

The Westmount Historian

NEWSLETTER OF THE WESTMOUNT HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

VOLUME 4 NUMBER 1

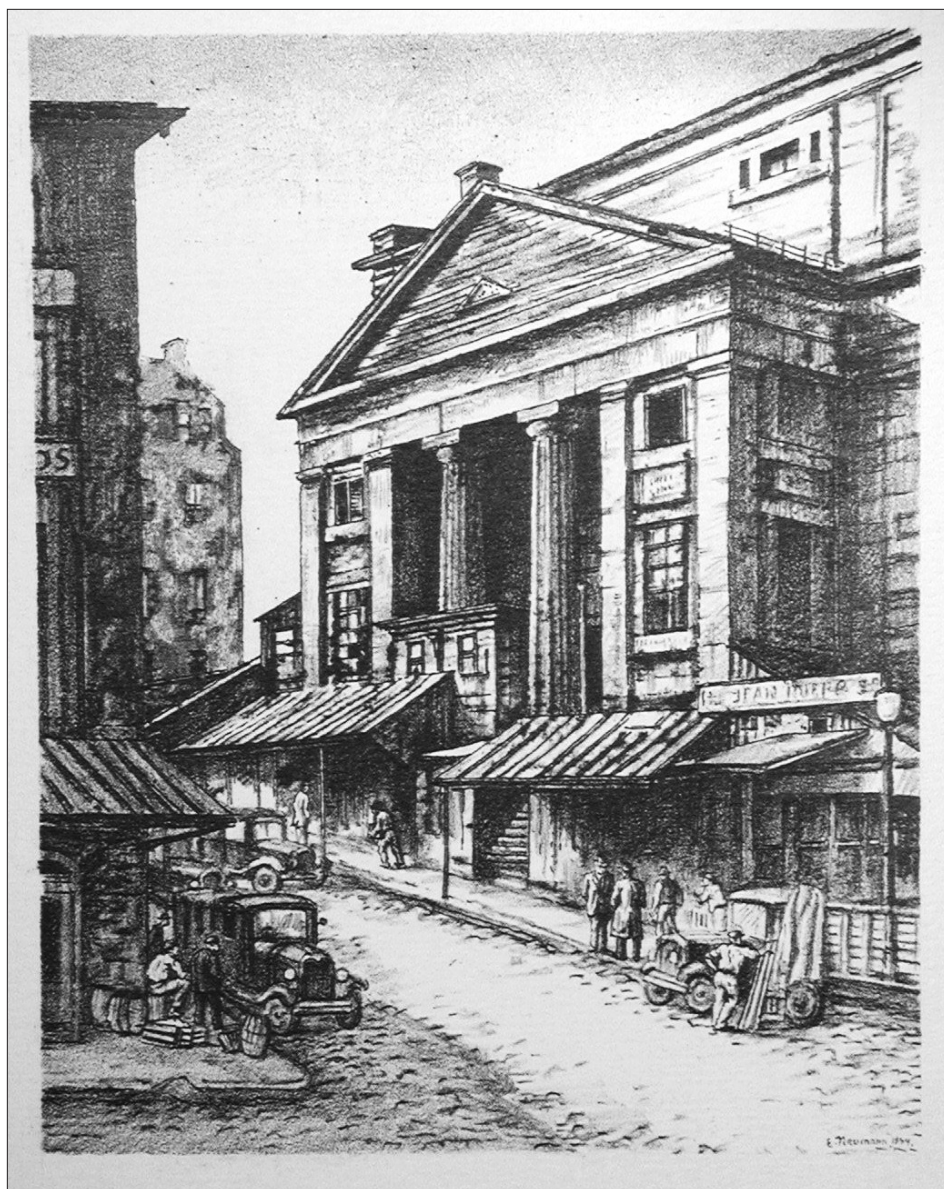
SEPTEMBER 2003

ERNST NEUMANN

Neumann was born in Budapest, May 1907. His life in Montreal, where he arrived in 1912, was one of poverty and caring for his ill mother. Those two factors instilled in him both bitterness and a compassion that spoke through his prints. The last in a series of studios was on Greene Avenue near Ste-Catherine Street, sharing the premises with friend and colleague, Goodridge Roberts. Neumann sustained himself financially with prints of Montreal and society portraits but his preferred subjects were victims of the Depression, society's outcasts and satires on the judicial system.

He attended the Ecole des Beaux-Arts and was a member of the Art Association of Montreal. Edwin Holgate was one his instructors, influencing Neumann with his wood engravings. Neumann often produced prints that were not for commercial consumption and among these were multiple-image studies that repeated the same figure at different angles and poses on one page. For these studies, Neumann uses his lithographic stone like a sketchpad. It is notable that he apprenticed in a lithography shop in the early 1920s. His other printmaking media were chine collé, etching and woodcut.

Neumann made and exhibited prints into the early 1950s, parallel to his career as a painter. At the time, there were only four art galleries in Montreal and artists not producing academic work created their own focus. Neumann illustrated for left-wing publications like *New Frontier*. Neumann's main subject, between



ERNST NEUMANN

WEST END GALLERY

1930 and 1935, was the plight of the unemployed.

In 1936, Goodridge Roberts and Neumann opened the Roberts-Neumann School of Art following Roberts, three-year stint at Queens

University as artist-in-residence. Neumann did most of the teaching while Roberts offered painting and drawing demonstrations. The school closed just three years later.

In the 1940s, Neumann was charg-

continued on page 8

The Westmount Historian

NEWSLETTER OF THE WESTMOUNT
HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

September 2003
Volume 4 • Number 1

EDITOR:
Flora-Lee Wagner

CONTRIBUTORS:
Caroline Breslaw,
Aline Gubbay, Doreen Lindsay,
Heather Solomon-Bowden – M.P.C.S.

WESTMOUNT HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION
BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Doreen Lindsay, President
Flora-Lee Wagner, Past President
Caroline Breslaw, Vice-President
Barbara Covington, Archivist
David Freeman, Treasurer
Andy Dodge, Secretary
Elizabeth Henrik, Membership
Anne Barkman
Joan Clark
Philip Dombowsky
Peter Lanken
Richard Lord
John Sancton

WESTMOUNT HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION
P. O. Box 198 Victoria Station
Westmount, Quebec
H3Z 2Y6

E-MAIL:
info@westmounthistorical.org

WEBSITE:
www.westmounthistorical.org

ISSN:
1496-4066

GRAPHIC DESIGN:
Studio Melrose
514 488-7366
info@studiomelrose.ca

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Westmount has been home to me for forty years. When I first moved here, it seemed very far from the centre of Montreal. It must have felt the same to the first inhabitants, 300 years ago, who came up the slopes of the mountain to settle and farm here. They travelled north-west, away from the over-crowded original settlement of Ville Marie, looking for fresh air and better farm land.

Over the years, Westmount has slowly seeped into my awareness. First as a parent, then as exhibition coordinator with Arts Westmount. It was during the panel discussion that I organized on Westmount's Heritage as part of the 1994 exhibition *Westmount Photographs* that the Westmount Historical Association sprang to life again after a few years of hibernation. Aline Gubbay held the chair as President while she was writing *A View of Their Own*. After her term ended, Flora-Lee Wagner energetically took over the chair for three years until 2003. Now, I have been asked to guide the Westmount Historical Association for the next two years.

Westmount has a special and unique identity. Although it is changing along with other urban areas, I do not want it to lose its quiet charm and grace. Only 10 years after the WHA was originally formed in 1944, then Vice-President, Alice Whitehall, saved our oldest extant farmhouse from demolition. We are again presented with the problem of how to integrate this same 1739 Hurtubise fieldstone house into our lifestyle.

We have inherited many significant buildings. Two thirds of our Westmount buildings are considered to be of exceptional heritage quality. The Victorian, Edwardian and often eclectic architecture of the large homes, the rhythmic repetition of row housing, all these continue to please the eye and delight the owners. Collecting and preserving the early experiences of the people who lived here before us enables us to understand the value of existing buildings, so that we may imaginatively maintain our heritage.

DOREEN LINDSAY

FALL LECTURE SERIES, 2003

Words and Images

Leonard Cohen, A.Y. Jackson, Mordecai Richler, and Mary Meigs:
Four of the many Westmounters who have made a huge impact on our cultural life and also helped shape Canadian identity.

Thursday, September 25, 2003 –

Leonard Cohen's Westmount – Speaker: Terry Rigelhof

Thursday, October 16, 2003 –

A.Y. Jackson in Westmount – Speaker: Wayne Larsen

Thursday, November 20, 2003 –

Mordecai Richler was here – Speaker: Joel Yanofsky

Thursday, December 18, 2003 –

Mary Meigs: painter and Writer – Speaker: Ann Pearson

Researching your Home – Westmount Historical Association – Information, 2003

1. Social History

For information about your house and its occupants talk to previous owners, neighbours, workmen.

2. Start by looking for your house in these books

A View of Their Own, The Story of Westmount, 1998

Westmount Library

Aline Gubbay, author. Social history of Westmount. Text and photographs of houses, churches and public buildings, etc.

Montreal's Little Mountain: A Portrait of Westmount, 1984

Westmount Library

Aline Gubbay & Sally Hooff, authors. A history of Westmount. Text and photographs of houses plus walks.

Westmount: a heritage to preserve, 1988

reference section of Westmount Library

Westmount Heritage Study by Beaupré and Michaud, 1988. City divided into 6 zones. Houses listed as exceptional or important, very significant and significant. Photographs. Shorter version (green book) available for sale at City Hall \$10.00

Les Résidences, 1987

1 copy in reference section, 1 copy in Library

Communauté Urbaine de Montréal, Houses of outstanding architecture. Photograph of house, name of architect and builder, description. Alphabetical listing under 1st owner.

Lovell Householders Directory established 1835

reference section of Westmount Library

423 St-Nicolas Street, Montreal, H2Y 2P4, (514) 849-3518
Alphabetical List of names/Street-Address section/map and street section. Early editions listed occupation of person.

Montreal Telephone Directory (514) 872 -5923
available in the Bibliothèque Centrale, 1210 Sherbrooke Street East

McGill School of Architecture – Blackader-Lauderman Library
(514) 398-4743

Mariline Berger, librarian in the Redpath Library on McTavish at Sherbrooke Street

1. If your house was designed by a well known architect.
2. Floor plans of many important Westmount homes by architectural students.

3. Further research –

Documents needed to do further research

A. Deeds of ownership received when you bought your house.

B. Cadastral and Subdivision Number

Westmount Historical Association Archives (514) 925-1404

Barbara Covington, archivist – make appointment. We have some information on houses and families in Westmount.

City of Montréal, Westmount Borough Hall (514) 989-5200

JoAnne Poirier, Director of Urban Planning and Services to Business. Only the owner of house may get information. You need address of house. Blueprints of houses and other documents after 1926. Municipal valuation roll.

Palais de justice – Publicité des droits (514) 399-2055

1 Notre-Dame East 2nd floor (corner of St-Laurent)
Search on net and microfiche for deeds, bill of sale – need cadastral number – Small charge

Archives nationales du Québec (514) 873-6000

205 Bleury (Place des Arts Metro) 535 Viger East or www.ang.gouv.qc.ca. Has copies of all Quebec documents.



PHOTO ALINE GUBBAY

SPRING LECTURE SERIES IN REVIEW

HAZELHEAD HOUSE, 1872

William Williams, owner
Peter Lanken, architect



The house called Hazelhead was named after a town in Ayrshire, Scotland. The original land, two to three times larger than today, was bought by John Thomson, a starch merchant, from Andrew Cameron and Catherine Glennon in 1872. There have been only seven owners: John Thomson, 1872 to 1886, who died at the age of forty of typhoid fever in 1874. The widow Thompson sold, by auction, to George Stephen (Baron Mount Stephen) who lent or rented to George Plow, a relative of Lady

Mount Stephen's until 1892 when he deeded the property to him. George Stephen Plow 1886 to 1913, Guy Ross, 1913 to 1920, John Nicholson, 1920 to 1921, Milton Hersey, 1921 to 1947, Thomas Harper, 1947 to 1964, William Williams, 1964 to the present. This red brick house built on a solid stone foundation stands at 364 Metcalfe Avenue today.

The original ornate barge board woodwork around the large porch and windows was stripped in the 1890's. Today, seven simple white columns hold up the porch. Thick white stucco covers the front and sides of the house. A central hallway leads from the front door straight back to the

kitchen. There is one large central fireplace in the living room, two stairways, one in the front going from the front door directly up to the second floor and another at the back, connecting the kitchen to the bedrooms. All wooden stair railings, door frames, window frames, and mouldings are simple, heavy and plain.

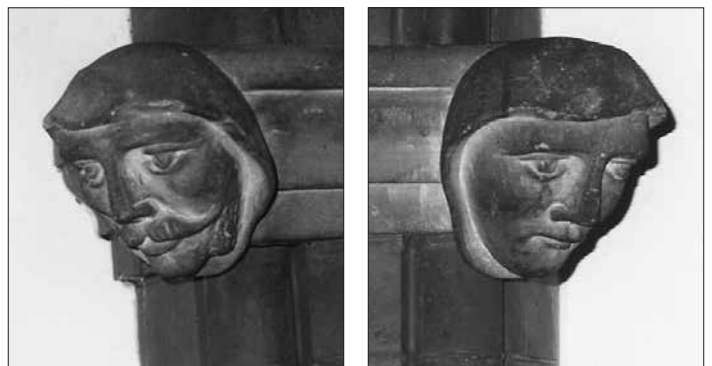
Originally, the sanitary arrangements consisted of an outhouse; a fur coat always hung inside the back door for winter treks.

DOREEN LINDSAY

THE MONTGOMERY HOUSE, 1901

Caroline Breslaw, owner
Peter Lanken, architect

The semi-detached houses at 447 and 449 Grosvenor Avenue were built in 1901 by James Maher on land that was originally on the eastern boundary of the Hurtubise Farm. Jonathan Brown purchased both houses upon their completion. They served as rental properties until 1913 when John Montgomery, chief agent for Dominion Guarantee Co., bought the southern unit at 447 Grosvenor. The Montgomeries lived in the house for seventy years, first, all seven of them and eventually, only the two spinster daughters. In 1983 Robert Vachon purchased 447 Grosvenor and did the first major updating in its history. The present own-



ers, Jon and Caroline Breslaw, bought the house in 1996.

This house is an example of Edwardian Baroque containing elements of many architectural styles. It is built of brick and buff sandstone. The slate false-front conceals a flat roof. The date 1901 is carved into the stone at the top of the façade. The front door is set back on the stone porch which has a geometric tile floor. The stained glass window and transom in the front door and above the hall fireplace



Keystone: The voussoir or wedge-shaped stone at the summit of an arch locking the whole together. The central principle on which all depends.

continued on the next page

continued from the previous page

show that this was built as a substantial house. The interior retains many original features, the brick hall fireplace with stone carvings of a man's and woman's head at each end, the butler's pantry with its grooved wooden draining board and ceramic sink, the floor to ceiling cabinets in the kitchen, and the divided upstairs bathroom. Many elements such as the stained glass, the shaped bricks, and the wood moldings, were catalogue items.

CAROLINE BRESLAW

HAZELBRAE, 1878

Patricia Lazanis, owner
Caroline Breslaw, WHA



The Victorian house named Hazelbrae stands on land sold by the Sulpicians to Alexander Cross in 1851 when the area was rural. The property was subsequently acquired by two consortiums. The first, in 1872, included George A. Drummond and the second, in 1874, included William Notman. In 1878, John MacFarlane and his wife Dame Jane Black built a villa with a matching stable on the property. John MacFarlane, a merchant, was mayor of Westmount in 1890. The MacFarlane family lived in Hazel-

brae until 1912. The property subsequently changed hands many times. The Lazanis family are the current owners. They purchased the house in 1996, and have updated and restored it.

Hazelbrae is a rock-faced stone house with intricate wood detail and a mansard roof of fish-scale slates. The extensive use of woodwork shows the influence of American architecture of the period. The mansard roof is taken from the French Second Empire style. There is no known architect, but pattern books were available to builders at the time. The house underwent few changes until 1946 when renovations were done to the kitchen and top floor. The two-story coach house with the round tower has remained intact.

Hazelbrae's interior retains many of the original Victorian features, including three marble fireplaces with cast-iron arches, inside shutters, marble-topped radiators

with cast-iron covers and a graceful staircase with a sculpted handrail and multiple curves. The WHA Archive possesses three Victorian photographs of the property.

CAROLINE BRESLAW

HURTUBISE HOUSE, 1739

Alan Stewart, historian

The stone farmhouse built by Jean Hurtubise in 1739, is the oldest house in Westmount. It still stands at 561-563 Côte St. Antoine. The land was granted to Louis Hurtubise in 1699 by the Seigneurs of the Island of Montreal. First mention of a wooden house was in



1731. By 1861 the farm was producing wheat, rye, oats, peas, potatoes, carrots and had apple orchards. In 1870 the brick annex was added. There are two fireplaces, one in the room to the left of the front door and one in the kitchen for cooking and baking bread. The two openings in the three foot thick stone foundation are for ventilation, not Indian attacks. There is a solid stone wall in the middle of the basement, now partially broken. In 1873 Antoine – Isaie sold the land below Côte Saint-Antoine, today's Victoria Avenue, to his nephew Ephrem Hudon. The large carriage shed to the west of the house was constructed in the 1880's. Dr. Léopold Hurtubise, the sixth and last generation to live in the house, renovated in 1911. In 1955 when he died, the Westmount Historical Association mounted a campaign to have the City of Westmount purchase and preserve the house. They did not, but Miss Alice Lighthall, vice-president of the WHA was instrumental in having the house sold to Mable Molson, Colin J.G. Molson, and James R. Beattie who formed the Canadian Heritage of Quebec to purchase the house in 1961. It remains empty and is still owned by them.

DOREEN LINDSAY

FROM THE ARCHIVES

Dating Old Photographs

On a recent trip to Mississquoi Museum, Stanbridge East, I noticed an article in their newsletter "*Mississquoi Heritage*" by the Archivist, Judy Antle, which I thought would be of interest to WHA members. The article is about a quick guide to dating old photographs, which was originally published in "*Family Chronicle*". With Judy Antle's permission, here are excerpts from the article.

* * *

WOMEN: If there are females in the picture, look at the hairstyle (this applies to both children and adults): in many cases this alone can give you the date. From the earliest days of photography, the 1840s until about 1870, women's hair was always parted in the middle and tied or pinned at the back. This style largely disappeared by 1890. From about 1870 hairstyles changed rapidly. Ringlets were fashionable in the late 1870s and again around 1900, but only during the earlier period was the hair parted in the middle. Dresses are the next most important clue. This is almost the only way of dating photos (of women) prior to 1870. A heavy bow on a dress was a feature throughout the 1870s. The sailor top to the dress is unusual on girls although boys were often photographed in sailor outfits. Dress styles changed as often as they do today.

MEN: Pictures of men are far harder to date than women. Men are usually photographed wearing a suit. While suits from the 1840s are different from those of the 1930s, the changes are far more gradual and have a greater overlap of styles than dresses. The same applies to hairstyles and facial hair.

The easiest way to date photographs of men is neckwear. Unlike suits and hair, neckwear did change fairly frequently. Ties, with a small knot as we use them today, are not seen before about 1900. Ties with a very large knot first appear in about 1870 but are out of fashion by 1900. Small bow ties are popular at all periods from the 1840s to 1930s but large were out of fashion by 1870. Beards are only helpful if they are of the "untidy" type. These were popular in the period 1860-1880.

SMILING: Having your photograph taken was a pretty formal affair, almost always done in a studio, until about 1900 when amateur photography came into being. A photograph was for posterity; life was serious and smiling is almost unknown before 1900

(H. Moorshead – *Family Chronicle* March/April 2003)

* * *

Can you date these photographs from the WHA Archives?

(Answers on page 8)



Photo no. 1



Photo no. 2

New Acquisition:

The WHA Archives has recently received, as a donation, the magnificent new publication from McGill-Queen's University Press, entitled **RESPECTABLE BURIAL:** Montreal's Mount Royal Cemetery, by Brian Young, photographs by Geoffrey James.

From the publist's flier:

RESPECTABLE BURIAL is a social history of death, burial, and Montreal's Mount Royal Cemetery, a place of great beauty that inspired the creation of Mount Royal Park and played a part in the development of Montreal, Canada's most vibrant city. Brian Young shows how the history of the Mount Royal Cemetery mirrors the evolving social makeup, changing mores, and tragic events that shaped the city. Young's text is brought to vivid life through the award-winning photography of Geoffrey James. James' photographs, coupled with archival images dating back to the 1800s, provide a beautiful addition to the text, and show the many different shades of the Mount Royal Cemetery, one of Montreal's most beautiful and cherished spaces.

BARBARA COVINGTON, ARCHIVIST

WHOSE STYLE IS IT ANYWAY?

A friend, recently returned from Europe, was lamenting the lack here of buildings of artistic and historical interest.

It is true we do not have very ancient buildings and the building styles we see around us have their roots, for the most part, in other countries and other cultures, but it can be fascinating to identify the similarities and highlight the differences so that we may arrive at a picture of what makes them particularly ours.

I asked my friend to come for a walk, as I live within a block of two Catholic churches, each a fine example of two strikingly different architectural styles. St. Leo's was founded early in the 20th century but radically altered in the 1920s in a robust Romanesque style. This 11th century style was itself, as its name suggests, a revival of Roman forms focused around the Roman arch. It was revived in various forms over the years and owes its vigorous 19th century revival to an American architect, Henry Hobson Richardson. He urged the use, wherever possible, of local building materials, such as those of St. Leo's, quarried from regional stone. With its soaring bell tower, St. Leo's would transplant comfortable onto a Tuscan hillside.

But St. Leo's special claim to fame is its interior. Classified as a heritage property in 1999 by the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada, this remarkable space is an integrated mix of materials and design; marble, ceramic, stained glass, painting and wood carving, supervised over some fifteen years by Guido Nincheri, an

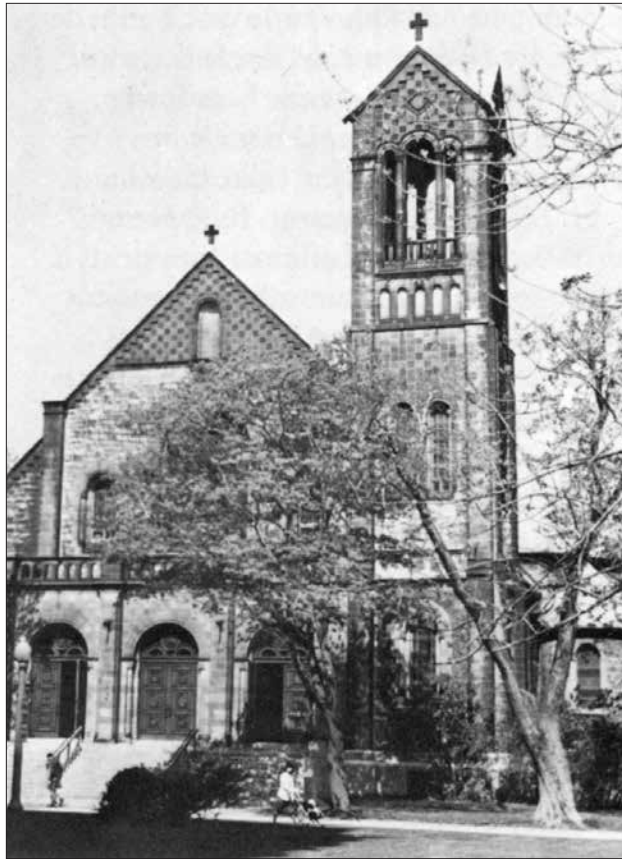


PHOTO ALINE GUBBAY



PHOTO PITKEN GUIDES

Italian artist from Prato, near Florence.

Of special interest is the apse with its al fresco paintings. This technique of applying paint directly on fresh plaster was well known in the Renaissance and learned by Nincheri in his home town. My particular delight are the wood carvings, dispersed throughout the building, but there is so much to study and admire.

On the same block of land as St. Leo's, stands the Church of the Ascension. We jump several centuries to arrive at the 14th century inspiration for this fine example of Gothic revival architecture.

Built in the 1930s during the Depression, the congregation had financial problems from the onset yet managed to produce a strikingly beautiful building. Its tower is modelled on two famous prototypes, among others, Magdalen College, Oxford and Worcester Cathedral, but it is here the product of a 20th century Gothic revival, led by several American architects and fuelled by a lingering attachment to William Morris and his medieval research. The church is set in an ample green space, reinforcing the aura of an English country town.

The Gothic style of the 14th century was already a revival of two centuries earlier, with each century adding elements, both exotic and home grown to the mixture of influences.

My friend was sufficiently intrigued by what she had seen that she suggested we continue our walk again another day.

ALINE GUBBAY

Ernst Neumann

continued from page 1

ing \$3.50 for a print, \$5.50 framed. These rates applied to what were called his Bread and Butter prints, scenes of Montreal that included harbour scenes, Bonsecours Market, the Old Courthouse, Dominion Square and its caleches, as well as the quaint, ramshackle wood structure of Milloy's Bookstore on Ste. Catherine Street. Neumann would sketch directly onto copper plates, even while sitting in the snow on cold days.

His en plein air approach to image-making often garnered him an audience. He was especially exasperated by the well meaning souls who

asked him, as he regarded his subject in a mirror to correctly render it on a plate backwards (since it prints the other way), "Wouldn't it be easier to look directly at your subject?"

Neumann's last year saw him off to France on a fellowship. Only two of his paintings were purchased by External Affairs in Ottawa. The lack of recognition he received throughout his career disappointed Neumann, but on the downtrodden, he lavished tenderness. He never finished his fellowship year, felled by a heart attack in Vence, France in March, 1956 and his Montreal artist-friends exhumed the body and brought it back to Montreal where it rests under a stone that says, "Ernst Neumann – artist peintre... He created beauty all his years/ Fondly remembered by his friends.

Edited and printed with kind permission from *The Montreal Print Collectors Society*. Written by Heather Solomon-Bowden. The West End Gallery on Greene Avenue carries the work of Ernst Neumann.

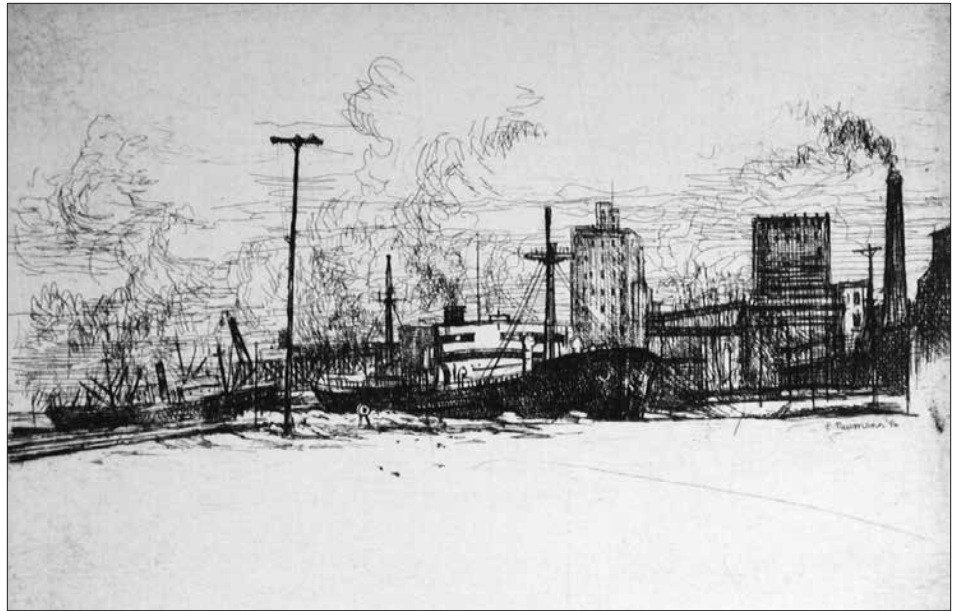
(Answers to quiz on page 8)

Photograph Dates:

Photo no. 1 – 1890,

The lady's hairstyle;

Photo no. 2 – 1913, Men's neckwear.



ERNST NEUMANN

WEST END GALLERY

THE RAVEN OF SAINT ANTHONY

The Raven inside the small shield on the Westmount Coat of Arms commemorates the Legend of the Ravens who fed Saint Anthony by dropping bread into his place of refuge when he chose to live a solitary hermit's life. From 1879 to 1894, for fifteen years, Westmount was called Côte Saint-Antoine, a continuation of the early name for the land. At first it was the Village of Côte Saint-Antoine, then in 1890, it became the Town of Côte Saint-Antoine.

The raven was chosen to represent Westmount in the **Mosaiculture International, 2003** when Westmount and the other seventeen boroughs of the new City of Montreal were invited to participate in the "Concours Inter-arrondissements de Mosaicultures". The 500 pound sculpture took Howard Ransom, a welder with the city, three weeks to construct. Then Pompei Dimembro and Mélanie Banninger, both gardeners with the city, inserted small plants into the metal structure in the traditional Topiary style. This is our first 3-dimensional crest. The City crest and the clock are long standing 2-dimensional crests.

The City of Westmount was the first Canadian City to obtain a coat of arms from Lord Lyon King of Arms (Edinburg, Scotland) on May 12th, 1945. The City obtained a patent of registration for the coat of arms with the Canadian Heraldic Authority on 15th of February, 2001.

DOREEN LINDSAY JULY, 2003

