FIRST UNDERGROUND HOCKEY RINKS in the WORLD 2013

FIRST TO GENERATE ELECTRICITY BY BURNING GARBAGE 1906

GLEN ARCH: FIRST MUNICIPAL WORKS PROJECT 1892

WESTMOUNT FIRSTS
PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE

Being first means being innovative and working to solve problems before they arise. Westmount has been innovative in many areas: some within the city of Westmount, and others reaching out to the larger city of Montreal and province of Quebec, and even extending to Canada and the world.

Our first innovative public works project was completed in 1892 when Westmount, then Côte St. Antoine, constructed a stone arch over the Glen ravine and diverted several flowing streams underground into sewers.

I have collected 25 “firsts” (see page 3) Four of them are described in this WHA Newsletter based on talks given by specialists in their field and presented during the 2014 WHA Spring Lecture Series. You can read about Westmount being the FIRST City in Quebec to hire a Director General in 1913 and Westmount being the FIRST in Canada to construct a power plant to produce electricity by burning garbage in 1906. Also the Westmount-based Royal Montreal Regiment was recognized as the FIRST official bilingual military unit in Canada in 1968 based on their bilingual existence since 1914.

Our most recent first was accomplished just last year when Westmount upgraded its sports facilities. Westmount became the FIRST city in the world to construct not only one, but two, underground hockey rinks.

DOREEN LINDSAY

WHA Fall Lecture Series 2014

WHA 70th ANNIVERSARY (1944-2014)

Thursday, September 18, 2014
Beginnings with Alice Lighthall
Speaker: Ruth Allan-Rigby, WHA Member

Thursday, October 16, 2014
Dr. Hélène Saly and the WHA archives
Sally Hooff and publishing
Speaker: Doreen Lindsay, WHA president

Thursday, November 20, 2014
Aline Gubbay: author of “A View of their Own”
Speaker: Sharon Gubbay, daughter

Thursday, December 11, 2014
70 Year Celebration with members in the Art Gallery
Join together to share remembrances, stories
an Anniversary Cake and refreshments.

All talks 7 pm to 9 pm – Westmount Public Library, 4574 Sherbrooke St. West
Series prepared by Doreen Lindsay
Admission free for members – non-members $5 at the door
WESTMOUNT FIRSTS

Firsts within the City of Westmount

First significant municipal project: the Glen Arch south of St. Catherine Street. 1892
First park: Victoria Jubilee Park (today’s Westmount Park). 1898
First woman elected Mayor: May Cutler. 1987
First wedding officiated in City Hall. 2007

Firsts in Quebec, Canada, or the World

Among the first cities in the world with an electrically-lit Christmas tree. 1896
First indoor rink in the world built specifically for hockey (privately owned – corner of St. Catherine and Wood). 1898
First free public library in Quebec: Westmount Public Library. 1899
First municipally-built community centre in Quebec: Victoria Hall. 1899
First in Canada to generate electricity by burning garbage. 1906
First municipally-funded children’s library in the British Empire, Westmount Public Library. 1911
First in Canada to adopt a City Manager form of government. 1913
First in Canada to create a local Architectural and Planning Board. 1916
First pipe organ in a public community centre in Canada, Victoria Hall. 1926
First outdoor floral clock in North America. 1926
First in Canada to build and operate a powered snow melter. 1927
First in Canada to register its municipal coat-of-arms in Scotland. 1945
First in the world to adopt a raised hand symbol as a ‘do not walk’ pedestrian sign. 1959
First bilingual military unit in Canada: Royal Montreal Regiment. Since 1914, officially since 1968
First in Montreal to establish a municipal ambulance service (no longer in place). 1975
First in Quebec to require sprinkler systems in new buildings. 1987
First in Quebec to adopt ‘pay-as-you-go’ financing. 1994
First to pass anti-pesticide bylaw in Montreal. 1994
First in Quebec to install battery disposal sites. 1994
First in the world to build underground ice hockey rinks: Westmount Recreation Centre. 2013

This list was compiled for our lecture series “Firsts in Westmount” in the Spring of 2014. It is evolving, and your input is welcomed. Please email us with your comments or suggestions.
Sports and recreation have always played an important role in Westmount. In 1897, City Council approved the purchase of land to create Westmount Park, and the area was expanded southwards in 1910. The community’s first swimming pool, using natural spring water, was built sometime prior to 1906 in Westmount Park to the east of today’s Westmount Park Church. Six tennis courts were built on land south of the church in the 1920s.

In 1958 a municipal arena was constructed in the southwest corner of Westmount Park on land that had been part of the D.W. Ross estate, and a concrete swimming pool was added in the 1960s. After more than 50 years of heavy use, the arena and pool were demolished, and in September 2013 the new Westmount Recreation Centre (WRC) was opened. The project was carried out using federal/provincial infrastructure grants, municipal funds, donations by residents, and major contributions by two local families, the Molsons and the Desmarais. The overall cost of the WRC was $38 million.

This innovative sports and recreation facility has been designed to the exacting standard of LEED Gold (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) certification in the new construction category. LEED is the world’s most widely used certification system for sustainable architecture and design. Its certification is granted based on energy efficiency, material use, and water resource management. Many ele-

The Molson and Desmarais Hockey rinks named in honour of two major donors are both NHL size: 200 feet x 85 feet.

World’s First Underground Hockey Rinks 2013

Westmount arena, a privately-owned public facility, was the first arena in the world to be built with rounded corners especially for hockey. It opened on December 31, 1898 on St. Catherine Street at the corner of Wood Avenue. Capacity was 4,300 people seated or 10,000 people overall. The first artificial ice-making machine in Montreal was installed in 1915. The building burnt down on January 2, 1918.
ments incorporated into the WRC count toward the Gold standard.

The WRC features the first two underground hockey rinks in the world. One of these rinks will operate year-round; the second will be used in the warmer months for day camps, games, and other activities. Most of the heat for the building and pools is supplied by recycling the waste heat produced by the rink refrigeration system. The ground temperature below the surface remains at 15 degrees Celsius throughout the year, providing energy savings in terms of heating and air conditioning. The project has resulted in a 54% saving in electricity consumption and a 40% reduction in water consumption relative to the National Building Code’s most recent norms.

The WRC arena structure is built like a bridge. The concrete roof is supported by enormous steel beams that are 105 ft. long and weigh 15 tons each. The landscaped roof adds an additional acre of green space to Westmount Park. Rain that falls on it is retained by the earth, and eventually goes into pipes leading to retention basins to the south of the pool. These have been designed to hold runoff after heavy rainfalls or spring thaws, reducing the load on the sewer system. French drains and membranes were installed around and under the WRC.

The new 25 metre pool meets competition standards. It has eight lanes, a separate diving area, and wheelchair access. There is a separate toddler pool and “splash pad”. The heating system for the pool could add almost two months to the swimming season at low cost.

Exciting new features of the WRC are two exercise rooms

LEED Gold points for the WRC include:

- location in a densely populated area
- proximity to public transit
- reclamation of a contaminated site
- recycling of demolition materials
- use of non-toxic paint and other materials
- parking for bicycles
- reduction of carbon emissions
- maximized green space
- thermal efficiency by building underground
- air quality control
- natural light
- green roof that cools the surrounding air
- use of renewable energy
- re-use of generated heat
- LED lights over the rinks
- Emission–free electric Zamboni
- control of potable water consumption
- rainwater management.

Lobby of Westmount Recreation Centre with access to Molson and Desmarais rinks to the left and entrance to the swimming pool to the right.

Zamboni Electric 552 ice resurfacing machine.
Westmount Recreation Centre opened in September 2013 at 5675 St. Catherine Street. View across swimming pool and over roof of hockey rinks and the café pavilion looking towards Westmount Park Church with Westmount Summit in the distance.

Retaining Basin south of swimming pool absorbs run-off after heavy rainfalls and spring thaws. It retains water so the sewer system does not get overloaded and cause flooding.

First swimming pool in Westmount was located in Westmount Park, where the lagoon is today. Indicated on Pinsonneault map of 1906.

with access to changing rooms and showers, a teen and Contactivity centre, a café at park level, a reception room, a pro shop, and universal accessibility. Three new outdoor tennis courts are also part of the project. Several large works of art have been installed in the centre, adding to its overall visual appeal.

The Westmount Recreation Centre has generated a huge amount of interest. It is the winner of the UMQ (Union des municipalités du Québec) award for top municipal project in the category of culture, sports et loisirs for 2014. It was also a finalist in two other competitions this year. LEED Gold certification is pending.

CAROLINE BRESLAW

Based on a talk to WHA by Patrick Martin, P.Eng., Westmount City Councillor and Commissioner of Public Works, on May 15, 2014.
In 1913 Westmount was the first city in Quebec to adopt the Director General form of government.

It was only five years after Westmount became a city in 1908 that Mayor John McKergow and councillors, who were all business men, decided they wanted to work with a general manager to administer city affairs.

The City Manager or “Director General” in Quebec is the chief executive officer of the City. He is a coordinator, an advisor and a planner. He provides administrative continuity and supervises the enforcement of municipal by-laws. He submits his own recommendations and participates in town planning. He responds directly to the City Council to ensure that council decisions are carried out and has full responsibility for the operations of the City.

Westmount was the first city in Quebec to adopt this form of government that had its birth in the United States in 1912. The cities of Outremont and Grand’Mère in Quebec followed in 1918 and 1920. There have been only ten men over the past 101 years to hold this position in Westmount and most stayed in their position for many years.

One month after advertising the position, Westmount appointed George Thompson, who had been the superintendent of the Westmount Light Department, as General Manager with a salary of $5,000 per annum. After 17 years of service, he died in office and was given a large civic funeral. His successor was Percy E. Jarman who was appointed in 1930 and did not retire until 1951, spending 21 years in office. The third city manager, from 1951-60, was Thomas Hughes who was with the city for 48 years. Hughes worked in the engineering department before becoming Assistant General Manager in 1945.

Norm Dawe, who was a teacher, prior to working as a personnel officer for the City, followed Hughes and stayed for 22 years, until 1982. During his time, Westmount opened the former swimming pool, brought in modern snow melting and salt-spreading equipment, and introduced the flashing hand signal (a first) at intersections. He oversaw the reconstruction of Westmount Park during the early 1960s and initiated a major economic study of the eastern section of the City.

John McIver, a Scot by birth, was the fifth. He was appointed Assistant General Manager in 1969, then General Manager in 1982 under Mayor Donald MacCallum. McIver had previously worked in Westmount’s purchasing department and with the governments of Alberta, Saskatchewan and Ontario. Unfortunately, he died of heart complications in 1984.

In 1983 Frank Davis was appointed Acting Director General and then Director General in 1984. He served until 1986.

Peter Patenaude was appointed Acting Director General in 1985 and Director General in 1986. He left in 1990. Bruce St. Louis became Director General in 1994 after being mentored by Manley Shultz, his predecessor from 1990-93. The 1998 Ice Storm occurred during St.Louis’ mandate.

Duncan Campbell is the tenth and present Director General of Westmount. He was Associate Director General for the City of Montreal before coming to Westmount on Sept. 29, 2008. During his term the new Westmount Recreation Centre was planned and constructed. Campbell will be retiring in September, 2014.

Doreen Lindsay

Based on talk to WHA by Duncan Campbell on February 20, 2014
A reserve infantry unit, the RMR was bilingual from its beginnings in 1914, and received official bilingual status in 1968.

Westmounters held a public meeting in Victoria Hall on Thursday, February 7, 1924 “in favour of leasing an area of land on which will be constructed, without cost to the City, an Armoury for the Westmount Battalion, Royal Montreal Regiment.” A referendum was held on June 12, 1924. (683 for and 55 against) with Mayor McLagan presiding.

In those days, armouries were often built through private funding. The Westmount Armoury Association was formed and incorporated in 1924 with the objective of raising funds to build an armoury for the regiment in Westmount. A meeting was called for Feb. 7, 1924 (See newspaper clipping) The City of Westmount agreed to lease the land upon which the armoury stands for 99 years at an annual rental fee of one dollar.

The Armoury was officially opened on December 28, 1925.

The RMR moved into the St. Catherine Street Armoury in December, 1925 when construction was completed. In the 1930s the federal government took over responsibility of ownership and maintenance of the building, with the land remaining under the control and ownership of the City of Westmount. It is a bilingual reserve infantry regiment based...
in Westmount, with members coming from all areas of Montreal. Westmount awarded Freedom of the City to the RMR on April 5, 1954. The retired colours (flags) of the Regiment are in St. Matthias’, their regimental church on Côte St. Antoine Road.

**Founding of the Regiment in 1914**

The 14th Canadian Battalion, designated The Royal Montreal Regiment by special warrant-authority of King George V, was recruited in August 1914 (at the outbreak of the Great War) from three Montreal units of the Canadian Active Militia:

- 1st Regiment, Canadian Grenadier Guards
- 3rd Regiment, Victoria Rifles of Canada
- 65th Regiment, Carabiniers Mont-Royal

In December 1914, the RMR was designated the 58th Regiment, Westmount Rifles.

**The First and Second World Wars**

The 14th Battalion embarked for England on September 27, 1914 and disembarked in France on February 15, 1915 where it fought as part of the 3rd. Infantry Brigade. Leading up to the Second World War, the Royal Montreal Regiment was redesigned as the 1st Battalion and mobilized for service in September 1939. The regiment fought with distinction in both world wars and other operations involving the Canadian forces since 1945, including the UN peacekeeping mission during the Korean conflict of 1950-51.


**The RMR Museum**, on the first floor of the Armoury (photos page 10), first opened on Sept. 20, 1974 and is open every Tuesday evening to the public. It preserves many reminders of warfare including the original grave marker of Westmount resident Captain Richard (Dick) Steacie, the first officer to be killed in combat in 1915. Steacie was Captain of the 14th Battalion at the Battle of Ypres, in the First World War.

**Doreen Lindsay**

*Based on a talk to WHA by Colin Robinson, Lieutenant-Colonel (retired), Honorary Lieutenant-Colonel of The Royal Montreal Regiment on April 17, 2014.*
Westmount was the first city in Quebec to set up a destructor plant to produce electricity by burning garbage in 1906.

Electric current was provided to Westmount residents by many different private corporations until 1904, when they merged and a new company, the Montreal Light, Heat and Power Company, was formed. Westmount citizens objected as they felt that the rates were not competitive and proposed that a municipal plant be constructed and operated by the Town. The Town Council therefore adopted bylaw #146 in 1904. The Westmount Light and Power Department opened in 1906. It had one distribution line running up the Glen to furnish electrical lighting at 10 cents per kilowatt hour to residences.

Two problems solved by the Town Council in 1906

Combined with the problem of high rates charged for electricity by the Montreal Light, Heat and Power Company, Westmount was having problems finding enough space for dumping increased garbage output produced by the growing population. It solved both problems by constructing a steam plant power station in the GLEN to generate electrical power by burning garbage. Then, after being self-sufficient for six years, the city needed to purchase additional bulk power from the Montreal Light, Heat and Power Company because of increased demand.

Destruction of garbage

The refuse-burning steam generator, referred to over the
decades as a “destructor plant”, was designed with a 525 kilowatt steam engine driven generator. The plant was used for electricity production for six years, and again during the 1939-45 war.

Snow Disposal
The power facility site included the main disposal point for snow removal in Westmount. At a snow-melter plant designed by City engineers, Mr. Daye and Mr. Heron, trucks dumped snow directly into tanks where the heat from burning garbage melted the snow. (see photo) The snow melter was capable of disposing of 720 tons of snow per hour, and the discharge was carried directly into the sewer system.

When the electrical generation plant was retired in 1948, the steam boilers were kept for an additional seven years to operate the old snow melting plant.

In 1933, Hydro Westmount acquired the Montreal Light, Heat and Power Company distribution network within its boundaries. Westmount acquired all the poles, lines, transformers, cables and related hardware from them, and in return agreed not to use the refuse-burning plant to generate electricity. They agreed to purchase bulk electricity from Montreal Light, Heat, and Power Company. Turbo-alternators of 4000 Kilowatts were installed. However, the electrical generation plant was kept in service from 1933 until 1961, available for stand-by power in case of a major power failure. It continued to generate heat for melting snow and was also used during the 1939-1945 war when energy was in short supply.

Today, Hydro Westmount buys power from Hydro Québec's De Maisonneuve substation located on St. Antoine Street near Greene Avenue. From there, Hydro Westmount carries power through 14 lines of 12.5 kilovolts to substations at: Olivier north of De Maisonneuve Boulevard, Park, beside the pavillion in King George Park, Saint Antoine under the Lawn Bowling Club, and at the Glen main station. From these four substations, power is mostly carried in 5 kV lines to 215 primary service blocks throughout Westmount, where transformers step down the voltage to household usage levels. Some large buildings with heavy power usage such as Westmount Square and Alexis Nihon Plaza are fed
with 12.5 kV lines. All the main cables are underground in conduits, though most homes are served with above-ground lines.

“Washington” streetlamps were designed in 1910 for street lighting in Washington, DC. During the 1970s, Washington streetlamps between St. Catherine and Sherbrooke were replaced with mercury vapour lamps on higher cobra-head poles. Residents objected and presented a petition to City Hall to halt the programme and a public meeting was held. In 1986, Council approved a $5 million programme to install streetlamps resembling the “Washington” style, but using a 150-watt high-pressure sodium light source. The city is gradually replacing cobra-style lights with a “semi-custom” design of “Washington” streetlamps in residential areas.

DOREEN LINDSAY

Text based on talk by Benoit Hurtubise to WHA on February 20, 2014.

Westmount’s “semi-custom” Washington streetlamp has a classic double fluted base with an acorn luminaire. A special decorative design is integrated on the post and the Westmount logo is on the base.
Westmount consumption from 1930 to 1990.

Westmount Light and Power manhole cover.
There are 400 manholes in the city to give access to underground conduits.
WHA UPDATES and NEWS

WHA/AGM held on May 15, 2014
The WHA Annual General Meeting was held at the Westmount Public Library before the last lecture of the Spring season. The president’s yearly report was read by Doreen Lindsay, followed by the treasurer’s report read by new Director Pina Santillo. Copies of the membership, website, and archives reports were made available for all to read. All 2013-2014 directors were returned by acclamation with the exception of Barbara Covington who has retired after serving for 13 years. She will continue as a valued WHA member.

JANE’S WALK MAY 4, 2014
LOST WATERS: WHERE ARE THEY NOW?
For the fourth year Ruth Allan-Rigby and Doreen Lindsay organized a WHA walk in Westmount to celebrate the ideas of the late, renowned urbanist Jane Jacobs. They led a walking tour of 50 people on May 4, 2014 that followed the early ravines through Westmount Park from the Library, past the site of the earliest Swimming Pool north of De Maisonneuve Bld. to the new Recreation Centre, and ending at the Glen Plaque near St. Catherine St. and Glen Road. With thanks to French guides Vivian Freedman and Councillor Patrick Martin.

SAVE THE DATE !!!
Walking Tour on Sunday, October 5th, 2014
English at 1:00 pm
French at 1:30 pm
“Architecture & Innovation in Westmount”
meet at Victoria Hall Art Gallery
Tour includes Westmount Public Library, Victoria Hall, Westmount Recreation Centre, Royal Montreal Regiment Armoury and the Glen Power Station.
Organized by Caroline Breslaw and Doreen Lindsay with the City of Westmount for the City of Montreal Architectural Heritage Campaign, 2014.
Photographic exhibition of buildings and maps
will be on view in the Westmount Public Library from September 26 to October 12, 2014 during library opening hours. Free Admission.
The WHA is proud of its growing archival collection, which is rich in photographs of our evolving cityscape, and also contains a range of documents, maps, artifacts and memorabilia relevant to the community’s long history. We sincerely thank all those who have donated original items to the archives, or published materials for our reference shelves.

To our readers: please feel free to contact us if items of local interest come to light as you downsize, or clear out attics or drawers. In particular, we seek good quality photographs that show identifiable aspects of life in Westmount over the years, but many other types of memorabilia are also welcomed.

JANE MARTIN, WHA ARCHIVIST