CORNER OF VICTORIA AVENUE & SHERBROOKE

NORTHWEST CORNER • SAQ 1992

NORTHEAST CORNER • ROYAL BANK 1907

SOUTHWEST CORNER • CANADIAN BANK OF COMMERCE 1955

SOUTHEAST CORNER • MONTREAL CITY & DISTRICT SAVINGS BANK 1951
The Westmount Historian
NEWSLETTER OF THE WESTMOUNT HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

February 2011
Volume 11 • Number 2

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Photos: WHA Archives
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The Westmount Historian is published twice a year in February and September by the Westmount Historical Association, Westmount, Quebec, a non-profit charitable association. Member of FSHQ and QAHN © 2011 all rights reserved. Reproduction without permission of publisher is strictly forbidden.

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PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE

In this February newsletter I am pleased to provide you with the results of our continued research into the beginnings and the development of Victoria Avenue in Westmount as it evolved from the original dirt pathway sloping south from the Hurtubise Farm on Côte St. Antoine Road. In our Fall 2010 Lecture Series Jacques Archambault, general manager of The Canadian Heritage of Quebec, which owns the house, provided information about six generations of the Hurtubise family and explained how the old stone farmhouse was extended and developed over the years.

Some of the early homes built below Sherbrooke Street became commercial enterprises and we were fortunate in being able to invite the owners of two establishments to tell us their stories. You will find a personal history of The Bead Emporium, which charmed and delighted customers for thirty-five years while it was owned and managed by the exuberant Ruth Shine. It occupied 366, 364 and then 368 Victoria from 1973 to 2008.

Overlapping in time was the Galerie Dan Delaney (ARTLENDERS) at 318 Victoria owned and managed by Dan Delaney from 1976 to 1990. Here artists who were exhibiting from the 70’s, through the 80’s and 90’s, art lovers and collectors would congregate.

You will also be able to find out what businesses predated those of today near the intersections of Victoria Avenue and Sherbrooke Street. Caroline Breslaw looked back into the past by researching Lovell’s Directory to provide us with names long gone, but remembered by some.

DOREEN LINDSAY

WHA Spring 2011 Lecture Series
GREENE AVENUE TALKS

Thursday 17 February 2011
MIES VAN DER ROHE & WESTMOUNT SQUARE
Speakers: France Vanlaethem, associate professor Ecole de Design, UQAM and President of Docomomo Québec.
Phyllis Lambert, Founder of Canadian Centre for Architecture in 1979

Thursday 17 March 2011
LES SOEURS GRISES DE MONTREAL – 1856 to 1955
Speakers: Nicole Fournier sgm, Congregational Secretary, Grey Nuns of Montreal
Doreen Lindsay, WHA researcher

Thursday 21 April 2011
ART ON THE AVENUE
Speaker: Michael Millman, owner/manager of Westend Art Gallery and President of Greene Avenue Merchants Association

Thursday 19 May 2011
DINING ON THE AVENUE
Speaker: Gordana Govic, manager of Bistro on the Avenue for 20 years.
These talks take place in the Westmount Public Library 4574 Sherbrooke St.W.
7 to 9 pm. Series prepared by Doreen Lindsay and Caroline Breslaw.
Admission free for members, non-members $5 at door
514-989-5510 or 514-932-6688
The intersection of Victoria & Sherbrooke

The intersection of Victoria and Sherbrooke, the west end shopping hub of today’s Westmount, was farmland until the late 1800’s. Victoria Avenue was originally a lane on the Hurtubise property, connecting the farm on Cote St. Antoine Road to its southern half. This road was divided into building lots in the 1870’s, but was not developed until the 1890’s. Sherbrooke Street was only extended from Greene Avenue to Claremont in 1893. In the same year, the electric streetcar service began a route along Sherbrooke and Victoria (which ended in 1956). Shops gradually opened near the tram stops, making shopping easier for local residents. The early stores took over the main floor of family homes with accommodation upstairs. The earliest businesses in the area were grocery stores, drugstores, and banks.

Several small stores existed on Victoria before any appeared on Sherbrooke. The first store listed in the west end in Lovell’s Directory was a butcher shop at the corner of Sommerville in 1894. Westmount’s first department store, Bilcliffe’s, was constructed in 1910 on Victoria. From 1929 the building housed Westmount Moving and Warehousing. It was transformed into the Visual Arts Centre in 1974. The small shops on the southwest side of the street have housed a variety of businesses, including Shop & Save, the Thrift Shop, and the Bead Emporium. Many buildings on Victoria and Sherbrooke were demolished when the City & District Savings Bank (now the Laurentian Bank) was constructed on the east side in 1951. Its long side facade housed the Miss Westmount Snack Bar and Electrolux for years. When Steinbergs was built in 1952, more homes were torn down to make space for its parking lot. Office buildings and apartments have replaced the original homes and shops on the west side; the east side still has some of the early buildings.

The first business to appear on Sherbrooke Street was a grocery store at 4869 in 1897. From 1898, Scarff Drugstore was on the southeast corner. C.E. Box Grocers, next door, survived until the 1940’s when these buildings were torn down and replaced by the City & District Savings Bank and Steinbergs (Metro since 1992). Clement’s Market, a well-known carriage trade grocery store which opened in the 1930’s, shrank and finally disappeared. A gas station has operated at the southeast intersection of Grosvenor and Sherbrooke since 1925.

There has been a Royal Bank at the intersection since 1903. It has occupied the building on the northeast corner since 1907 when the rest of the block was vacant. The bank has expanded many times and is the oldest commercial establishment in the west end. Laura Secord rented the addition now housing the ATM’s until 1984. The business next door has always been a convenience store – first the United Cigar Store, now Lee’s. Pascal’s Hardware at 4833 was replaced by Hogg Hardware from 1992 until 2010 when the SAQ acquired the space. In the 1990’s, a large store and office building was constructed on the northwest corner of Sherbrooke and Grosvenor that previously housed Mac’s Convenience Store and its parking lot. There have been two businesses on
The BEAD EMPORIUM was opened by Ruth Shine on 2 September 1973 and she closed it 35 years later on 2 September 2008. During those years the doors to 366, 364 then 368, Victoria Avenue were entered by bead enthusiasts who delighted in creating their own jewelry. Mothers and children, school classes, teenagers, and adult collectors all came to admire and buy the small brightly coloured beads the owner brought into her store: glass beads from Italy, ceramics from Greece, olivewood from Israel, old silver from Nepal, beads from Mexico, Guatemala, Peru, Japan, South America, and trade beads from Africa.

Mrs. Shine first rented one room on the second floor from Mr. Hartley Barbers who owned the building, then moved downstairs to the space left vacant by Chas Foon Lee Chinese Laundry at 366 Victoria. As her business increased, she expanded and finally moved next door to 368 to replace Watson Plumbing in the same building.

The Bead Emporium did not sell ready-made necklaces or bracelets because Shine believed in encouraging creativity among her clients. Her salesgirls would assist people in selecting and then stringing their own beads. Courses were organized for specific purposes and books and tools were available to make necklaces, bracelets or earrings. Teachers of young children used beads to help their students develop their fine motor coordination. The Bead Emporium was considered by many to be a museum of beads. Film designers would borrow items, fashion designers would combine beads into their designs or feature them with their clothes in magazine articles.

Ruth Walzer Shine was born and raised in Lima, Peru where she inherited a fascination with beads from her German grandmother who owned a notions store. Ruth was always interested in early civilizations and studied anthropology before coming to Montreal. She spoke German, Spanish, French and English from an early age and is a graduate of the School of Interpreters in Geneva. While working as an information officer for the Canadian Embassy in Peru, she took the opportunity to work for the Canadian government and would visit Canada yearly. On her last trip to Montreal in 1964 she met her husband to be, architect Anthony Shine, and settled in Westmount.

In addition to owning the Bead Emporium, Shine was always an enthusiastic organizer of community events. She and Gail Fellerath of Folklore 1 started the Village of Sherbrooke and Victoria Festival in the late 70s. Shine was elected to serve on the Board of Directors of the Westmount Municipal Association in 1983, and was a Director of the Visual Arts Centre where she organized fund raising events.

Ruth Shine came to talk to the WHA on 16 September 2010 about her life-long love of beads as world history and the 35 years she owned and managed The Bead Emporium on Victoria Avenue in Westmount.
Painting of The Bead Emporium when it was located at #366 Victoria Avenue. Note the date of construction 1913 above central window. Today the building is occupied by Boulangerie Le Fournel and Foot Resolutions.

Interior of The Bead Emporium at 368 Victoria Avenue in May 2008, three months before the owner Ruth Shine (standing on the mezzanine in centre of the photo) closed her museum-like bead store after 35 years on Victoria Avenue. Photo: D. Lindsay
Retiring and New WHA Archivist

Barbara Covington retires as WHA archivist in 2010

This year Barbara Covington retired as archivist for the WHA after ten years of dedicated work. Barbara first volunteered to assist in the archives when she went on a walking tour of old Westmount houses and met Philip Dombowsky, WHA archivist at that time. She began by assuming the responsibilities of secretary of the WHA while assisting Dombowsky, and then continued as archivist upon his departure. We owe much to Barbara’s organizational skills and thank her for bringing increased order to our historical holdings.

Barbara was born in Beijing, China and came with her husband to live in Westmount in 1974. She worked as a librarian in the Nurses’ Library at the Montreal General Hospital for 20 years before being involved with the WHA.

Jane Martin is our new volunteer archivist. Originally from Texas, Jane is a long-time Westmouter who has worked as a journalist, writer, editor, and archivist. She currently is employed as archivist for Lower Canada College, a position she has held for more than five years. She holds a Master’s degree in Library and Information Studies (M.L.I.S. ’87) from McGill University, and a Bachelor of Journalism from Carlton University. Her objectives for the WHA Archives feature upgraded application of computer technology, including new equipment, the introduction of a digitalized photographic database, and an enhanced website.

Jane was invited to join the WHA Board of Directors in 2006. Previous to that, she had served on the board of the Westmount Municipal Association, where she was actively involved in the Westmount anti-merger and de-merger campaigns.

Dr. Hélène Saly archivist during the 1960’s, 70’s, and 80’s
Philip Dombowsky archivist from 1998 to 2003
Barbara Covington archivist from 2001 to 2010
Jane Martin archivist from 2010

WHA Patrons and Donors

from January to December 2010

On behalf of the hard-working nine volunteer members of the Board of Directors of the WHA, plus all Westmounters who gain information and pleasure from our ongoing research into the history of Westmount, I wish to thank the WHA members and the following patrons and donors for their additional financial assistance which enables us to continue to produce eight lectures per year on a variety of aspects of the History of Westmount and a bi-yearly Newsletter which compiles this information.

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(in Memory of Rosalind Moquette)
the northeast corner of Grosvenor and Sherbrooke since the early days. Westmount Grocery Store, Banque Canadienne Nationale, Kane's Drug Store, and Quenneville Pharmacy have occupied this location.

The southwest corner of Sherbrooke and Victoria has housed a number of businesses, such as Diana Candy Co, Shop & Save, Thrift Stores, and the Bank of Commerce. The early buildings were demolished in the 1950’s to make room for the bank in its present form. Drouin Terrace, a block of Victorian rowhouses at 4872-96 converted into stores, remains intact, although the businesses change.

Macy’s Drugstore and Soda Bar was on the northwest corner from the late 1920’s. After it was destroyed by fire in 1971, Cantor’s took over the location. In 1984 it was replaced by the first SAQ in the west end. Hogg Hardware has just acquired this corner premises. Courval Lingerie has been at 4861, with different owners, since the 1940’s. The row of charming Victorian homes on this side looks much as it must have originally. Westmount Stationery, which has been owned by two families at three locations on Sherbrooke Street since 1931, occupies one of these buildings. National Food Shop was also on this block for years.

Sherbrooke Street has become the west end’s main shopping artery. It has remained more cohesive than Victoria, retaining an ensemble of Victorian homes converted into shops on each side. Three of the corners at the intersection are occupied by large stone bank buildings. The fourth has housed a popular restaurant, a liquor store, and a hardware store over the past ninety years.

The Royal Bank remains the grande dame of the block, keeping watch over the intersection as it has for the past 103 years.
This northeast corner remained vacant until 1907 when the Westmount Victoria Avenue Branch of the Royal Bank was constructed. It was designed by architect Howard Cotton Stone in the classical revival style with pilasters framing the entrance, a cut-stone façade, and a flat roof. The manager lived on the top floor with a private entrance from Victoria Avenue. In 1927 an addition was built on the adjacent lot (which was rented out to Laura Secord until 1982). In 1929 the original structure was expanded at the rear, turning it into the building that stands today.

The southwest corner lot was not developed until 1935. In 1900 there was a Chinese laundry at 4852 Sherbrooke. The Montreal Park & Island Railway Company took over the premises for a short time as a ticket office. It was followed by the Diana Candy Company around 1915. Shop and Save and the Thrift Stores occupied 4850. The Canadian Bank of Commerce (which was at 4854 from 1922) constructed a new building in 1955 and expanded to the corner. Today it is the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce.

The southeast corner was the first to have businesses. Lawson Drugstore was listed in the 1898 Lovell’s Directory. Scarff Drugstore took over the premises the following year and remained until the late 1920’s. It housed the Royal Bank from 1904 until its own building was constructed. C.E. Box, grocer, was located next door. Paul Service Store was at this address around 1940. In 1951 the Montreal City & District Savings Bank demolished buildings on Victoria and Sherbrooke to put up the large stone bank that became the Laurentian Bank in 1987.

Near the northwest corner there was a wooden cottage for many years. The first business listed at 4853 Sherbrooke Street was a boot and shoemaker. Macy’s Restaurant and Drugstore, a favourite hangout over the years, was at this location from 1929 until destroyed by a fire in 1971. Cantor’s Bakery took its place. The SAQ opened here in 1984 and remained until it was replaced by Hogg Hardware in 2010.

Information compiled by Caroline Breslaw
The ARTLENDERS Gallery on Victoria Avenue was bought in 1976 by Dan Delaney with Betty Banks as a partner. She left in 1981 and he became sole owner. Although the gallery continued to offer rentals, most paintings were sold outright with 80% being sold during the opening vernissages. In 1988 Delaney had to change the name to Galerie Dan Delaney to comply with the new language laws under Bill 101. In 1990 Dan retired to concentrate on his own painting and turned the gallery over to his daughter Mary-Monica who continued it for another two years.

Victoria Avenue proved to be an ideal location for this type of casual friendly gallery where both artists and customers came to talk. Art lovers could give post-dated cheques for a painting they saw in an exhibition and wanted. Under the management of Delaney and Banks, ARTLENDERS was successful from their first day. It was January, very cold and a snow storm was beginning. The man and woman, who came into the gallery and asked to look at paintings by Richard Billmeier, left by buying seven. This artist had a huge presence in the art community and his colourful paintings were sought after by many collectors.

**EXHIBITING ARTISTS**

One of the many artists invited to exhibit their paintings over the seventeen years that Delaney was director was Allan Harrison. He would often come into the gallery Saturday afternoon to sit and talk about art. Harrison exhibited at the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts as well as being a successful commercial artist. He designed the first ARTLENDERS logo.

Elisabeth Skelly's clear, detailed drawings of rocks, animals, and sweaters were usually all sold during the openings with people lining up to have their turn. John Collins' paintings of Montreal street scenes were also so much in demand that lineups often formed outside the door causing newspapers to report riots on Victoria Avenue. Freda Pemberton-Smith, Anne Kahane, Catherine Y. Bates, Hugo Wuethrich and Mary-Martha-Guy also exhibited. John Walsh always gave
Artlenders some of his work to sell because he liked the ambiance of the space. Dan invited his daughter Pat Walsh to show her work when she also showed talent as a painter.

ARTLENDERS Gallery started by Jean Newman in 1955

ARTLENDERS GALLERY had actually been started by Jean Newman in her home at 4225 Melrose Avenue in NDG in 1955. She introduced the innovative idea of renting paintings by the month so that people with limited income who wished to own a painting could afford to do so. Rental could be applied to purchase. It was important for her, and also innovative at the time, to sell works by living Canadian artists. In 1960 she moved the gallery to Victoria Avenue. In 1970 Mrs. Newman went into partnership with Mary Thompson. It was Mary Thompson who asked Dan Delaney if he wanted to buy the gallery. At the time Delaney was working in advertising at J. Walter Thompson Agency and curating art exhibitions in their executive offices. He was thinking of making a change in his life. Owning his own gallery was a natural step forward. He, his wife Patricia, and their five children had already started a small gallery in their home on Grand Boulevard in NDG. Delaney had been born in 1928 in the Maisonneuve area of Montreal to Catholic, English speaking parents of Irish descent. He pursued his interests in drawing, painting and music throughout his formative years and began working in advertising as many artists did in those years.

There are numerous newspaper reviews about the artists, the gallery, and Mr. Delaney’s paintings by Henri Lehman and Ann Duncan, art critics for the Gazette, and Joan Capreole who wrote for the Westmount Examiner.

Mr. Delaney, artist and Gallery owner, was invited by the Westmount Historical Association to give a talk about his gallery on Thursday evening 18 November 2010.
Jean Hurtubise had the stone farmhouse built for his family in 1739. The land had been granted to his father Louis Hurtubise in 1699 by the Seigneurs of the Island of Montreal. After Louis died in 1703 his widow Jeanne Gateau married Louis Langevin dit Lacroix and they had four children. In 1724 a Quebec appeal court decided that one-half of the farm was to be divided between the five Hurtubise children and the other half between all nine children.

Jean must have had the strongest entrepreneurial spirit of the first generation of nine children in the Hurtubise family since between 1724 and 1736 he and his brother Pierre had bought out the shares of their siblings and half siblings and by 1739 Jean decided it was time to have a stone house built for the family. A year after building the house, Jean bought out his brother Pierre’s half share plus more land in Côte St. Luc.

Second and third Generation

In 1768 Jean passed on the property to his two younger sons Antoine and Pierre-Jérémie who also acquired land in Côte Saint-Pierre. Pierre-Jérémie died in 1792 and his son Pierre-Jérémie Jr. acquired the property from his father and a transfer from his uncle in 1798.

Fourth Generation: Antoine-Isaie and Benjamin-Dominique Hurtubise

This was the beginning of the division of the land.

By 1829 Antoine-Isaie and Benjamin-Dominique (the younger sons of Pierre-Jérémie Jr.) begin to manage the land and by 1837 they gained full ownership in 1839 and divided...
the farm. Antoine-Isaie took the farm-house and its buildings. He also gave land to the east in 1847 to his sister Justine-Solomée who married Ephrem Hudon, a merchant from Ville Marie. It was their son Ephrem Hudon Jr. who bought a strip of land below Côte St. Antoine (which became Victoria Avenue) from his uncle Antoine-Isaie and divided it into lots to sell. It was also Antoine-Isaie who had the brick annex built, in 1870, on the east side of the original house for older family members to live in.

Fifth Generation: Isaie Hurtubise

Antoine-Isaie died in 1878 and his son Isaie inherited the house and land. He bought more land in St. Rose on Île Jésus in 1887. He was the last family member to farm the land. He died in 1893.

Sixth generation: Five sons of Isaie inherit property (see photo)

In 1897 they subdivided the upper portion of farm (above today’s Côte St. Antoine Road) into 100 lots to sell. In 1909 one of the brothers, Leopold, acquired “usufruct” of the house and remaining land.

Dr. Léopold Hurtubise died in 1955 and his heirs sold the house to Mable Molson, Colin J.G. Molson and James R. Beattie. They transferred it to the Canadian Heritage of Quebec in 1961.

Information obtained from lectures by Jacques Archambeault, General Manager of the Canadian Heritage of Quebec who own the Hurtubise property, on October 21, 2010 and Alan Stewart, historian, on Feb. 2, 2003

Diagram of Hurtubise land from étude patrimoniale de la maison des Hurtubise May 2001
The front page of The Westmount News dated Friday February 7th, 1913 with a photograph of the oldest house in Westmount “The Hurtubise House”
Two copies of “The Westmount News” dated 13th December 1912 and 7th February 1913 have recently been donated to the Westmount Historical Association. It was published every Friday by The News Publishing Company, 206 Olivier Avenue, Westmount, phone Westmount 622, Subscription price $1.00 per year, Hubert Groves, publisher and C.H. Moody, editor. The first issue was published 5th October 1907 and the company also published the Academy Bulletin, the High School News, and the McGill Daily.

The December issue of 1912 was focused on the upcoming Christmas season as were the many advertisements appearing in the paper. For example: The Westmount Windsor Market, 4167 St. Catherine St. announced that they were securing four tons of turkeys to be cleared at lowest market value: Alf. Moir, 1219 Greene Avenue “have just received full line of Imported and Domestic Cigars, complete line of Smokers’ Sundries and a select line of Walking Sticks” which they suggested for Xmas Presents: and the very well-known grocers Dionne & Dionne, Grocers and Butchers, 4120 St. Catherine Street West were offering Xmas Plum Puddings @ 30 cents a pound, Fancy Florida Oranges @ 40 cents/dozen, New Grenoble Walnuts @ 25 cents/pound, and Turkeys @ 23 cents/pound. The lead article was entitled “Christmas and Human Brotherhood” and starts with the sentence “Christmas is the greatest harmonizing event of the year”, and ends with “This Christmas is the most prosperous in Canada’s history. She has much to be thankful for. What has she done, what will she do, to hasten the day when

Men shall brothers be,
And form one family
The wide world o’er?

WANDERER

The front page of the February 1913 issue features the oldest house in Westmount, “The Hurtubise Residence, Cote Road, for over 250 years”. It is interesting to note that some of the companies advertising in 1913 are still in existence today, Holt Renfrew, Bank of Nova Scotia, The Royal Bank of Canada, corner Sherbrooke and Victoria, Bank of Montreal, corner Greene and Western, and Canadian Pacific. Canadian Pacific advertised an Around the World, 75-day holiday for $639.10 with an additional $50 which would include hotel expenses and side trips. The trip took you on the Empress of Russia to ports of call Suez, Singapore, Hong Kong, Shanghai, Kobe and ending in Vancouver. Presumably you then boarded a CP train to return to Montreal. This issue included a number of theatre advertisements, His Majesty’s Theatre, Miss Horniman’s Company, The Orpheum offered a variety of acts, The Princess ‘Bought and Paid For’, The Strand ‘Satan in four parts’, and Windsor Hall offered ‘South Pole. There was a stable to let, for two horses, a Montreal West Page with a message from the mayor Ballantyne, a congregational supper at the Westmount Methodist Church, and a Fancy Dress Carnival to be held at the Mount Royal Riding Academy, Hillside Avenue.

These are but a few of the items that caught my eye as I turned the yellowing pages of our community newspaper of nearly 100 years ago.
New Acquisitions


Photos: 21 original black and white photographs showing construction in the 1950’s of the “Well House” on the Riverview mansion property, corner of Côte St. Antoine Rd. and Victoria Ave. Donated by Cynthia and Peter Graham.

Photos: 28 original documentary photographs, in colour, of Westmount Arena, taken in November 2010 by professional photographer Ralph Thompson. Donated by Ralph Thompson.