trees, where, we're told, gypsies had once established a campsite.

A small pathway led from the spring through a birch wood up to higher ground, and along this path a dog cart carrying cans of water brought supplies to the few houses in the neighbourhood. A real estate company had built a wooden bridge across the gully, hoping to

sell housing lots in the area. But they had met with little success since public transportation had not yet extended that far west.

Homeowners ploughed the road in front of their properties. Sidewalks were non-existent on some streets but since traffic was minimal, pedestrians walked in the roadway with safety. When the roads were blocked after a heavy snowstorm and no deliveries of any kind were available, "good old-fashioned oatmeal was a steady diet, often three times a day, till the roads were open again."

But the long snowy winters and open spaces provided for many kinds of sport. There was skating on a large pond south of St. Catherine Street where a primitive hockey game was played using sticks cut in the woods. Any number could play and there were no special rules.

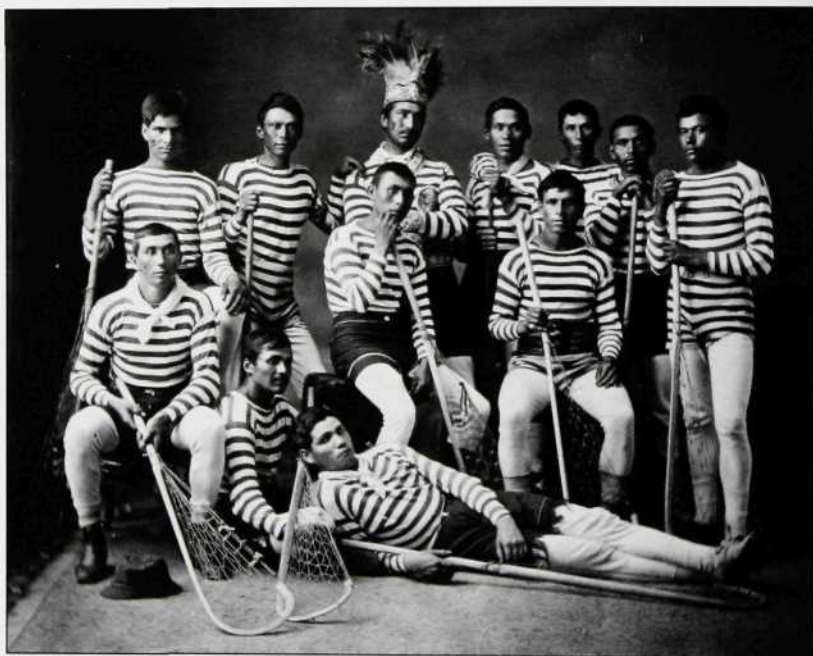
Tobogganers on improvised sleds found exciting natural runs down the steep inclines of Clarke and Mountain Avenues. Council minutes recorded the irritable reactions of some members of the public at the inconvenience caused by this activity, compelling ratepayers to make a long detour through the fields.

Snowshoeing was the most popular winter sport of all and in 1886, St. George's Snowshoe Club moved into the district. This club was founded in 1874 with members drawn from St. George's Cricket Club in Montreal and a militia unit, the No. 3 Company Victoria Rifles. Membership grew so quickly that a permanent clubhouse was built on the upper slopes of the

village, its large verandah overlooking the panoramic view to the far shore across the river. The location is now occupied by St. George's Elementary School.

The following year, on Christmas Eve 1887, the Heather Curling Club opened on Kensington Avenue. A little wooden building housed two sheets of ice that were kept in constant use by a membership of almost 200.

Another sport was organized in the summer of 1889 when a group of enthusiasts formed



Indian Lacrosse team. An intriguing new sport learned from the Indians.

the Côte St. Antoine Tennis Club. On rented land at the corner of Kensington Avenue and Sherbrooke Street they laid out four grass courts and two cinder courts and were soon taking part in matches with other tennis clubs in the region.

In 1887, the Montreal Amateur Athletic Association (MAAA) opened its new athletic grounds on 10 acres of land bought from the

Hallowell estate and the adjoining Irvine farm. Formed in 1881, the MAAA was a union of three sporting groups, the Montreal Snowshoe, Lacrosse and Bicycle Clubs. Snowshoe club members began playing lacrosse matches with the Iroquois teams from Caughnawaga (Kahnawake), and in 1856 they formed the first non-Indian lacrosse club in the world.

In 1880, the snowshoe and lacrosse clubs

The MAAA grounds were ample enough to provide for all the association's outdoor sports. There was a central playing field with a banked cinder track around its rim underlaid with drainage tiles. The field itself held room for a cricket crease and nine tennis courts, seven of grass and two of cinder.

A roofed grandstand ran the entire north side of the field. There were seven tiers of seats,

with a directors' pavilion slightly elevated in the centre. Spectators seated in the stands had a magnificent view beyond the grounds over the river to the south shore, with the Lachine rapids to the west and the Victoria Bridge to the east.

Track and field events were organised every spring and fall, attracting the best athletes in North America. A McGill professor, C.H. Mcleod, designed an electric timer and the MAAA became the first organization to use this new instrument to record lap and finishing times in track races. There were also bicycle races,



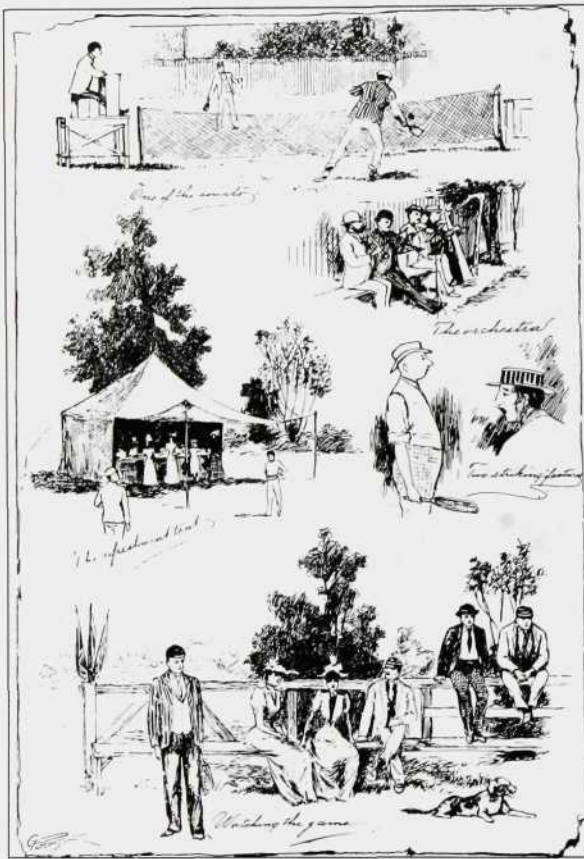
The Winged Wheel, emblem of the MAAA

MAAA Clubhouse. This sporting club gave a great impetus to many kinds of sport all over Montreal.

were joined by the Bicycle Club — the oldest bicycle club still in existence in North America. The bicycle became the inspiration for the Association's emblem "The Winged Wheel." The wheel represented the heart and hub of the association, the spokes its various branches, and the wings signified progress. Around the rim ran the motto — *Jungor et implear* (I am joined in order that I may be complete.)

ranging in distance from one half to five miles. And one was billed rather alarmingly as a "half clash on highwheelers without hands."

A clubhouse was fashioned beside the old Irvine farm cottage. Strict abstinence was observed with no liquor available or permitted on the grounds. The MAAA grounds became a major Montreal attraction and the Canadian



The Côte St. Antoine Tennis Club was organised in 1889.

Pacific Railway ran a special train from Windsor Station to the grounds on days when important sports meetings were scheduled.



Côte St. Antoine Academy, Stanton Street. 1886-93.

The MAAA proved a magnet for development in its neighbourhood. New streets were opened up. Western Avenue and St. Catherine Street were soon extended to the western edge of the village at Claremont Avenue.

The growing population included many young children resulting in an increase in school enrolment. To accommodate them, the Cote St. Antoine Academy, a handsome brick building with a capacity for 200 students, was built in 1886 on a parcel of land beside the Stanton Street School.

That same year, Alexander Hutchison, a councillor, a member of the school commission and a devoted Presbyterian, initiated the building of Melville Presbyterian Church with a capacity for 200 members. Larger than St. Matthias', it stood a block away along the Côte St. Antoine Road. Temperance was a major issue at Melville, one that was later to erupt in a serious confrontation and split the congregation in two.

Meanwhile at St. Matthias' a new rector, the Rev. Jervais Newnham, was installed. His journal records that "September 19, 1886 was my first Sunday as Rector and since there was no Rectory, I built my own house and in the following year the first Ladies' Aid was organised by my sister and myself."

One parishioner recalled: "We attended St. Matthias', a wooden, clapboard building with tubular chimes in the belfry." These chimes were saved from an ice palace built in Dominion Square during a winter carnival. When the ice structure was demolished, the chimes were carried off and installed in St. Matthias' belfry. The chimes were a group of hollow bars attached to a rope. When the rope was pulled a hammer struck the bars in a musical sequence "which would be heard very far away on a quiet Sunday."



Melville Presbyterian Church. Opened 1886, N.E. corner Côte St. Antoine Road and Stanton Street.

Close beside the church grew the fruit trees of the Raynes' Forden estate. "From midsummer well through the autumn there were for the picking St. Lawrence, Fameuse and Russet apples. Also we could duck out of the low church windows and pick sickle pears and damson plums. Since the usual Sunday apparel was a sailor suit or dress, the blouse of which was ideal for storing away fruit, these

could be tucked out of sight to be eaten on the way home from church or choir practice."

Another church, a modest affair, suddenly appeared one Sunday in 1885 in a remote western corner of the village. One week earlier this had been the site of an untended field of weeds and wild grasses. Now a steady file of worshippers were seen entering a completed building.

It transpired that a few Methodist families had recently arrived in the village and decided to build their own chapel. The group was led by the Rev. George Douglas, George Vipond and George Bishop. From the hauling of the lumber to the nailing of the last roof tile the little church was completed in the brief space of seven days.

It was christened "The Tabernacle" but was often affectionately referred to as "the church of the three Georges." From its modest beginnings this little community went on to play an increasingly important role in the religious life of the whole district.



The usual Sunday apparel was a sailor suit or dress, the blouse of which was ideal for storing apples and pears picked from the Raynes' orchards.



'The Tabernacle' opened in 1885. This little Methodist chapel, at the corner of Lansdowne and Western (de Maisonneuve) avenues was completed in seven days. First fire ladder wagon in front.

By now Montreal's economy was on the rebound. Sir John A. Macdonald's party was back in power, the great trans-continental railway was on track with Montreal the hub of the nation's business. By the end of the decade the population of the Village of Côte St. Antoine had soared to over 3,000.

This was gratifying, but it brought problems. Chief of these was the provision of an adequate water supply, but as late as 1889, when the question was raised in council — "In view of the lack of a ready supply of water what is to be done in case of fire?" — the lame reply was a suggestion that the Village buy a few fire extinguishers!

The police force was still a solitary affair, though residents contended that the current police officer, John Kerr, his big stick and his Newfoundland dog were as formidable a trio as any three-man force.

Residents complained loudly and often about the state of the roads. In 1884, a Mr. Evans sued the council for \$1,000 for injuries to his son and his horse because of the appalling conditions of the roads. Not much later, he was suing again, this time for \$250, after falling into an excavation site and then later again, he complained of a bad smell from all the roadwork constantly in progress.

Real progress, however, was reported on other fronts. A city hall staff member, Mr. Robertson, had invented a new piece of machinery for snow removal. In future, roads were to be ploughed and rolled by workmen, paid at a rate of \$3 a day, thus relieving householders of this responsibility.

In 1886, the tollgates were finally dismantled. They had proved a major irritant for some time to residents who were required to pay a fee each time they re-entered the district; five cents when on foot, 10 cents if driving a two-wheel vehicle, and 25 cents for a four-wheel wagon or carriage. In lieu of the dues, which had been collected individually, the council agreed to pay the Turnpike Trust, which maintained the Côte St. Antoine Road, the sum of \$600 a year, payable in quarterly instalments.

Altogether the work of the council had so expanded that it justified the setting up of separate committees to handle particular issues — roads, light, police, finance, and a Board of Health. Council members began to talk hopefully of a new Town Hall, but this was dismissed as an unnecessary expense and municipal business continued to be handled in the adequate, if unimposing, spaces of the former Stanton Street School.

6

The Town I

Côte St. Antoine 1890-94

"Any municipality with a population greater than two thousand may pass a resolution authorising the presentation of a petition to the Government to be incorporated as a city or town. After certain formalities have been satisfied such as declaring the name, limits and population of the proposed city or town, the Government will issue letters patent confirming such a petition has been granted." Cities & Towns Act, 1890, Quebec Legislative Assembly

Well, here was the Village of Côte St. Antoine in 1890 with a population far above the required minimum and ambitious to improve its municipal standing. Its police force might be limited, its fire department barely existent and its municipal buildings hard to find, but still its hardworking council, meeting in the local schoolhouse, was busy with plans for an expansion its members felt to be imminent.

A petition was forwarded, the necessary formalities posted, and in due course, letters patent confirmed the new status of the village.

A debate over the name stirred a lively controversy. "More euphonious and romantic" alternatives were proposed. Names such as Glen Royal, Avonmount, Mount Avon, Glen Avon, and Avon Glen, all had their sponsors, but in the end, Côte St. Antoine remained in place.

A "Town" was expected to provide urban facilities, but the canny council aimed at keeping taxes low, if possible no more than half those exacted in Montreal. As a beginning a remarkable contract for a water supply was

negotiated with the Montreal Water and Power Company which set rates at 40% of those prevailing in the city. Even when certain other obligations were added, the total was equal to roughly half the city rate.

By 1893, land below Côte St. Antoine Road was subdivided, particularly in the eastern part of the town. All existing streets had water mains and were lit by electricity; gas and telephone services were available soon after.

A new by-law of 1890 established a fare tariff for cab services. For 15 minutes or less, a one-horse cab ride for one or two persons cost 25 cents. Prices rose if more people were carried or if the cab had two horses. There was a charge of 25 cents for trunks but travelling bags, valises, boxes or parcels carried by hand were free. This often led to an overflow of containers of imaginative material and bulk which fell short of being called a "trunk."

Canadian Pacific trains had begun to run west, with a brief stop at the bottom of Abbott Avenue. But, as a resident of the street complained, there was "no facility for embarking or discharging passengers, and especially is this apparent in the case of ladies who have to climb on or jump cars from the level of the track. A small platform would obliterate the trouble with little expense."



David McNicoll, CPR
Vice-President



Abbott Avenue station. It was unsatisfactory and was moved west.

This matter was already in hand following a letter from David McNicoll, CPR General Passenger Agent, to T.G. Shaughnessy, Vice-President of the CPR which read in part, "Côte St. Antoine is growing in importance ... My own opinion is that Côte St. Antoine will some day in the near future stand in the same relationship to us in Montreal as North Toronto does for Toronto business." As a result, the stop at Abbott Avenue acquired not just a small platform but a well-designed train station as well.

Most important perhaps for the growth of the town was the extension of streetcar services. In 1892, a loopline was run through the lower half of the district, adjacent to Montreal's city limit. Service was frequent, with trams every five minutes during the day and even greater frequency in the mornings between six and eight a.m. and again in the evenings between five and seven p.m. Fares were five cents a ticket, 25 for one dollar.

In 1892, the first electric street car caused great excitement. Its roar could be heard for

whole city blocks. Sparks shot clear across the road at certain points of contact, and a box with a transformer placed beside the driver occasionally exploded with a loud bang and a bright flash. Many an anxious parent counselled their offspring: "Never get in one of those things, they're not safe."

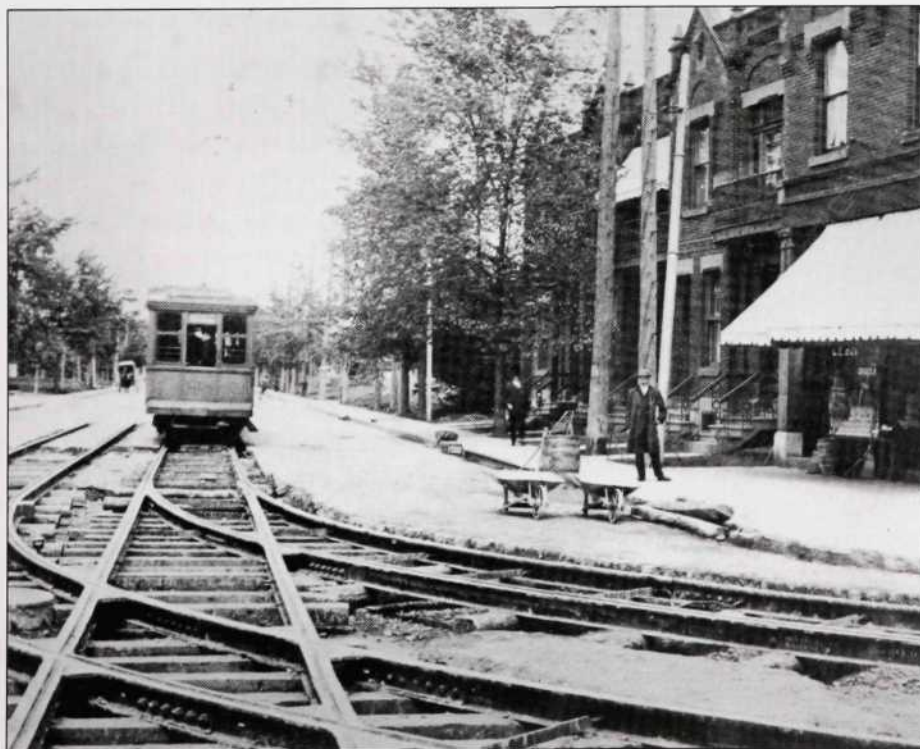
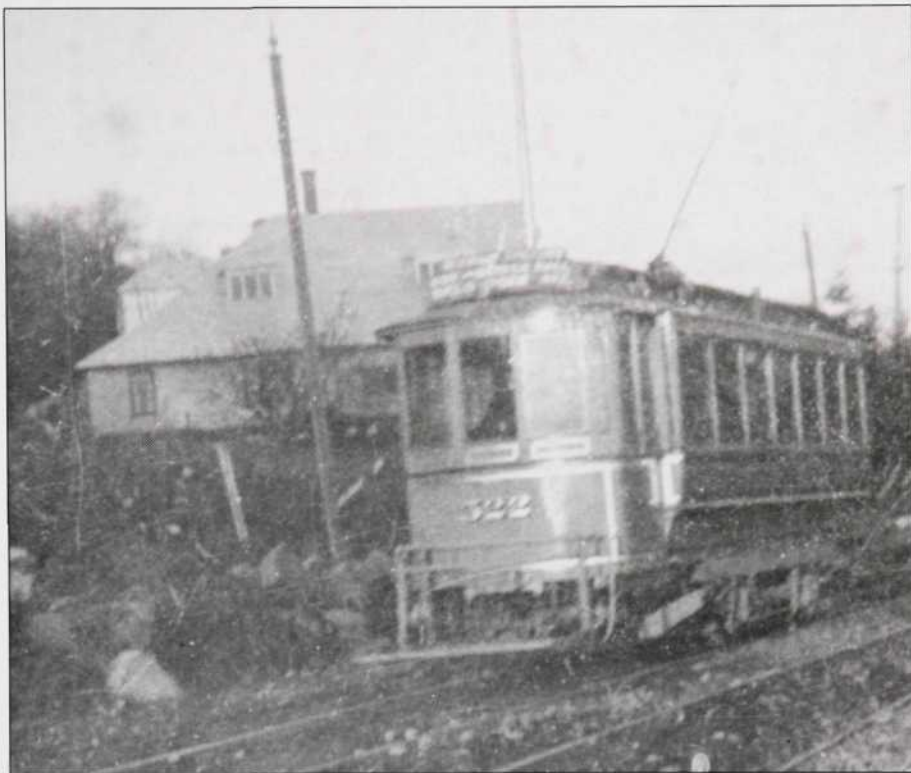
But with familiarity public alarm subsided. Rides provided the new experience of social encounters in an informal setting. Men chewed tobacco, though a bilingual sign across the front of the car strictly forbade spitting.

In winter the car was heated by a stove in the middle of the aisle, its chimney poking through the car roof. Every now and then the conductor, who collected the fares, would open up the stove and, cheered on by the passengers, tip in a shovel full of coal.

Housing development followed the streetcars all along their route. In 1893, after years of delay, Sherbrooke Street was lengthened to run through the town from its eastern to its western limits and beyond. The following year streetcar tracks were laid there as part of the loopline and Sherbrooke Street became the town's main artery.

As zoning regulations were eased to allow for commercial development, stores began to cluster around the main streetcar stopping points at the eastern and western ends of the town. Grocery stores, a butcher, drygoods, stationery, candy and toy shops all opened for business. In 1894, the Merchants Bank of Halifax, later the Royal Bank, was set up at the corner of Greene Avenue, the first financial institution in the town.

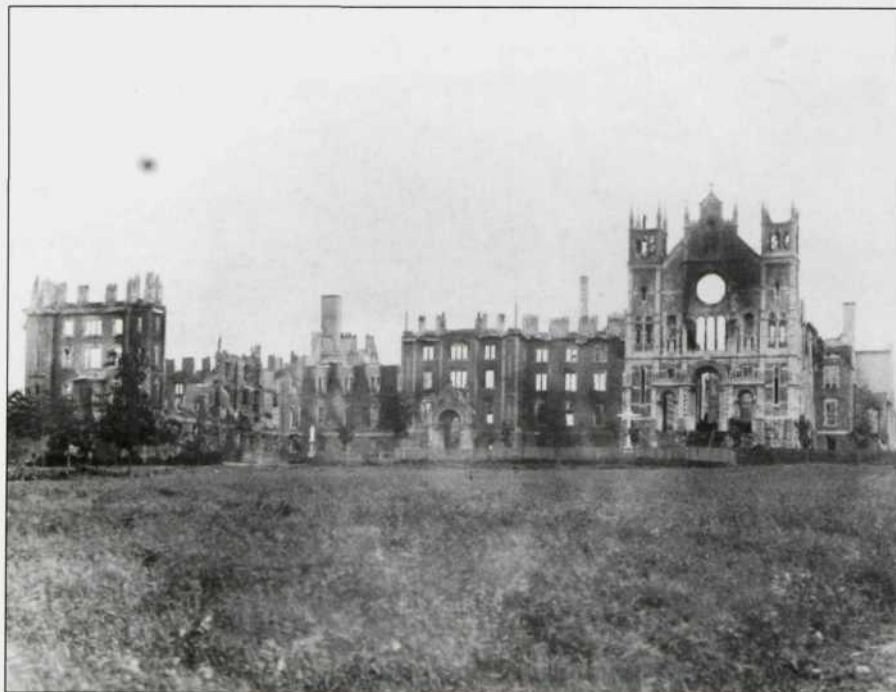
*A new street, called
The Boulevard was
opened up and a
streetcar line
installed to service
the upper levels of
the Town.*



*The first electric
streetcars caused great
excitement and some
alarm.*



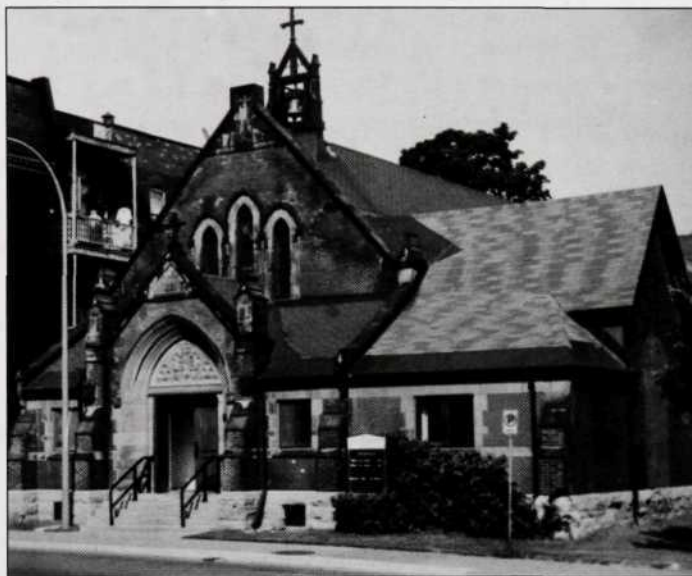
Mother House of the Congrégation de Notre Dame built on the grounds of the Villa Maria, 1876-80. It was destroyed in a catastrophic fire in 1893.



The Mother House after the fire. Discouraged by the extent of the loss, the Sisters returned to their base in old Montreal.

All this activity was concentrated in the lower part of the town. It was time to give attention to the upper levels. If this area were to be made accessible a streetcar route there was urgently needed. Negotiations with the Sulpicians for permission to open a road

part of the town. With support from the mother church, Montreal's St. James the Apostle, the Côte St. Antoine group built a charming "Chapel of Ease", later named "Church of the Advent," at the corner of Wood and Western avenues.



Church of the Advent, opened 1892 at Wood and Western avenues. Sponsored as a Chapel of Ease by Montreal's St. James the Apostle.

through part of the Priests' Farm had been at a standstill for some time. But finally the incumbent mayor, J.H. Redfern, reached an agreement with Father Leroux, the Superior of the order, in 1895. The new street, called "The Boulevard," provided ample passage for a streetcar line to service the upper levels of the town.

The growing population needed new churches. They were established, as before, under the sponsorship of larger congregations based in Montreal.

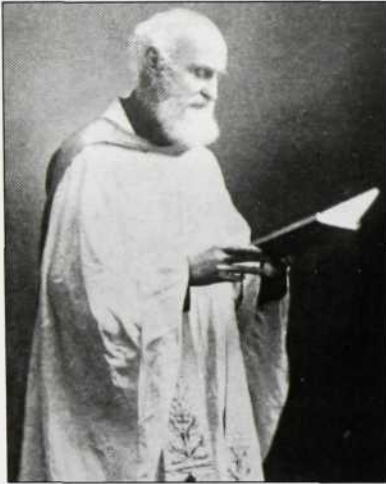
A few High Anglican families began holding services in a rented room on Staynor Avenue in the lower

On Advent Sunday 1892, the church was opened, with some 35 families in the initial congregation. The rector was the legendary Canon Jacob Ellegood, "Patriarch of the Anglican Diocese," who is credited with founding several Montreal churches. His curate said of him, "When he stood at the altar to pronounce the benediction one could easily sweep away the centuries and fancy Moses or Aaron blessing the flock."

Canon Ellegood's name is linked with another Westmount Anglican Church, St. Stephen's, which opened for worship in January 1903 at the corner of Dorchester and Atwater avenues. This congregation had a turbulent history beginning in the 1840s in Griffintown (Pointe St. Charles) near the waterfront, where



St. Stephen's Anglican Church had a turbulent history before moving from Pointe St. Charles to Atwater and St. Catherine.



Canon Jacob Ellegood. "When he stood at the altar one could sweep away the centuries and fancy Moses or Aaron blessing the flock."

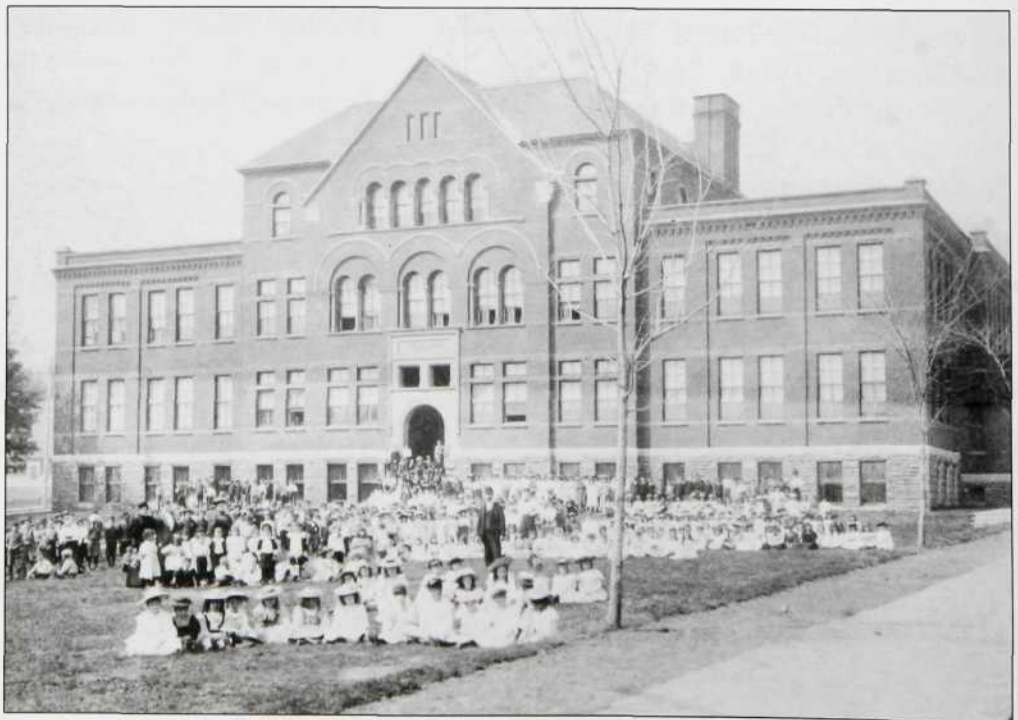
the Rev. Canon Ellegood was pastor. Through the terrible years of the plague, 1847 and 1848, he ministered tirelessly to the sick and dying. Later, during the worst of the recurring floods to hit the low-lying area, he was seen wading waist high through the rising waters to get help for his marooned parishioners. Canon Ellegood later moved on to other ministries. St. Stephen's

relocated to higher ground in Côte St. Antoine.

Just beyond the Town's borders, on the Villa Maria grounds of the old Monkland Estate, the magnificent Mother House of the Congrégation de Notre Dame, built in the years 1876-1880, was destroyed by fire. Miraculously, the library's 4,000 volumes were saved but the building itself was a total loss. Pending a decision on a new location the Order returned to its St. Jean Baptiste address in Montreal.

Another newcomer was the French Methodist Institute which built an impressive structure on Greene Avenue. This was an institution founded in 1888 in Montreal as a home for French Protestant girls. When it moved to Côte St. Antoine the following year, it had an enrolment of 60 boys and 40 girls. The institute had a distinguished faculty and maintained a high academic standard until it closed in the early 1920s.

New Côte St. Antoine Academy opened 1894 around the corner from the earlier building.



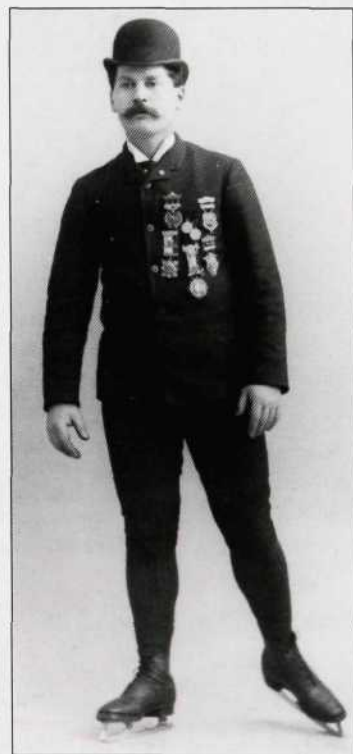
A sense of movement, of expansion, could be seen and felt everywhere. The Côte St. Antoine Academy, built in 1886, was quickly outgrowing its capacity. The school had acquired a proud academic reputation. Academy students, male and female, were given every encouragement to continue their studies as long as possible. Its "Associate in Arts" certificate was recognized by both McGill and Bishop's universities, and opened the way to university admission and a Bachelor of Arts degree.

Enthusiastic support for the best in education, available to all, reflected the deep conviction of many residents, especially those of Scottish background. Standards of education in Scotland had reached a particularly high level since the 18th century when Edinburgh, with its philosophers, educators, writers and theorists was looked on as the "Athens of the North." From Scotland, too, came the new economic theories that set commerce in the forefront as a civilising force in society, providing the wealth that would in turn stimulate the arts and sciences. The champions of these movements were to be the middling ranks of society, "being too rich to be servile to the great yet too poor to tyrannise the humble."

With scholastic horizons and student enrolment expanding, the Côte St. Antoine Academy was in urgent need of larger premises. A parcel of land on the next block was acquired and a much larger building erected. The new school opened in April 1894. It had room for 600 students, three times the capacity of the old academy, and cost \$75,000. A few years later a former student, Muriel Brodie, who had graduated from McGill with a B.A. in 1899, returned to teach in the new academy.

The old academy building was sold to the city council and began a new life as a combined town hall and a police and fire station. James P. Harrison was Chief of Police as well as Chief of the Fire Department and Sanitary Inspector. His complement of two constables also doubled as firemen when needed. Although their equipment consisted of only one horse cart and a hose reel, they inspired greater confidence than the hand-held fire extinguishers available until then.

Over at the MAAA sports grounds, now accessible by streetcar, a major new attraction was developing. One winter's night when the moon was full, it was observed shining on a patch of glare ice, silvered like a mirror. The next day members laid ambitious plans for a large skating rink. When completed the rink measured 330 by 150 feet, bigger by far than any rink in the neighbourhood. Twenty lights were installed for the nighttime skating, and on certain days two military bands, those from the Victoria Rifles and the Royal Scots, played for dancing. If the rink was to be closed due to bad weather or poor ice conditions, a red light, visible from a great distance, glowed from the top of a high pole.



Louis Rubenstein become world speed-skating champion in 1890.

The ice rink proved sensationally successful, the association's biggest money maker. Other clubs were drawn to make use of this exceptional facility. Montreal's Tuque Bleue Club built a track around the outer edge of the rink for speed skating, with seven laps equal in distance to one mile. It was open six days a week and, with arc lights already installed, remained open after dark.

The sport received a burst of publicity when Louis Rubenstein, a well known Montreal athlete and member of the MAAA — he was later president — became world speed skating

The Tuque Bleue Club next went to work on a toboggan run for the town. The club planned a run which followed a hair-raising route down the steepest streets before shooting across Sherbrooke Street to end in a haybank at St. Catherine Street. A turn at the bottom of the run acted as a brake but it remained a sport for stout hearts and steady nerves.

This generous use of land for sport in a small municipality that still encompassed pockets of farmland, kept the town council busy balancing the demands of increasing urbanisation with those of an earlier rural lifestyle.



MAAA skating rink. It proved sensationally successful and helped substantially towards paying off the club's debts.

champion in 1890. In 1894, the Canadian speed skating championships were held on the MAAA rink. Attendance at the event was huge, 9,000 inside the grounds and 1,000 more outside, perching where they could, on rooftops, in trees, and up poles along the CPR tracks.

Some residents found the country image too homespun and the contrasts embarrassing. On Mrs. Murray's property, Daisy the cow could be seen cropping the rich grass, while along the streets men were setting up poles and stringing wires for the installation of modern

facilities. Could we not, asked one resident plaintively at a council meeting, at least do away with all cow stables in town?

But others were distressed at the pace at which new roads, houses, shops and streetcar lines were encroaching on open land. When the Côte St. Antoine Improvement Committee was set up in 1890, its first major recommendation was that the town acquire an option on a 16-acre tract of undeveloped land south of the newly extended Sherbrooke Street, for use as a public park. The advice was accepted, and the land, "pleasantly wooded, with a

the area's gradual development from forest to city park.

Meanwhile, early attitudes entrenched in the community's first by-laws were reinforced. Requests for liquor licences were regularly brought forward and as regularly rejected. "We don't want saloons and we won't have them," declared Mayor Redfern. "Whenever an application for a licence comes in we just throw it under the table!"

It was during Mayor Redfern's tenure that the town's name again came up for discussion.



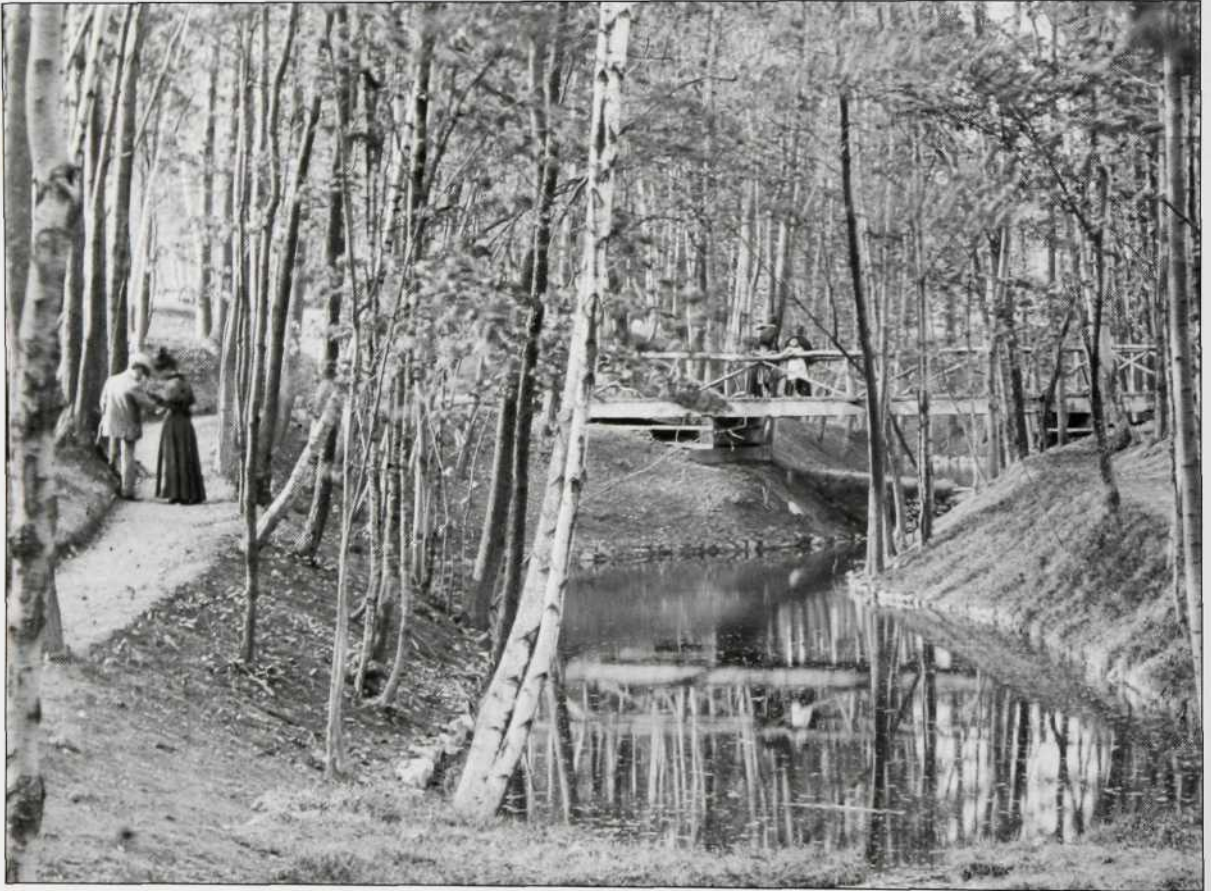
Speed skating at the MAAA rink. Hallowell Street in the background, circa 1900.

portion of the original forest, traversed by a picturesque glen," became the district's first park. James Robert Walker, who served in local government for twelve years as councillor and later as mayor, was prominent in helping guide

"Westmount" was once more brought forward as being the most appropriate but there was vigorous opposition. One resident, Mr. Suckling, said he thought Westmount "a stuffy, starchy, self-righteous name, a poor exchange

for beautiful Côte St. Antoine with its lovely elms, maples, tree shaded roads and green fields." A lively debate followed with "Westmount" emerging the winner by a slim margin.

In 1894, Council was granted permission by the Legislature to make the change and the following year, with Mayor Redfern presiding, the Town of Côte St. Antoine officially became the Town of Westmount.



The municipality's first park "pleasantly wooded, with a portion of the original forest, traversed by a picturesque glen."

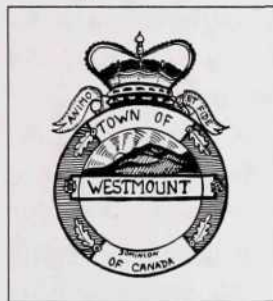
Left: James Robert Walker, Mayor 1898-99. As Councillor he guided the development of the park.

7

The Town II

Westmount 1895-1908

The town adapted quickly to its new name and adopted a new municipal badge. "Westmount", it was generally agreed, accurately fitted the district's geography. It also



A new municipal badge

reflected the changes that, over the years, had created an English speaking majority.

The Côte St. Antoine Academy was renamed Westmount Academy and celebrated the occasion with a concert in

the school's new assembly hall, under the auspices of the Men's Guild of St. Matthias' Church.

Residents were able to read all about it in the first issue of a new publication, the

Westmount Weekly News and Westend Advertiser, which sold for one cent. The recital, the paper informed its readers, was varied and uniformly excellent. There was a piano solo, "Reflections of Home," followed by a recital of well-known songs such as "She wandered on the Mountainside." Then Mrs. Belle Rose Enslie of the Montreal School of Elocution, recited several items including, by special request, "Saunders MacGlashan's Courtship." The report concluded that, "The audience got full value for its money since the programme found such favour, that after the opening pianoforte solo every number was encored, and in each case the performer gracefully responded, so that it was in fact a double programme, one just as good as the other."

At the police station, the constables were given smart uniforms modelled on those of the British "Bobby." The well-known helmet, with its tall rounded top, was issued in blue for winter wear and in white for summer — when it was regularly whitened and placed on posts outside the station to dry.



Town Hall staff 1897. Police and Fire Chief Harrison is standing flanked by four policemen wearing hats modelled on those of the British 'Bobby.'

Pure water was supplied by a Montreal company and a municipal power plant was installed using a remarkable new system, the first in Canada, which drew its power from burning garbage waste. The

whole plant was tucked discreetly in the hollow of the Glen.

Major changes had taken place in the terrain all around the Glen. Lac St. Pierre and the surrounding marshy swamps had been drained. The former swampland was covered by a huge train yard with 50 acres of track for shunting and stationing trains. The CPR train station, built in 1896 at the foot of Abbott Avenue, had been forced to balance on such a steep grade that the wooden platforms on the far side of the tracks were built up on piles. This was too hazardous an arrangement for the

At the upper level, serviced by a second streetcar line, development moved more slowly, with zoning restrictions imposing larger areas of open ground between houses and prohibiting commercial properties.

It was the streetcars that brought shops and offices crowding into the two main commercial zones at each end of the town, Greene Avenue to the east and Sherbrooke Street near Victoria in the west. Stores, for the most part, were family-owned and run and became familiar ground to both parents and children.



Westmount CPR station at Victoria Avenue opened in 1907.

long term and in 1907, the station was moved farther west to a more accessible site at the foot of Victoria Avenue.

Regular public transport was making it easier to reach Westmount from Montreal, and once within the town it was possible to reach every part of the district by streetcar. The loop around the lower town was proving to be "a service better than contracted for," noted the council minutes.

One of the earliest to open on Greene Avenue was John Smithers' boot and shoe store. Smithers, the son of a farmer, opened for business in 1890 and the store continued in family hands for over 80 years. Whole families, from the smallest child to the oldest adult, were fitted with their summer and winter footwear there, and the store also supplied the regulation boots and shoes for the municipality's police and firemen.

Nils Ohman, a jeweller and watchmaker from Sweden, was another whose Greene Avenue store became a local landmark. Everyone took their clocks and watches to be

fixed there but, residents recall, "it was a treasure house just to visit and Mr. Ohman was a wonderful gentleman, unhurried, courtly and courteous."

Mr. Senecal, the tailor, is also fondly remembered. "He received customers so graciously in his narrow shop, carefully dusting off a chair before he allowed a client to sit down." Customers could also be seated at the grocer's, the butcher's and the dry goods stores while giving their orders, which were delivered

with dispatch by horse and cart, or perhaps by a young boy on a bicycle.

Outstanding among the food stores were the premises of Dionne and Dionne. In 1900, two cousins, Thomas, a grocer, and Georges, a butcher, each invested \$500 — a large sum for those days — in a joint venture. Their store, splendidly appointed, equipped and stocked, quickly acquired a reputation for the quality of its goods and the efficiency of its service. Of the 60 employees, three or four were kept busy just taking orders which were processed to customers across the country as far west as Vancouver.

There was little pre-packaging of dairy and other products. Cheese and butter were cut as required, the cuts accurately measured by the eye. Vinegar, molasses and other liquids were ladled into pint or quart bottles which were retrieved, washed, dried and re-used. Many years later Dionne and Dionne's store moved east into Montreal, servicing a clientèle living in the elegant "Square Mile" on Mount Royal. One long time employee, Georges Richard,

then set up his own store in Westmount, "Westmount Grocery," at the corner of Sherbrooke and Grosvenor, drawing a faithful Westmount following with him.

More banks were opening. The Royal Bank — formerly the Merchants Bank of Halifax — now had two branches, one in each of the two shopping zones, opened in the years 1903-04. At the same time a branch of the Bank of Montreal was built at the corner of Greene and Western avenues, with an impressive sculpture of the bank's crest over the entrance doorway. "The bank was built after we came to live on Elm Avenue," recalled Westmounter Eva Vineberg. "Sir Gerald Aylmer, he was plain Gerald Aylmer then, was the first manager. He gave me the first numbered account at the bank. When we came to live on Elm Avenue, it was all fields nearby, no houses, just open fields. In the summer the military would bivouac there, pitch their tents and graze their horses in the fields. It was very exciting and colourful to see."



Dionne and Dionne opened 1900 and quickly acquired a reputation for superb goods and exceptional service.



Royal Bank opened 1904 on St. Catherine and Greene

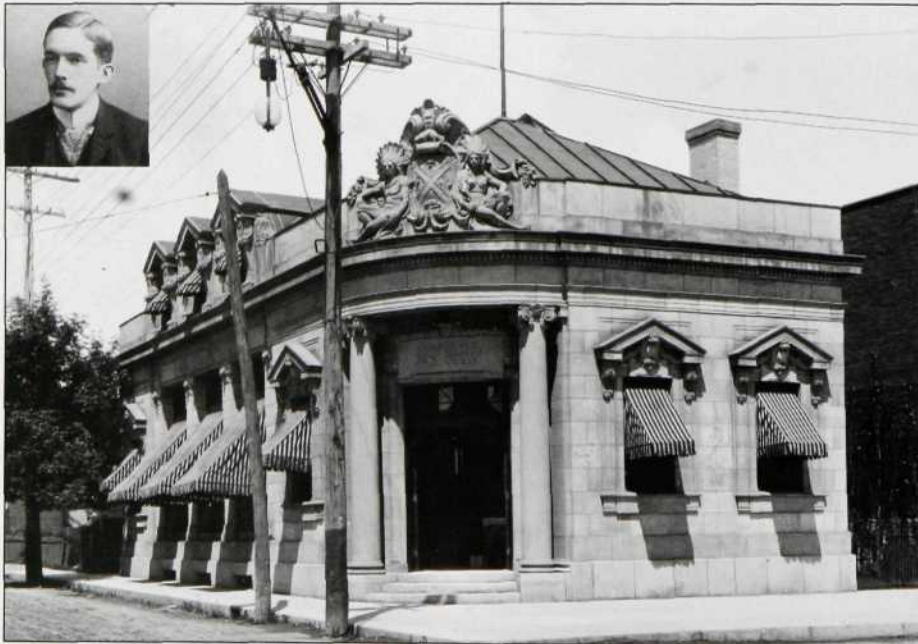
The post office was moved from the house on Côte St. Antoine Road into a small brick building on St. Catherine Street but, recalled

one resident, it still retained a personal relationship with many of its customers. "That's where I did my first banking. The space wasn't any bigger than a small room. There was a handle, not a knob or latch exactly, that you lifted to go inside. We stood on tiptoe at the counter to hand in this cheque we got at Christmas from the family. We put some kind of mark on it and the postmistress, she knew us, she did everything else."

Five of the "Indian wells" were still operating, each now ringed with a protective balustrade. Mrs. Alexander Murray, who lived at the edge of the Murray estate, which became Murray Park, had refused to have water pipes installed in her home because she feared it would unsettle her numerous cats, and could be seen each day coming to fetch her drinking water from one of the wells.

There were still pockets of farmland and

orchards as well as a few large estates but these were shrinking year by year, dissolving into streets of terraced housing, semi-detached homes and small villas. Apartment blocks, however, were frowned upon. Members of council were agreed that "the colonization and gathering under one roof of many families should be prohibited"



*Bank of Montreal, opened 1904. Northeast corner, Greene and Western avenues.
Insert: Gerald Aylmer, first manager of Bank of Montreal branch in Westmount.*

because it was “not in the interests of the city as a whole to have more than one family under one roof.”

The importance of parkland within an urban community had been a subject of continuing debate for some years. The issue was highlighted in Montreal by the discovery of the dramatic erosion of Mount Royal, the city’s most distinctive geographic feature. It mattered not at all that it was only 700 feet high. It had been christened Mount Royal early in its history, and “royal” it remained in the hearts of Montrealers. When it became known that its trees were being cut down and sold for firewood, public anger forced the Quebec legislature to pass an act in 1869 authorising expropriation of the mountain for development as a public park. Development was entrusted to the Olmstead firm of landscape architects which achieved an outstanding result, deftly blending the mountain’s natural features with cultivated areas.

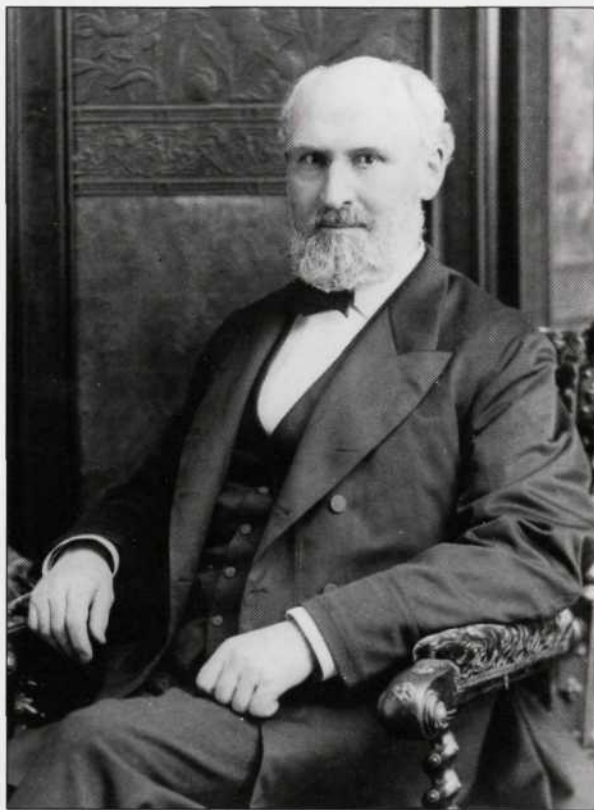
Frederick Law Olmsted was the most influential and imaginative landscape architect in North America and had become world famous for his creation of New York’s Central Park. “The possession of natural scenery in a city” Olmsted wrote, “is an influence of the highest curative value, a form of wealth as practical as that of wholesome air, pure water or sunlight unobstructed by smoke or fog.”

Westmount also had its “mountain park,” a unique feature for so small an urban community. To preserve this wild woodland crowning the summit of the town, the council approached the Olmsted firm, now in the charge of Frederick’s sons, John Charles and Frederick Law Jr., who submitted plans for a Summit Park, but though Councillor (formerly mayor) Redfern urged strongly that the plan

be accepted, other councillors considered the initial cost of \$1,000 too high, and the proposal was dropped.

While Westmount’s council debated the matter of the summit land, Sir William Macdonald entered the picture. Sir William was an eccentric millionaire who had become McGill University’s most generous benefactor. He had made a huge fortune in the tobacco industry though he himself did not smoke and considered it “a filthy habit.”

In 1895, he began to buy up land, farms and estates on and around the Westmount summit. He then presented the property to



Sir William Macdonald bought the “summit” and gave it to McGill University for the use of the Botany department.

McGill University (officially called “The Royal Institution for the Advancement of Learning”) for use by the department of Botany.

The university found added uses for the terrain. McGill's Survey School set up the "Macdonald Observatory" on the summit and used the land as a base of operations with a mess hall, several small shacks and a high tower, as well as a campground for students. Meridian telescopes were set up on large blocks of stone, several of which still remain embedded in the ground.

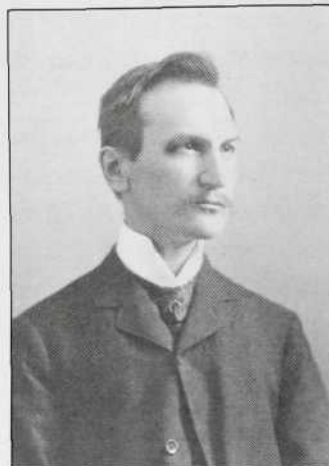
Without William Macdonald's fortuitous and generous intervention the summit land would quickly have been swallowed up by residential development during the town's years of expansion. The reprieve allowed council to absorb some of the new concepts of urban living that were surfacing in Europe and North America.

Along with ideas of the "City Beautiful" promoted by Olmsted and others, there was the "Garden City." Ebenezer Howard claimed to be the inventor of this concept. It evoked the ideal of a small community of about 30,000 living in an area roughly 1,000 acres in size, (the size of Westmount), with its own cultural and recreational facilities. "Town and country must be married," wrote Howard, "and out of

this joyous union will spring a new hope, a new life, a new civilisation." Howard was convinced that "mankind was moving toward a new era of brotherhood and the Garden City would be the only fitting environment for the humanity of the future!"

In Westmount, William Douw Lighthall was particularly responsive to these new ideas. He served as mayor of the town in the years 1901-03 and was a participant in virtually every decision involving aspects of Westmount's direction and growth.

The Lighthall family, of Dutch descent, had emigrated from New York in 1830, with every succeeding generation educated to be fluently bilingual in English and French. As a novelist, poet, historian, lawyer, antiquarian, specialist in Indian lore and customs, champion of veterans' rights and foremost authority on

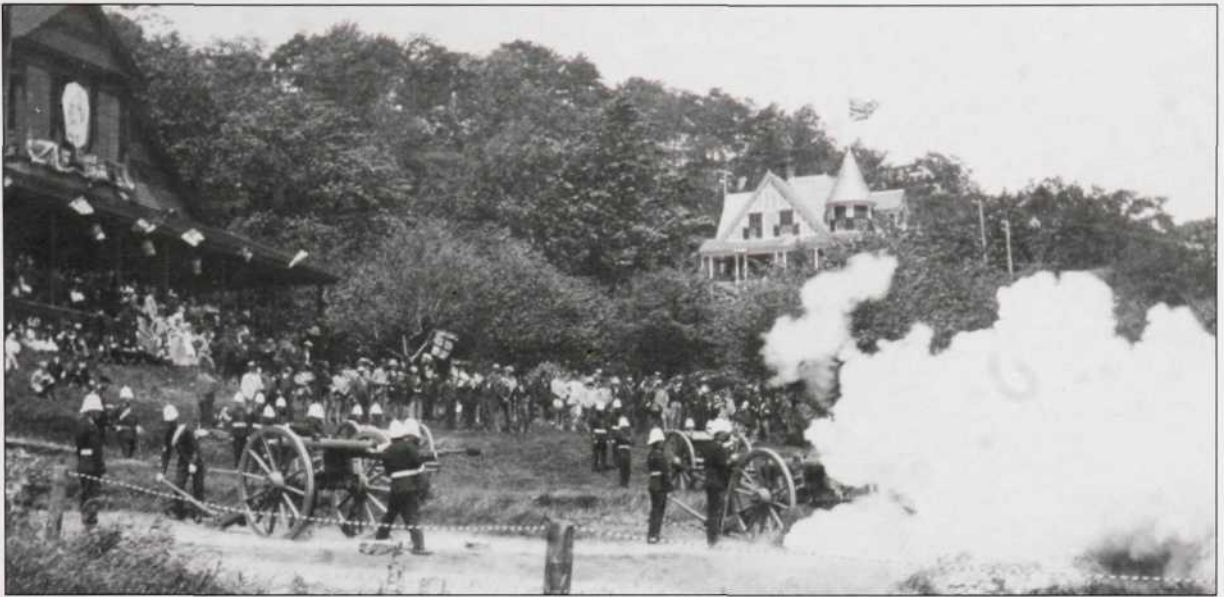


*William Douw Lighthall.
Mayor 1901-03.*

the municipal law in the Dominion, William Lighthall truly merited the title of "Renaissance Man." He himself rejoiced in Westmount's country pleasures, building a home – "Château Claire" for his family on the edge of the Murray farm. But he was also deeply involved with Montreal, its history, social relations and civic developments.



Chateau Claire, the Lighthall home at the eastern edge of the Murray estate.



Firing the canon, Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee, 1897, on St. George's Snowshoe Club grounds.

The catalyst that provided the opportunity to carry forward some of these new ideas in urban planning was the imminent anniversary of Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee in 1897. Communities large and small throughout the British Empire, of which Canada was a part, prepared to observe the occasion in some way; putting up a statue, renaming streets, squares

and public buildings, holding competitions, awarding prizes.

Westmount issued a municipal "Jubilee" badge and celebrated Victoria Day with the firing of a cannon on

the open ground in front of St. George's Snowshoe Club above the Boulevard, followed later that night by a dazzling fireworks display and a children's Demonstration in Westmount Park.

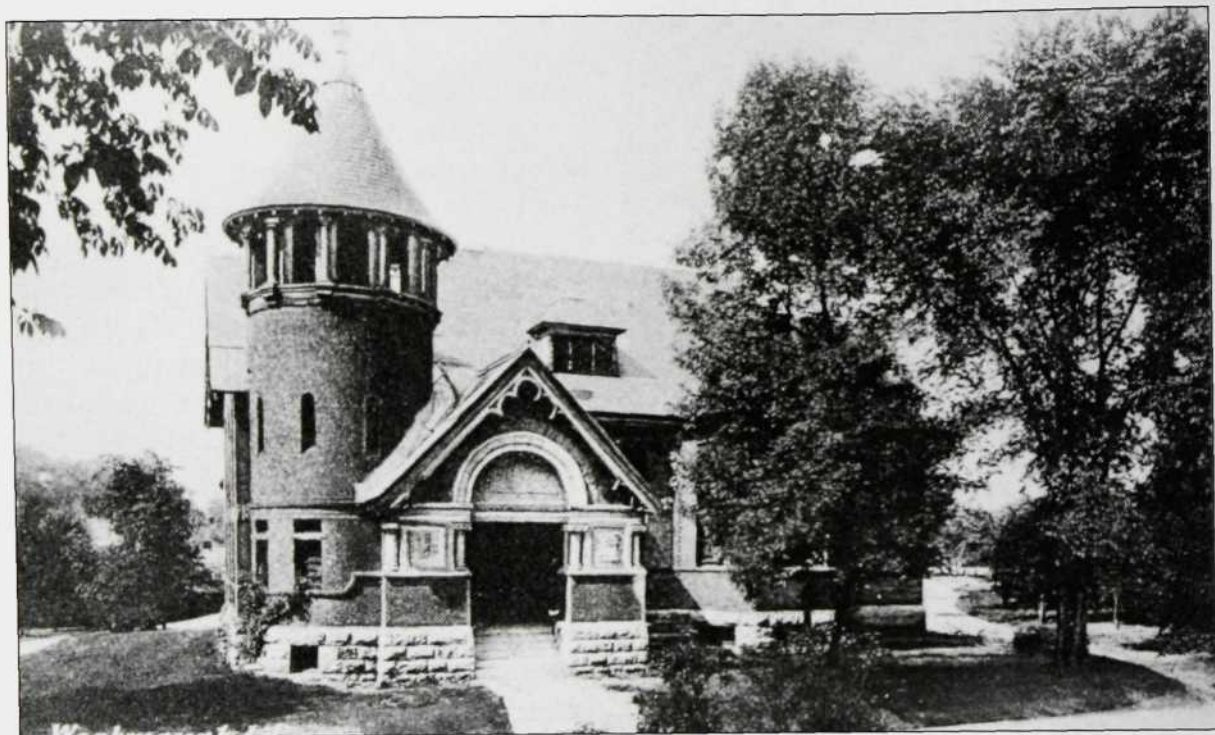
But the council was interested in a more lasting project and a group was appointed to consider options. The final decision of Westmount's "Permanent Memorial of the General Jubilee Celebration Committee" was to build a free public library, the first public library in the province of Quebec.

After careful study, a site was chosen at the rim of the 16 acres of land recently acquired by the municipality from a local farmer and tentatively named "Victoria Jubilee Park." It had proved difficult terrain for farming and was left virtually untouched, but it was a glorious setting for the proposed library. An additional asset was the Sherbrooke streetcar line which ran along the upper edge of the park and provided convenient access to the site.

The council, with its parsimonious



A children's Demonstration was part of the Jubilee celebrations, 1897.



Westmount Public Library, opened 1899. The first free public library in the province of Quebec.

*Interior of
Westmount Public
Library.*



Westmount Public Library.
General Reading Room.



Mary Solace Saxe, Chief Librarian for the years 1901-31. She formed the Library into an outstanding institution.

approach to spending, was gratified when funds arrived from an unexpected source. The Coates Gas Company defaulted on a contract so that the money gained could be applied to the library project. Nevertheless, every item of the plan was minutely scrutinised. Council members were ruthless in whittling away at the architect's proposals and when the Westmount Public Library opened in 1899, the building, furniture and fittings, together with an inventory of 2,000 books, had been acquired for less than \$17,000.

For Robert Findlay the architect, himself a Westmount resident, the library was a labour of love. He worked miracles with the limited funds at his disposal. The interior of the

building was rich with colour, highlighted by delicate plaster work. Texts were carved into the panels on either side of the front entrance and over the great hearth inside, which glowed with a welcoming fire in the winter. Leaded windows of clear glass carried the names of writers, poets, philosophers and scientists.

In 1901, Mary Solace Saxe was recruited as chief librarian. She had trained with some of the leading authorities in the field of library science, C.H. Gould of McGill University's Redpath Library and Charles Cutter of the Forbes Library in Massachusetts.

At the outset, Mary Saxe worked unassisted with the help only of a part-time janitor. In an emergency, there was a bell in a tall elm outside the library door, which she could ring to summon the park policeman. Over the next 30 years this resourceful, knowledgeable and witty woman helped form the library into an outstanding institution, enlarging its collection and introducing successive innovations.

Early in 1898, while the library was being built, a petition was presented to the town council signed by over 300 residents requesting the building of a municipal centre for public meetings, with a lodge room for fraternal meetings, a gymnasium, baths, and a curling rink.

The only public rooms available at this time were those in Elm Hall. Not many facilities existed for indoor exercise and sport, one of the few being the Heather Curling Club. Because of this exception the council, while receptive to the idea of a community centre, decided not to include a curling rink, but in other respects it agreed to build the facility as petitioned.

Robert Findlay was once again the chosen architect. The sum of \$25,000 was allocated to



Robert Findlay, architect of the Library, Victoria Hall and, later, of Westmount City Hall.



Plaster casts of the plaques that flank the library's entrance.

the project, a little more than for the library, but in view of the facilities to be provided, hardly lavish. Built on a site close to the library Victoria Hall, as the centre was named, was opened to the public in September 1899.

In addition to the facilities requested, there was a dance floor, billiard room, drill hall, and a number of small assembly rooms which were immediately put to use by chess clubs, literary, debating and drama groups, a kindergarten, music and dance classes, and sports groups that had no clubhouse of their own.

Findlay built Victoria Hall to harmonize with the library, using the same warm brick and Romanesque architectural style. The two buildings and the park together provided a concentrated focus for the town, a meeting ground for people of all ages, giving the municipality a centre around which the community could revolve.

These municipal facilities, set in a park, gave the town an urban-rural mix which proved especially attractive to families with young children. They were also drawn to Westmount by the very practical advantage of low taxes, never more than half, often less than a third, of those levied in Montreal. The older generation, living in Montreal, was less enthusiastic. "Do you really think it wise," cautioned one father, "to go and live so far in the country!" And many parents were reluctant to make the journey to visit their children after they moved "such a great distance away."

But with improvements in public transport, the distance grew less formidable and Westmount's obvious advantages as a place to raise a family increased.

Children required schooling and small private schools mushroomed to supplement

Westmount's only public school. One of the first and longest-lasting at the nursery-kindergarten level was "Sunnyside." Its principal was Frances Brown, daughter of Irish-Scottish settlers who had built a house in Ontario they called "Sunnyside." In 1880 they moved to Montreal. Frances, the eldest of eight children, had had an excellent education that included college and art classes, and dreamed of starting a school of her own. When her brother built a large home on one of Westmount's newly opened streets, Melbourne Avenue, she seized the opportunity to gather a few children together in the dining room and began teaching. Before long, the class outgrew the dining room and moved into the newly built Victoria Hall.

Among the pupils who attended Sunnyside were Mary and Danny Dunn, both blind, who were helped by children assigned weekly to be their guardians. Mary became a well known pianist and Danny a minister. Other early pupils included Frances MacNaughton, who became a distinguished neurologist, and the Shearer children, Athole, Douglas and Norma, the last two going on to distinguished careers in Hollywood.

Other private schools included Woodside Seminary, a girls' school founded by an American, Miss Lay, who had emigrated from the United States after the Civil War. On the same street, Mount Pleasant Avenue, was another girls' school, Roslyn Ladies College, while on nearby Clarke Avenue was a boys' school, Wykeham House.



Victoria Hall, opened 1899. It contained facilities designed to meet the requests of Westmount citizens.



Athole and Norma Shearer. Norma and brother Douglas had very successful careers in Hollywood.

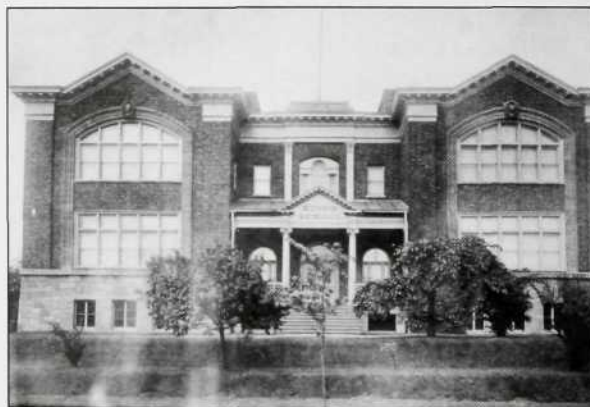
But at the public school, Westmount Academy, resources were once again stretched beyond their limits, with enrolment well over the 600 initially planned for. To meet the demand for more space, branch schools were set up in rented premises, some in Elm Hall and some in private homes, all under the supervision of the academy, but such arrangements were obviously unsatisfactory for the long term.

Consequently, two new schools were built in the area below Sherbrooke Street where the population was most heavily concentrated. The Glen School, later King's, with space for 350 students, was built in 1896 at a cost of \$25,000, at the foot of Roslyn Avenue. Three years later Queen's School was built in the eastern sector at a cost of \$50,000, and accommodated 550 pupils.

Under the province of Quebec's confessional school system, these schools fell within the jurisdiction of the Protestant School Board. Catholic girls, English and French, attended Mont Ste. Marie in Montreal, run by the Congrégation de Notre Dame. When the Sisters of the order became aware of the need for a new girls' school in the growing west-end area, they acquired a large house, not far from

Westmount Academy, with plans for classes to be given in both French and English.

Some parents found the location isolated, and even the Sisters who were to teach there were not keen to move. But after the Sisters had toured their new premises, they quickly warmed to the comfortable surroundings. "Ah Mother!" announced one happily, "it is just like home", and from another "Que c'est donc joli!" At the official opening the Archbishop of Montreal, Monsignor Paul Bruchesi, was present to give his blessing and the school, named St. Paul's Academy, began its first semester in October 1898.



Glen School later renamed King's. Opened 1896 at Roslyn and Western avenues.



Queen's School, opened 1899, Olivier Avenue.

A few years later, a Catholic school for boys, St. Léon's, opened under the guidance of the Christian Brothers in rented premises in Elm Hall. Later the school was moved to Clarke Avenue and teaching gradually transferred to a lay faculty under the supervision of the Westmount Catholic School Commission.

During these years the Catholics of Westmount, who had been attending various surrounding parishes, were accorded a parish of their own. In 1901, on farmland bought from the Grey Nuns, building began on a church to be called Saint Léon de Westmount. While the church was being built, at the northwest corner

Bethlehem Congregational Church was established in 1896, by a group from Calvary Church in Montreal. Calvary was famous in the city for having founded the Welcome Hall Mission, a unique facility for homeless men, providing them with food and shelter, as well as with help and advice.

Further west, the Methodist's clapboard Tabernacle was replaced with a handsome brick building and renamed Westmount Methodist Church. But at Melville Church on Côte St. Antoine Road, controversy flared up. In this bastion of the temperance movement, the minister, the Reverend T.W. Winfield, was accused of using intoxicating liquors in the



St Paul's Catholic Girls' School, administered by the Congrégation de Notre Dame. Opened 1898. Monsignor Paul Bruchesi, Archbishop of Montreal was present to give his blessing.

of Clarke and Western avenues, services were held either in St. Paul's Academy or in the dance salon of Elm Hall. "Six days a week", observed Abbé Perron drily, "the salon is consecrated to the devil, on Sunday to the Lord!"

There were other additions and some changes in places of worship. Diagonally across Western Avenue from St. Léon's, the

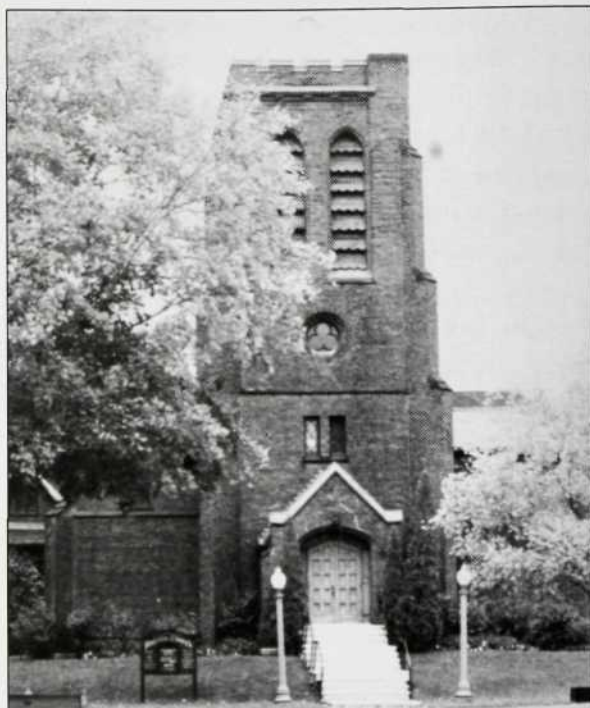
Sacrament. The congregation was torn in its loyalties between those who believed, and those who rejected, the allegations. Finally, the minister left in 1900 to establish a new Melville Church. This was built on the border of the new park, on a street called Elgin, which was renamed Melville in honour of the church. The group left in the Côte St. Antoine building renamed their church St. Andrew's, and for

many years each congregation was able to sustain its church and its membership.

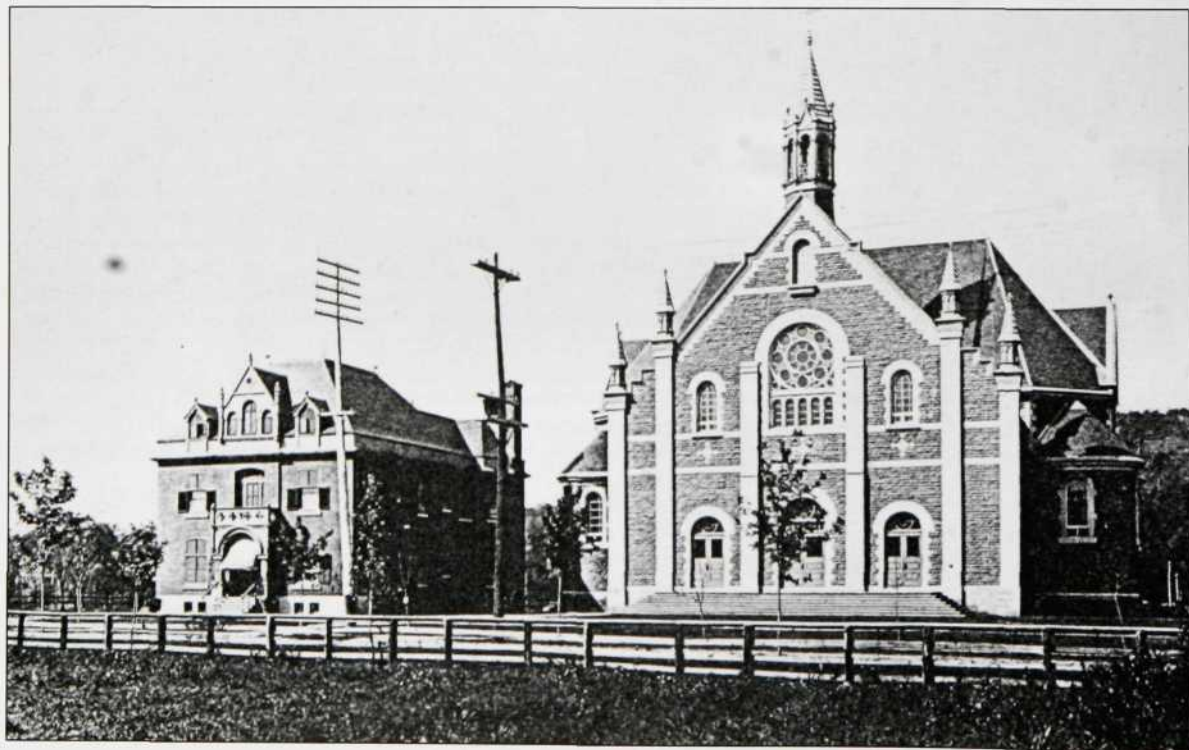
At this time, the Congrégation de Notre Dame, their Mother House still not rebuilt, received a generous offer from the Sulpician Superior who suggested the following solution: "Prenez donc une partie de notre propriété angle des rues Atwater et Sherbrooke et reconstruisez votre Maison Mère".

The Seminary offered an entire city block of their land, at the price of \$200,000. Since its true value was close to \$500,000, the offer represented a gift of \$300,000. Moreover, the Sulpicians offered free building material from their Westmount stone quarry, as well as help in transporting stone from the wreckage of the Villa Maria Mother House.

It was too magnificent an offer to refuse. An added inducement for this teaching order



Melville church, opened 1900. The 'original Melville' changed its name to St Andrew's.



St Léon de Westmount opened 1901, first Roman Catholic church in the town



Mother House of the Congrégation de Notre Dame. Built 1905-08. Southwest corner Sherbrooke and Atwater.

was the location, a plot of land which lay in full view of the stone tower where their founder, Marguerite Bourgeoys had visited her pupil, Marie Ganonsagouas, over 200 years earlier.

In 1905, the papers were signed. As architect, the Sisters selected 30-year old Omer Marchand, a Montrealer and later a Westmount resident, who was the first French-Canadian to receive the Diploma in Architecture from the École des Beaux Arts in Paris.

Marchand created a superb neo-Byzantine complex in the form of a huge H, using the newest building techniques of reinforced concrete and brick. The dimensions of the site were so generous that the immense building was able to rest comfortably in a spacious setting of open ground which, over the years, developed into one of the finest park-like spaces in Westmount.

The Mother House was opened in 1908, but for the sisters the more important moment in their new home came in September 1910,

when the remains of their founder were brought there and the Papal Legate pronounced “La reconnaissance officielle des Restes de Mère Marguerite Bourgeoys.”

In the meantime, sports flourished in every corner of the town. In 1904, the Montreal Ski Club discovered the possibilities of the district’s steep streets and acquired the use of a run down Clarke Avenue. The incline was sufficiently sloped to provide a very effective take-off for jumping, with a landing area on the south side of Sherbrooke Street.

For a few brief years, there was a golf course near the summit. Players could take the streetcar along The Boulevard, then follow a path leading up to the course. But one sports club that did not win favour with Westmount residents was a gun club that met occasionally on a stretch of open ground below The Boulevard. Unwanted in the neighbourhood, it did not last long.

Lacrosse was popular and was played on grounds at the eastern end of the town. One team,



Top – Westmount Golf Club c. 1901. It flourished for a few short years before World War I on land near Summit Park.



Left – Westmount Gun Club, c. 1900. It did not prove popular with local residents.

the Shamrocks, played their way to a world championship in 1899-1900. Later the sport fell out of favour and the grounds were taken over for baseball, with the Montreal Royals drawing large crowds for their home games and practice sessions.

One sports group found itself squeezed out of its premises by the spread of real estate development. The Côte St. Antoine Tennis Club's grounds were sold in 1906 for building lots. The club, renamed the Mount Royal Tennis Club, relocated on land immediately west of Westmount's borders. There, surrounded by the hay fields and apple orchards of the Decarie farmlands, the club laid out nine grass and seven cinder courts. The old clubhouse was conveyed intact to the new locale, via Western Avenue, blocking streetcar lines for hours. Since the streetcar's loopline did not yet extend this far west and since none of the club members owned cars, a three-plank wooden sidewalk was laid down to the new club grounds.

The MAAA continued to flourish. In the winter of 1897 the association was host to the World Skating Championship and from 1901 to 1905 it regularly hosted the joint American and Canadian skating championships. In the summer of 1899, when bicycle racing was reaching its peak of popularity, the MAAA welcomed the World Bicycle Meeting.

The Lawn Bowling Club proved to be the longest lasting of the sports associations. In August 1901, three friends, bowling enthusiasts, discussed leasing a plot of land on Kensington Avenue near Sherbrooke Street. The lease was for a period of nine years, at an annual rental of \$1,000. Membership was limited to 120, with annual fees of \$10 with each member obliged to buy three shares in the Club at \$5 a share. By 1903 the secretary, William Brown, son of the president, James Brown, was able to announce in his annual report that "the originators may take credit for having

established in Westmount in the short period of two years, a Club which is a credit to the Town."

The club's facilities and its reputation for sportsmanship and hospitality were put to the test in 1906, when a group of 40 bowlers from Britain, accompanied by wives and children, arrived on their first stop in an itinerary organised by the Ontario Bowling Club.

The visitors, who won the tournament — 129 shots to 93 — were royally entertained for three days. There was a lavish lunch at Victoria Hall given by the mayor and council, and a convivial dinner at St. George's Snowshoe Club. The setting was a fine one. As the light faded the guests looked down the slopes of the mountain on the darkening panorama of the city below. In mellow mood, the mayor and other dignitaries made speeches, climaxed by M. Decarie who welcomed the Britons "on behalf of the whole French-speaking population of Canada".

Dr. Russell, of Hamilton, Ontario, replied for the visitors. He thanked their hosts for the bountiful welcome and generous hospitality. He marvelled at the development of the town which he had known 20 years earlier "when it was just a village," and he brought the occasion to a rousing finish with his enthusiastic toast "to Westmount, the beautiful Town of Westmount."

Within this prosperous, optimistic time there were some dark days. In 1905, 25 cases of typhoid were reported resulting in two deaths. Residents were warned to boil all water for drinking and cooking. Newspaper reports carried articles warning that "Westmount is becoming a very undesirable place wherein to build a house and raise a family."

But only two years later, the council quoted a survey showing that Westmount was the ideal municipality in which to live in all of eastern Canada. It was praised for its municipal services and for its balance of town and country pleasures.

Alice Lighthall, daughter of William Lighthall and as distinguished and talented as her celebrated father, recaptured the memory of a childhood lived in this privileged enclave during these transition years when she wrote: "I was one of the children who played in the Murray fields and the Raynes' orchard, who splashed in the

oak wood above The Boulevard, beside one of the old Indian wells."

In his valedictory address in January 1903, retiring Mayor William Lighthall noted the profound changes that had taken place. Six years earlier Westmount had been little more than a village. "Today, to all intents and purposes it is a



Lawn Bowling Club, established in 1901. In 1906 the club hosted a visit from a British group, shown here, of forty bowlers accompanied by their families.

spring freshet that ran down the east side of the road between the two. We watched Miss Murray's carriage with the old coachman bringing her home from a sedate drive, while we gathered violets in the field where the lily pond is now ... We watched from a respectful distance, while Miss Raynes, in gloves and net-veiled garden hat, tended her beehives. We rode in the haycart in the upper meadows and had picnic teas at the edge of the

leading city in Canada although as yet its population is a small one to have taken that position. As the chief residential suburb of the great and growing metropolis of Canada it has an influence as wide as the Dominion, and circumstances have frequently arisen which have thrown upon us the responsibility of representing the English-speaking community of Montreal."

8

The City of Westmount (1908 - 1914)



City Badge, 1908

In 1908, the town became the City of Westmount, and adopted a new municipal badge. Its new title conferred no radical change since under the Provincial Cities and Towns Act, "town" and "city" were virtually interchangeable. In the event it should wish to do so, however, Westmount could now annex other villages and towns. It could also establish a town planning commission to make recommendations on all aspects of development.

In Westmount, the population in the first decade of the 20th century leapt from 8,856 to 14,579, and there was a boom in residential building and related service facilities. But strict zoning laws kept out "any work likely to create a nuisance."

A citizens' group, the Westmount Municipal Association, was formed and announced plans to hold regular meetings in Victoria Hall.

The group's stated objective was to encourage public discussion on every aspect of municipal affairs such as education, traffic, the environment, etc., and to inform the city council of the results.

There are many long-lived residents who recall life in these early decades of the century, when the municipality became a city but country vistas persisted side by side with newly built housing. "My parents



Pockets of rural life. "The sound of cocks crowing was as familiar as church bells."

Montreal, the great metropolis on Westmount's doorstep, was booming. Expansion of shipping and railway facilities had transformed the economy, bringing favourable comparisons with Boston and New York — both for its commercial vitality and for the magnificence of Montreal's mansions and institutions.

moved into a new house, one of the first on Aberdeen, in 1908. The area was just changing from farmland to residential. Across the street the family kept chickens and a cow in their back garden."

The sound of cocks crowing at dawn was as familiar as church bells on Sunday. Several

homeowners, including the curé of St. Léon's, maintained chickens in their yards. When this was frowned on by city council the chickens were quietly moved into basements or sheds.

A few old customs remained to highlight a pattern of social life that was fast disappearing. "I remember New Year's day," related one resident. "The men went calling, usually on foot. They wore formal dress, top hat and tails or frock coat. Of course they were offered a drink at every house so that by the end of their rounds they sometimes needed a little support to get back home." Scottish and French traditions blended here. In both cultures Christmas was a religious observance but New Year was the occasion for visits to relatives, friends, and on a more formal level, to leading personages in the community.

A certain formality of dress was also required in other situations. "Ushers at church were expected to wear formal dress and many men refused to serve because they hadn't the clothes for it," reported one Westmounter, while another recalled that, "Speaking for our family and, I think, many others, we didn't have many clothes. I had one pair of corduroy trousers, replaced as I grew out of them. That was all, winter and summer. If they got wet I waited until they dried. There were no separate clothes for sports, at least not in our house."

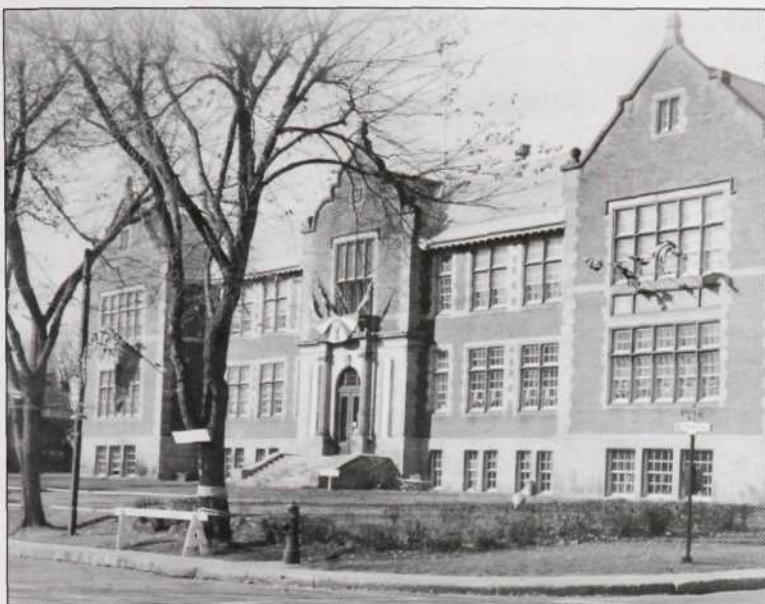
Heating involved an elaborate ritual and remains a vivid memory of childhood for many elderly residents. "The coal came from Wales. We used 16 tons each winter. It was delivered in one-ton loads by horse and cart. Houses had coal chutes through which men dumped the coal. I can still hear the rattle as it went down the chute. There were always scattered bits available. Great for drawing hopscotch on the sidewalk."

Ice was another basic necessity. There was an ice-manufacturing plant in the neighbourhood. "Householders were given a card to put in the window and you placed it with the number of pounds you wanted showing at the top. At our house, every day except Sunday, the iceman had a regular order to leave a 25-pound block of ice on the kitchen doorstep. Sometimes it wouldn't fit and had to be chipped away with a hammer and chisel. We gathered up the bits to chew on ... We also chewed tar. Was it melted in the heat or were they repairing the roads? We didn't like it much but we all did it. 'They' said it made your teeth white."

Families were now crowding into the area above Sherbrooke Street where houses were beginning to line the long straight roads which climbed the mountain between what had been a series of linear farms. The name of the last farm owner was lost when Hurtubise Road was renamed Victoria Avenue in the wake of celebrations for Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee in 1897, but the old farmstead remained in the hands of the Hurtubise family.

To service this fast growing district a third elementary school was planned, on land fronting a new street, Westmount Avenue, at that time still only a dirt road through fields on the Raynes and Murray properties. It was to be called Roslyn and was conceived with a buoyant optimism to be finer than any other school yet built in Westmount.

The school's projected capacity was 550, like that of Queen's school, but its cost, \$150,000, was three times larger. At the laying of the cornerstone, C.A. Ross, the architect, was elegantly outfitted in top hat, striped trousers and dark grey coat, like a medical consultant presiding at a royal birth. When Roslyn School



Roslyn School. One of the finest school buildings in the Dominion.

opened in 1909, it was hailed as "one of the finest school buildings in the Dominion."

At Westmount Academy students continued to be encouraged to extend their studies at the college level, though women were still only grudgingly accepted at university. Alice Lighthall was an early McGill student, taking courses in English literature and French between the years of 1911 and 1913. But her mother insisted Alice remain a part-time student as she wished her daughter to devote her time to volunteer work. Consequently, Alice did not graduate with a degree.



Mary Howard Henderson, an early McGill woman graduate.

One very early McGill graduate was Mary Howard Henderson, daughter of the principal of Montreal's Diocesan College. Her son, Alex Shearwood recalls: "My mother was in the first McGill University class that

accepted women. She graduated in 1890 and her degree is signed by thirteen people, including Sir Donald Smith - later Lord Strathcona - a strong advocate of women's higher education. My mother was interested in many things. She wrote a biography of Bishop Newnham, one-time minister of St. Matthias'. Much later I found she had written some thirty articles, including one with the title 'Concerning the right of a wife to invest her own money,' which I should think was rather radical for those days."

As Westmount's population grew, so did the traffic. Bicycles, trains, electric streetcars and automobiles were all in use, but

ALCO



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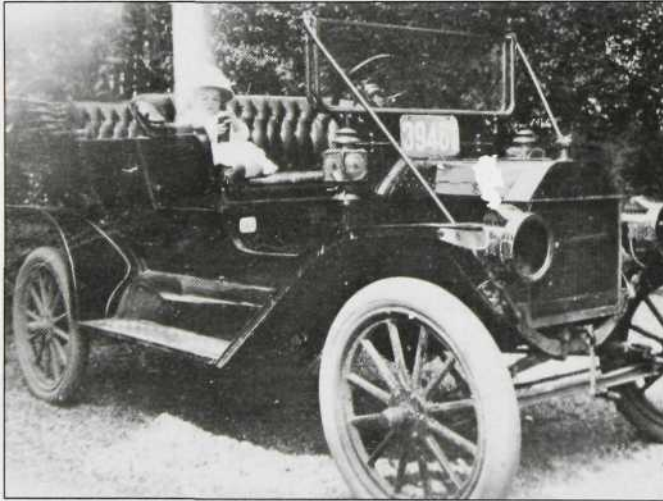
The Montreal Locomotive Works
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delivery wagons were mostly horse-drawn, on wheels in summer, on runners in winter.

Children knew most of the delivery horses by name and drivers were tolerant about giving rides, especially towards the end of their rounds. "There were stables to the east where the milk wagons were parked and sometimes you could get a ride back and help unfasten the horses and feed them. Another stable was over to the west and it was quite a sight to see a long string of horses trotting homeward along Western Avenue at the end of the day."

Streetcar rides, if no longer a novelty, were still an adventure since there were always hazards to negotiate on the steeper descents. On very cold days, if the cars moved down hill too fast, the sand-spreading mechanism would not work and the cars would slide quite alarmingly. "I remember one very cold winter's day I was in a streetcar when it started sliding on the rails down Lansdowne Avenue. It wasn't



Touring car c. 1911. People riding in the car were much on view.

able to make the turn east but continued, off the rails, and shot straight across the road, entering the living room of the house on the southwest corner, to the great surprise of a group of ladies who were seated having tea."

The first private motorcars began to appear. "I remember the first car I ever saw, around 1910. It was what they called a 'touring' car with a canvas roof which could be folded down. The running boards along the sides were quite high off the ground so that people sitting in the car, which was a sparkling green colour, were very much on view, rather like royalty. They waved to us and we waved back."

Commercial activity was also increasing, particularly in the west end, promoted as "the coming business thoroughfare." It was here William Biltcliffe chose to build Westmount's first department store, at the corner of Somerville and Victoria Avenues. Biltcliffe had been in the grocery business in Montreal since 1893 but, as a strong Temperance advocate, he had refused to handle liquor sales and decided

to move to Westmount where such sales were prohibited by law. He enlarged his merchandise to include hardware, crockery and kitchen tools and offset the expenses of his large premises by leasing the whole of the top floor to a badminton club.

Outstanding among Westmount's commercial ventures was the saga of Dent Harrison's Bakery. Harrison was an engineer who had been raised by an aunt and uncle who ran a successful bakery in Yorkshire, England. In Montreal, young Dent encountered a nostalgia among immigrants like himself for the foods they remembered and missed from "home."

One of these foods was crumpets, a popular product in his uncle's bakery.

Sensing a market opening, Dent Harrison left for England, learned the business and returned to start up in the bakery business with a three-jet hotplate and Uncle Henry's crumpet recipe. Together with a friend, Thomas Allat, he set up in Point St. Charles, mixing and baking the crumpets — which they named "Creampets" — at night and peddling them door to door by day.

The product was an instant success. Moving to bigger premises in Westmount, Harrison drew on his engineering background to adapt industrial machinery to his baking needs. His daughter recalled, "My father was

always searching out the newest techniques and working out how they could be modified for breadmaking. He told me how he heard about a 'travelling oven' which was in use for biscuits, but which he was told was impossible for breadmaking. Well, he had a principal engineer, W.J. Roberts, and together they managed to solve the problem, so that in 1909 the world's first travelling bread oven was delivered to his plant."

The factory grew to employ one hundred



Dent Harrison, founder of the bakery

people. Over forty horse-drawn wagons and sleighs carried the bakery colours all over the city. Later the three Harrison

brothers, Will, Gordon and Dent Jr., sons of the founder, built a striking new factory at the Glen named POM Hall. A bilingual logo 'POM' 'Pain Orgeuil de Montréal' 'Pride of Montréal' was carried on their motorized delivery vans, the 'Pommobiles'. Once a year the bakery held an "open house." Visitors were shown the breadmaking process from start to finish and were sent off with the gift of a freshly baked miniature loaf.

The age of advertising had arrived and Westmount's businesses were part of it. J.H. Timmis (cutlery) promised, rather confusingly, "You can make fifty per cent on every dollar by saving half a dollar on every dollar invested in our knives, forks, spoons etc."

J.S. Teskey (groceries) attracted children with its system of overhead pulleys, which conveyed cash in a metal container to a central

cashier who sent it whizzing back with the correct change. Teskey's advertised itself forthrightly by declaring "A first class grocery handling Good Goods serves a good purpose. So our lot in life deserves credit."

In organised sports the number of outdoor events continued to multiply. The MAAA, with its membership of over 4,000, judged it was time to build larger and better-equipped clubhouse facilities, and in 1911, opened



The horse drawn wagons were a familiar sight on Montreal streets.

spacious new premises.

Its magnificent skating rink remained "without doubt the most popular winter resort of pleasure that the city affords." There were masquerade carnivals and dances when 1,200 to 1,500 skaters could waltz under revolving coloured lights and the glow of 400 Chinese lanterns. Income generated from these events contributed materially to freeing the association of debt by 1902.

In 1913, the Montreal Ski Club organised a Championship Meet in Westmount, at which a jump of 80 feet was recorded. But this jump, down the steepest of Westmount's streets, was becoming increasingly hazardous as the

surrounding area developed, so a new jump was constructed on the north side of the mountain, where no residential building was planned.

Riding was another popular sport. Residents could stable their horses locally at Collyer and Hummel's Livery Stables, and riding classes were available at the Mount Royal Riding Academy on Hillside Avenue, advertised as "the largest and best ring in Canada."

Sports were also prominent in the programme of Westmount's newly opened YMCA, on Sherbrooke Street across from the library. Founded in London in 1844 by 22-year old George Williams, the YMCA aimed at providing physical recreation and spiritual comfort to young men, like himself, coming from small country communities to live and work in big cities. The message spread with amazing speed and only seven years later the first YMCA in North America opened in Montreal.

The Westmount branch opened in 1912. Designed with a handsome neo-classical façade, its interior opened into a comfortable reception area where a welcoming fire glowed in the large fireplace. Facilities included a gym, swimming pool and billiard room. Men's dormitories were on the upper floor, together with a lunch room for boarders.

None of these facilities, however, was available anywhere in the municipality on Sundays. To the dismay of many, but particularly the French, recreation of even the most passive kind was frowned on. As one French resident vividly recalled, "Oh! the English Sunday! Nothing to do but twiddle your thumbs. One Sunday my mother bought me an ice cream cone. It was from a shop called 'Diana Sweets,' run by a Greek family. As I began to eat it a woman stopped me and said

'Aren't you ashamed of yourself, eating an ice cream cone on Sunday!'"

This sober aspect of Westmount life contributed to its image as something of an oddity among municipalities. Adjacent to the great metropolis of Montreal with which it was closely linked on many levels — work, transport, services — it nevertheless maintained a distinct personality of its own, quite different from Montreal's reputation as the liveliest city in Canada.

Westmount's city council had for some time been dominated by Protestants whose outlook had stamped the community with a certain pattern of morality. These men favoured strict temperance laws and a rigid standard of decorum. Bylaw No. 196, passed in 1909, stated firmly that: "All gambling houses, bawdy houses, houses of ill-fame and houses of assignation are hereby prohibited and forbidden. Also every description of gaming, cards, dice, cock-fighting or dog-fighting." It also imposed speed limits. "No person shall ride or drive faster than at an ordinary trot."

In 1910, Mayor Rutherford in his inaugural address emphasised that Westmount was a "dry" municipality. "Any alderman who would dare to ask for the granting of a licence in Westmount would only have to wait until the next election to be asked to retire."

This attitude was supported and reinforced by businessmen, such as J.A. Patterson, who strongly urged there should be no places of entertainment in the district because "anything that tends to lower the moral standards of a community is a menace to success. If you have a theatre the money will go to it and not into business."



Temple Emanu-El. 1911, a favourite subject on postcards of Montreal.

Still another aspect of the city's image was that of an island of middle class prosperity — homogenous, English-speaking and Protestant. The reality was more complex.

French-speaking families with names such as Hurtubise, Decary and St. Germain, continued to provide a continuity with the district's earliest recorded history, while their impressive parish church, St. Léon's, served an active and expanding congregation.

Westmount's Jewish community, present in small numbers since the 1840s, established its first synagogue in Westmount early in the 20th

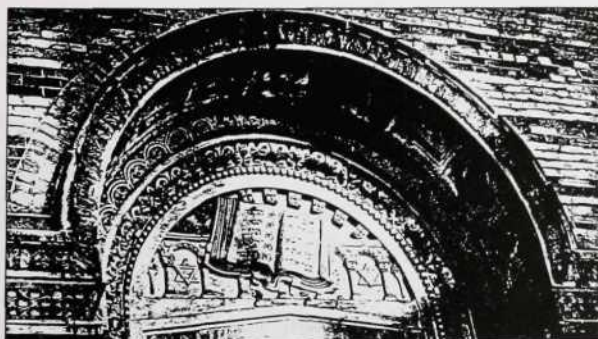
century. Named Temple Emanu-El, this was the mother congregation of liberal Judaism in Canada. The pioneer founders of this relatively new division of Judaism included the industrialist Sir Mortimer Davis and the artist William Raphael, one of the founding members of the Royal Canadian Academy of Arts. Temple Emanu-El was dedicated in 1911, and its impressive Byzantine form became one of Montreal's best-known buildings, reproduced many times over

on postcards and in illustrated books of the city.

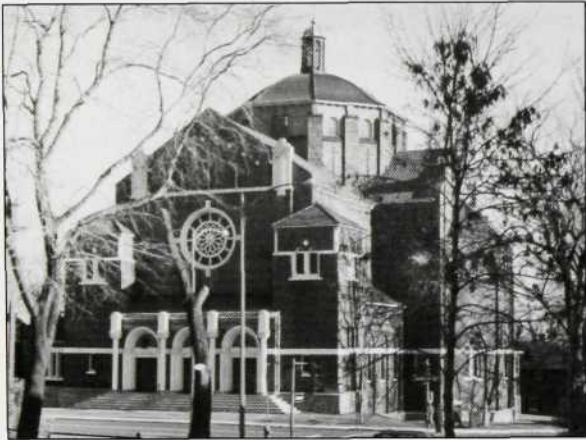
The Protestant community continued to diversify, with groups merging, moving, expanding or establishing a new presence here. In 1911, the Bethlehem Congregational Church was joined by a downtown group from Calvary Church, whose building had been expropriated by the Canadian Pacific Railway Company. The combined membership soon outgrew its site at the corner of Clarke and Western avenues, and moved to larger premises at Greene and Dorchester avenues. The church they vacated was taken over by a Lutheran congregation, who renamed the building "Church of the Redeemer."

Another newcomer was the First Church of Christ Scientist which held services and Bible classes in rented rooms in Victoria Hall. Later it moved to its own premises on Lansdowne Avenue, where it still stands.

The earliest Presbyterian congregation, that of St. Andrew's on Côte St. Antoine, was flourishing. Less than a decade after the defection



Doorway detail, Temple Emanu-El.



Stanley Presbyterian Church at Victoria and Westmount avenues. 1913. Closely resembled Temple Emanu-El.

of some of its members, the old church was demolished and a larger one built in 1909. Reminiscent of early Italian Romanesque churches, its façade further enriched the variety of Westmount's architecture.

A new Presbyterian group arrived in 1913. These were members of a congregation that separated from the Erskine American Church in 1874. Led by Sir William Dawson, principal of McGill University, this group of 60 had objected to the use of music in the service, and established their own church on Stanley Street.

Rising costs downtown forced a move. The mid-level site they chose in Westmount was considered, by many, "Too far and too



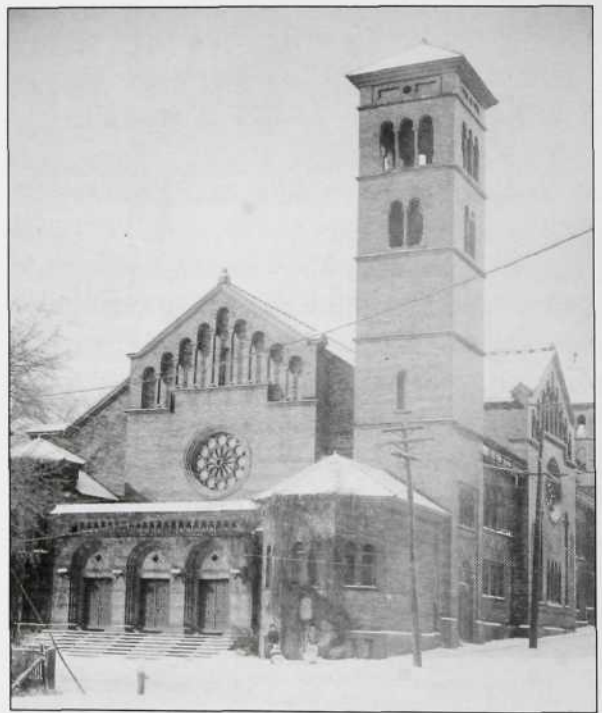
Bell from old St. Mathias Church

isolated." But it was not long before the magnificent church, the Stanley Presbyterian, on the corner of Westmount and

Victoria avenues became a source of pride to the whole community. The handsome exterior strongly resembled that of Temple Emanu-El. Inside, the gilded

dome and softly filtered light created a harmonious environment unlike that of any other church in the city.

At the formal opening service in October 1914, the Rev. John McNeill, a famous evangelist, preached an inspiring sermon. By then, sentiment towards music in the service had changed. A magnificent organ had been installed and music, provided by a succession of excellent musicians, was an integral part of the service.



New St. Andrew's Church, 1909. North west corner Côte St. Antoine Road and Stanton Street.

Meanwhile, Westmount's first church, St. Matthias', was moving out of its original wooden building into a new stone church, with the old church serving as parish hall. When the bell was tolled for the last service held in the little wooden church, in 1912, the bell cracked and could never be used again. It now sits on the grass in front of the church.

Along with its diverse religious beliefs, the background of Westmount's population covered a broad range of occupations, mostly white collar. There were railway employees, clerks and sales personnel, shopkeepers and small merchants, young professionals, lawyers and doctors, as well as many artists and writers.

A very small number belonged to the really wealthy class of top executives in the great railway, shipping, banking and commercial enterprises which were making Montreal the communications and financial hub of Canada. But for the most part, families in this high economic bracket lived within Montreal's "Square Mile" on the slopes of Mount Royal.

City hall was busy with several new projects. Purse strings had loosened considerably since the days when the library's building costs had been so minutely scrutinised. Nevertheless, it took Chief Librarian Mary Saxe ten long years to persuade the Library Committee to add a Childrens' Room which, at her insistence, was "not in the basement, not in the attic, but in a wing, with a separate entrance, separate hours and its own Librarian."

The new room was a success from the day it opened in 1911. It was a well-proportioned space with an attractive fireplace, faced with brightly coloured tiles of characters from "Alice in Wonderland." The children's program was very popular. "Story time in the Childrens' Room took precedence for us over every other activity," remembers Lawrence Lande. "Miss Jenkins, aunt of Katherine Jenkins, who was to follow Mary Saxe as chief librarian in the Thirties, read to us. Not only

the classic fairy tales which we loved, but adventure stories by newer authors such as Andrew Lang."

Other municipal projects included Fire Station No. 2, built on The Boulevard at Victoria, to respond to emergencies at the upper level. It was an elegant structure which, by the time it opened for service in 1912, had exceeded its original estimate of \$26,000 three times over. Because of its striking design and comparative isolation, the station had a personality all its own. One fireman commented many years later that "it was our house on the hill, our big family home. It had a different feeling from No. 1 Station which was



Fire Station No. 2, opened 1912. "It was our house on the hill, our big family home. It had a different feeling from No. 1 station."

more like a place of business. At one time we had window boxes with flowers at every window and it was the junior man's job to water them every day."

The horse-drawn fire wagons provided moments of high drama. The ladder truck had six horses and the following wagon two horses. They went very fast when summoned to a fire and after Fire Station No. 2 was built, one of the big thrills for children living in that part of



Westmount Post Office. Opened 1914. A far cry from the village-style operation on St. Catherine Street.

town was to see the fire wagons thunder along The Boulevard, alarms ringing and the horses galloping along. "On sleighs in winter it was even more exciting and by the time they dashed past the corner of our street they had reached what seemed like highly dangerous speeds. But on the daily exercise for the horses the firemen would stop and talk to us children and tell us



Canon donated by 'Sons of England'. Popular photo backdrop.

the name of each horse."

Another well-designed public building was the new post office. A long time in the planning, it finally opened in 1914 on a corner lot at Greene and Western avenues. Built at a cost of \$70,000, it was very grand indeed, a neo-Baroque edifice topped by a central copper dome, with columned and pedimented façades on each of its two wings. A far cry from the village-style operation on St. Catherine Street.

Westmount Park was landscaped in 1908, the year the municipality became a city. The forest of trees was thinned and a pond for sailing toy boats filled one corner on Sherbrooke Street. Regular band concerts in the park proved so popular that a special bandstand was built.

An unusual addition to the park were two cannon, installed by the Westmount Lodge Sons of England. The cannon were identified, from their markings, as having been forged in 1810, during the reign of George III. They were quickly commandeered as climbing apparatus by young children and as a background setting for photographs in the park.

Victoria Hall was in constant use, producing a modest revenue for the city. There were several dance classes, considered a necessary social skill for young boys and girls. An adult who attended these classes as a boy recalled, "It was all right when we learned to dance the hornpipe or some of the reels, but it was agony when we were supposed to cross the floor and ask a girl to dance. We often tried to sneak away

to watch the men in the bowling alley in the basement.”

Dances for adults, however, were very popular. There was a particularly large turnout after an announcement in the local paper that, in the following month of March (1912), “Professor Frank Norman of Stanley Hall, Montreal, has been prevailed upon to hold one of his popular Dancing Assemblies. He will bring the full Stanley orchestra with him and will also have the floor polished with his famous Roller Wax.”

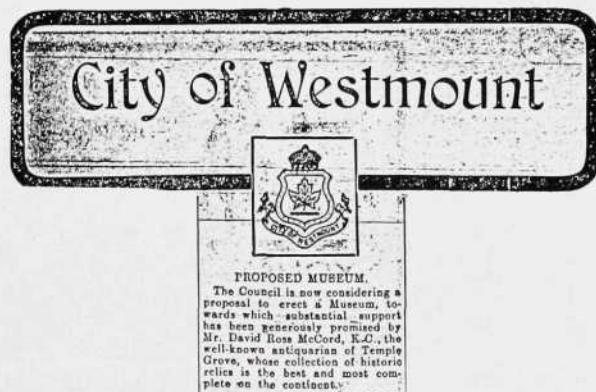
The image of young couples gliding across a dance floor gleaming with unaccustomed brilliance may have alarmed an ever vigilant council, since the necessary permit was issued with a stern caution that read, “There is a strong public opinion against certain dances now in vogue, and if the officers now in charge of entertainments do not see that such objectionable dancing is eliminated the permission will be cancelled.”

A few community projects remained unrealised. One proposal, for a zoo, got off to a tentative start with the purchase of seven foxes “at a cost not to exceed fifty dollars, to be placed in the park with provision made for their proper care and habitation.” A resident donated two young bears to what it was hoped “might be the nucleus of a Zoological Garden.” And there was a further offer — not accepted — of a jaguar. But the project quietly languished, the animals were handed over to outside keepers and the zoo never materialised.



Westmount Park was landscaped. The pond was one of the new additions. 1908.

Another failed project proved to be Westmount’s loss and Montreal’s gain. In 1909, a newspaper announcement read: “Council is considering a proposal to erect a Museum. Generous support is promised by Mr. David Ross McCord, K.C., well-known antiquarian whose collection of historic relics is the best and most complete on the continent.” No further news items relating to the scheme are to be found and McCord’s collection later formed the basis of the McCord Museum in Montreal.



Notice of a possible museum for Westmount. 1909.



Cartoon, 1909, showing Westmount being pursued by the 'villain' Montreal.

Meanwhile, the pressures on Westmount to accede to annexation by the metropolis were very strong, as a cartoon of 1909 demonstrated. The incumbent mayor, William Henry Trenholme — the first to be elected in place of being appointed by council — led the fight against the merger with Montreal. He had vigorous backing from the local residents. One citizen, speaking at a public meeting, made his protest clear despite rather muddling his metaphors.

"Don't go like a poor inoffensive sheep to the slaughter with simply a Baaa," he demanded. "Westmount, by being pirated into the octopus Montreal, would be sucked dry as a bone in three years to swell the corporation belly of that city."

It was a sentiment overwhelmingly endorsed by other residents. Council minutes of 1910 record that "Westmount cannot, in view of the unanimous opposition of its citizens to such a project, become a party to any negotiations tending to such annexation." They added, somewhat piously, that "Westmount is firm in this matter not because of the possibility

of increased taxes but against the spread of decadent morals."

It was these same sober councillors, shrewd and watchful, who guided the municipality's financial affairs to the point where, in its first year as a city, Westmount was able to declare itself free of debt. Most other small municipalities could not manage to achieve such financial independence and, as a result, were annexed by Montreal.

At the eastern end of Montreal, there was the sobering case of the town of Maisonneuve. This prosperous community had had ambitious plans to create a "City Beautiful." At the turn of the century it billed itself as the "Westmount of the East" because of its pure air, healthy environment and good urban services. It had also managed to attract a broad range of industries, earning itself the title "Pittsburgh of Canada." It had grown to be the third largest city in Quebec, and its streets were graced with fine homes, stately boulevards and superb public buildings, garnering still another title as the "Athens of Montreal." But in spite of the accolades, Maisonneuve was unable to survive as an independent community.

When it became clear Notre-Dame-de-Grâce was in grave financial trouble Westmount's council, armed with its new city powers, hastily debated the possibility of annexing its neighbour. But the offer, when it was finally made, came too late and in 1910 Nôtre-Dame-de-Grâce became part of the city of Montreal.

It was W.D. Lighthall who helped provide the foundation on which Westmount and other small communities could build with some measure of security. He saw clearly the direction in which society was moving in this new century. "The old order is changing," he

wrote. "The little shop is being displaced by the immense departmental store; private works are giving place to great trusts; clusters of village communities are being incorporated into greater cities."

Some form of united action was needed, Lighthall argued, to protect the interests of municipalities against the encroachments of central governments or big corporations. Through his efforts a conference was held in December of 1910, "between representatives of the City of Montreal and of the other municipalities on the island of Montreal, for the purpose of discussing the desirability of a union or federation of the different municipalities in a manner which will reserve

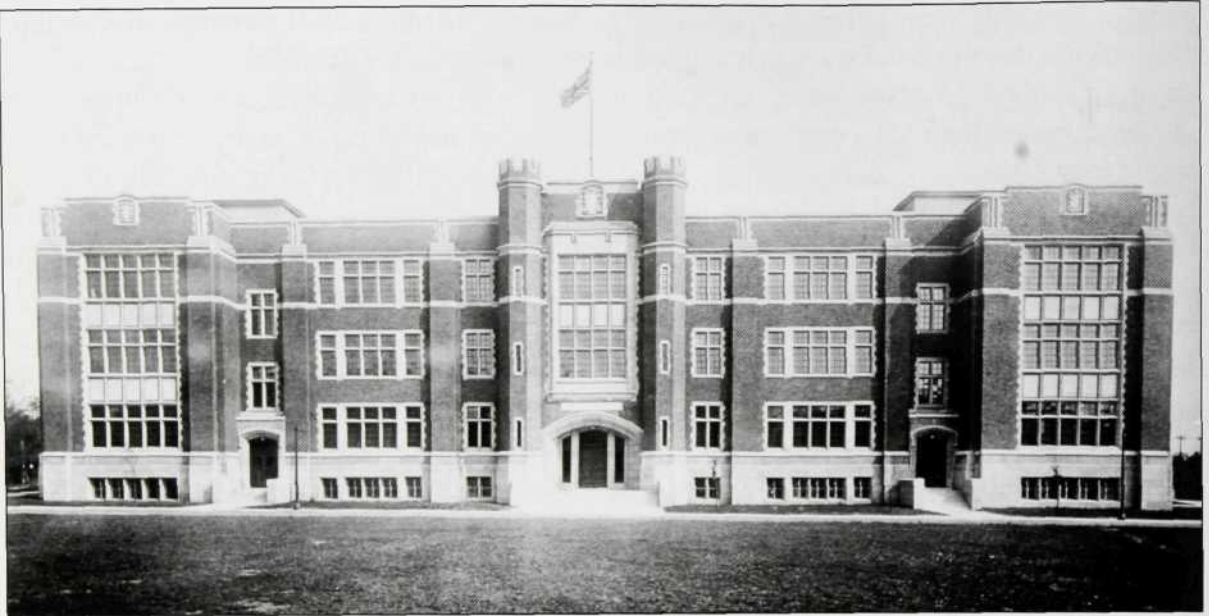
to each the right of self government regarding local matters and affairs."

From this and subsequent meetings, there emerged the Union of Canadian Municipalities, through which small communities could discuss common problems, and prepare defences against those forces eager to deprive them of their independence.

Meanwhile, the Westmount Protestant School Board maintained a close watch on the municipality's educational needs. King's, Queen's and Roslyn elementary schools were rapidly approaching capacity, but Westmount Academy, the district's only high school, was already overextended.



Meeting, Union of Canadian Municipalities. W.D. Lighthall, co-founder of the Union is seated second row, third from right.



Westmount High School. Opened 1914. Extensions were added to right and left in 1929 and 1931.

A new high school, built at a cost of \$500,000 opened in 1914. It accommodated 1,200 -1,500 students from grades seven to eleven — twice the capacity of the old Academy.

The year the high school opened, Westmount Academy sent its last class of graduates to sit for McGill University's entrance examination, and then began a new life as Argyle School, handling primary and intermediate grades.



One of the last graduating classes of Westmount Academy.

At the same time, Westmount's city council began renewed discussions on the need for a city hall building, separate from the fire hoses and ladders, policemen's equipment, and horses' stables, all of which shared premises in the old Stanton Street school.

It was decided to hold a competition. Only architects from the island of Montreal would be eligible. The jury was to consist of one architect, F.S. Baker, from Toronto, the mayor of Westmount, two or three councillors, and the city manager — a new position in the city administration and an innovation in municipal affairs in Canada. A first prize of \$750 was offered, with three follow-up prizes of \$200 each.

But such plans for the future were overtaken by events beyond local control. It was the late summer of 1914. War was declared in Europe and for the moment all plans, including those for a new city hall, were placed on hold.

9

World War I

The Great War

In August 1914, when war was declared between Germany and a coalition of Allies including Great Britain, a bitter debate erupted in the province of Quebec. Canada, as part of the British Empire was inevitably involved in the conflict, but many French-Canadians were adamantly opposed to taking part in a European war. Even though France was the main battlefield the French people had little hold over the sentiments of French-speaking Canadians, who had been forgotten and abandoned by France in the crucial early years of Nouvelle France.

At first, the Canadian government's call was for volunteers only to join the Allied forces in Europe, but as the war dragged on into its third year and the terrible toll of casualties continued to climb, a Conscription Bill was abruptly passed through Parliament, generating fierce acrimony and antagonism between factions for and against the bill.

In Westmount, the question was never seriously at issue. With its large British component, Westmount staunchly supported the Allied cause. In the following months Westmount was reputed to have the highest per capita enrolment of combat forces of any community of comparable size in Canada.

Within days of the declaration of war on September 3, 1914, Mayor John McKergow presided at a meeting in Victoria Hall, initiated by a group from the Westmount YMCA, for the purpose of creating a "Westmount Rifle Brigade."

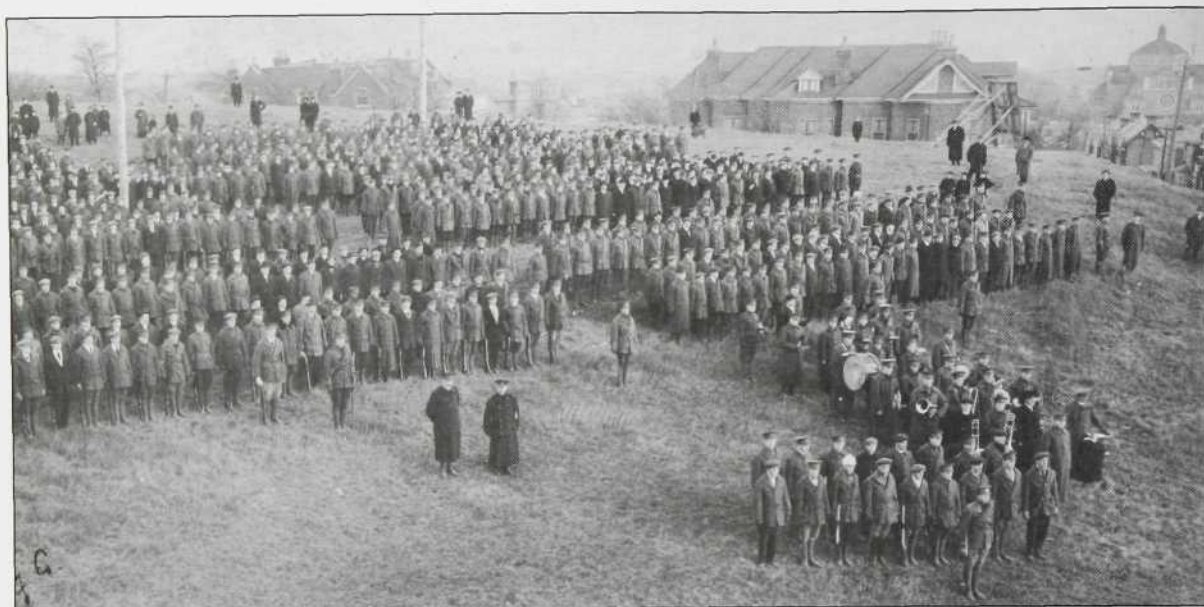
Fifty-one volunteers signed up that night and Lt.-Col. Frank Fisher accepted a request to head the unit. On November 2, 1914, the Department of National Defence designated the 58th Westmount Rifles as a militia regiment available for home service.

By now the ranks had swelled to several hundred, including an enthusiastic older group who constituted a Home Guard. The men were seen drilling every Saturday on the open ground in front of the new high school, or on land above Westmount Avenue. Rifle practice was held in the Victoria Hall bowling alley, "on the strict understanding," warned the mayor, "that no liquor be served or consumed on the premises."

Locations throughout the district were commandeered for military use. The 21st Westmount Field Artillery began drilling several times a week at the Mount Royal Riding Academy and the riding ring was used once a week by a mounted unit, Westmount Squadron, the 13th Scottish Light Dragoons.

As the war progressed, the MAAA placed its entire grounds and facilities at the disposal of the military, and its new clubhouse was converted into a convalescent home for returning invalided soldiers.

In the meantime, three units from Montreal militia regiments, which included a number of Westmounters — the 1st Regiment Canadian Grenadier Guards, the 3rd Victoria Rifles of Canada and the 65th Carabinières de Mont Royal — merged under a new name, the Royal



Volunteers drilling above Westmount Avenue, circa 1915.

Montreal Regiment, which was authorized for overseas service as 14th Battalion, Canadian Expeditionary Force.



Regimental badge: Royal Montreal Regiment.

The 14th Battalion, under the command of Colonel R.E.W. Turner, a veteran of the Boer War, found itself placed in the 3rd Canadian Infantry Brigade. This brigade included a strong contingent of

kilted Scottish-Canadian troops. In view of this impressive Scottish presence it was suggested the newly arrived 14th Battalion should don kilts. However, the prospect of Grenadiers, Carabinières and Riflemen in kilts proved too unorthodox to contemplate and the project was quietly abandoned.

The 14th Battalion went on to earn the first Distinguished Conduct Medal in the Canadian Division, and emerged at the end of the war with

373 decorations including two Victoria Crosses.

One of the Westmounters who was awarded the VC posthumously was Lance-Corporal Fred Fisher, killed in action on April 23rd 1915. Fisher was a graduate of Westmount Academy where he had been a leading figure in sports. A captain of the football team and winner of the Principal's Cup in Athletics in 1911, he had helped organise the school's athletic association. He enlisted in 1914 at the age of 19 and was killed in action the following year. The citation in the London Gazette, June 22, 1915, read in part, "On April 23rd 1915, in the neighbourhood of St. Julien, he went forward with the machine gun of which he was in charge, under heavy fire, and most gallantly assisted in covering the retreat of a battalion. Later he was himself killed while bringing his machine gun into action under very heavy fire, in order to cover the advance of supports."

By the end of the first year of the war, the 58th Westmount Rifles, growing impatient with home service duty and giving military band

concerts in the park, were agitating to see service overseas. A few months later, Colonel Fisher was given permission to organise the battalion for active service renamed the 23rd Westmount Battalion, Canadian Expeditionary Force. Before leaving for overseas, it paraded for inspection by the Governor-General of Canada, the Duke of Connaught.

Women became involved from the first weeks of the war. They raised funds, rolled bandages, collected clothes and nursed returning convalescent soldiers. They also served overseas. Alice



Alice Lighthall served for two years as a nurse in Europe.

Lighthall, one of several Westmount women who trained for nursing duties, served on the European front, near Rouen, from 1916-18.

On the domestic level, homeowners noticed a change in their heating fuel. "During the war we no longer got coal from Wales. It came now from Pennsylvania. It was different and formed

clinkers. It seemed to give less heat and the furnace had to be cleaned out once a week." In 1916 a new girls' school, founded by Miss Amy Stone, was opened in an apartment at the corner of Greene and Sherbrooke. The school was relocated several times as the enrolment grew, finally settling at 18 Severn Avenue on the old Rosemount estate.



Members, 3rd Canadian Infantry Brigade: Lt. Col. Dick Worrall, 14th Battalion, R.M.R., Lt. Col. Charles Bent, 15 Battalion, 48th Highlanders, Lt. Col. Cy Peck, V.C., 16th Battalion, Canadian Scottish, Lt. Col. Ken Perry, 13th Battalion Black Watch.

In other developments fire destroyed a landmark building when the Arena, a large, interior exhibition hall on St. Catherine Street west of Atwater, scene of many horse shows, Christmas pageants and bazaars, was swallowed up in a huge conflagration. "The fire went on for hours and the firemen became exhausted. We lived nearby and my mother sent over jugs of coffee and plates of cookies which were greatly appreciated."



Lance-Corporal Frederick Fisher, V.C. A graduate of Westmount High. The V.C. was awarded posthumously.



January 1919. HRH Prince Arthur of Connaught presented the RMR with its first set of colours at UnterEschbach, Germany.

Mid-way through the war, in October 1916, there was a sudden, alarming outbreak of infantile paralysis (polio) in the country. Westmount's health report for the year recorded "14 undoubted cases, 6 suspicious ones and 5 deaths."

One resident remembers, "A girl I knew, Betty Davidson, was diagnosed as a polio patient and was given up by her doctors. Then Hazel Moore, a physical education specialist who taught in all the Westmount schools, helped her with a programme of exercise and swimming. Betty made a complete recovery and was able to go on to hold a responsible position at the Royal Victoria Hospital for many years."

The polio outbreak subsided but was followed in the fall of 1917 by an epidemic of a virulent strain of influenza. The health report recorded 1,130 cases that year, some of them diagnosed as the Spanish Flu — "This scourge

swept over the city much the same as in other cities resulting in 31 deaths in the month of October. Extreme measures were taken to prevent the spread of infection such as the closing of schools, churches and public assemblies."

"We would see the steady stream of hearses winding up Côte des Neiges Road to the cemeteries on Mount Royal. The hearses for children stood out. They were white and drawn by ponies." The flu epidemic lasted for several months but the years

when "catching" illnesses was widespread continued for a long time. "In those days if anyone in your house had such an illness you put a bright red sign on your door, and if you were out walking and saw such a sign you crossed the street so as not to pass the house." On one occasion King's School was closed down for a week because of five cases of scarlet fever.

There was a footnote to the terrible human losses reported weekly from the war front. An item in the local paper read, "We shall miss next spring the usual beautiful beds of tulips, as the shipment of bulbs from Holland was torpedoed on the way."

The war ended in 1918. The following January, HRH Prince Arthur of Connaught, son of the former Governor-General of Canada, presented the Royal Montreal Regiment with

its first set of colours, at UnterEsbach, Germany. It was the first time such a presentation had taken place on foreign soil following a victorious campaign. The colours were donated by Mrs. E.A. Whitehead, whose two sons had served with the regiment. One son, Captain E.A. Whitehead, was killed in action in June 1916.

The 23rd Battalion, which had made the transition to an active unit from the old 58th Westmount Rifles, returned home to a hero's welcome and set up its mess quarters over Brook's pharmacy on Greene Avenue.

The Royal Montreal Regiment also returned to an emotional homecoming. Marching at the head of the parade was Lt.-Col. Dick Worrall, DSC, MC., with Major C.B. Price, DSO, DCM, second in command, bringing up the rear.

The regiment was reduced in numbers but greatly strengthened in its sense of comrade-

ship. It had participated as a unit in 12 major battles, received 281 decorations including two VCs, and 12 decorations from France, Belgium and Russia. Members of the RMR serving in other units had received a further 51 decorations.

The war was over and the time had come for the sad tally of faces missing from the family tables. Plaques appeared on high school walls, in churches, synagogues and clubhouses, listing the names of those who had served and those who had died. It was part of a worldwide lament for a generation decimated by a war of unprecedented destruction.

At Westmount High, a bronze tablet was unveiled on November 11, 1921, by Sir Arthur Currie, Commander of the Canadian forces in France. On two side panels were listed the 384 names of those who had served overseas. The centre panel held the 58 names of those who had not returned.



Homecoming of 14th Battalion, Royal Montreal Regiment. Lt. Col. Dick Worrall in the lead. April 1919.



*Left: Westmount War Memorial. George Hill
sculpt. 1922*

*Below: Plaster casts of marble
reliefs showing two aspects of
women in wartime.*



10

The Twenties

Canada suffered tragic human losses in the war but its territory remained intact and the country as a whole emerged economically healthy in the post-war years. Europe by contrast was devastated, crippled both by the loss of huge numbers of its young men and women and by a shattered economy.

A steady stream of emigrants began to leave Europe seeking opportunities elsewhere. The Canadian government specifically encouraged immigration from Britain and many of those who responded settled in Montreal, several in Westmount.

The newcomers brought traditions and preferences which reinforced an existing British presence. Plum puddings, oat cakes, teas, and jams from Britain soon covered the grocery store shelves. Clothing, music and entertainment from Britain were all in demand

and there developed an emphasis on observing celebrations connected with the British Crown. In Westmount schools British history and customs occupied a larger part of the curriculum than those of Canada.

When the young Prince of Wales, on a visit to Montreal in 1919, made a brief appearance in Westmount, he received an emotional welcome. "We lived on Roslyn Avenue," one resident recalled. "I remember hearing talk that the Prince was going to be driving by. All of us ran to Sherbrooke Street to see him pass. I recall how young and handsome he looked, with the sun glinting on his golden hair."

The demand for new building, pent up through the war years, was released in the wake of peace. Streets were filling up with terraces, apartment blocks, detached and semi-detached housing.

One of the first post-war municipal projects was a war memorial designed by George Hill, sculptor of two major Montreal monuments, the Boer War memorial on Dominion Square and the George-Étienne Cartier monument on Mount Royal. Its cornerstone was laid in November 1920 and the memorial was unveiled two years later. Hill's striking design included two bronze figures, a 12-foot high soldier and guardian angel, and marble reliefs on two sides of the high plinth.

In 1920, an armoury association began to plan for the financing and building of a permanent home for the Royal Montreal Regiment. Plans started to take shape when the



HRH the Prince of Wales during a brief stop in Westmount, 1919.



Westmount Armoury. The only municipally funded Armoury in Canada. Opened 1925.

City of Westmount leased a parcel of land on St. Catherine Street to the armoury for 99 years for \$1.00. Westmount architects Ross and Macfarlane designed the building which was to cost an estimated \$180,000.

Events now moved rapidly. Financing was obtained from a mixture of private and public sources. The first sod was turned on June 1, 1925, and the building was completed within six months. There was justifiable pride at the outcome that established the only municipally-funded armoury in Canada. A formal opening followed on December 28, 1925, in the presence of the Honorable E.M. Macdonald, of the Canadian Ministry of National Defence. The ceremony was simple, a salute to the colours and a religious dedication. It was

climaxed by a military ball which became a well-attended annual social event for many years.

In the same year that the war memorial was unveiled, the cornerstone was finally laid for Westmount's City Hall. Designed by



Doorway, City Hall.

Robert Findlay, architect of the library and Victoria Hall, the city hall was built in the style of English medieval manors, reflecting the strong British influence in Westmount at the time. Findlay's fine sense of craftsmanship and design, and his careful financial management, made the building an aesthetic and a financial success at a cost of less than \$150,000.

One year after these new landmarks appeared, an older one vanished. In 1924, Victoria Hall burned to the ground in a mass of flames, watched with fascinated horror by crowds of residents. Many of them, though

very young at the time, remember it vividly. "It was frightening and yet so spectacular. Everyone came running out of their houses to watch."

Victoria Hall was so important to the community that plans to rebuild were announced immediately. One year later, on June 24, 1925, a new Victoria Hall opened its doors, with the Governor-General, Lord Byng of Vimy, leading the distinguished guests.

Although the building was admired, its relationship with the community had altered. Outwardly its design was entirely new, the style and materials resembling the new city hall farther along Sherbrooke Street rather than the adjacent library.



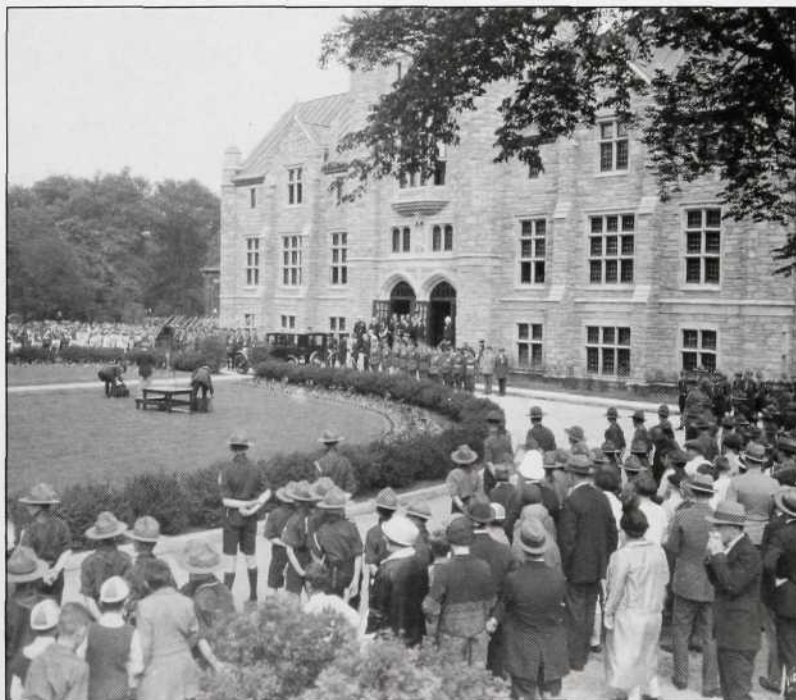
Westmount City Hall, designed by Robert Findlay and his son Frank.



Victoria Hall after the spectacular fire which destroyed the building in 1924.



Opening of the new Victoria Hall, with Lord and Lady Byng as guests of honour.





Inside the Palm House the most popular section was this room with its pond of goldfish and a charming statue.

In the twenties Victoria Hall provided a fine setting for the annual flower shows.





Conservatory created a visual link with the Library and Victoria Hall.

Inside, the range of facilities was scaled down, changes which were inevitable in view of the new resources established since the time of Victoria Hall's opening in 1899. There was no swimming pool, since one was available across the street at the YMCA. And the military units which had drilled and exercised in the hall now had their own quarters in the new armoury. Classes, performances and meetings of all kinds continued in the new building, but the central role Victoria Hall had played in the life of the community was diminished.

In 1927, a new building appeared between Victoria Hall and the library,

visually linking the two. This was a graceful conservatory comprising a palm house of moderately lofty proportions, backed by extensive greenhouses in which bedding plants were nurtured to be set out around the city's open spaces in the spring.

From its first year of operation the greenhouse produced elaborate floral exhibitions that were at first held in Victoria Hall, and later in the palm house. These developed into a popular annual event with displays in the spring and fall which continue to this day..

Plants from the greenhouse also went into the making of an unusual novelty. This was a floral clock, placed near the sidewalk on Sherbrooke Street. It was the only one of its kind at the time in Canada and became a popular tourist attraction. A letter to the local paper, signed by "a Traveller," stated that, "Although I have travelled extensively in Canada and the U.S. east of the Mississippi, and in Great Britain and Europe, I have not seen on this continent or in Europe anything like the Westmount floral timepiece."



The Floral Clock, the only one of its kind in Canada at the time.

Other new public buildings helped define Westmount's eastern and western borders. To the east was the Mechanics' Institute, now known as the Atwater Library. The institute, originally established in Montreal, was a branch of a movement in Britain dedicated "to make the man a better mechanic and the mechanic a better man." From the time it opened its doors in the heart of Old Montreal it had welcomed a stream of distinguished visitors who gave readings, lectured and led discussions on current affairs. Once moved to Atwater Avenue, it concentrated on providing general library facilities, rare in Montreal.



Atwater Library, formerly the 'Mechanics Institute' of Montreal.

Two blocks away from the Atwater Library was Westmount's only hospital. Founded in 1871 in Montreal as "The Woman's Hospital," it had served as practical training ground for medical students in obstetrics and gynaecology.

In 1886, Dr. Herbert L. Reddy became physician-in-charge. At this time, nursing as a profession was struggling to establish itself, but with the young doctor's enthusiastic support,

the hospital succeeded in breaking new ground in the treatment and nursing care of women patients.

The hospital's policy was that "no woman, poverty stricken or otherwise, was ever turned away while there was an empty bed." Standards were high; in 1899 it was considered "the largest and best equipped obstetrical hospital east of Toronto."

In 1927, the hospital moved to Tupper Street, within Westmount's borders. Services were expanded to include male patients and a broader spectrum of treatments. When he died in 1936, Dr. Reddy had given 50 years of his professional life to the service of this institution. Later, the hospital's name was changed to the Reddy Memorial Hospital.

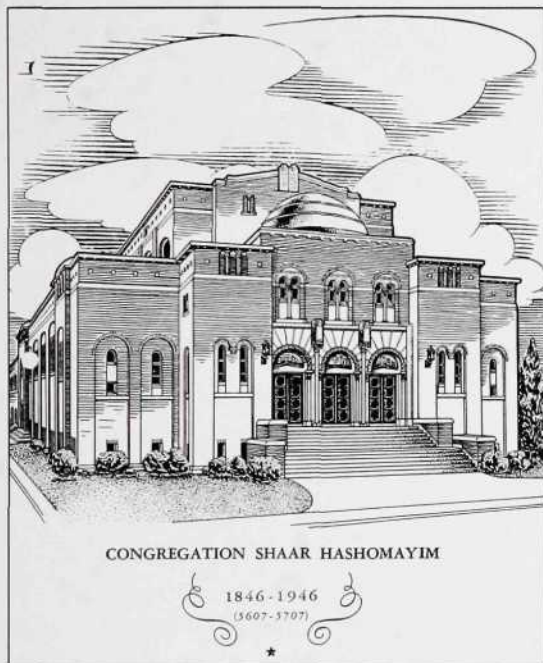
Marking the district's western border on Westmount Avenue, was the Institut Pédagogique — Teachers' College — administered by the Congrégation de Notre Dame. Designed by Omer Marchand, it occupied a city block and won a silver medal for its architect in a Paris competition in 1925.

The Institut also functioned as a collegial school, equivalent to a private junior college,



The 'Institut Pédagogique' offered excellent courses and was housed in a fine classical award-winning building.

offering pre-university general courses. In addition to the formal curriculum the Sisters gave classes in cooking and sewing open to the general public. "Like everything the *Congrégation* supervised these classes were on a very high level," commented one former student. "They were very popular, especially with brides-to-be and young homemakers."



Shaar Hashamayim Synagogue, opened 1922. Home of the second oldest Jewish congregation in Montreal.

The religious profile of the municipality was considerably altered in the 1920s. As the City Hall was being built a new congregation arrived from downtown Montreal to take up residence nearby, forming, with St. Matthias' and St. Andrew's, a triangle of houses of worship of three denominations. The latest arrival was the Shaar Hashamayim (Gates of Heaven) synagogue. This was the second oldest Jewish congregation in Montreal; the oldest being the Spanish and Portuguese Synagogue, founded in 1768.

The "Shaar," as it was popularly known,

was founded in 1846 as the "Congregation of English German and Polish Jews," but changed its name in 1918 after moving into new premises on McGill College Avenue. When this area grew crowded with commercial development, the search began for a move to a more residential district. The synagogue, which opened for worship in 1922, was a well-proportioned design marked by the domes of middle eastern architecture combined with other symbolic forms and classical details.

The rabbi who guided the congregation through these years of change was Herman Abramowitz. The Shaar was Rabbi Abramowitz's first and only ministry. During World War II he was appointed chaplain to the Jewish servicemen in the Canadian army and continued to serve his community until the year before his death in 1947.

Among Protestant congregations dramatic changes were under way. In 1925, Methodists, Congregationalists and Presbyterians were given the option to join together in a "United Church of Canada." Some Westmount churches chose to join the Union, others opted to retain their independence.

Presbyterians from Melville in favour of union transferred their allegiance to the Methodists at Westmount Park church. The result was an enlarged congregation which was able to afford to replace its old building with a graceful Gothic structure on the same site. The church interior was greatly enhanced with some of the finest stained glass windows in the city, designed by a Westmount artist, Charles Kelsey.



Rabbi Abramowitz at the 'Shaar' for 45 years



*Westmount Park United Church at de
Maisonneuve and Lansdowne Avenue.*

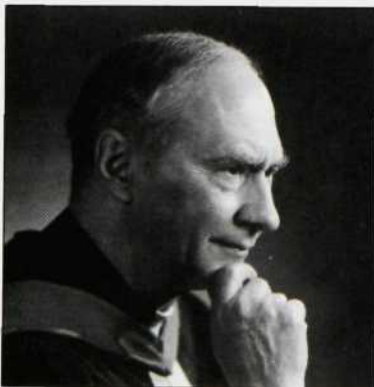


*Dominion-Douglas United Church.
A strikingly beautiful Gothic Revival building.*

In 1925, the Dominion Methodists, who had worshipped in a modest hall on The Boulevard since 1913, were joined by another Methodist group from Montreal's Douglas Church. In 1927, the joint congregations built the new Dominion-Douglas United church, a striking Gothic revival building high on the hillside between Roslyn and Lansdowne Avenues.

Four years later a new minister, the Rev. Dr. Alfred Lloyd Smith was inducted and remained to serve Dominion-Douglas for 28 years. Dr. Smith guided the church through the difficult years of the Depression and World War

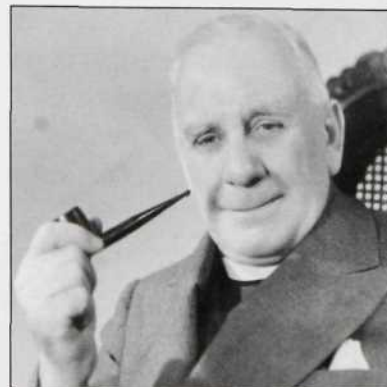
II. It was during his ministry that Dominion-Douglas Church became known as one of the great United Church congregations in the region.



*Rev. Alfred Lloyd Smith of
Dominion-Douglas Church.*

Dr. Smith was a great preacher, able to communicate his total commitment to the faith to every parishioner. "He had the ability," wrote one member, "to gather strength from the mountain top and interpret it for the marketplace." During World War II, Dr. Smith undertook to write once a month to every service man and woman of his parish serving overseas. One recipient remembered, "Often the letter from Dr. Smith was the only mail many of us ever received while we were away. None of us ever forgot that."

There were other developments in denominations outside the United Church. One



*Canon Gilbert Oliver. At St. Matthias
Church the congregation quadrupled.*

involved Westmount's Baptists, who planned to move their modest brick home on Western Avenue to larger premises on Sherbrooke Street.

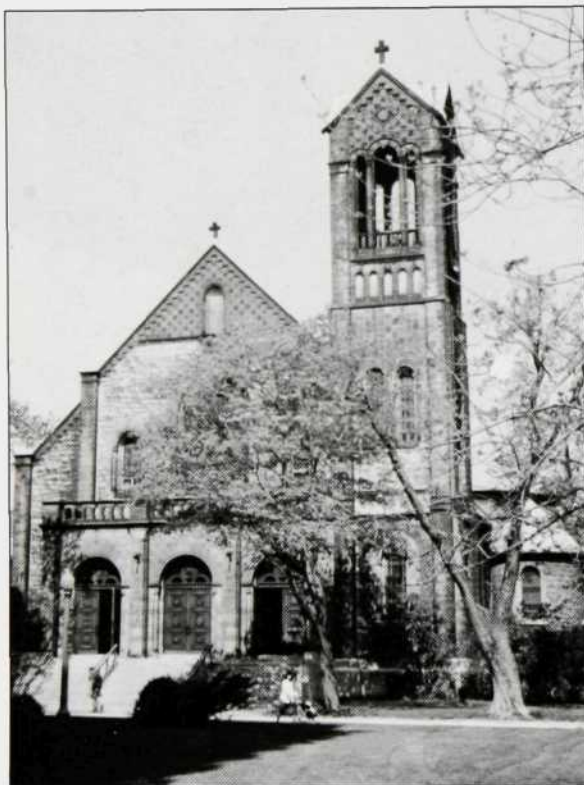


Turning the first sod for a new Baptist church. David Lloyd George was the honoured visitor.

The first sod was turned in 1923, in a highly publicised ceremony attended by the Rt. Hon. David Lloyd George, Britain's charismatic and controversial prime minister — and an ardent Baptist — who was visiting Montreal at the invitation of the Welsh Society. Lloyd George had led his country through the last two years of the Great War and had gone on to lead the British delegation to the Peace Conference in 1919. But three years later, unable to hold a volatile coalition of forces together, he had resigned as head of government.

Lloyd George, a striking figure familiar from a thousand newspaper photographs, made a dramatic addition to the assembly of dignitaries. A great speaker, he thrilled an audience that had patiently sat through tedious preliminaries in order to hear him.

At St. Matthias' Anglican Church another outstanding religious leader arrived in 1927 to become rector there. Canon Gilbert Oliver served at St. Matthias for the next 28 years during which time the congregation quadrupled in number.



St. Léon's Church. Both exterior and interior were dramatically changed.

His active social work took him beyond the church into many fields including service as Protestant chaplain at St. Vincent de Paul penitentiary, and Protestant chaplain to the Quebec Society for Crippled Children. He served in both World Wars, earning a Military Cross in World War I and serving as squadron leader and command chaplain of #3 Training Command in World War II.

Another transition was taking place at St. Léon's, where Abbé Gauthier had launched an ambitious programme. The façade of the church, which since 1901 had been left in a temporary state, was transformed to include a campanile and narthex in the Tuscan tradition.

There followed a grand design for the church interior, financed it was said, from Abbé Gauthier's private fortune. Guido Nincheri, an Italian artist from Prato, on the outskirts of

Florence, was at work on several churches in Montreal when he received the commission to supervise and co-ordinate the work at St. Léon's.

It proved to be his most demanding assignment. The result, achieved over the next 15 years, was a rich composition of design and materials — marble, wood, stone, ceramics and paint — worked into a cohesive whole. The quality of workmanship and wealth of detail, some of it completed in Florence but the greater part carried out in the basement of the church under the supervision of craftsmen from Italy, created an interior unique in Westmount and not matched in all of Montreal.

St. Léon's church had been planned to serve both the French and English communities and for some time sermons were given in both languages. By the mid-1920s, however, there were enough English-speaking Roman Catholics in Westmount to justify their own parish, the Ascension of Our Lord, established in 1926. The church was built on land below Sherbrooke Street bought from the Grey Nuns. When finished, in 1928, it moved Westmount's unofficial poet, C.E. Benedict, to praise its ...

Four graceful pinnacles, as white as snow
Westmount has nothing to compare with these
Gleaming — a dream in stone.



Abbé Gauthier made St. Léon's one of Montreal's finest churches.

A local resident, the Reverend Wilfred Emmett McDonagh, was installed as its first parish priest and remained to serve the church for almost 30 years.



Ceiling murals in St. Léon's.



An example of the magnificent wood carvings in St. Léon's.

Westmount's churches played an additional role in the 1920s. Although Westmount's council refused to permit any cinema to operate within the municipality, churches were allowed to show films, and those that did attracted audiences from outside their own parishes. Children could go every second week to Dominion-Douglas to see movies. Later St. Matthias' also had shows. Entry cost a nickel or 10 cents. The serials were highly dramatic. Every episode ended with a "cliff-hanger" so that one had to go the following week to find out what happened. "Was it strange we switched so readily from one church community to another?" mused one resident. "We all did it and I think it didn't occur to our parents to object."

There were still plenty of horse-drawn vehicles in use both for recreation and for transportation. A resident of lower Westmount recalled, "My great-aunt lived on the Boulevard. Her birthday was on the 17th of January and invariably there was a snowstorm. We could usually get a sleigh to take us there but we had to walk down afterwards."

There were also organised sleigh rides. "The big long sleighs were called 'Kingfishers'. You could hire them for birthdays. Two long seats faced each other and you kept your feet buried in the straw on the floor. When we caught sight of Lumkin's Hotel we knew it was time to begin the return journey. Hot cocoa or chocolate and baked beans were the favourite foods when we got home."

When the first motorised taxicabs began accepting fares they often ran into difficulties, especially at the upper level. "We lived at the foot of Argyle Avenue. Sleighs, cars, would often end up in the snow bank in front of our house as they came sliding down the slope. One

winter a taxi driver collected an elderly passenger at the top of the street but was wary of driving her down in case of an accident. So he placed her on his car rug and pulled her all the way down to the Côte Road. Then he left her with us while he went to collect his car, drove down, picked up his fare and went off."

Cars were no longer the novelty they had been only a few years earlier but there were some strange experimental models on the street which still caused heads to turn. "There were cars you never see now. One had a gas pump on the dashboard. Another was the Stanley Steamer. It had a boiler in the back. You couldn't miss it when it came huffing and puffing along the street. Our family owned a Franklin. It had a wooden chassis, an air-cooled engine and windshield wipers you operated by hand."

Most cars were used for pleasure, not as a means of getting to and from work. Few cars were used at all in the winter and "putting the car up on blocks" was a November ritual. Coach houses were being converted into garages or, if there were space enough, a garage was built beside the house.

Cars were changing people's lives. For some it brought a sense of freedom, similar to the sense of liberation that came with the bicycle. The Weekly Examiner ran a column in praise of the car which read, in part, "He who owns a car is a free man, free from the law of gravitation that tied men to one spot until the automobile came."

But there was another side to its social impact. "Cars were exciting but they isolated people one from another. When you took the streetcar or train you invariably met someone you knew. You chatted about the news of the day and about family matters. All that stopped when you were shut off in your private car."

In education, Westmount continued to maintain an enviable standard of scholarship. All the public schools were crowded. Classes at every level averaged 30 to 40 pupils, the numbers boosted by new immigrants and by an increase in the birthrate since the end of the war. Still, scholastic standards remained high and in 1921 Westmount was declared "the most literate city in Canada."

At Roslyn School, new ground was broken when a young Jewish teacher, a McGill graduate, was hired to teach French. Miss Seiden was the first non-Protestant teacher to be engaged by the Westmount Protestant School Board and though she remained for only three years, from 1920-23, the way was opened to a freer hiring policy in the future.

Reminiscing about their high school days in the 1920s, the Lande brothers, Bernard and Lawrence, recalled, "Mr. Howe was the Principal in our time. The teachers were very individual characters, and in spite of large classes, they managed to hold your interest. Mr. Wordsworth, the Latin teacher, was an enthusiastic climber and would bring in pictures and tell us about his climbs in Europe



G.P. Smith coached the High School teams to a phenomenal ninety-eight championships.



Mr. Howe, popular Principal of Westmount High.

and South America. I remember Mr. French, who taught English, which we thought very funny. And Mr. Anderson, the History teacher. He would wave his tie about and announce in a rolling Scottish burr, 'This is the Anderrrrson plaid my boys, the Anderrrrson plaid.'" Another Scotsman was C.S. Allan. He introduced into Canada, very successfully, the Allan toffee bar from Scotland, and made a fortune.

"Then there was Mr. Wells. We all called him 'Bombardier' after a famous fighter of the day. Our Mr. Wells kept bees in his garden at Notre Dame de Grâce and would invite us out to see the hives and learn how to take care of them."

In sports, the director of physical education was G.P. Smith who, during his tenure, coached the high school teams to a phenomenal 98 championships.

In 1927, many schoolchildren and several adults took part in an event staged in Westmount Park. It celebrated the diamond anniversary of the confederation of Canada, established in 1867. In a synchronised display,

participants were placed standing, kneeling, bending, to form the letters of each Canadian province. "I was there with my parents. At a signal those taking part moved into position and suddenly the letters could be read with great clarity."

Young children were comfortable shopping in the local stores, clutching their weekly allowance. In middle Westmount this was usually five cents. "Some kids had better financial resources from odd jobs, like shovelling snow from front lawns in winter and mowing lawns in

summer. There was also a group of boys who sang in the St. Matthias' church choir. They were paid ten cents for each service — morning and evening on Sundays — and five cents for turning out for practice during the week.

They were paid once a month with 'shin plasters', 25-cent banknotes which were then not uncommon."

Fry's novelty shop on Sherbrooke Street near Victoria Avenue was a popular meeting place. The premises were divided in two. On one side Mrs. Fry sold ribbons and laces and on the other Mr. Fry dispensed stationery and candies.

In winter a pot-bellied stove filled the store with warmth. "I spent all my allowance at Fry's. When I opened the door and walked down the wooden aisle all I could smell was 'Double Bubble' which I bought ten of — they were

two for one cent. Sometimes we spent hours deciding how to spend our few pennies. 'Honeymoons', a chocolate covered caramel, were a favourite at two for one cent."

"There were also 'jawbreakers'. These were hard round balls of indeterminate sweet material almost impossible to crack with your teeth, but when sucked for what seemed hours, finally revealed a tiny nut, which didn't taste very good. Licorice whips, black or red, were also very popular at a cent a piece as you could tear off a piece to share with a friend.

"If you were not saving up for something special such as a bicycle, you could move beyond the candy counter to the back of the store where there was a large table on which were spread the ten cent comics, Cheers, Boy's



The Decarie farms still cultivated the wonderfully sweet musk melons.

Own Paper, Chums, The Thriller. These arrived once a week from England aboard the "Drunken Duchesses." These were the Duchess ships — Atholl, York, Richmond and Bedford — which earned their nickname because they were said to pitch and roll so alarmingly."

High school students were drawn to another attraction. "When we came out of school we could smell the wonderful aroma of fresh baked bread. It came from the Canada Bread bakery in a lane off Melville Avenue. We would go and buy a fresh loaf for ten cents. It was so hot you had to toss it about in the air to cool it off.

Then we would eat the crusts and use the soft inside to roll pellets for our catapults and loose them on loving couples sitting on the park benches."

By the late 1920s, most large open spaces in Westmount had disappeared in the surge of urban building. In 1927 the last of the Sulpician holdings that lay within the municipality were sold to the city and the area of the Priest's Farm was developed with residential housing.

The golf club at the summit gave way to a major housing development. Cultivated land around many large estates was parcelled off and new housing encroached close to the mansions of Rosemount, Weredale and Forden.

Some few pockets of the farmland endured. Across from St.

Léon's Church the Grey Nuns continued to work their diminished acreage until the 1950s. "Even on the hottest summer days we would see the Sisters, in their voluminous robes, bent over the rows of vegetables. At one corner of the field there was a small farmhouse where M. Caron, the caretaker lived."

Further west the Decarie farms still cultivated fields of the wonderfully sweet musk melons so highly prized by connoisseurs. These were mostly shipped to the American market where they reportedly commanded \$1 a slice in New York restaurants.

For a while longer, the Murray family's lands remained untouched. The Lande family lived on Strathcona Avenue, close by the Murray estate. "My brothers and I had the run of the Murray farm. The stable boy was our friend and let us help with some of the farm work. You felt you were deep in the country, not in the city at all."

Also on Strathcona lived the family of Judge Louis Boyer, a judge of the Quebec Superior Court, who was responsible for drawing up the charter for the municipality's

change of name to Westmount. Of the 12 children in the Boyer family, the two youngest, Louis and Alphonse, were identical twins. Reminiscing about their childhood, they recalled, "Our house was at the top of the street just below Côte St. Antoine, so we grew up with the open spaces of the Murray farm



Children of Judge Louis and Mrs. Boyer. The youngest were identical twins, Louis and Alphonse.

just beyond our doorstep."

Then one day a large portion of the Murray properties was put up for sale, destined it seemed for yet another housing development. Mrs Eva Vineberg had just moved nearby. "When we moved to Belmont Avenue, close to the Murray land, they were going to put a road through the middle of the open space and subdivide it into lots. All the drains and services were in place, but the people in the neighbourhood got together and said it should be a park. We all signed a petition and took it to City Hall. The council listened and the

people of Westmount have us to thank for gaining another lovely park for the City."

Westmount bought the land for \$75,000 and developed it as a park and playground, named for the Murray family. Trees were planted and several thousand bulbs from the city's greenhouses were set out in new flower beds.

The Murray house, backing onto the park, remained intact a few years longer. "We children often climbed over the fence to pick flowers. We would see the [Murray] sisters on the verandah knitting white socks 'for the lepers in India' we were told. There was a barn next to the house and one day some boys, having gone in for a smoke, must have dropped matches. The hay caught fire and the barn burned to the ground."

Soon after, the house itself was demolished and residents were swamped with all kinds of little wild creatures after the Murray house and barn were taken down.

The days of roomy mansions, such as West Mount, seemed by now to belong to another age, but as the 1920s drew to a close, one last major residence began to take shape on a commanding site at the upper level. This was the new house of Noah Timmins, who with his brother Henri, had been among the first to build houses near the summit. The Timmins family,

in spite of their English name, had been French-speaking since the time Noah Timmins, patriarch of the family in Canada, left England and settled in a small town in northern Quebec. His sons, Noah and Henri, together with their nephew Alphonse Paré, went on to become highly successful mining developers with world-wide interests. It was the 25-year old Alphonse Paré who, in 1910, travelled across the lakes and forests of northern Ontario to inspect a new find, made by a 19-year old pro-

spector, Benny Hollinger, and his partner Alex Gillies. What Paré saw astounded him. "It was as if a giant cauldron had spattered gold nuggets over a bed of pure, pure white quartz crystals as a setting for some magnificent crown jewels." This



There was a pond for sailboats in the newly developed Murray park.

was the fabled Hollinger gold mine, in which the Timmins family bought a share for \$330,000, and which went on to produce more than a billion dollars in gold.

In 1928 Noah Timmins commissioned his new mansion at 66 Belvedere Place, with sweeping views down to the river and beyond. It cost \$1 million, a great sum at the time, and was the last of the opulent homes built on this scale in Westmount. The house was 175 feet long and 75 feet wide. Among its many rooms were a magnificent ballroom, a billiard room, a library and a conservatory.



Earmarked for real estate development, local residents petitioned successfully to keep the open space for a park.

The Timmins mansion became a showplace but it was also a family home of great warmth for the large extended Timmins family. Lucy Paré, Australian born wife of Alphonse Paré, recalled the days of wonderful Christmas parties at the house. They were parishioners of St. Léon's Church at first, and then later of the Church of the Ascension. On Christmas Eve, the family gathered together and crowded onto sleighs. Forming a long procession, they sped down the hill to church, sleigh bells jingling, to attend midnight mass. Then home again through the frosty night for réveillon.

The '20s were heady days of economic opportunity here as elsewhere in North America. The horrors of war had begun to fade and prosperity appeared to be just around the corner for the average family as well as for the financier and industrial giant. There were few who would have foreseen that this rosy future, resting on an artificially swollen stock market, could vanish into thin air.

But in the fall of 1929 the financial markets in New York came tumbling down. A chain reaction of panic selling was set off which in turn prepared the way for years of hardship as the Depression took hold.



Lookout, Summit Circle, 1932. One of the 'make work' projects of the Depression years.

11

The Thirties

In 1929 the level of unemployment in Canada stood at 2.9 per cent. Only four years later the figure had soared to 25%.

The Wall Street Crash of 1929 cut deeply into personal and public life. Certain industries and individuals proved particularly vulnerable, but few escaped the hard times. Homeowners with no mortgages, and those who had invested modestly, were the fortunate ones. Those who had plunged and bought "on margin" in the months when stocks were spiralling upwards daily, as well as those who undertook to sell all they had to meet their obligations, were reduced from riches to poverty overnight. Values of blue chip stocks went plummeting like waterfalls.

For those in low or moderate paying jobs it was a devastating time, when worries over falling sick and being out of work often brought on the very misfortune that was dreaded. Even the largest, most successful enterprises were laying off workers. "I was in an engineering department with about 50 men," recalled Alex Shearwood. "In 1932 we were down to ten key people, and their salaries were all levelled at \$90 a month, impossible for a family to live on. Three of us, who had graduated at the same time, were paid \$50 a month. Total employment in the firm went from 2,000 to less than 50, and the stock of the company fell from \$141 to \$5. My boss became indebted to the Royal Bank for four million dollars, but he knew they did not dare sell him out in the hope things would eventually improve and they would get their money back."

Apart from the POM Bakery, which opened its new building in 1930, construction in general was at a standstill. In a welcome move,

Westmount announced it would employ all qualified, out-of-work engineers living in Westmount. "Make work" projects were initiated. Wooden stairways at various levels up the mountain were replaced with stone. City sewers were renewed or repaired, and a full survey of Westmount's terrain was undertaken.

"My father, Martin Wolff, was one of those taken on by the City," recalled his daughter. "He worked on the Lookout, which was paved and balustraded and he installed the metal indicators pointing towards distant landmarks."

Manual work was available — cleaning vacant lots, weeding the park lawns, chopping fallen branches or trees in the park for firewood. A Westmount branch of the Rotary Club opened in 1930 and immediately launched philanthropic initiatives of its own.

A relief system was established at City Hall. Between 1932 and 1935, 1,322 people were helped with food, shelter, clothing and fuel. Grocery orders, to the value of \$1.50 a week were made available to the needy, as well as supplements of 50 cents per person per week, tickets for bread and milk, and subsidies of up to \$15 a month towards rent. There were free health services, which included eye glasses and dental work, for low-income families.

Clothing was made and distributed, or made and sold, for small sums by unemployed women. "Make do" was the slogan of the day. Newspaper columns were filled with advice on preparing cheap, wholesome meals, remaking old suits and coats into children's garments, and ways to conserve heat and reduce household expenses.

At Dionne and Dionne, the grocers, customers were ordering minimal quantities of supplies — tea by the quarter pound, eggs by the quarter dozen, ham by the slice. “People who we knew kept no dogs were ordering dog meat — “retailles.” These were the trimmings, left over from prepared meats, which were tossed into a barrel and sold for pennies or given away.”



Kathleen Jenkins, Chief Librarian following the retirement of Mary Saxe.

some to sleep or keep warm. Later one man told me ‘only the Library saved me from suicide.’”

Nevertheless, throughout the decade Miss Jenkins, an outstanding librarian and scholar, was able to oversee major changes — reclassification of the library’s contents and a redecoration of the building’s interior. The rich red and cream walls were painted white and new ceiling lights installed. “The original decor was beautiful,” said Miss Jenkins, “but it was sombre and had become rather shabby. The change lightened and brightened the place even on the darkest days.”

The library was very busy. Kathleen Jenkins, who replaced Mary Saxe as chief librarian in 1931 recalled that, “People came just to chat,

At the Church of the Ascension, Father McDonagh discovered that young mothers especially, found the burden of financial and emotional troubles hard to bear. As a religious minority in the municipality, they had few people to talk to and share their anxieties. Father McDonagh turned to Lucy Paré for suggestions on how to help these young women.

Lucy Paré organised the Westmount English Catholic Mothers’ Club, open to all mothers in the parish from the top of the hill to the lower level below Dorchester Avenue. There were no membership fees. Together, they arranged activities that suited their various needs, meeting in groups to make new friends, as well as arranging larger assemblies, such as bazaars and dances at Victoria Hall and St. Léon’s School. The Club was a genuine success, easing social barriers and the sense of isolation.



The Mothers' Club Bazaar Committee. Lucy Paré, seated second from right, organized the Club and created this composite photograph.



Westmount Library. It provided a welcome refuge through the Depression years.

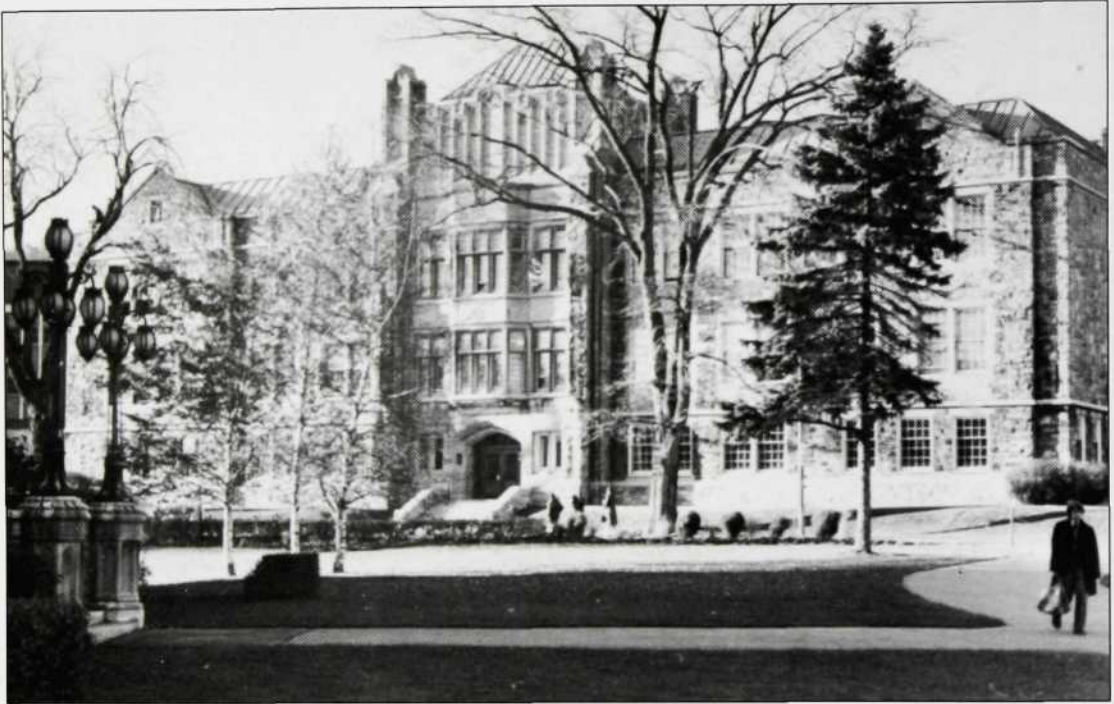
Everywhere, sales and raffles, concerts and performances were raising money for the unemployed and the stage at Victoria Hall hummed with activity.

Schools, however, functioned normally, with classes filled to capacity. Between 1929 and 1931, Westmount High School was enlarged with two additions, one to the east and one to the west of the original building. A number of new students came from Weredale House, a charitable institution originally founded in 1874 as the "Boys' Home of Montreal" and now a residence for English-speaking boys aged 10-18, built on the former Moffat estate. These boys' integration into the Westmount school system created some

difficulties but managed to achieve a measure of success.

In these difficult times, new home and school associations, alumnae and Old Boys groups were formed, involving parents and former students in school affairs. Such community associations sponsored extra-curricular activities, organised volunteer help when needed, and worked on special fundraising projects.

In 1934, Argyle School, with its wooden floorboards, was declared unsafe. It was demolished and reconstructed in greystone, harmonizing with Westmount City Hall across the road. Also at this time, the central section of St. Paul's school was modernised in the currently fashionable Art Deco style.



New Argyle School. Later Senior High School. Today Selwyn House School.

With school activities functioning normally through the Depression, children were, for the most part, shielded from their parents' worries. Out of school, every season of the year provided opportunities for recreation at little or no cost.

In winter, snow and ice turned the whole district into a playground. The new open space of Murray Park, with its long, gentle slope, was made to order for children's toboggans. "Another slide was constructed in Westmount Park," recalled one resident. "We also tobogganed down Victoria Avenue to Queen Mary Road. The street was closed to traffic in the winter below the last house on Sunnyside. There was no money for extras like sports equipment so we improvised a lot. A garbage can lid made a great

toboggan and we made skis out of barrel staves. It was a challenge skiing on the sidewalks down Mountain Avenue. Sometimes we walked over the top of the mountain to watch grownup skiers at the ski jump which was by the cliffs at the back.

The snow on the streets was left in huge



'Red River coats, sashes and tuques, mittens and over-stockings which were worn over the shoes but under the rubbers.'

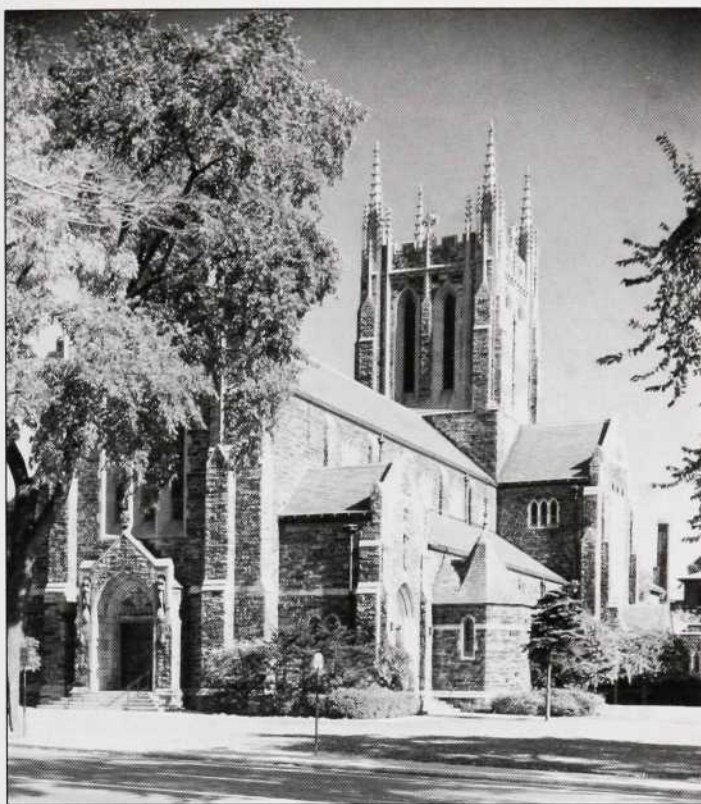
piles beside the road. We made tunnels through the piles with here and there an exit. An old apple barrel, if one could be found, made an excellent 'entrance'.

"Most of us still wore the dark blue Red River coats, which literally never wore out and were handed down or handed on as you grew out of them. They were worn with sashes, sometimes of plain red wool, but sometimes with 'ceintures fléchées', beautifully woven in traditional Indian patterns. Then there were leggings and tuques, mufflers, two pairs of socks and two pairs of mittens. All these were mostly made of wool and got wet and heavy after they were covered in snow. I still find the smell of wet wool brings back memories of playing outside through the snowy winter.

"Of course there was skating. You could pay to skate at the big MAAA rink, but there was free skating in all the parks. There were shelters where you could put on your skates and warm up, with someone always on hand in case help were needed. There was usually a rink close to someone's home where you could be with your friends and not have far to go afterwards for hot chocolate or hot bovril made with milk — delicious!"

At the upper level on a flat field there was ice-sailing. "This took place after a thaw followed by a freeze up. It was all very makeshift with boards for a base and sails made from old sheets.

"When spring came there was water everywhere and we made lakes and dams in the gutters all along the sides of the streets. When all the snow and water had gone, out came the roller skates. It felt wonderful, whizzing down the Westmount hills with an



Church of the Ascension of our Lord at Clarke Ave. and Sherbrooke

old broom handle as a pretty effective brake. Sometimes, on the small side streets or cul-de-sacs, the police would block off the entry and we could skate with no fear of traffic."

Then there were the trains. "It was a great treat to go down to Westmount station to watch the trains go by, or see them being shunted back and forth in the railway yards. We called the engine "the Big Hiss" because of the noise. You had to stand well back on the platform to avoid the clouds of steam. As it grew dark, the lanterns carried by the men as they moved about the tracks would waver and shine, which made them seem mysterious and magical."

From the upper level where the view was unobstructed down to the river, "We used to enjoy watching the "Rapids King" and "Rapids Queen" shoot the Lachine rapids."



There was free skating in the parks and shelters to put on your skates and warm up.

In 1933, children were offered another attraction. Dorothy Davis and Violet Walters, two young women with a background in



Dorothy Davis and Violet Walters, directors of the Montreal Children's Theatre.

English theatre, staged their first production, "The Cave of the Island King" at Victoria Hall. They also began drama classes for children aged five and up. "We wanted to offer not only theatre productions they could enjoy, but also the experience of participating in a show on stage," they explained. "We covered a big range in our productions, from "Anne of Green Gables" to a "Life of Queen Victoria."

These Children's Theatre productions continued for over 50 years, an astonishing achievement, accomplished with a minimum of financial support, aided on the production side in later years by distinguished colleagues

André Trudel and Marc de Gagné. One notable alumnus of the children's classes was William Shatner who went on to a very successful career in television and the movies.

One day in 1935, residents found a newspaper on their doorstep. It informed them that *The Westmount Examiner*, "a Clean, Independent Newspaper for the Home, Devoted to Public Service, is delivered to every Home in the City of Westmount."

Other newspapers had appeared sporadically over the years, covering news of several western suburbs, including Westmount. *The Examiner* was to prove more focused and durable and is still publishing today.

Among its first reports was an article about Firefighter Milden who had won the highest fire safety education award in a contest open to all firefighters in the British Empire. Two other Westmount firemen scored in the top ten.

One of the first dramatic incidents the paper recorded involved the streetcars, which were still having problems in winter. One January night in 1936, the Number 14 streetcar came careening down Claremont Avenue and landed up facing east-west, smashing into the window of Chatfield's grocery store. Duncan Chatfield recalled the occasion well. "King George the Fifth had just died and we had arranged a

memorial window, empty except for a portrait of the King, which we had draped in black. The accident happened at eleven o'clock at night. No one was hurt. The firemen came and covered the window with canvas until the morning. People talked about it for years after. It grew into quite a legend, with people saying such accidents had occurred regularly. Some

versions had our store front being smashed every winter!"

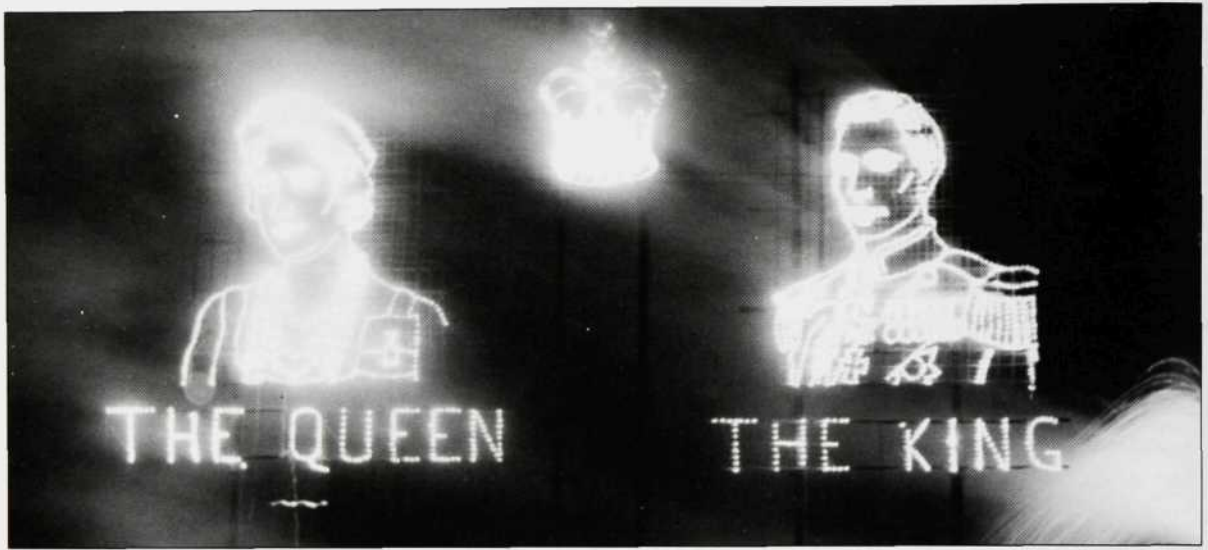
Westmounters were fervently attached to the British monarchy and followed the dramatic events leading to Edward VIII's abdication with great interest. By 1937, when the coronation of the new King and Queen was announced, Westmount, with its



Mr. Duncan Chatfield of Chatfield's grocery, 'a streetcar, out of control, smashed the store window. People talked about it for years.'

economy beginning to revive and a cautious optimism emerging, declared its intention to celebrate in style. The entire city assumed a festive air. Flags representing various parts of the Empire flew in front of City Hall and every schoolchild received an Anointing Spoon, "an almost perfect replica of the original used in the actual Coronation ceremony at Westminster Abbey."

Two years later, Royalist enthusiasm rose to fever pitch with the visit of the King and Queen to Westmount during their tour of Canada. Grandstands were built in Murray Park, one for each school and every building in the city was hung with flags and bunting.



Finale to the fireworks display, Coronation Day, 1937.

"First Aid stations did not have a single patient," reported the Westmount Examiner, "though the streets were crowded, especially on the open ground around City Hall." A tree planting ceremony took place and Murray Park was renamed King George Park.

Also that year, an intriguing item was noted in the city's annual report. "A noticeable number of Europeans, mostly refugees, have been using the facilities of the Library, some to acquire a knowledge of the language and culture. Many of these people start with children's picture books and progress through

simple stories to a higher standard."

For Canadians, insulated by distance from events in Europe, it was difficult to appreciate that the presence of "refugees" reflected a reality different from that of the immigrants who had been settling the country since the 16th century.

But developments, huge and horrifying, were gathering momentum across Europe, and in the fall of the same year in which the City had welcomed the springtime visit of Britain's new King and Queen, the radio announced the shocking news that Europe was again at war.



Their Majesties King George VI and Queen Elizabeth passing Westmount City Hall on their visit in 1939.

12

World War II

Within days of the declaration of war Westmount sprang into action. The athletic grounds were turned over to the military for use as barracks and a militia training centre. Some 600 bunks were stacked inside the clubhouse. Extra kitchens and toilet facilities were added and the area was declared off limits to all but authorised personnel.

At the armoury, preparations for active duty had been quietly going forward for some weeks, following a secret mobilization order dated July 18, 1939. By August 30, the 1st Battalion (active) of the Royal Montreal Regiment, for the past three years no longer an infantry but a machine gun unit, was ready to proceed overseas as part of the First Canadian Division.

The unit's departure later that year was in marked contrast to the cheering crowds that had waved the men off in 1914. "Early on December 6th the men were astir: at 6 a.m. in the light of the moon and in the cold of approaching dawn, they formed up on the snow-covered parade square in the Westmount athletic grounds. There was no ceremonial ... All ranks knew that the 1st Division of the Canadian Active Service Force was on the move and would sail overseas from Halifax [though] the date of the sailing was still a military secret."

Canada's support for the Allied cause was never in doubt. Conscription however, remained a thorny issue which the federal

government was reluctant to face. Finally, in 1944, it resorted to a national referendum, asking release from its previous commitment not to introduce conscription and "seeking a free hand to enlist non-volunteers to send them overseas to fight."

In Quebec, 85 per cent refused to grant the request, while in the rest of the country 80 per cent were in favour. Nevertheless, the percentage of French-Canadians who served with the Canadian forces rose to 19 per cent from the figure of 12 per cent in World War I.

In Westmount the majority of citizens, French and English alike, voted overwhelmingly, 86 per cent, in favour of the move to conscription: "I wanted to do so much for my country, Canada. It was a spontaneous feeling, passionate and heartfelt."

Radio, still rare during the First World War, was now bringing the war into Canadian homes with daily broadcasts from Britain, tracking developments on all fronts. It carried the impressive oratory of the Allied leaders, Winston Churchill in particular, and made familiar the songs, singers and entertainers who helped maintain morale through the worst days of Allied reversals.

Westmount's association with the RMR had been firmly established by the end of World War I. New for the city was its involvement with the Air Force — due in large measure to one man.



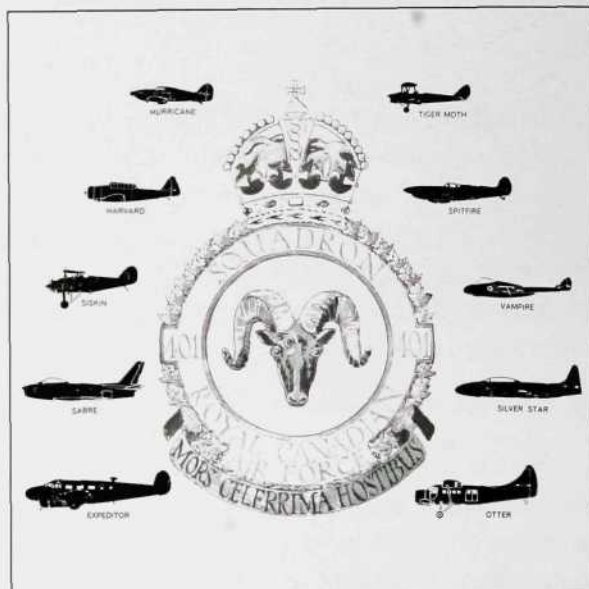
Air Vice-Marshal Frank McGill. His career paralleled the development of flight in Canada.

Frank McGill — he rose to the rank of Air Vice-Marshal — had been inspired with a passion for flying by the pioneers of aviation. Already famous in Canada as an all-round athlete, McGill joined the Royal Naval Air Service in World War I and became a combat and test pilot.

His career went on to parallel the development of flight in Canada. In 1934, he initiated flying training, in De Havilland Tiger Moths, for a new unit, No. 15 (later 115) Squadron, Non Permanent Active Air Force (NPAAF) of the City of Westmount. Recruiting offices were housed in a building at the corner of Sherbrooke Street and Metcalfe Avenue, donated by the Bell Telephone Company.

In 1939, the unit was ready for active service and was posted overseas. The following year it was absorbed by No. 1 (F) Squadron

and went on to establish an astonishing record. In over 12,000 sorties it took part in virtually every engagement in the European theatre of



Emblem of the 401 (City of Westmount) Squadron with types of aircraft used in training.

operations, including the Battle of Britain, the only Canadian and one of the few non-RAF squadrons involved. It was after this decisive battle that Churchill coined the memorable phrase, "Never in the field of human conflict was so much owed by so many to so few."

When the war ended, the squadron, re-numbered 401 (F) Squadron was reformed as a reserve unit and adopted by Westmount as No. 401 (City of Westmount) Squadron (Auxiliary). Many years later, on the occasion of its 50th anniversary, attended by several veterans of the "401," there was a moving ceremony at the cenotaph at which the names of those who had died in World War II were read. "There were names I hadn't thought of for years," said one veteran overcome with emotion. "As their names were read, I could see some of the men leaning against the wings of their planes."



'I could see the men leaning against the wings of their planes.'

Westmount's name was also carried at sea. By 1942, German submarine attacks on transatlantic convoys carrying desperately needed supplies to Britain were causing serious losses to merchant shipping and its escort vessels. To help in the urgent need for replacements, Westmount commissioned the building of an escort vessel, a 699 Bangor class mine-sweeper. Christened the *City of Westmount*, the vessel was adopted by the city's

residents who donated radios, a washing machine, clothing and a quantity of sporting goods and games.

The HMCS *City of Westmount* became part of the newly formed First Canadian Minesweeping Squadron and performed escort duty for the remainder of the war. When she was retired at Sydney, Nova Scotia, in October 1945, a naval representative from the Department of National Defence, presented the ship's bell to the municipality. It is displayed in Westmount City Hall.

In 1943, Westmount commissioned a second ship to help replace continuing losses in the wartime fleet, a merchantman built by United Shipyards Ltd., in Montreal's Bickerdyke basin. Christened *SS Westmount Park*, Mayor Walter Merrill presented the vessel with a walnut plaque, decorated in gilt and sterling silver. The inscription read "Given by the people of Westmount with their good



'City of Westmount', an escort vessel commissioned to help replace losses in merchant shipping.

wishes for a happy and lucky life to the new ship."

The *SS Westmount Park* had a diversified career but its end was a mysterious one. After the war, the ship was converted to civilian use and renamed *Nordic Star*. On December 12th 1956, she sailed from Philadelphia bound for Le Havre, France, failed to reach her destination and was never heard from again.

In all three services women were involved to a greater degree than ever before. First to be established were the Women's Royal Canadian Naval Services (WRCNS). Then followed the Canadian Women's Army Corps (CWAC), known inevitably as the "Quacks" and the WDs, the Women's Division of the Royal Canadian Air Force.

Suzy Simard, of Westmount, was one of 150 women chosen from among many hundred



Fl. Lt. Suzy Simard, one of the first women to serve in the airforce.

applicants from across Canada to serve with the air force. "The motto assigned to us was 'We enlist so that men may fly'. We were paid 90 cents a day. The men got \$1.30. Why this was so was never explained to us. Most of us, including myself,

wanted very much to go overseas, but because I was fluently bi-lingual I was told my services were needed in Canada."

Ms. Simard was assigned to establish a "School of English" at Rockcliffe, Ontario, for francophone women recruits. These women

went on to work as transport drivers, photographers, hospital assistants, parachute riggers, as well as stenographers and typists.

Women went back to work in the shops, offices and factories as they had done in World War I. They also took on less familiar occupations. In 1942, Dorothy Barnes was the first policewoman to patrol parks in North America. She was also the first uniformed policewoman in Canada on a beat, alone and on equal terms with her male counterparts. Ms. Barnes was 26 years old at the time. When she retired, 31 years later, she was remembered with admiration by her fellow officers as well as by the public as "the best park ranger we ever had."

Westmount women were leaders in the intensive volunteer effort at both the local and

the national levels. Mrs. Sam Bronfman, a long-time volunteer worker who had been active in community projects from the age of eighteen, established a branch of the Jewish Red Cross in Montreal. "During



Mrs. Sam Bronfman. She was awarded the OBE for her work during the war.

the war," wrote Mrs. Bronfman, "there were thousands of women who wanted to participate in some way. They wanted to knit and sew for the servicemen and also to offer them hospitality and help their families. I was on the Red Cross premises five days a week, all day

long. We had over six hundred people to co-ordinate and supervise.”



Mrs. Alexander Hutchinson. Among her many volunteer activities she served on the War Finance Committee promoting the sale of Victory Bonds.

Mrs. Alexander Hutchinson was another very remarkable volunteer. Actively involved in a wide variety of community concerns, Mrs. Hutchinson seemed cheerfully unaware of her awesome reputation as an org-

aniser and her ability to engage her friends in her many projects. She was taken aback when, on inviting one of her friends to lunch the reply was, “Oh Helen, you don’t have to give me lunch. Just tell me what it is you want me to do.”

After the war, Mrs. Hutchinson co-founded the Women’s Auxiliary of the Montreal General Hospital as well as that of the Douglas Hospital.

Another Westmount volunteer, Alice Winslow-Spragge, helped start the first Red Cross Blood Donor clinic in Montreal. When she left to go overseas, other volunteers, many from Westmount, took her place.

Several volunteers worked on the programme “Bundles for Britain.” The “bundles” contained non-perishable foods, toys and small items of clothing. Response from Britain indicated the parcels were greatly appreciated and the programme never lacked for goods or for personnel to package them.

Money for this project was raised in various ways, including the sale of an official pin, handsomely designed and engraved.

Then there were the “evacuees.” When the bombs started to fall on London and other cities in Britain, women and children were advised to leave if they could and go to the countryside

or even overseas. Many came to Canada, several to Westmount. Some came to stay with relatives, often distant ones they had never met. In one case “we had three generations who came to stay, my father’s sister, her daughter-in-law and two small boys. The boys went to Roslyn and had no major problems but the women had a difficult time adapting, which made it awkward all round.”

“The local schools took in 159 evacuee children. Some children had a hard time of it. Their clothes were different, especially the boys in their short pants and none of them had clothes suitable for a Canadian winter. Also their accents were strange and they got teased about that. If they had come without a parent many got homesick and unhappy. Others adapted and loved it all and made friends for life. But on the whole the experiment was not a great success and when one ship, the *City of Benares*, carrying children evacuees across the Atlantic was torpedoed and sunk, the project was abandoned.



The ‘Bundles for Britain’ pin, sold to raise funds for this popular programme.

Throughout the war years schoolchildren were buying War Savings Stamps. When these were collected in 1945, the accumulated sum from all the Westmount schools was large enough to buy a Cornell airplane which was presented by student representatives to the RCAF, to be used by them for post-war training. At the ceremony, in Westmount Park, the plane was christened *City of Westmount* with a bottle containing water from the Atlantic and the Pacific oceans.

Meanwhile with so many of its personnel volunteering for active war services, Westmount's city council announced that positions of enlisted employees would be kept open for them until they returned. If pay and allowances in the Services were together less than their regular pay from the city, Westmount

would make up the difference. Contributions would be made to the pension fund on their behalf for the duration of the war and their years of war service would be counted as years in Westmount's employ.

For a conflict waged so far from Canada's shores, there was a high degree of preparedness at the local level. The basement of Westmount City Hall was equipped as a control centre where the progress of the war could be closely monitored. In the event of a direct attack, plans, with copious guidelines and procedures, were prepared to protect Westmount's terrain, and a Civilian Protection Corps (CPC) was formed.

Practice sessions were organised in Westmount by the CPC together with a Red Cross unit. As one participant recalls, "We all worked hard at doing our part but it had its



Entrance lobby, wartime, City Hall.

comical side. Westmount Station was designated a disaster area with a first aid post. 'Casualties' usually volunteers from the CPC, were assigned an 'injury', given superficial treatment, then picked up by volunteer drivers and rushed up to the Casualty Clearing Station, established at Fire Station No. 2 at the top of Victoria Avenue. Some drivers were carried away with enthusiasm and drove very fast. Since the stretchers were not fastened down a few 'casualties' claimed to be the real thing by the time they arrived!"

Schoolchildren and adults all took part in salvage campaigns. Paper, rags and metal of every kind, from toothpaste tubes to the railings around Argyle school, were gathered for scrap to be recycled and reused.

A War Savings Campaign was launched with the mayor, Walter Merrill, as honorary



Basement Control Room, City Hall.

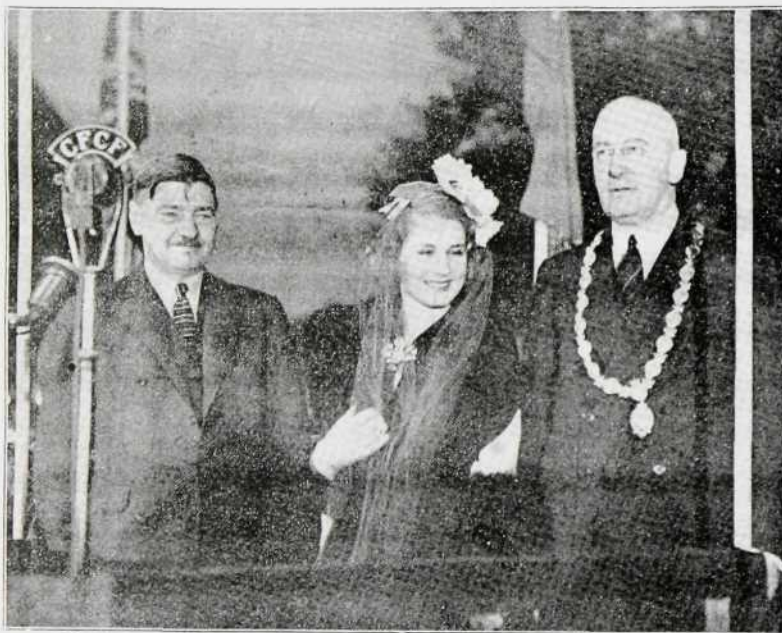
chairman. One way to contribute was through an "Honour Pledge." The signee received a six-inch square card with a maple leaf design signifying a pledge to buy war savings certificates on a regular basis, no matter how small the contribution.

In June 1941, a huge Savings Loan rally took place in Westmount Park. Norma Shearer, a reigning Hollywood film star, flew in from California "at her own expense," noted the local paper approvingly. A crowd of over 60,000 jammed every inch of the park. The actress declared that she was "terribly happy to be here I remember so clearly walking through this park, right where you are standing, and going to school over there at Westmount High."



Wartime Salvage Campaign posters.

60,000 Hear Norma Shearer in Westmount



MISS NORMA SHEARER, Westmount's own Hollywood star, returned home yesterday to be greeted by many thousands of her former fellow citizens. At left is AIR MINISTER POWER, and on the right MAYOR WALTER A. MERRILL of Westmount. The picture was taken on the platform at the opening of the Victory Loan drive in Westmount last evening in Westmount Park.

Georgia Photo (Copyright) Associated

Norma Shearer, a reigning Hollywood star, returned to launch a War Savings Bond Rally. She had maintained her contact with Westmount over the years.

The rally was a great success and the campaign continued through the war years, repeatedly exceeding its target.

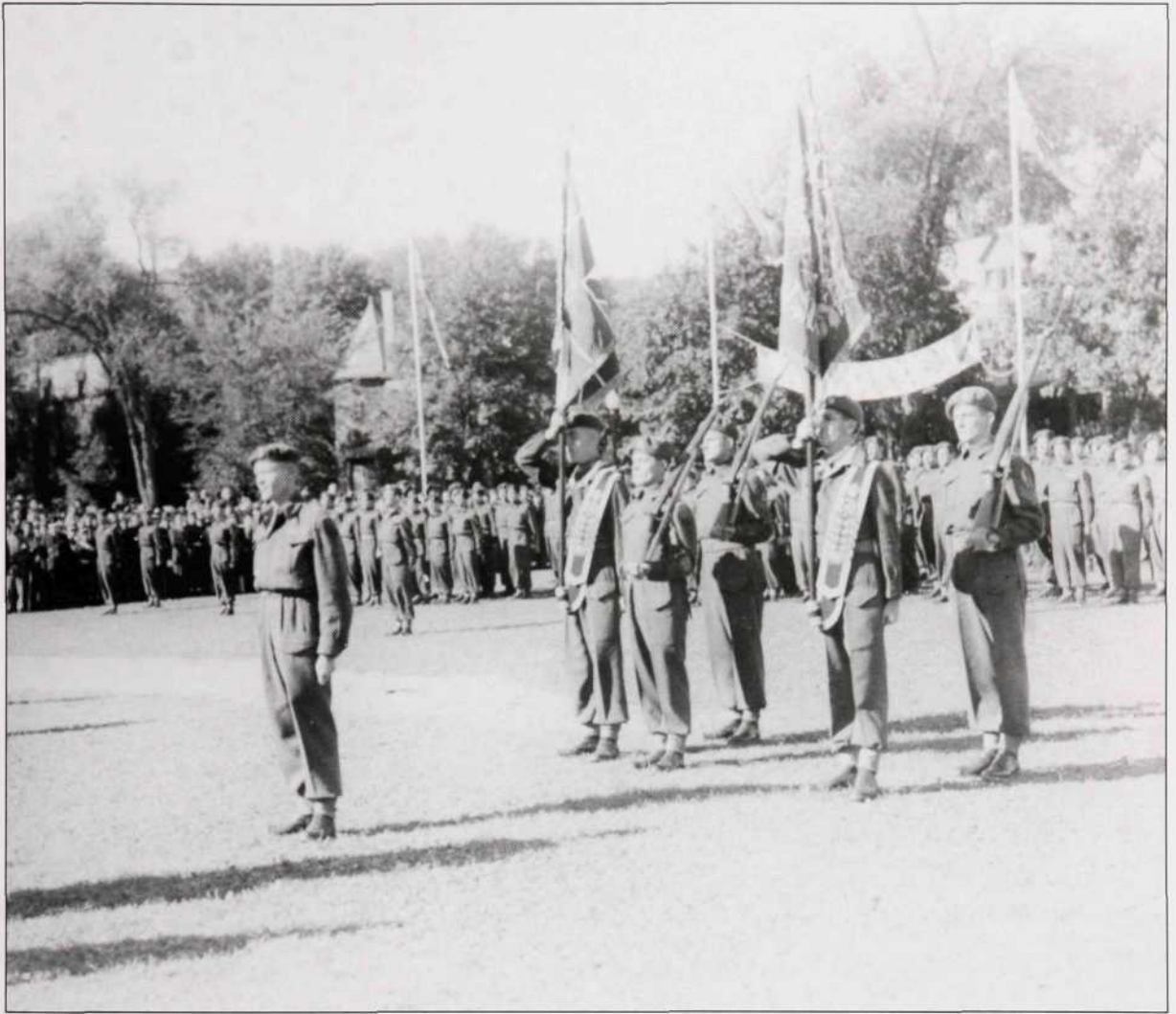
Ration books were issued but the restrictions were not severe. Sugar was what people missed most. Many gave up sugar in their tea or coffee so that they could collect enough to make cakes or jams. Gasoline was also rationed for civilians, a situation that boosted the use of public transport. The Montreal Tramways Company announced it was carrying over a million passengers a day in Montreal. Bicycles were everywhere on the streets. One year, 650 bicycle licences were issued at Westmount's City Hall.

The shortage of private transport could create personal dilemmas: "In November 1943 I was expecting a baby. When the contractions began I called my doctor. He told me to get to hospital as fast as possible. Taxis were very scarce but the doctor advised trying the Ritz Hotel because there were usually one or two taxis parked outside. He was right. A taxi came and got me to the hospital."

May 1945 brought an end to the war in Europe. In July there was a presentation of the second set of colours by General H.D.G. Crerar CH, CB, DSO, GOC-in-C, 1st

Canadian Army, to the RMR in the field at Amersfoort, Utrecht, Holland. The colours had been rushed into readiness to replace a set stored in London that had been destroyed in the Blitz. The first set presented to the RMR at the end of the First World War was retired and deposited in the chancel of the regimental church, St. Matthias', where they were received by the rector, Squadron Leader, the Rev. Gilbert Oliver, MC.

The conflict with Japan ended late in 1945 and World War II was finally over. In September came the news that after nearly six years overseas the Royal Montreal Regiment was to sail home from Southampton on the



Old RMR Colours being handed over 'for safe keeping'. Westmount Park, September 1945.

troopship, Pasteur, bound for Quebec City. Thereafter the Regiment's progress was monitored every step of the way. From Quebec City the troops travelled by train to the old Park Avenue Station in Montreal. "There followed the maddeningly slow journey to Westmount Station where they arrived at 2.30 p.m. in the afternoon of September 22."

It was a glorious autumn day. Over 50,000 cheering people lined the streets. Escorted by the 2nd (Reserve) Battalion of the RMR and RMR veterans of World War I, the Regiment

marched up Victoria Avenue, then along Sherbrooke Street, passing the saluting base at Victoria Hall, to Westmount Park.

There, with due ceremony, the colours of the regiment were passed from the Overseas Battalion to representatives of the 2nd Battalion "for safe keeping." Now the Overseas Battalion waited for final orders and without further delay came the welcome: "Dismiss." The men broke ranks and were soon caught up in the joyful welcome of their friends and kin.



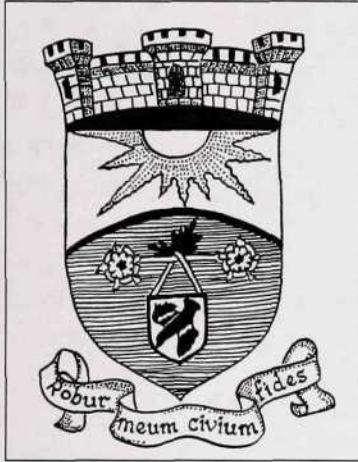
Governor-General Lord Alexander of Tunis at the unveiling of the Cenotaph where names had been added of those who fell in World War II.

Names were added to the memorial tablets in place around the municipality. An addition was planned on the parapet around the War Memorial, linking memories of the two World Wars, and the armoury was rededicated to those who had fallen in World War II. City Hall listed the numbers; 2,804 Westmount citizens and city employees had enlisted, 281 died in combat.

In 1946, Field Marshall Viscount Montgomery of Allemeine, KB, GCB, DSO, visited the armoury. The following year the Rt. Hon. Viscount Alexander of Tunis attended the annual regimental dinner at the armoury. Later he returned to hold an investiture and help unveil the extended War Memorial.

13

The Post-War Years



Westmount's Coat of Arms which were registered with Lord Lyon, King of Arms, Scotland.

The war years brought Canada out of the Depression as its factories worked overtime to meet the Allies' need for supplies of every kind. After the war, the good economic times continued, with a shift in production to meet peacetime domestic demands.

But in Europe, the post-war years brought continuing shortages and a depressed economy. A stream of emigrants left, seeking a new life in Canada and elsewhere. The new immigrants changed the demographic face of the country. Whereas before the war, 40 per cent of newcomers had come from Britain, that percentage fell to 18 per cent in the post-war period.

The increase in immigration, as well as the number of young couples settling down to raise families, sent Montreal's population soaring. A tidal wave of residential building poured all over the island of Montreal, creating new suburbs that flowed around Westmount's

borders. Orchards, farm and open land were swallowed up in the flood, which spread swiftly, largely unplanned and unchecked.

The existing handful of small independent municipalities, with their well defined boundaries limiting growth, emerged as islands of stability. Among them, Westmount stood out by its unusual geography — a municipal island surrounded by the city of Montreal — and by its singular social standards. Although its population now numbered over 27,000, the sale of liquor was still banned, there were no cinemas and a 1909 by-law still demanded a "modest decorum" in dress and behaviour on the city's streets.

Re-inforcing this somewhat archaic image Westmount became the first municipality in Canada to register its Coat of Arms with Lord Lyon, King of Arms, in Scotland. The shield with its symbols was described in a city hall communiqué as follows:

The devices symbolised the corporate history of the community.

The arched division "per fess", represents Mount Royal with the setting sun behind it, thus "Westmount."

Rose branch emblem of Virgin Mary refers to the former Village of Notre Dame de Grâce.

Small shield commemorates St. Anthony — legend of the ravens who fed him in the desert — and refers to former name, Côte St. Antoine.

The motto *Robur Meum Civium Fides* translates as "The faith of the citizens is my strength."



George and Donald Smithers, second and third generation owners of Smithers' shoe store which opened in 1890.

Westmount's commercial stores were building their own traditions. Several were in the charge of second or third generation

members of their founder's families. Smithers' boot and shoe store on St. Catherine Street was more than 60 years old and had been supplying footwear to Westmount families, as well as to the police and fire departments personnel, since the time those forces had been represented by a single individual.

Around the corner on Greene Avenue was Tony's Shoe Store,

opened in 1937 by Tony Fagnoli. Unpretentious in decor, it carried both traditional and fashionable shoes for men, women and children.



'Maryland Ice Cream Parlor and Confectionery' now 'Nick's Restaurant'

Further north on Greene Avenue, the Alevisatos' American style soda fountain, the "Maryland Ice Cream Parlor and Confectionery," opened in 1922, had evolved into "Nick's Restaurant," a popular neighbourhood meeting place.

And there was Ohman's jewellery store, with its graceful bow front window, modelled on Georgian shop fronts in Bath, England. Its founder, Nils Ohman, had died in 1935 and the shop was now managed by his son Eric, a World War I Air Force pilot and a multi-talented man: artist, accomplished cartoonist and designer of fine jewellery. His outgoing personality and sense of humour established a friendliness that allowed even a young child to enter the shop alone without feeling intimidated.



Ohman's workforce reflected Westmount's new demographic profile. It was a little "League of Nations." The head watchmaker, Ted Kawai, was Japanese. Jewellery repair was handled by an Italian, Bruna Catellani, and a Hungarian, Genja Hermann, was the master clockmaker. Another of Ohman's skilled craftsmen was Lawrence Alexander, who opened his own store in 1946.

Above: Bracelet designed by Eric Ohman.

Right: Ohman's, with its graceful bow-front window.



Edward (Eddie) Fagnoli, second generation owner of the 'Real Tony's Shoe Store'. Founded by Gianantonio (Tony) Fagnoli in 1937.

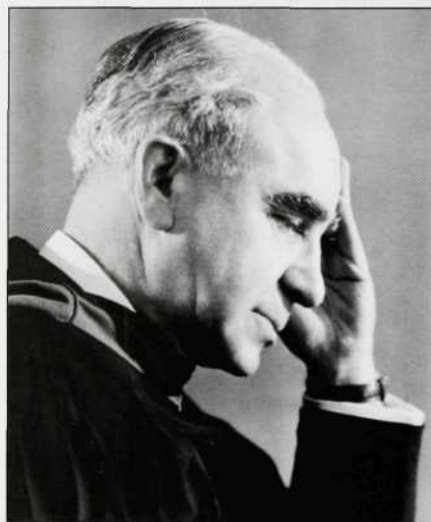


Westmount's public schools, under the guidance of their own Protestant School Board, continued to maintain high scholastic standards. At every level there were teachers of outstanding ability whose entire professional life was spent in the Westmount schools. One of these was Elsie Gordon Dewey, who taught at Roslyn for nearly 40 years, from 1921 to 1959. She taught two generations of children and in 1954 was awarded the First Degree of Scholastic Merit. Another was Irene Nichols, who taught music in all four elementary schools from 1934 to 1975.

The high school years were now divided in two. Westmount High became Westmount Junior High School, teaching grades seven, eight and nine. Argyle School took over as Westmount High, handling grades 10, 11, and 12. Later, grade 12 was dropped and graduates entered a four-year university program following grade eleven.

A new Catholic high school was opened at the western end of the city in a magnificent 1930s mansion in the upper level, within sight of St. Joseph's Oratory. It was operated by the Congregation of Marcellines, an order of teaching Sisters from Italy.

Among Westmount's places of worship, Temple Emanu-El was making a name for itself as a centre of inter-faith experiment. Rabbi Harry Stern, who arrived at the synagogue in 1927, encouraged inter-faith understanding from the year he took up his duties. In 1928, he inaugurated the yearly Fellowship Dinners, and in 1934 the Forum Lectures, all with the aim of



Rabbi Harry Joshua Stern, Temple Emanu-El's 'Ecumenical Rabbi'.

drawing together representatives of different faiths to discuss topics of mutual interest.



Villa St. Marcelline, 815 Upper Belmont the former residence of Aimé Geoffrion, a prominent Montreal lawyer.

In 1942, Rabbi Stern, already widely known as the "Ecumenical Rabbi," launched an "Institute on Judaism for Clergy and Religious Educators," a unique academic and religious forum in Canada.

Three years later, Sylvia Stern, the Rabbi's wife, began a "Book Lovers' Forum," a study and discussion group for "women of all religious faiths for inter-faith study." Librarians Kathleen Jenkins and Norah Bryant gave invaluable advice on choice of books, given the guideline that "each book had to have depth and be both readable and understandable." The series opened with James Ramsay Ullman's "The White Tower" and continued unbroken for over 30 years.

In 1953, the synagogue achieved another "first" with the opening of the Josef Aron Museum of Ceremonial Art Objects. This collection of Jewish artifacts used in daily living was the only one in Canada at that time.

Disaster struck the synagogue in 1957 when the sanctuary was destroyed by fire. The sympathetic response from all denominations in the community was so immediate and so generous that it was possible to rebuild the structure within two years.

At Shaar Hashamayim, a young rabbi, Wilfred Shuchat, who had been appointed assistant to ailing Dr. Herman Abramowitz, succeeded to the full title of Rabbi to the congregation in 1948. Dr. Shuchat's name became increasingly known to a wider public through his weekly column in the Montreal Star called "A Jewish Message for our Times."

Post-war life soon resumed its normal rhythm, with some changes in domestic routine. Oil and gas began to replace coal as a heating fuel and coal carts gradually disappeared from

the streets along with the ritual of household tasks that accompanied the coal furnace.

Dances were in full swing at Victoria Hall.

*Dancing in
Victoria
Hall to the
music of the
Johnny
Holmes
Orchestra*



Johnny Holmes was a notable personality in popular music in Montreal. Passionate about music from a very young age he was largely self-taught as a player, performing wherever and whenever he could.

Gradually he gathered together a small group of musicians which grew into an orchestra of fifteen players and two vocalists. However he continued working at his day job, as salesman to a pharmaceutical company, until the mid-Forties by which time the band had become so popular he could concentrate full-time on his music.

Holmes established a base for the band in Victoria Hall. Saturday nights the Hall, with



Most Saturday nights, from the early 1940's, the Johnny Holmes orchestra played at dances. Since only 800 tickets could be sold, two hour queues were normal.

a capacity of 800, was jammed, with lineups forming up to two hours before the doors were opened. He produced the dances himself; renting the hall, personally guaranteeing the musicians' salaries which were regularly above union scale and hiring personnel to sell tickets and soft drinks (no liquor allowed).

The orchestra had a repertoire and a sound of its own with original arrangements by Holmes himself. In spite of being only semi-professional in status it was one of the most successful of the big bands in Montreal. Professional musicians from other Montreal bands would crowd the balcony in Victoria Hall on their night off to watch and listen and learn. Radio played a big role in reaching a broad public for popular music and the CBC broadcast the Johnny Holmes band regularly live from Victoria Hall.

Holmes' eye and ear for talent were legendary. He hired a shy fifteen-year old trumpeter, Maynard Ferguson, after an inauspicious audition because he sensed the

youngster's potential, an instinct vindicated by Ferguson's subsequent brilliant career.

But it was Johnny Holmes' collaboration with a seventeen-year old Oscar Peterson that gave the orchestra its unique distinction. Peterson became the orchestra's star attraction. Audiences were enthralled by his virtuoso playing but he was also popular with his fellow musicians who were among his most appreciative fans.

Peterson was probably the first black musician to work regularly with any of Montreal's big bands. Recognising his contribution to the band's success Holmes paid him more than any other band member so that Peterson was able to earn a living from the band, the only member, apart from Johnny Holmes, to do so.



Oscar Peterson whose career would take him to the top in the music world.

*Summit Park,
an area of
wild
woodland*



There still remained aspects of country life. The sisters of the Congrégation de Notre Dame had a flourishing farm on the Villa Maria land and sold their excess produce to the public.

“Vegetables of many kinds were set out on trestle tables in a great stone barn, which was always delightfully cool. When you took your purchase to be paid for, a Sister, seated at one of the tables, would enter the transaction in a flowing script — the name of the item and the price — into a large account book. If you wanted flowers a Sister would go into the fields and cut you a bunch. Dahlias and asters were

favourites. The whole experience was quite unlike any other commercial exchange. It is a memory I will always cherish.”

Another country pleasure, unusual so close to the heart of a big city, was Summit Park, the stretch of wild woodland crowning the Westmount summit. By great good luck this had been left in its natural state during the years it had belonged to McGill University. When it was sold to the city in 1940, it was with the understanding the area would be maintained as a wild flower and bird sanctuary.

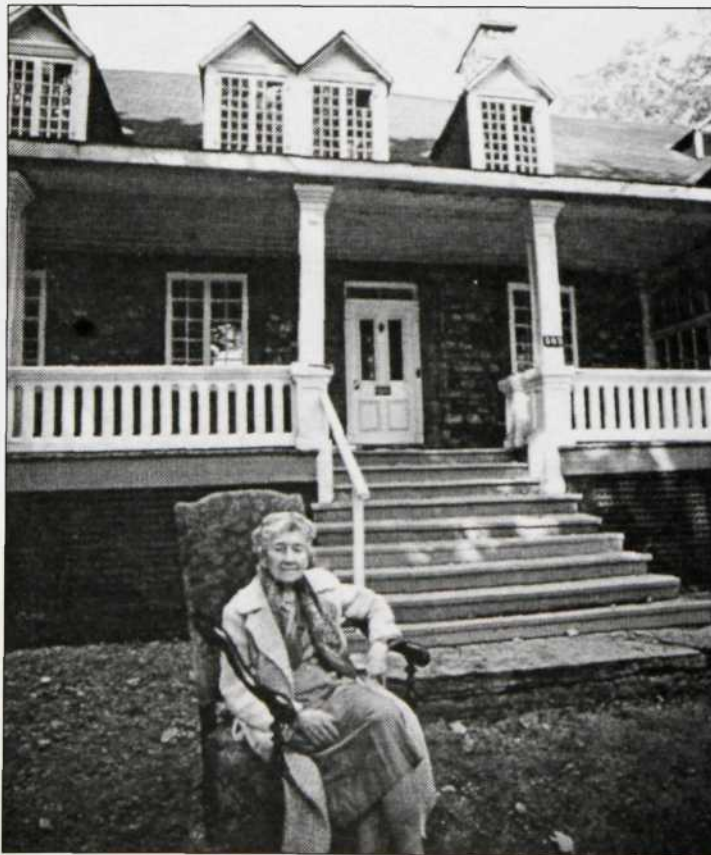
In a spectacular gesture to publicise the City's new acquisition, 50 Laurentian pheasants, hardy birds known to withstand bitter winter weather, were released among the trees and undergrowth. They adapted well to their new habitat. Visitors walking the quiet woodland paths were often startled and delighted to be confronted with these large, colourful birds. The pheasants continued to nest over the next 20 years, but they were gradually stolen until all were gone.

Meanwhile bird watchers discovered that Summit Park in springtime was one of the finest bird-watching sites in the province. Its relatively untouched state and its location high on the hilltop, combined to provide a natural

resting place for dozens of migrating species, some moving on to other areas, others remaining to nest and stay throughout the summer.

In 1944, a group of Westmounters, led by Alice Lighthall, concerned about preservation both of areas of natural beauty, such as Summit Park, and of historic buildings, founded the Westmount Historical Association.

One day, by chance, Miss Lighthall heard that the Hurtubise farmhouse on Côte St. Antoine Road, owned by Dr. Leopold Hurtubise, the last of his branch of the family, was to be sold. The buyer was a contractor who proposed to demolish the house and build on the land. Alarmed, Miss Lighthall alerted the



Miss Alice Lighthall on the lawn in front of the Hurtubise house which was saved from demolition through her energetic intervention.

media that one of the last examples of a French-Canadian farmhouse within the city was about to disappear.

Members of the Molson family, who had a long-standing interest in Quebec history, read the relevant article in the *Montreal Gazette* while summering in Tadoussac. "We got in touch with the Hurtubise family and the contractor who was to buy and demolish the house," relates Colin Molson. "A deed of sale had already been prepared but signatures not completed."

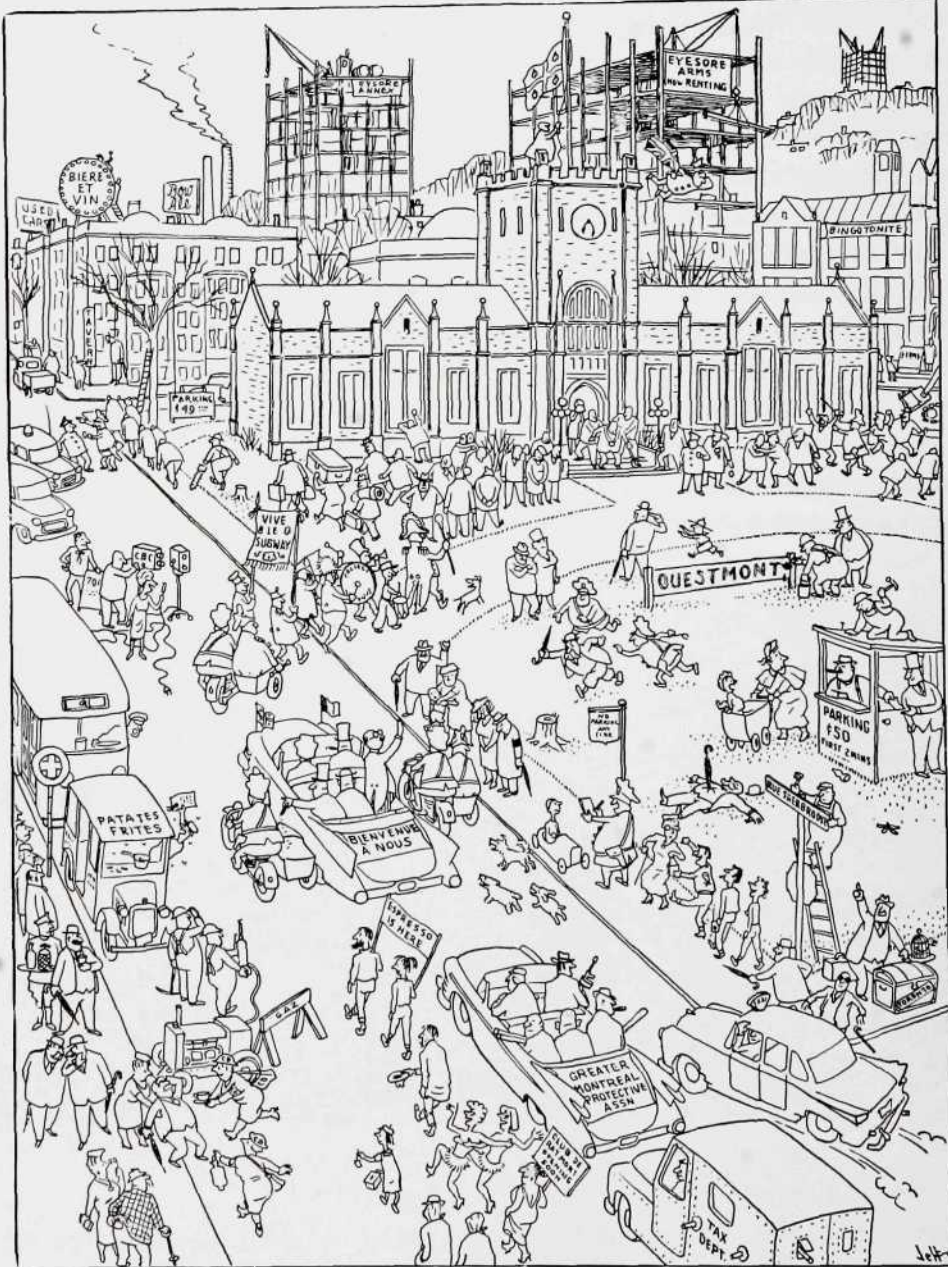
When the City refused to become involved, "this left only one course open to save the old house — to buy it ourselves. This was done and the three of us, Miss Mabel Molson, Mr. James Beattie and me, Colin Molson, found ourselves owners of one of Canada's oldest historic houses."

The Hurtubise property, bought in 1955, became the first acquisition of the group who went on to establish "The Canadian Heritage of Quebec" in 1960, thus becoming a pioneer in the field of historic preservation in Canada.

The dramatic rescue of the Hurtubise house and the publicity surrounding Summit Park added to Westmount's attractions. The demand for housing outstripped the supply and those few properties that came on the market were quickly snapped up. City Hall appeared to have no difficulty coping with the needs of a growing community and the years ahead seemed to offer a vista of peace and prosperity. It proved to be the calm before the storm.

Right: Mr. Colin Molson inside the Hurtubise house.





The Changing Scene: "Triumphal Parade celebrating the formal surrender of Westmount to annexation."

REPRINTED FROM "THE MONTREALER", FEBRUARY, 1961

Cartoon satirising the spectre of annexation to Montreal which was being raised once more.

14

The 'Sixties'

The decade began innocuously enough with the replay of a familiar theme. In 1961, Westmount's annexation to Montreal was again proposed and again rejected. A light-hearted cartoon on the subject in a Montreal magazine showed portly Westmounters reacting with panic and dismay to a Montreal "invasion."

Residents found the cartoon hilarious. But for some *indépendantistes*, urging the separation of Québec from Canada, Westmount had turned into a symbol of detested

immoderate in its language and the threats of violence were suddenly made real when a bomb, planted in a downtown Montreal armoury, resulted in the death of its night watchman.

Then on May 24, 1963, a day once celebrated as Queen Victoria's birthday, and chosen no doubt because of this association, 14 bombs were placed in mailboxes in scattered locations across Westmount. "That morning a policeman came to our door and said a bomb had been detected on our street and was going to be dismantled," one resident recalled, "In



Sgt.-Major Walter Leja receiving the George medal for bravery, from Governor-General Georges Vanier, at Government House, Ottawa, March 19, 1964.

Anglophone superiority, with stereotypes of prosperous matrons and upper class males clinging to dreams of "Empire." The municipality was constantly singled out as a target for invective, its image a distorted caricature. Rhetoric grew heated. A terrorist group — le Front de Libération Québécois (FLQ) — became

case it should explode before this could be done, we were advised to leave our doors and windows open to lessen the impact of the explosion, and to stuff pillows along the window ledges and door sills."

A bomb disposal unit, headed by Sergeant-Major Walter Leja of the Royal Canadian

Engineers, raced from one location to another to de-activate the bombs. Several exploded before they could be reached. When one was found at the corner of Lansdowne and Westmount Avenues, near Roslyn school, there was an agonizing race to defuse the mechanism before classes were dismissed and children poured into the streets. As it was being taken apart however, the bomb exploded and Walter Leja was critically injured. Conrad Pelletier, a fourth-year medical student at the Université de Montréal, living nearby on Lansdowne Avenue, was on the scene within minutes and is credited with saving Leja's life. Nevertheless Leja lost one arm and the other was paralysed.

One mother remembers: "I heard the explosion and knew at once it was a bomb. I ran out of the house. Others were running, all of us headed for Roslyn. It was one of the worst moments of my life. There was a police cordon around the Lansdowne corner and Sergeant Leja was lying on the ground. We were assured the children were safe, though we had to wait until nearly two o'clock for police clearance, and only then were the children allowed out of school."

For Walter Leja and his family the disaster remained a life-long tragedy, with Leja unable to regain independent mobility and forced to remain permanently hospitalised. A trust fund was set up for the Leja family by the City of Westmount. Later, Walter Leja taught himself to paint with a prosthesis and presented one of his canvases, a landscape painting, to Peter McEntyre, who as a councillor, had been in charge of the Leja Trust.

Two years later, on June 30, 1965, there was an attempt to blow up City Hall. The Examiner account of the incident read in part, "The bomb was planted in the rear or west end of the Hall and exploded at 12:26 a.m. The blast

broke all the windows in the rear of City Hall and several in the area. The Hall itself was not damaged and the spot where the bomb was placed against the building is not even cracked. The walls at that part are almost two feet thick and solid stone."

The frustration felt by Westmounters in the wake of the bombings was particularly galling since many parents with children at the elementary level had been agitating to find



1965 bomb damage at the rear of City Hall.

positive ways to respond to the changing social climate in Quebec, and to the demand for increased use of French in the life of the province. By 1965, an active Home and School Association at Roslyn initiated an extra-curricular French programme for the primary grades. This was followed, in 1968, with a French immersion kindergarten year, the first in any school within the Protestant School Commission. It proved immensely popular, attracting 110 pupils.

While Roslyn was searching for innovative ways to integrate the teaching of English and French, developments at St. Paul's school had taken another direction, with students divided into separate French and English elementary streams, each with its own principal. By the late 1960s, jurisdiction over the school was transferred from the Congrégation de Notre Dame to the Montreal English Catholic School Commission and its French counterpart. The French sector was moved to École St-Léon on

School, built on part of the old MAAA fields, with the original track and facilities serving as the school's sports ground. The junior high, originally Westmount's first high school, was renamed Westmount Park School, offering elementary grades for the district below Sherbrooke Street. King's and Queen's schools were phased out and closed in 1963 and 1964. Roslyn was unaffected and continued to function as the elementary school for the area above Sherbrooke Street, its reputation maintained at a consistently high level thanks to a teaching staff of exceptional quality. "Mrs. Ross, Mrs. Mayerovitch, and others, you felt they got to know you and they took time to explain things."

With the opening of the new high school in the fall of 1961, the old high school, formerly Argyle, was closed and later sold to a private boys' school, Selwyn House. The wholesale restructuring of the public school system left a number of parents confused and uneasy. In particular the large size of the new high school raised doubts about the quality of instruction. The reputation of Westmount's public schools had always been high, but for the first time many parents began to consider the possibility of private schools for their children.

Several alternatives were available within Westmount. St. George's school had been established in the district since 1930. This was a non-denominational, co-educational school founded by a group of Westmount parents impatient with a public school system they felt penalised imagination. The school was run on progressive lines, implementing new concepts initiated by education pioneers in England.

Later, three more traditional schools relocated from Montreal to Westmount. In 1960, Selwyn House, a boys' school, moved into the old Argyle High School on Côte St.



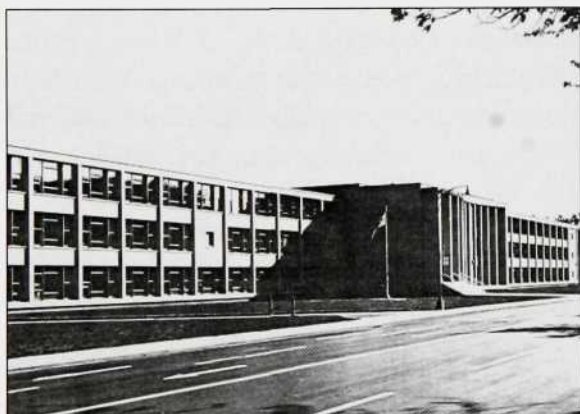
Painting by Sgt. Major Walter Leja, presented to Peter McEntyre, a Mayor of Westmount, who organised a fund for the Leja family.

Clarke Avenue, while the English sector was expanded to become the English Catholic Junior High School for Montreal's west end. A decade later the school was closed down altogether and classes dispersed among schools outside Westmount.

In another round of seemingly endless shifts of the student population, Westmount's senior and junior high schools were merged into a single institution, Westmount High

Antoine Road. The same year, The Study, a girls' school founded in 1915 in downtown Montreal, settled on The Boulevard, in a spacious house built by Robert Findlay for Mr. Macaulay of the Sun Life Company.

Another girls' school, Miss Edgar's and Miss Cramp's, which had been searching for a permanent location since their downtown Guy Street property was sold, was re-established at the corner of Montrose and Mount Pleasant



Westmount High School. Opened 1961. Sleekly functional in the architectural style of the day.

avenues in 1964. It was, however, forced to abandon its boarding school operation when Westmount's City Hall refused to grant it a permit.

Meanwhile the new Westmount High School began to take its place in the community. The public's negative reaction stemmed in part from the visual impact of the building. Conforming to the 1960s architectural style, it was sleekly functional with little embellishment or flourish, indoors or out. Trees and bushes planted around the façade were too young to soften the bare outlines, and the general aspect remained dismayingly sterile. The "baby boomers," born in the early post-war years and now entering their teens, filled the new school and stretched its facilities to the

limit, with an initial registration of 1,282 students exceeding the projected enrolment of 1,200.

There were innovations. A music class was added at the junior level. There were two groups: "You had the choice of joining the strings or the woodwinds. Morley Calvert was our teacher. He helped us feel we could really play though most of us were using these instruments for the first time. He later became a leading Canadian composer. There was also a choir, directed by Miss Jamieson, which she developed into a really good ensemble."

At the senior level, a small group of brilliant teachers continued to maintain Westmount's high standards. One was Angus Bernard, head of the English department. He was

a fiercely individual personality, frightening in his rigorous standards, inspiring in his students a love of the subject. One of his pupils, Michael Kabay, recalls: "I was the very first recipient of the Angus Bernard medal for English and I have kept it proudly. Mr. Bernard was a man who treasured conciseness. Perhaps the most important thing he taught us was the joy of the well-written clear simple English sentence. He despised humbuggery and fancy language used for effect."



Angus Bernard, head of the English department, WHS.



Douglas Lawley

Douglas Lawley was another teacher remembered with pride by those in his class. His subject was Latin, but he also supervised the art class and was himself a versatile and competent artist. His paintings of horses, from the sleigh cab horses on Mount Royal to the wild horses of Sable Island, were particularly fine and extremely popular. Several of his canvases now hang in the high school principal's office. "Each year Douglas Lawley



Dr. Hélène Saly, French specialist and innovator

would set up his easel in the high school gym and paint a canvas while students gathered round him to watch. The finished canvas was then donated for sale in the annual Red Cross Drive."

Yet another teacher was Dr. Hélène Saly, French specialist at the senior

level. Dr. Saly initiated an unusually creative project that ultimately went well beyond its modest objectives. The idea began as a composition assignment focusing on Westmount as "Ma Ville et son Histoire." The assignment generated so much interest that an Old Westmount Club was formed to continue research into Westmount's history in greater depth. Assisted by Latin teacher Geraldine Lane, the final outcome was "Old Westmount," a book which told the story of the city from its earliest days to 1920, researched, written and illustrated by the students. It was the first attempt to capture a coherent view of Westmount's development and proved a catalyst for continued research on the subject.

Elsewhere, interesting innovations were taking root. At St. Matthias', a Men's and Boys' Choir was formed in 1960. This was a unique programme, demanding dedication to hours of practice from its members. Its primary value was a kind of musical education not available elsewhere, with a repertoire ranging from Gregorian chant to the work of contemporary composers. Under successive choirmasters, the St. Matthias'



Country road Quebec – Douglas Lawley

Choir earned a national and an international reputation through its recordings, recitals and tours in Canada, the United States and Great Britain.

Also at St. Matthias', a new social programme, 'Meals on Wheels' was inaugurated by Phoebe Seely and Catherine Stavart of the Women's Association. It introduced to Canada a programme, also known as "Stew for a Few," begun by the Women's Voluntary Service in England. Volunteers cooked, delivered and served a hot meal once a week to elderly men or women living at home alone on limited incomes. Along with the assurance of a well-balanced meal the visit of the volunteer



Gwen Mousley, winner of the Rotary Volunteer award for 1966, with a consignment of 'Meals on Wheels' from St. Matthias Women's Association.

provided a welcome social contact. The programme, launched in January 1966, was an immediate success and was soon adopted by other volunteer organisations.

At the library, Norah Bryant, another distinguished scholar, had succeeded Kathleen Jenkins as chief librarian in 1962. Under her direction meetings began with other chief



Chief Librarian Norah Bryant in Library Centennial Room.

librarians across the metropolitan area. "Libraries were facing so many changes; it was heartening to share our problems and ideas for solving them. We also initiated reciprocal access to the libraries in the Town of Mount

Royal and Laval, giving us expanded material for use, particularly in the French sector." To commemorate the centenary of Canadian confederation in 1967, the library opened "The Centennial Room," a new reading room and reference area.

At City Hall, continuing a tradition of innovation begun in 1896, the Westmount Fire Department, under Paul Motard, became the first in Canada to develop a Junior Firefighters Programme "to give Westmount children the education necessary to help them avoid injury." The programme came to be widely copied across the country. In the same year, 1969, Captain William Timmons, officer in charge of fire prevention, won the grand award for

Westmount's Fire Department became a leader in the innovation of new programmes. Fire Chief William Timmons, one of the department's longest-serving members, was a familiar and well-loved personality.



Canada in an annual contest, judged in Boston, of the National Fire Prevention Associations (NFPA). William Timmons went on to become deputy-chief of the Westmount Department for six years and chief, that is director, for another six. Fire fighting was "in the family," with Mr. Timmons and his two sons accumulating a remarkable record of 101 years of service.

A welcome new recreational facility was an outdoor public swimming pool built beside the skating arena at the western end of Westmount Park. The pool was a huge success with an attendance of over 80,000 recorded in

its first full season of operation. Parks large and small were being redeveloped. Stayner Avenue's small playground area was redesigned to include a greater variety of facilities.

Westmount Park itself underwent a complete overhaul aimed at producing a maximum of visual variety and multiple recreational uses. The objectives were laudable and the results generally hailed as a great success, but in the grooming process the park inevitably lost the last vestiges of its original wild landscape.

Another sign of changing times was the fate of the great house built by Noah Timmins in the late 1920s. It was sold in 1962 and divided into two residences, each substantial but more manageable than the original mansion, whose dimensions reflected a way of life rapidly vanishing by the 1960s.

Another landmark closing, of a very different kind, occurred with the sale of Macy's. The Old Colony Pharmacy and Restaurant, known to everyone as Macy's, had filled the northwest corner of Victoria Avenue and Sherbrooke Street since the 1920s. It had an old-fashioned English tea room look, with waitresses in dark uniforms with frilled white aprons and caps. An enthusiast recalls "It was a treat. I remember eating chicken in the basket, hamburgers, and ordering cherry coke made

with real syrup rather than the pre-mixed kind." In other changes, a familiar street name disappeared when Western Avenue became de Maisonneuve in honour of the founder of Montreal. And after years of unsuccessful lobbying, liquor sales were finally permitted within the municipality.

Montreal was also changing, its central role as a communications and transportation centre diffused by demographics and changing patterns of trade. Colouring every move were political uncertainties and the continuing threat from terrorists, whose strength could not be gauged.



The Timmins mansion becomes two large houses.

Against this background of anxious uncertainty a major public event was nevertheless taking triumphant shape in the area. This was Expo '67, the first international exhibition staged in Canada. It was Montreal Mayor Jean

Drapeau's most ambitious and most successful enterprise in publicising his beloved city and raising it to world stature. The exhibition's overall theme was "Man and His World." Individual pavilions were filled with imaginative interpretations of the theme, with the whole glittering fantasy brilliantly conjured up on islands in the St. Lawrence River.

In preparation for the expected crowds visiting Expo 67, Montreal's first subway line, "the Métro," was built running east and west through the city. Its western terminus was at



Westmount Square, an elegant apartment complex built in the wake of new construction following the building of the 'Metro'.

Atwater Avenue, with exits fanning out into Westmount as far as Greene Avenue. This new transportation system brought real estate development in its wake, just as the first streetcars had done almost 100 years before. The most striking of the new structures was Westmount Square — three austere high rise

towers — designed by Mies van der Rohe in the International Style he helped make famous. In the process, several blocks of small buildings, many of them among the oldest in the vicinity, were demolished to provide the large tract of land needed for the project. The final result was a fine example of Mies' elegant architecture but it was nevertheless an intrusion into the scale of the neighbourhood and opened the way to future large projects including Alexis Nihon Plaza, a multi-layered shopping mall, and several high rise apartment blocks of mixed architectural merit.

But Expo 67 was an unqualified success. Westmount contributed handsomely with a "Plaza of the Universe," an outdoor terrace with lighted fountains, a hexagonal pool and a 27-foot mechanical sculpture by Yves Trudeau. The Plaza was formally handed over to the



Expo 67. Deputy Commissioner-General Robert Shaw (left), Commissioner-General Pierre Dupuy and Mrs. Dupuy with Mayor Michael Tucker and Mrs. Tucker on 'Westmount Day'.

Fair's Deputy Commissioner-General, Robert Shaw, by Westmount's Mayor Michael Tucker, on Sunday afternoon, April 16. Strategically placed in the heart of one of the main avenues on the site, the terrace proved immensely popular throughout the six months of the exhibition.

Westmount also had its "Day." This took place towards the end of the fair in October. The weather proved unkind, raining hard for most of the day, but this failed utterly to dampen the spirits of those taking part. Westmount's reputation for reserved behaviour was quite overturned by the joyful enthusiasm of participants and spectators. Expo officials later remarked that never had the Place des Nations, the principal demonstration ground, seen such spirited participation and such exuberant crowds in such inclement weather.

The demonstration began with a Westmount fire truck leading a parade of antique cars into the Place des Nations to the accompaniment of wild cheering from the

multitude of youngsters who had been granted the day off school. Mayor Tucker, decked out in a silver fireman's helmet, rode in on the back of the truck. He then presented Commissioner-General Pierre Dupuy with a similar helmet, designating him Honorary Chief of the Westmount Fire Brigade. There followed a performance tracing Westmount's history from the days of the Indian wars through its various identities up to the present.

Commissioner Dupuy then spoke. "For Montrealers" he said, "Westmount is the jewel in our crown. Whether we belong to it or not we are all proud of its architecture, of its trees and flowers, of its way of life." It was a moving tribute, climaxing what one spectator reported as "a very happy and rewarding occasion."

In honour of Expo year, Rabbi Stern held a special convocation of his Institute at Temple Emmanu-El, gathering together four outstanding Canadian theologians, representing the Roman Catholic, Protestant, Greek



A historical pageant traced Westmount's history. The entire programme was an unqualified success.



Rabbi Harry Stern with Cardinal Paul-Emile Leger, honoured guest at Rabbi Stern's Fellowship Dinner that year.

Orthodox and Jewish faiths. In the same year, the rabbi's guest at his annual Fellowship Dinner was the beloved and revered Cardinal Léger.



Mayor Maurice Tessier of Rimouski and Mayor Michael Tucker of Westmount, celebrate the 'twinning' of their cities.

A year after Expo, in a lighthearted ceremony at Westmount City Hall, Westmount was "twinning" with another city in the province, Rimouski. This accord of mutual good-will was signed by the respective mayors of the two cities; greetings were traded and promises made of cultural exchanges to follow. In a time of increasing hostility between the linguistic factions of Quebec society, it was a heartening move to link this perceived Anglophone bastion with one of the most vigorously nationalist cities in the province.

But with the onset of the 1970s, Westmount continued to be a prime target of the FLQ, with bombs exploding at random locations, including the main post office. Early in June 1970, five bombs exploded in a single day, with one in particular, on Sherbrooke Street near Elm Avenue, doing considerable damage.

Following this incident, the effect on the population was described in a *Westmount Examiner* editorial which read, in part: "There is no panic in Westmount." There was, of course, the immediate alarm and anguish for the affected households. There was shock, injury, material loss, and general sympathy for those who, apparently at random, suffered it. But there was no panic. "No community," commented a later editorial, "has suffered more through this reign of warped thuggery, more bomb incidents or more threats."

At the next council meeting, "while lawn bowlers, like so many Sir Francis Drakes, quietly played in the summer heat on the greens outside," the incumbent mayor, Peter



The Canadian Military on the streets of Westmount depicted in The Westmount Examiner of October 29, 1970

McEntyre called the latest bomb incident “a most deplorable occurrence.” Then, “Mayor, aldermen and city officials made their way through a fourteen point, largely routine agenda for this statutory June meeting.”

In October, the FLQ kidnapped two public figures, James L. Cross, a British official living in Montreal, and a Quebec cabinet minister, Pierre Laporte, who was later murdered. These actions triggered the October Crisis when the War Measures Act was invoked. Public reaction to this move was sharply divided, with some feeling relief, others outrage, at the resulting suspension of civil liberties.

Westmount, still perceived as a possible target for further terrorist attacks, witnessed the surreal spectacle of armed protective personnel on the city’s quiet streets. At the opening of Council on October 22, 1970, members observed a minute’s silence in tribute to the death of Pierre Laporte. A constable stood guard just outside the wrought iron gates of the council chamber, armed with an automatic FN rifle. Local officers, armed with automatic

rifles and shotguns, and troops in battle gear, stood on sentry duty, while other heavily armed policemen patrolled outside City Hall.

The tension continued for some time, and was felt by all segments of the population. Special precautions were taken at schools, as one former student recalls: “Local bomb scares were still frequent. Whenever one occurred, we were marched over to the armoury for safety. It was kind of fun for us students but of course it was disruptive too. It was a difficult environment in which to focus on school work.”

Still, Westmounters remained calm, resolved to carry on in a spirit best exemplified by the mayor at that time, Paul Ouimet.

Paul Ouimet, who took office in 1971, was a championship athlete and a man of intellectual distinction. His inaugural speech was made in the wake of the worst days of the attacks on the community, yet his words were in striking contrast to the partisan rhetoric prevailing at the time.

“We have here,” the mayor said, “a complex

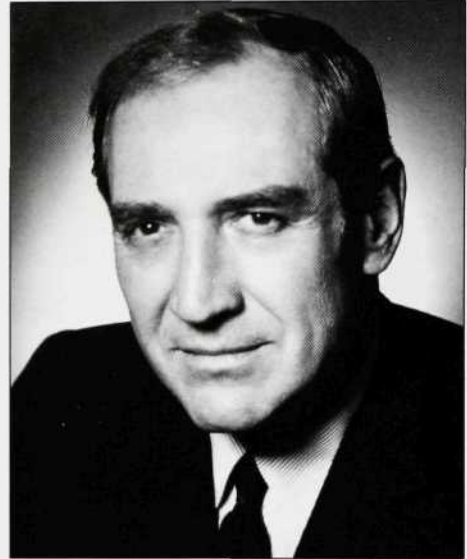
society, economically and in other ways. We speak both official languages and several others. We are involved in an immense range of occupations and personal services and interests.

“Some Westmounters have ancient roots in this soil, others fresh ones but deep none the less. One of our problems in Westmount is that, wilfully or not, those who comment on us often misrepresent us.

“These are not easy times. They are times when specious answers to weighty questions often go unchallenged and when confrontation is put forward as the modern version of negotiation.

“Our first objective must be the betterment of Westmount, but we seek to achieve this as part of the betterment of the entire metropolitan area.

“Let us then work as a team of citizens to keep Westmount a bright example among other municipalities as well as a strong leader.”



Mayor Paul Ouimet. 'Let us work as a team of citizens to keep Westmount a bright example.'

Epilogue

The October Crisis passed. Challenges of a different kind followed in the wake of a social evolution that affected almost every aspect of municipal life.

Westmount's development as a municipality had been formed by deliberate choices of standards and institutions that contributed to a particular view of community life, emphasizing education and literacy, religious tolerance and diversity, the importance of green spaces and sports, and municipal independence.

Independence. Generation after generation each incumbent mayor and council fought to maintain Westmount's autonomy. But in the drive towards bigger and more powerful urban units, local communities increasingly were forced to cede authority. In this, Westmount showed, and continues to show, a remarkable resilience.

Alterations in the division of fiscal responsibility weakened Westmount's planning control, but each step was contested in a vigorous and sustained fight. When police departments were removed from local control to the centralised management of the Montreal Urban Community (MUC) over vehement public protests, the change was effected with commendable harmony due to Westmount's cooperation.

Most dramatic was the change in the education system, cornerstone of the municipality's standards. In the 1970s, Westmount lost control of its school board and was assigned to a district which included half of Notre Dame de Grace and most of St. Henri. Many Westmounters were aghast but others saw a positive side. Joan Rothman, the last chairperson — and the first woman — to preside over Westmount's School Board observed that as a result, "the system was opened up in a more democratic way. The new formula helped even out the disparities between districts, those like Westmount with a sound tax base and others, like St. Henri, which were less well endowed. Of course it was a shock. Westmount's schools were no longer restricted to local residents. This was a big, a fundamental change."

A dramatic population exodus began, largely of families with young children. Still, few were prepared for the Westmount Examiner's headline on September 24, 1987: "Westmount High School to close." Due to plunging enrolment it seemed the numbers did not justify the school's survival. However, a group of young parents, shocked and galvanized into action, began meeting weekly, defining goals, establishing priorities, searching for solutions. By the fall of 1989, the school was declared safe from closure.

Nevertheless, as Principal Richard Meades acknowledged, "It is a different school from that of a generation ago. We now have students from every continent and of every religious faith. It may not be easy for them but these boys and girls are learning to get along with each other and I believe it will provide a rewarding experience when they move out of the school into the world outside."

The dramatic demographic changes affected commerce, from real estate to the local family-owned businesses. Some old-established and well-loved stores such as Smithers' and Ohman's closed, but there were also heartening signs of commitment and optimism. On Greene Avenue, three young women, Judy Mappin, Hélène Holden and Joan Blake, opened a bookstore, the Double Hook, devoted exclusively to Canadian books. The women were judged foolhardy and misguided, but contrary to dire predictions, the Double Hook has flourished and become a distinguished presence in the community.

Henrietta Antony, whose modest store on Greene Avenue was identified for many years by "the rocking horse in the window," undertook an extensive renovation project when she acquired the old Royal Bank building at Greene and St. Catherine and transformed it into a treasure house of antiques. Today, Tony's shoe store, Nick's restaurant, Alexander's and the West End Gallery, also remain to anchor the old with the new on Greene Avenue.

And on Victoria Avenue, the Visual Arts Centre, the only independent crafts and design school in the province, took a great leap forward moving from the cramped quarters of "The Potters Club" in an old house into the spacious premises of the old Biltcliffe department store. The move was made possible in large measure, by Virginia McClure, whose devotion to the centre's concept helped carry the project forward, providing a vibrant showcase for the arts in this western sector of the community.

In the early 1980s, a lively Westmount Arts Festival was mounted, surprising many with the range and depth of Westmount talent in every field of the arts. The week-long event included exhibitions of paintings and photographs, chamber music concerts, dance and theatre performances, and literary events of poetry and prose readings.

Late in the 1980s, Westmount took part in "Family Week," a federal government initiative "to celebrate the family in its many and varied forms as the fundamental unit of our society." Westmount fashioned its participation around the theme, "Westmount: a Family of Families," highlighting the ties that bind people at work, in school, at play, and on the street where they live. Organized under the direction of Councillor Sally Aitken, the project was a huge success. For many, it provided a rediscovery of the sense of neighbourhood that makes this city such a remarkable urban community.

One facet of Westmount's image remained firmly in place — its concern and care for gardens and green spaces. In the third year that Westmount entered the provincial "Villes, Villages et Campagnes Fleuris" competition, it emerged as the only municipality to win in three categories: beautification in its population category, greenest municipality in the province and the top regional award.

Religious diversity continued to evolve. In the 1970s, when the Melville congregation was unable to maintain its church it was taken over by the Holy Trinity Orthodox community. A portrait bust of one of its founders, Doctor Drago Papich, stands on the grounds in front of the church.

At Stanley Presbyterian, the church fathers were pleased to find a like-minded missionary congregation, the Seventh Day Adventists, who had worshipped in Westmount since the 1920s, to move into their fine building. The arrival of this mostly black Christian group which attended services on Saturday instead of Sunday, caused some bewilderment in the neighbourhood. "At first the police were frequent visitors," observed Pastor Robert Samms drily, "but the novelty soon wore off. It was obvious we wanted to care for and preserve the church. It is such a beautiful building, a very special place."

St Andrew's, Westmount's first Presbyterian church, was sold to its neighbour, Selwyn House School, and the remaining congregation

from St. Andrew's joined the Dominion-Douglas Church on The Boulevard.

Changes were also underway at the stately Mother House of the Congrégation de Notre Dame. With only a handful of sisters left to care for the huge building, it was clear the order was ready to move. But where was the tenant with a need for so much space?

A happy combination of circumstances brought together the Marguerite Bourgeoys teaching order with Dawson College, the largest of the English CEGEPs (Colleges of General and Professional Education). The long and skilful negotiation by Dawson's DirectorGeneral, Sarah Paltiel, resulted in the government's agreement to locate Dawson's new campus in the handsome building and grounds of the order.

Fears of vandalism which might follow a student invasion proved unfounded. "The building," reported the new Director-General Patrick Woodsworth, "has exerted its own positive influence. It has been unnecessary to impress the students with the need to respect their surroundings. They have simply done so."

The college drew Westmount into a larger urban orbit and underlined an evolution already underway in the municipality. At the official opening, the college was praised by Premier Robert Bourassa "for its cultural diversity and contribution towards building a new society," and Montreal's Mayor Jean Doré saluted "this cosmopolitan institution".

One well-loved landmark disappeared when "The Reddy" was forced to close its doors. In spite of a sustained, passionate campaign on its behalf, the hospital was swept away in the wholesale reorganisation of medical services throughout the province.

The constant threat of losing cherished institutions, a hemorrhage of population, particularly young adults, set against a background of continuing political uncertainty induced a public anxiety and frustration which found an outlet in the 1987 municipal election.

Westmount elections had traditionally been low-key campaigns with the mayor, by tacit consent, invariably voted in by acclamation. But in the elections of 1987, in a whirlwind of public participation, the popular incumbent, Brian Gallery, was defeated by an opposition candidate, May Cutler.

Westmount's first woman mayor, with a background in journalism and publishing, was making her first entry into public life. The next four years were among the most controversial and stimulating in Westmount's history. Declaring she wanted to see a more "creative" city hall, the mayor set in motion a series of events in the arts.

Stained glass panels in the windows of the Council chamber and paintings hung throughout City Hall showcased the work of Westmount artists. An "Author's Night" highlighted the remarkable number of writers in Westmount, and an Honours Committee celebrated Westmounters who had made a significant contribution in many fields outside the municipality.

The mayor was also active on issues beyond Westmount. When Montreal rushed to rename Dorchester Boulevard for the late Premier René Lévesque, Mayor Cutler steadfastly refused to rename that section that ran through Westmount, declaring there were other ways to honour M. Lévesque without discarding a valuable part of Montreal history.

In 1991, Mayor Cutler's term of office came to an end. When urged to continue for a second term she declined, admitting that it had been a strenuous four years and that she was anxious to step down. Former Councillor Peter Trent was nominated to succeed May Cutler and, reverting to tradition, the nominee was unopposed and later installed as Westmount's 35th mayor.

Under Mayor Trent's guidance, one of the enduring elements in the life of Westmount, the Library, the heart and centre of the community for 100 years, has been lovingly renovated and extended. Now discreetly modernised and computerised, yet reassuringly familiar in aspect, it appears ready to welcome another century as the community's favourite meeting place for all ages.

Mayor Trent faced, and continues to face, many of the recurring challenges to Westmount's independence and institutions. But the city's long and deep-rooted traditions and style, and its proven ability to adapt to change while maintaining its essential character, augur well for the future.

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Aline Gubbay was born in Egypt and raised in England, where she trained at London's Royal Academy of Dramatic Art and subsequently launched a successful career as a portrait photographer. Marriage brought her to Canada, the raising of a family and new ventures, culminating in a Masters of Social Work at McGill University. In the early 1960's she moved to Westmount, where she has lived ever since. A decade of service as a social worker was followed by a return to first loves: a second Masters, in Art History, and a career as a lecturer and author. She has been President for the last four years of the Westmount Historical Association and contributes a regular column "Know your Westmount" to *The Westmount Examiner*.



Her M.A. thesis on public sculpture in Montreal was followed by a series of histories of the city, illustrated throughout with her photographs of its architecture and public monuments. Publications include *Montreal-The Mountain and the River*; *Montreal's Little Mountain-A Portrait of Westmount* (with Sally Hoof) and *A Street Called The Main*. In *A View of Their Own*, Aline Gubbay combines her photographs with original archival material.

