WHA ANNIVERSARY

December 11, 2014 in the Gallery at Victoria Hall

Doreen Lindsay, president, lighting candles on anniversary cake with directors Caroline Breslaw, Louise Carpentier looking on from left and invited guest Jacques Chagnon (MLA Westmount-St. Louis), directors Sharon Sparling and Anne Barkman to the right.
The Westmount Historian

The Westmount Historian is published twice a year in February and September by the Westmount Historical Association, Westmount, Quebec, a non-profit charitable association.

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The Westmount Historian was 70 years old in 2014. We were born out of the Westmount Municipal Association in 1944 when Roy Campbell, its president, realized the need to collect and preserve documentation of the development of our community before it was lost. People began to meet monthly, organize exhibitions to portray the history of Westmount and collect documents from the City of Westmount and the Sulpician archives as well as documents and photographs from older residents. Over the years, many dedicated people have continued to research, collect, conserve, mount exhibitions, write, and organize public lectures and walking tours.

Since organizations are made up of individual people, this issue of the Westmount Historian celebrates the achievements of four women who were particularly active in giving direction to heritage issues over the years. Alice Lighthall was the guiding light through the early days. Her saving of the Hurtubise Family home from demolition in 1955 showed her dedication to preserving history and her activism within the community. Dr. Hélène Saly encouraged her students to publish their Old Westmount book in 1967, thus renewing interest in local history. Sally Hooff and Aline Gubbay wrote and published books about our early buildings and people that have greatly enriched our knowledge and understanding of our local history.

Enjoy reading about our Association’s evolution and these four outstanding women.

Doreen Lindsay

WHA Winter/Spring 2015 Lecture Series
Preservation of Heritage Interiors

WHA will look at how owners of four different Westmount residences have maintained heritage features of their homes’ interiors

Thursday, February 19, 2015
RESTORING AWARD WINNING HOUSE: 4274 DORCHESTER BLVD.
Speakers: Michael McAdoo & Theodora Samiotis, owners

Thursday, March 19, 2015
INTERIOR PRESERVATION OF 1739 HURTBUSE HOUSE
Gina Garcia, architectural conservator. (To be confirmed)

Thursday, April 16, 2015
PRESERVATION of 1847 BRAEMAR VILLA: 3219 The Boulevard
Speaker: Sharon Azrieli, owner

Thursday, May 21, 2015
RESTORING 1913 PERCY NOBBS HOUSE: 38 Belvedere Road
Speaker: Michael Bliderman, owner and Julia Gersovitz, architect

All talks 7 pm to 9 pm – Westmount Public Library, 4574 Sherbrooke St. West
Admission free for members – non-members $5 at the door
Westmount Historical Association. February 27, 1945

Annual Report

Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have the honour to present to you the first Annual Report of the Westmount Historical Association.

When this Association was formed a year ago, by the Westmount Municipal Association, we were charged with the duty of gathering together the threads of our history as a community.

Two committees were set up, one to put together what material could be found in Municipal records, and the other to carry on research in regard to historic properties and people. (With this last I have worked throughout the year. DELATED)

With the very kind support of the City Council, through the Library Committee as soon as we were organized, we began our work.

A list of old residents was compiled by Dr. Lunn and Dr. from the early Assessment Rolls. Representatives of those families were contacted as we could find their whereabouts. In this the work of Miss Jarvis, Mr. Ward, and Miss Brown has been of very great value. A circular letter was sent out to these representatives early in the summer, asking for any contributions they could make to the study.

Through the "Westmount Examiner" a general appeal was made for historical material, such as books, maps, letters, or articles bearing on the region. Various articles prepared by this Committee were printed in the "Know Your Westmount" column throughout the year.

Dr. E.Z. Massicotte, of the Montreal Archives was consulted and with his staff gave us unstinted assistance in collecting early material from that source. By the generous interest of the Westmount City Council, through the Library Committee we are being enabled to have photostats made of the rarest documents bearing on our subject.

The Record Office of the Seminary of St. Sulpice has been equally generous, and is likewise cooperating in this research. This work is not finished. Its very nature requires long and arduous study.

The present exhibition is, we hope, but a beginning. It has drawn together pictures, maps, documents which give a glimpse of our City's past. Each may be an unfolding leaf.

Some may wonder at busy people taking so much time from their war-work to do historical research in these rushed days. I would answer that this is war-work. Those of us who knew the loneliness of far places in the last conflict, know that to many a lad the long dark night in a shell torn ruin has been made lighter and warmer by memories home. This little spot of earth is what he is fighting for.

We have the duty of passing on his love for it to other children.

Respectfully submitted

Alice M.S. LIGHTHALL

Photo copied and deported by H. Saly Apr. 28, 1945.
Alice Lighthall was a founding member of the Westmount Historical Association in 1944 when she was 53 years old. Miss Lighthall had lived in Westmount most of her life and grown up in a politically aware family. Her father, William Douw Lighthall, was a lawyer and mayor of Westmount from 1900 to 1902. She sat on the board of the Canadian Guild of Crafts, for which she was awarded the Order of Canada, the Woman’s Art Association, and the Montreal Council of Women. She helped set up two committees for the new Historical Association: one to collect material from the municipal records and one to research historic properties and people. Alice asked residents, through the local Westmount Examiner newspaper, for historical material such as books, maps, letters, or articles, and she started the “Know Your Westmount” column in the Examiner.

Alice Lighthall as a Voluntary Aid Detachment (VAD) nurse from 1916 to 1918 in Rouen, France.

Alice Schuyler Lighthall (1891-1991)
“The Story of Westmount”
First exhibition Feb. 27, 1945

The Association organized an exhibition of documents and photostats obtained from the record office of the Seminary of St. Sulpice, plus paintings and photographs from other sources, in the Westmount Library on February 27, 1945. Alice wrote that “she hoped that the present exhibition is but a beginning and each picture, map, or document may be an unfolding leaf”. The Board of Directors at that time consisted of Dr. W.D. Lighthall, 87 years old, as honorary president, B. Panet-Raymond, president, with Alice Lighthall and Dr. Robert Harvie as vice-presidents. Kathleen Jenkins, longtime Westmount librarian who published an excellent history of Montreal in 1966, was secretary.

During 1945-46 members of the newly-formed association wrote articles about street names that were published in the Westmount Examiner. In 1947 when the Raynes Villa (Forden) was bought by a member of the Bronfman family, Alice tried to stop the demolition and was unsuccessful, but she did ask permission to have the house exterior and interior photographed for the WHA.

Saving the Hurtubise house in 1955

Alice Lighthall is remembered best for saving Westmount’s oldest house, the Hurtubise family home at 563 Côte Saint Antoine Road, from demolition in 1955. Upon learning that Léopold Hurtubise, the last member of the family to live in the house, was selling it, she contacted the press and organized a special meeting in Victoria Hall to discuss ways of saving the historic structure. As a result, the stone farmhouse, built in 1739, was bought by Colin Molson, Mabel Molson and James Beatty who later formed a private foundation – the Canadian Heritage of Quebec – to own and administer the house and property.

Living in Westmount

The Lighthall family moved into Westmount from Stanley Street in 1894 when Alice was three years old. Their first home was at 2 Murray Avenue (see photo), and then the family moved to 4351 Montrose (see photo). In 1909, when Alice was 18 years old, she entered McGill University as a regular student, studying English, French, History, and Economics. She later became a part-time student but did not graduate out of respect for her mother’s wishes. In recognition of Alice’s achievements, however, McGill awarded her a posthumous honorary degree in 1991.
Nursing in France, during wartime 1916-18

While her family was still living on Murray Avenue, Alice Lighthall, along with other Westmount women, began training as a nurse when war with Germany began in 1914. Alice served from 1916 to 1918 as a Voluntary Aid Detachment (VAD) nurse near Rouen in France (photo).

In 1958 Alice bought her own house at 422 Metcalfe Avenue where she lived until 1983 (photo). To celebrate Alice’s 90th birthday, Dr. Hélène Saly, archivist of the WHA, arranged a party for her in the Hurtubise house that she had saved. That was Miss Lighthall’s last public appearance before she moved into St. Margaret’s Home soon after. She passed away in 1991 just two months before her 100th birthday.

Note: A detailed profile of the life of Alice Lighthall, including a biographical timeline, can be found in the February, 2008 issue of the *WHA Historian*. It was based on a lecture by Ruth Allan-Rigby to the WHA in December, 2007.

Information for this article from WHA Lecture by Ruth Allan-Rigby on September 18, 2014

Doreen Lindsay

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WHA gratefully thanks its 2014 members, donors, and patrons who help make it possible to produce our Lecture Series and Newsletter.

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When she was the French specialist at Westmount High School, Dr. Hélène Saly encouraged her students to study local history. The composition “Ma ville et son histoire” that she assigned to her class developed into the book *Old Westmount* published in time for Expo Year, 1967. The 2,000 copies quickly sold out. To give her students access to historical information, Dr. Saly organized the embryonic collection of papers and photographs stored in cardboard boxes that were the WHA archives in those days. She became our first archivist and in her honour, we named our archives “The Saly Heritage Collection” in 1994.

**Reorganization of the WHA on Feb. 3, 1971**

The publication *Old Westmount* awakened interest in heritage issues and a renewal of the local historical association. Dr. Saly became friends with Alice Lighthall and they began to meet once a month in the Library or at Alice’s home at 422 Metcalfe Avenue. Aline Gubbay and Sally Hooff joined the small group of supporters for historic preservation. Working together, these motivated women located and organized the
photographs of the Raynes house, the Sulpician photostats and documents from the City of Westmount. Henrietta Harvie donated the account books of prominent early Westmounter Robert Harvie, father of Dr. Harvie. Membership in the renewed organization was established at $2.

In 1972 the WHA organized two exhibitions: The first one was for the September Fair in the skating rink. A second exhibition of 94 items showing “Westmount’s Past and Present” was planned, arranged, organized and mounted by Dr. Saly and Geraldine Lane for the Library. Then, on the occasion of the Centennial of the City of Westmount in 1974, the City asked the WHA to continue the study of Westmount streets’ history that was started in 1948, and to organize an exhibition for September 1974. Dr. Saly was elected president, with Miss Lighthall as honorary president and Sally Hooff as vice-president.

Doctorate in Philosophy

Born in Budapest, Hungary, in 1920, Hélène Zirczy (Saly) published her first book of poetry when she was only 16. She completed her doctorate in Philosophy in 1942 before escaping with her parents from Hungary in 1944 to settle in Paris. She completed post-doctoral studies at the Sorbonne. In 1951 she and her husband George, with their young son George, immigrated to Montreal where she began her teaching career and integrated into the Westmount community. Their second son Peter was born here. At first they lived in an apartment on St. Catherine St. before it was torn down in 1960 to build Westmount High School. In 1970 they bought their house at 352 Kensington Avenue (photo).

Over the years in her capacity as archivist, Dr. Saly wrote reports, collaborated with others in organizing annual essay contests for schools, initiated photographic historical exhibitions, and sat as president in 1982-83. By 1987, both Dr. Saly and Henrietta Harvie were in poor health. The Association once more became dormant until it was revived eight years later by Aline Gubbay.

Dr. Saly and her husband moved into the Foyer Hongrois retirement home in Montreal where “Loly” outlived her husband and died November 18, 2009.

Information from WHA lecture by Doreen Lindsay on October 16, 2014

Doreen Lindsay
Westmount Historical members (1981 or 82) in front of the Wardleworth House (Metcalfe Terrace) at 168 Côte St. Antoine Road. L. to R. Ellie Blake (mother of Sally Hooff) Rev. Davies, Mrs. Davies, George Saly, Alice Lighthall, Sally Hooff, Una Wardleworth, Bill Hooff, Kathleen Earle, Hélène (Loly) Saly.

Drawing of a squirrel surrounded by the motto – I glean the past for the future – was designed and first printed on letterhead paper during the presidency of Dr. Saly from 1981-83.

WHA/AGM
June 3, 2015

The WHA will hold its Annual General Meeting on Wednesday, June 3, 2015, at 7 p.m.

In May, members will receive advance notice of nominations for the coming year’s officers and directors, as well as a copy of proposed revisions to the Bylaws.
Sally Hooff joined the Westmount Historical Association in 1974 after attending a WHA lecture in the Westmount Library where she met president Dr. Hélène Saly and honorary president Alice Lighthall. Together they organized many lectures, educational contests, and photographic exhibitions during the 1970s and 80s. “The activities of the association soon became my main interest…” Sally said. Noteworthy among all the lectures she organized was her talk to the Rotary Club on the Preservation of Historic Houses, the lectures on Sunnyside School (by Miss Wardleworth), the Canadian Heritage of Quebec (by Colin Molson) and the Montreal Street Railway (by CPR archivist Omer Lavallée).

Hooff was voted in as president at the June 2, 1975 Annual General Meeting. At that time there were 42 members, the treasurer reported $560.99 on hand, and a room was made available in the basement of the Library tower for archival space. It proved to be damp and was furnished with only two small metal desks.

Publishing
In 1979, Sally Hooff drew five chronological maps of Westmount to include in Montreal’s Little Mountain: A Portrait of

SALLY BLAKE HOOFF  PRESIDENT, AUTHOR, ARTIST

Sally Hooff, WHA President from 1975-79, programme director, author, artist. Sally is now retired and lives in Charlottetown, P.E.I. where she continues to be involved in historical preservation.
Westmount (photo), the book that she published with Aline Gubbay who took the photographs. Six thousand copies were sold. When the book was reprinted in 1985 with a distinctive red cover, she designed and drew five walking tours within the city to replace the maps.

From Scotland to Canada.
Sally Hooff grew up and went to school in the village of Dollar in the Lowlands of Scotland. She graduated from St. Andrews University in 1955. Her father was George Blake, journalist, author and broadcaster who published 30 books. Six are in our Westmount Library. Sally came to Canada in 1957 to teach high school English in Digby, Nova Scotia. While there, she attended one year at the College of Art in Halifax and won a scholarship to study with the artist Arthur Lismer at the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts School of Design. She graduated in 1964, then, taught art at Trafalgar School for Girls in Montreal for a year.

In 1965 Sally married Bill Hooff, a Royal Bank executive, and they moved to Ottawa where their daughter Julia was born. When they moved back to Montreal in 1969, Hooff began teaching art along with another Westmounter, Doreen Lindsay, in l’Institut Leclerc penitentiary, followed by six years in the after-school programme at Roslyn School in Westmount, and three years at St. George’s Junior School in Montreal.

Arts Westmount and Community volunteering
During the 1980s, Sally was co-coordinator with Edythe Germain of Arts Westmount, a local festival of concerts, exhibitions, and activities for the entire family. She was a founding member of the Westmount Action Committee that fought the construction of the Ville Marie Expressway, and of the Society to Stop Pollution (STOP) in Westmount. She also worked with the Westmount Park Home and School Association for seven years, two years as president.

Letters asking for protection
Sally and Aline were prolific letter writers on behalf of historical preservation. One appeal was to Donald MacCallum, mayor of Westmount at the time, to stop the demolition of trees on the grounds of Braemar, the 1847 house at 3219 The Boulevard, in order to construct new houses.

“İ believe that an extraordinary building requires extraordinary protection and should be the subject of special further discussion by Council.”

In 1984 Sally combined notes and drawings of trees to publish In a Green Shade: Some Trees in Westmount (photo). Her interest in preserving landscapes predated the current provincial law regarding protection of landscape as historical site.

Information from WHA lecture by Doreen Lindsay on October 16, 2014 and the Westmount Examiner article by Joan Capréol, Aug. 12, 1982.

Doreen Lindsay
In 1994, during a conference about the importance of preserving old buildings in Westmount, taking place at the Visual Arts Centre in conjunction with the exhibition “Photographs of Westmount,” Aline Gubbay stood up and said that it was time to revive the Historical Association, which had been inactive for eight years. The following week, a group composed of the following people met in the Gubbay home (photo) at 59 Windsor Avenue: Kit Finkelstein, president of the Westmount Municipal Association, Doreen Lindsay, Chairperson of the Committee for Culture in Westmount, David Freeman as treasurer, Janet MacKinnon, publicity, Sarah Stevenson, acting secretary, Joan Clark, Jeannette Moscovitch, Arlene Scandrett, and Andrew Hoffman, architect. They planned a lecture series and set up research programmes.

The second meeting in July 1994 brought in Pat Harris as vice-president, Marilyn and Michael Lally, Marcia Goldberg, and Phillip Dombowski who took over as archivist. In November 1995, Flora-Lee Wagner (who became vice-
president, then president in 2000) and Lee Taylor joined the group. Among their earliest projects was the printing of 1,500 of the popular “Doors” and “Balloons” posters that showcase the community’s architectural heritage and are still available.

Presentation of Slide Shows

Aline Gubbay first became a member of the WHA in 1975. That same year she presented a slide show entitled “Architecture of Westmount”. She followed this with many other slide presentations over the years as she researched and photographed her chosen city. “In 1977 Aline Gubbay once more launched our season of lectures with an illustrated talk on the sculptor George Hill and his work. A highly appreciative audience benefited from her extensive knowledge of this man who was the creator of Westmount’s noble war memorial.” (from the report by WHA president Sally Hooff May 8, 1978)

After arriving in Montreal in the early 1960s with her husband Dr. Eric Gubbay, a cardiologist, Aline completed a Masters in Social Work at McGill University, followed by a Masters in Art History from Concordia University in 1978. It was while writing her thesis on three Quebec sculptors that she presented the WHA lecture on George Hill.


Aline was born in Alexandria, Egypt on June 20, 1920 but raised in London, England. She won a scholarship to study at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art in London from 1935-38. Her mother, Rachel Landau from Turkey, died the year Aline entered the Theatre School. Her father Albert Béber-achvili, from the Soviet Republic of Georgia, dissuaded her from becoming an actress. He suggested that she study photography with a family friend, Germaine Kanova.

Montreal’s Little Mountain: A Portrait of Westmount by Aline Gubbay and Sally Hooff, published by Trillium Press, Westmount, 1979


Aline then pursued a successful career as a portrait photographer, making classical black and white portraits of famous people of the day and eventually having an exhibition in London. In Montreal, she continued to use her medium format Rolleiflex camera to photograph people and houses in Westmount. When Aline was writing her “Story of Westmount” she made 26 new photographs to complement the old photos from the WHA archives. In 2002, an exhibition of her photographs was presented in the Gallery at Victoria Hall called “Westmount: from Farmhouse to Bauhaus.”

When she died in Westmount in 2005, where she had lived since the 1960s and raised a family with three daughters, (Sharon, Michelle, Diana), Aline Gubbay was 85 years old. In recognition of her excellent photographic work and to keep her legacy alive, the WHA named its archive of photographs “The Aline Gubbay Photographic Collection.” Another tribute to the Westmount historian, photographer and author is the memorial tree first planted in 2010 in front of the old Train Station, then re-planted in 2014 beside the WHA commemorative plaque in the Glen.

Information from WHA lecture by Sharon Gubbay Helfer on November 20, 2014.

Doreen Lindsay
WHAS SPECIAL EVENTS IN 2014

WHAl 70th ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION
December 11, 2014, 7-9 pm
in the Gallery at Victoria Hall

REMENMBRANCE DAY CEREMONY
November 9, 2014

ARCHITECTURE & INNOVATION WALK
in WESTMOUNT
Sunday, October 5th, 2014

WHAl president Doreen Lindsay and WHA member Mark Boundy presented the WHA wreath at the Cenotaph.

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WHAl COLLABORATION WITH CONTACTIVITY 60+WALKERS GROUP

A WALKING TOUR of municipal buildings and the new Recreation Centre, organized by the WHA in collaboration with the City of Westmount on the occasion of the Montreal Architectural Heritage Campaign (OPAM) 2014. The tour guides were Caroline Breslaw, Louise Carpentier, Elizabeth Currie and City Councillor Patrick Martin.

ACCOMPANYING EXHIBITION OF PHOTOS and TEXT IN WESTMOUNT PUBLIC LIBRARY from Sept. 26 to October 12, 2014.

“Evolution of Victoria Avenue” walk on November 20, 2014 conducted by Doreen Lindsay. Photo by Lily Lam.

Upcoming Contactivity tours in 2015:

“Evolution of Victoria Avenue” walk on November 20, 2014 conducted by Doreen Lindsay. Photo by Lily Lam.

Upcoming Contactivity tours in 2015:
NEW ACQUISITIONS

Two scrapbooks of newspaper clippings, plus a file containing various correspondence, printed documents, photos etc. pertaining to former Westmount Mayor Michael L. Tucker (elected 1965). Donated by his daughter Helen Wiegand.

Lapel Badge created ca. 1982 by Edythe Germain for the first precursor event to Arts Westmount, “Paintings in the Park/Atelier Champêtre.”


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