

The Westmount Historian

NEWSLETTER OF THE WESTMOUNT HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

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Floral clock in Westmount Park, 1930

PHOTO: CITY OF WESTMOUNT

PARKS & GARDENS



Association historique de Westmount
Westmount Historical Association

The Westmount Historian

NEWSLETTER OF THE WESTMOUNT
HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

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EDITOR'S MESSAGE



This edition of the *Westmount Historian* reflects the WHA Fall 2018 lecture series on parks and gardens in Westmount. It features articles on municipal parks and green spaces, the long-lived Diggers and Weeders Garden Club, and the evolution of residential landscaping in our community. The reinstallation of Washingtonian light standards, which grace many of our streets, resulted from efforts by former mayor Peter Trent, who describes this project for us. Westmount resident and former *Montreal Star* journalist Dusty Vineberg Solomon was interviewed by WHA past-president Doreen Lindsay for our ongoing oral history project.

The upcoming winter 2019 lecture series will focus on several well-known Westmount institutions that have undergone significant changes over the years. We look forward to learning about their pasts, while gaining insight into their futures.

CAROLINE BRESLAW

WHA 2019 WINTER LECTURE SERIES CHANGING WESTMOUNT INSTITUTIONS

This series focuses on four institutions with their historic roots in lower Westmount which have undergone many changes over the past decades.

Thursday, February 21, 2019

THE LOCAL NEWS: The role of Westmount's newspapers in shaping the community

Don Sancton, former editor and publisher, *The Westmount Examiner*, and **David Price**, founder and editor, *Westmount Independent*

Thursday, March 21, 2019

1-3 HILLSIDE AVENUE: From Riding Academy to Armoury
Susan D. Bronson, MOAQ, heritage consultant

Thursday, April 18, 2019

MONTREAL BICYCLE CLUB

Malcolm McRae, co-founder of the new Montreal Bicycle Club

Thursday, May 16, 2019

WESTMOUNT PARK SCHOOL: Moving On

Paul Saunders, former principal of Westmount Park School

Westmount Public Library, 4574 Sherbrooke St. W., from 7 to 9 pm
Admission: free for members; \$5 for non-members at the door
wha.quebec/514-989-5510

Series prepared by Ruth Allan-Rigby, Caroline Breslaw,
Louise Carpentier, & Marlene Chan

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



The WHA may seem less active during the summer when we do not hold lectures, exhibits, or give walking tours, but this summer we were busy behind the scenes. For our office in the Library, we acquired new steel shelving to house our growing archival collection, which necessitated some reorganization of materials. On our website, we added three new photo galleries to the *Photos* page, and expanded the *Houses of Worship* gallery to include all 12 churches and synagogues in Westmount.

This past fall, the WHA played a role in supporting the City of Westmount's successful bid for the Prince of Wales Heritage Prize for municipal heritage leadership from the National Trust of Canada. We supplied photographs and information to assist Urban Planning in preparing the application document. We also submitted a strong letter of support. The award citation mentions the Local Heritage Council (LHC) on which the WHA holds a seat. Recent work of the LHC involved a study of all the houses of worship in our city, resulting in value statements on their heritage merits. The WHA's ongoing collaboration with the City of Westmount continued with the Fall 2018 walking tour of four of these houses of worship.

As our Oral History project continues, we hope that any of you who grew up in Westmount or have lived here for many years will let us know if you're willing to share your experience of Westmount in days past. You can do this through a recorded interview or in writing.

We would love to hear from any of you who have an interest or experience in the arts or design, in keeping track of income and expenses, in organizing events, or in using computer software. If you possess these or other skills that you'd be willing to share with us from time to time, please let us know.

ANNE BARKMAN



Remembrance Day was observed on November 4, 2018 at the Westmount Cenotaph. The RMR honour guards on duty at the ceremony wore replica World War I uniforms – a tribute the end of that war.

PHOTO: JANE MARTIN

Donors for 2017

The WHA recognizes members who have made personal donations of over \$20. These contributions are greatly appreciated, as they help support our lecture series, newsletters, and other activities.

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Solomon, Dusty

Sparling, Sharon &

Robert Graham

Vachon, Michel

Walkling, Nancy

Winn, Lorayne

WHA/AGM May 23, 2019

The WHA will hold its Annual General Meeting on Thursday, May 23, 2019 at 7:00 p.m.

WHA members will receive advance notice of nominations for the coming year's officers and directors and the agenda for the meeting.

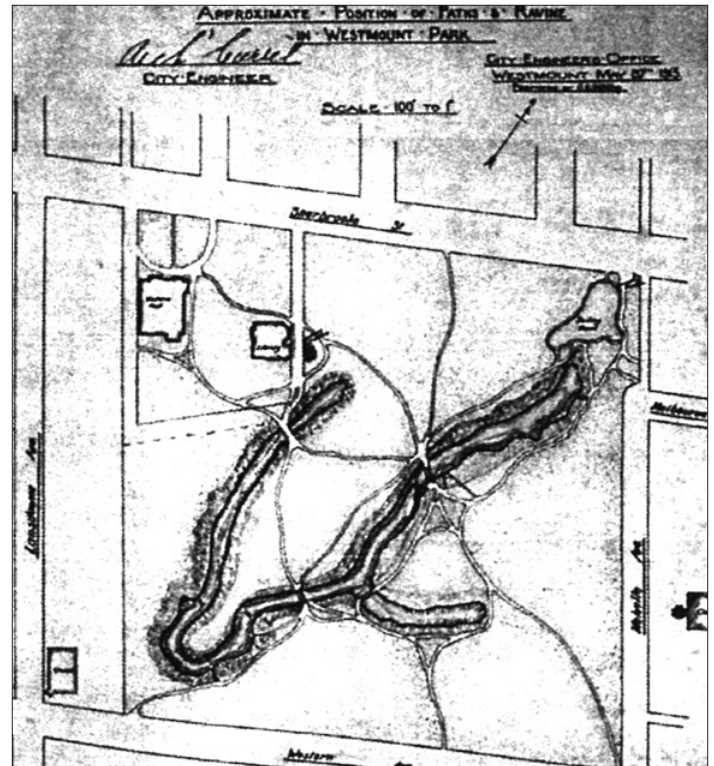
THE BEGINNINGS OF WESTMOUNT'S PARKS

The City of Westmount has many municipal parks and green spaces in its territory, extending from the plateau and up the slope to the Summit. The parks were created between 1898 and 1940.

Occupying a prominent location on Sherbrooke Street west of City Hall, **Westmount Park** was the first park in our community. It was the initiative of the Côte Saint Antoine Improvement Committee, comprised of leading local citizens, who realised that the marshy land with ravines and streams was unsuitable for farming or housing. The park opened as Victoria Jubilee Park in **1898** to commemorate Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee. Westmount Public Library and Victoria Jubilee Hall, the first community centre, both designed by architect Robert Findlay, were constructed within the park shortly after its creation. The park was extended south of De Maisonneuve Boulevard in 1910, and additional land was acquired at the corner of Lansdowne and Sherbrooke in 1926. The annual creation of a floral clock on recently-purchased parkland at the corner of Lansdowne and Sherbrooke began in 1926.

The land for **Sunnyside Park**, located in upper Westmount just below the Lookout, was acquired by the City in **1898**. The park's layout and the construction of the staircases and the cement balustrades framing the Lookout were only carried out in the 1930s.

Vimy Park, which faces Westmount City Hall and is the site of the Cenotaph, was created in **1911** on land that had once belonged to the Grey Nuns. It was named Garden Point at the time, as the land had originally been cultivated. The an-



Plan from 1913 showing Westmount Park's paths and ravines
annual Remembrance Day ceremonies are held at the war memorial. The park's name was changed to Vimy Park in 2017.

Devon Park was called Westview when the eastern portion of the current park opened in upper Westmount in **1902**. By 1949, it had expanded in size, retaining grassy areas and paved tennis courts.

The eastern half of **Stayner Park** opened in **1924**, when it



A pond in Summit Woods, c.1890



Farming at Garden Point, c.1900, with the old St. Paul's Academy at back right.



Ceremony to rename Murray Park to King George Park in 1939, marking the monarch's recent visit

was known as Clandeboye Park. A western section was created in 1936, providing a larger public greenspace for the residents of the southeast sector of Westmount.

Prince Albert Park, a long and narrow park located between Prince Albert and Claremont avenues, was built in 1927 and expanded in 1938. The comfort station was constructed in 1940, largely to serve nearby residents using the outdoor skating rink installed every winter.

The slopes of today's **Murray Park/King George Park** were once part of the original Murray family estate, located in the heart of the municipality. When the portion of the estate between Côte St. Antoine Road and Westmount Avenue was slated for a housing development, citizens' opposition resulted in the city expropriating the land. The new municipal park opened in 1929. In 1937, a pavilion designed by architect Robert Findlay was constructed. By the end of the 1930s, the four homes on the property had been demolished. Following a royal visit, the park's name was changed from Murray Park to King George Park in 1939. Among the park's features are lighted tennis courts, a soccer field, children's play area, and toboggan runs in the winter.

Located on St. Catherine Street south of Westmount High School, the **Westmount Athletic Grounds (WAG)** occupies property acquired by the Montreal Amateur Athletic Association (M.A.A.A) in 1887. The land was purchased by the



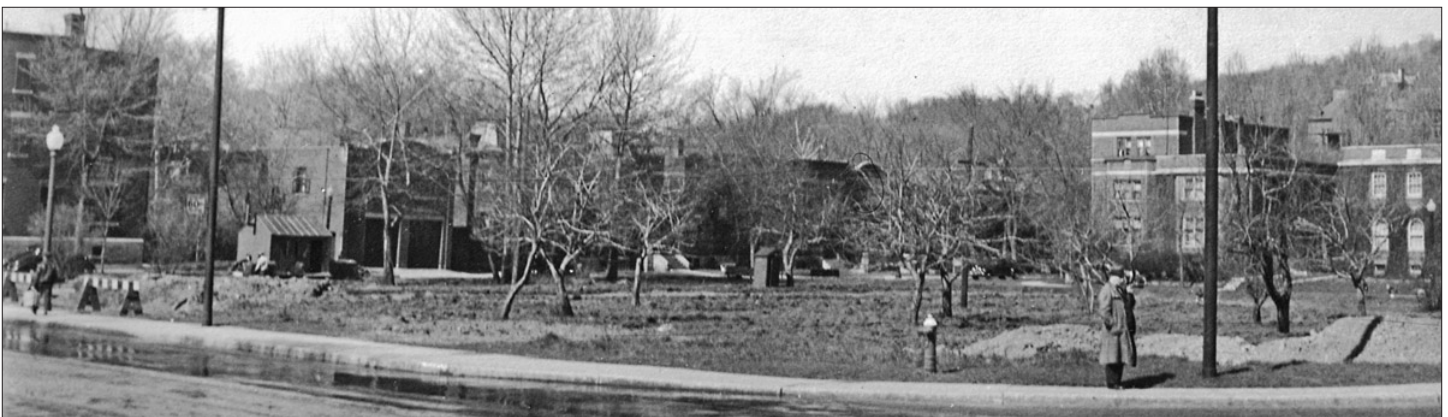
Clubhouse serving the athletic grounds of the Montreal Amateur Athletic Association, built in 1910 and located on St. Catherine Street West where Westmount High School is today.

PHOTO: CITY OF WESTMOUNT

City of Westmount in 1936, when the clubhouse, grandstands, and racing tracks still remained. This immense green space was used by the Canadian military in two world wars and continues to provide a functioning track and space for team sports.

Summit Woods is a nature preserve on the mountaintop of Westmount, which Sir William MacDonald bought from various owners and donated to McGill University in 1895. The forested area was used by McGill's botany department and survey school. The City of Westmount purchased the property from McGill in 1940, agreeing to maintain it as a park in perpetuity and designated it as a bird and wildflower sanctuary. Its meandering paths are popular with both nature lovers and dog walkers.

Queen Elizabeth Gardens, on Sherbrooke Street near Atwater, was originally part of the Sulpicians' orchards on the order's large land holdings in Westmount. The Priests' Farm was a residential development built in the 1920s on the west side of Atwater Avenue. In 1940, a park was created south of the housing and was named after the Queen Mother, who had visited Westmount in 1939 with King George VI.



Construction of Queen Elizabeth Gardens in 1940

PHOTO: CITY OF WESTMOUNT

PARKS AND OPEN SPACES IN WESTMOUNT

The City of Westmount has built up a rich and diversified legacy of green spaces, in large part due to the activism of some of its citizens and the enlightened stewardship of its civic leaders.

There are about a dozen recognized parks and green spaces in Westmount today. Some of these are smaller parks, like Prince Albert or Stayner, or even parklets, such as the traffic islands on Forden Crescent. Four important Westmount parks are looked at, each of which has its own personality.

Westmount Park (1892-1912):

A romantic, picturesque park.

Shortly after Côte Saint-Antoine became incorporated as a town, several prominent city officials moved to create a city park in an undeveloped area of ravines where Westmount Park sits today. When celebrations were planned for the sixtieth year of Queen Victoria's reign in 1897, the area was enlarged, and Westmount Park was inaugurated. The following year, Westmount Public Library and the community centre of Victoria Jubilee Hall were opened. It would be another dozen years before the park was fully redesigned in a romantic, picturesque style that was typical of the Victorian era. The man put in charge of this work was Canada's first native-born landscape architect, Rickson Outhet (1876-1912). Although he is almost forgotten today, Outhet had

trained with a branch of Frederick Olmsted's firm in Boston before returning to Montreal to establish his career in Canada. Westmount Park was one of his first major projects. Like his mentor, Outhet was heavily influenced by a romantic vision of the city park. The ravines produced by centuries of spring runoff waters from the mountain were sculpted into idyllic waterways, flowing softly under rustic bridges made of birch logs. Westmount Park has undergone several major redesigns over the decades, with remnants of the original ravines replaced by a shallow, manmade waterway.

Vimy Park (1911-1920): A European-style city "square"

A different approach towards city parks was evidenced when the City bought up land in 1911 to make a park at Garden Point. This triangular piece of land, bounded by Argyle, Côte St. Antoine Road and Sherbrooke Street, took on the characteristics of a town "square" during the 1920s when Westmount City Hall was built. In the same era, the



Streams and ravines in Westmount Park, c. 1900



The Cenotaph, designed by sculptor George Hill, with the base by Percy Erskine Nobbs, 1955



The upper playground in King George Park near the western end of Montrose Ave, 1937

Cenotaph, churches, and schools were built to frame the other sides of the park. Together, these buildings give the space a feeling reminiscent of a European city space. First known as Garden Point, then City Hall Park, it was renamed Vimy Park in 2017.

King George Park/Murray Park (1928-1940)

A South-oriented recreational park

This large tract of land, located on one of the soft rolling slopes of Westmount, was originally set aside as a park in the 1920s when part of the estate of William Murray was acquired by the City. This park combined recreational facilities such as an immense playing field suitable for lacrosse, rugby and soccer, with south-oriented hills that favoured the growth of acacia (*pseudoacacia robinia*) trees rarely seen in the Montreal region. It was officially renamed King George Park in honour of the royal visit paid to Canada by King George VI and his wife Queen Elizabeth in 1939.

Summit Woods (1940): A nature park

One of the crowning jewels of Westmount parks lies at the top of Westmount, one of the three summits, which together with Mount Royal and Outremont make up the distinguishing natural silhouette of the island of Montreal. Summit Woods, as it is called today, was acquired by the city from McGill University in 1940. The tobacco magnate W.C. Macdonald had donated the land to McGill in 1895, when it was used it as an astronomical observatory and then

as a botanical laboratory. For this reason, the land had been little transformed and contained then, as it does today, many of the native trees and flowers which have almost disappeared elsewhere on the island.

Four major parks with four distinct cultures: romantic, urban, recreational, and natural. These are an important part of the rare and diversified heritage that was built up and enjoyed in Westmount from the late 19th century until today.

LORNE HUSTON

Based on the lecture "Evolution of the Parks and Open Spaces of Westmount Through the Years" given to the WHA on September 20, 1918 by Dr. Ron Williams, professeur, École d'architecture de paysage, Université de Montréal.



The promenade, formerly part of Summit Circle Road, in Summit Woods
PHOTO: CITY OF WESTMOUNT, 2018

THE DIGGERS & WEEDERS GARDEN CLUB

The Diggers and Weeders Garden Club, founded in Westmount in October 1932, is a long-standing organization that remains functional and relevant today. It is not strictly Westmount based, since it has many active members from Montreal, the West Island, Hudson and the Eastern Townships, and their activities extend beyond our local community.

Eight of the 15 founding members at the first meeting were ladies from Westmount. Mrs. Ballantyne of 20 Forden Avenue was elected President at the next meeting in November 1932, followed by Alice Lighthall in 1933. A constitution and bylaws were written to establish the club's purpose, structure, and modus operandi. Specifically: "The object of the Club shall be to stimulate the knowledge and love of

Lunch in the Garden



Almond Chicken sandwich filling

1 cup chopped cooked chicken
1/4 cup chopped blanched almonds
1/2 cup finely chopped celery
Mix, moisten with mayonnaise and season to taste with lemon juice, salt, and paprika.

Double or triple this for the Diggers and Weeders.

Miriam Tees

From the 2002 cookbook compiled by the Diggers & Weeders Garden Club
PHOTO: ANN PEARSON, WITH THANKS TO MIRIAM TEES



The Arthur McMaster garden at 634 Clarke Avenue from a club scrapbook in the WHA Archives

gardening among amateurs; to aid in the protection of native trees, plants, and birds and to encourage civic planting."

Regular meetings took place in members' homes, by invitation, and included presentations, discussions, and social segments. Eventually the meetings moved to the Dominion Douglas United Church on The Boulevard. In the early years individual members led the meetings and made presentations on a wide variety of topics related to gardening and flower arranging. Over time, most of the meetings came to be led by guest speakers.

From its early years during the Depression, the



Fireplace screen created with collages by member Miriam Tees during a club workshop PHOTO: ANN PEARSON, WITH THANKS TO MIRIAM TEES

Club undertook various activities aimed at making a difference in the community. It held its first public meeting in Victoria Hall on February 6, 1933 with an entrance fee of 25 cents for non-members. The topic was Canadian wildflowers. Community projects included sending seeds to Britain for victory gardens during WWII, providing perennials for the garden of the Grace Dart Hospital, and supplying a canning machine and cans to the Community Garden League of Greater Montreal. The Club's most important project, undertaken in 1953, was the design and planting of the garden at the former Queen Mary Veteran's Hospital. Other organisations that benefited from the Club's support include St Margaret's Home prior to its move to Westmount, the Prospect Belvedere residence in Westmount, and the Tynedale-St- Georges Community Centre in Little Burgundy. In the early 1950s the Club developed a relationship with the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, participating in the "Noel" shows of decorated trees, held until 2015. In 1972, the Club was involved in the successful "campaign" to save 875 fully-grown elm trees in Parc Maisonneuve from being cut down prior to the 1976 Olympics.

Thematic flower shows, exhibitions of flower arrange-

ments and festivals of flowers, as well as participation in stimulating workshops, plant exchanges and garden tours in and outside of the province have been undertaken by the Club over the years, and continue to interest club members to this day. Lectures by invited speakers have included Ron Williams on landscape architecture (January 1975); the late Stuart Robertson on hydroponic gardening (January 1980); and David Lank on 2000 years of botanical art (November 1988). The Club maintains records of meetings and activities, and in 2002 compiled a book of members' favourite recipes, *Lunch in the Garden*.

The Diggers & Weeders lives on today with monthly meetings (except in summer) where 45 active members and approximately 20 associates can pursue their interest in gardening and the creation of beautiful flower arrangements.

LOUISE CARPENTIER

Based on a lecture given by Miriam Tees to the WHA on October 18, 2018.

See also *Volunteering as a way of life, including information on The Diggers and Weeders Garden Club*, by Doreen Lindsay in *the Westmount Historian Fall/Winter 2017*, p. 12.

WESTMOUNT'S PRIVATE GARDENS: Past to Present

There have been gardens in Westmount since the first French farmers settled here in the early 1700s. These families, after building their houses and clearing the land of trees and rocks, cultivated fields to feed their families and later sold produce at the public market. Many vegetables (potatoes, leeks, onions, radishes, beets, parsnips, corn, pumpkins, peas...) were raised in the large market garden which existed up to 1873 at the Hurtubise property on Côte St. Antoine Road at the corner of Victoria. After selling off their farmland for building lots in 1893, the Hurtubise family retained a kitchen garden close to the house, where herbs, such as chamomile and thyme, and flowers, such as calendula and nasturtiums, were grown along with vegetables. A small apple orchard was located on the east side of the house. The front garden was surrounded by a hedge and later a wooden fence. It held shrubs, a pergola, planters with annual flowers, vines growing up the gallery, and peonies in a circular bed.

The wealthy merchants who settled here in the 1800s had large estates accessed by long, tree-lined private driveways. John Young's 'Rosemount' villa was known for its collection of trees. Its back garden featured a lawn, a formal round flower bed, vines climbing the walls and porch, and urns filled with annuals. This was probably a typical Victorian garden for prosperous homes of the period. Alexander Murray's home on the 'West Mount' estate



Front garden of the Hurtubise House in the early 1900s, with Leopold Hurtubise on the steps



Back garden of 'Rosemount' (today's 16-18 Severn Avenue) in 1881

PHOTO: MCCORD MUSEUM

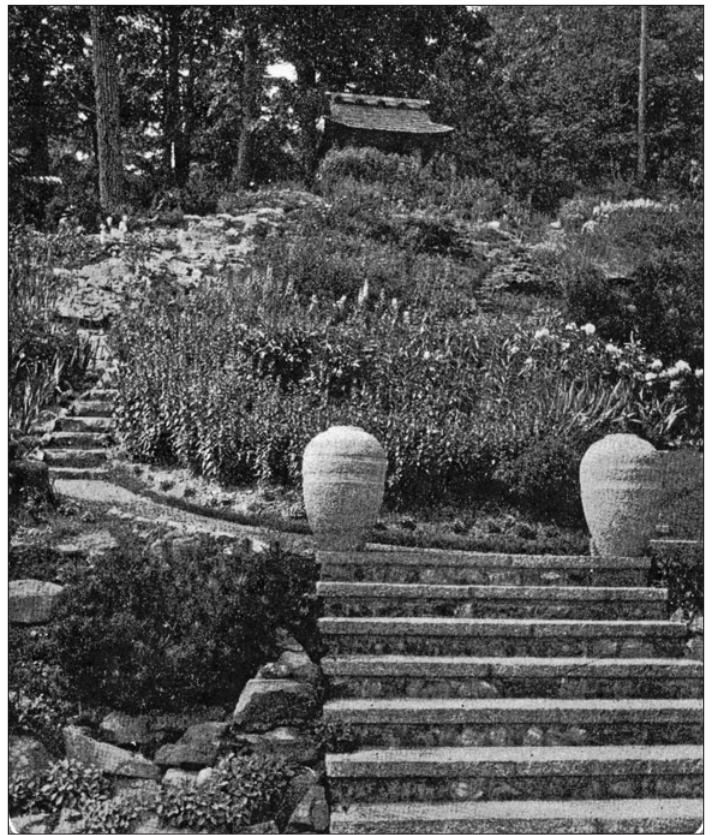


Alexander Murray's front garden at the end of the 1800s

featured a semi-circular carriageway and flower beds in front of the house. Leading up to William Murray's residence was a roadway with maples lining both sides. Large lawns were dominant features of all these estates.

After the arrival of the streetcar in 1893 and the ensuing rapid growth of Westmount, residential properties tended to be much smaller than those of the previous periods and generally faced directly on the street. Rowhouses and semi-detached homes, stretching north to Côte St. Antoine Road, had front and back gardens, but usually none on the side. Trees planted by the City bordered the sidewalks on many streets. Front gardens were often separated from the sidewalk by a fence or hedge. These gardens had a cement walk to the front steps, a small lawn, and shrubs. The limited choice of plants in the early years gradually became more varied, while reliable species such as lilacs, hydrangeas, begonias, chrysanthemums, and peonies remained popular with the home gardener.

One upper Westmount home had an unusual private garden that became well-known in Montreal and beyond. Arthur H. Campbell created a large garden about 1922 on a steep slope at 21 Edgehill Road. His show-case grounds featured rock gardens, winding stone paths, a natural rock pool, and a Japanese garden house. In 1968, Westmount purchased the property, which attracted many visitors. In 1978, because of the high upkeep costs, the City sold the land to



The Campbell Gardens on the slopes of upper Westmount, 1927

PHOTO: CANADIAN HOMES AND GARDENS, FEB. 1927

private developers. The wooden totem pole once displayed there now resides in the reading area of Westmount Public Library, overlooking the Westmount Conservatory.

Westmount gardens have evolved greatly over the past few decades. Annuals put in by Italian gardeners in late spring and taken out in the fall are being replaced by more varied and creative choices – perennials, grasses, native plants, and many types of shrubs. Front walkways are often paved in bricks or stone and may be undulating, rather than straight. Ground covers and perennials sometimes take over front lawns.

Since the beginning of the 1990s, many back gardens on larger properties have been transformed into luxurious outdoor living spaces and extensions of the house. The entire lot, including rooftops, may be used. Landscape designers are creating eating areas with cooking facilities, conversation groupings, irregular-shaped swimming pools, play equipment, and smaller lawns. These multi-use spaces reflect current trends, as well as the taste of the owners. Today there are unlimited design options, from the richly planted and rustic English country garden to clean and edgy Zen simplicity. No matter what the approach to the home garden is, the outdoor landscape ideally provides a link to the architecture of the house.

CAROLINE BRESLAW



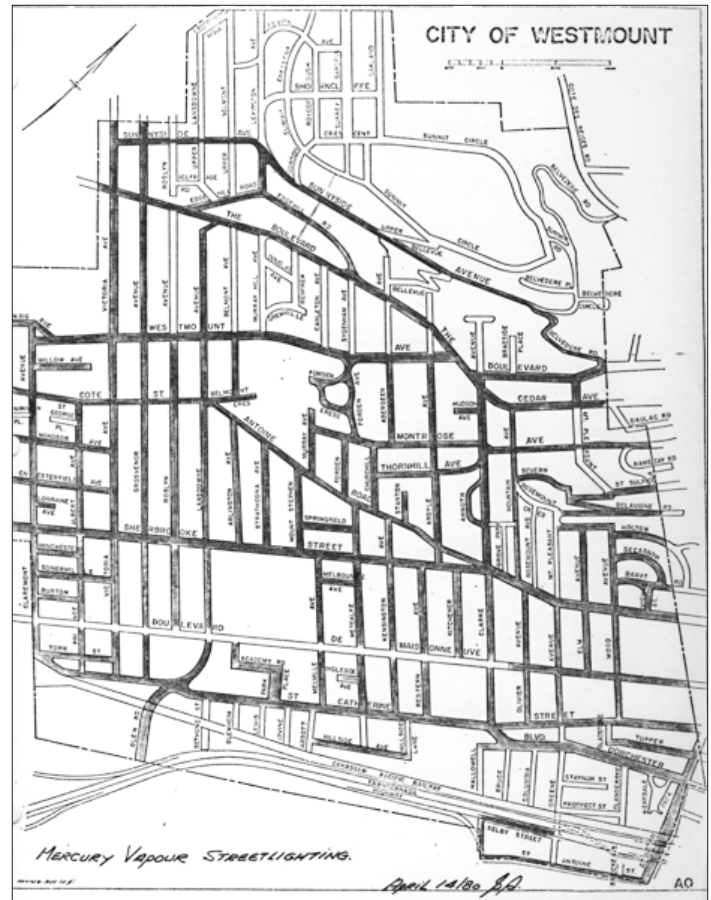
A contemporary Westmount garden designed by landscape architect Myke Hodgins' firm of *Hodgins et associés*

PHOTO: HETA.CA

THE RETURN OF WASHINGTONIAN STREET LIGHTS

Once upon a time, throughout the length and breadth of Westmount, there were elegant cast-iron streetlamps – with ornate bases, fluted shafts, and decorative globes. Since the identical model graced the city of Washington, they were known as Washingtonian lamp standards. In scale and style they matched our traditional architecture. In the 1950s, it was judged that the Washingtonians, with their incandescent light source, did not give off enough light. Not really for the pedestrian, but for the car. The enlightened burghers of the day called for the gradual extirpation of these relics, starting with the main arteries.

Forests of the old-style lights were felled and replaced by cobra-head “luminaires” trademarked “Styletone.” Few citizens seemed to object. And I suspect the architects of the day found the Washingtonian too historical and decorative. From 1956 to 1976, according to a City report, “all of the main streets in Westmount have been equipped with modern lighting. The side streets in about two-thirds of the City have



Map of cobra-head invasion by 1980 IMAGE: CITY OF WESTMOUNT

also been so treated.” Most of the holdouts “still using the ineffectual lighting on the 1920s,” were lit by Washingtonians. By 1976, there were only a few streets where Washingtonians stood as serried sentinels.

The doughty residents of Parkman Place refused to accept the tall intruders when their turn came in 1976. The relighting programme was suspended, only to be restarted in March 1981 when a loan bylaw was adopted. The Washingtonians on my own street were the first on the hit list. Mind you, I only learned of the coming invasion by yellow marks painted on the sidewalk. I got all my neighbours to write to City Hall. Come the 1st of June, I went to my first council meeting and asked for “complete citizen consultation” on the matter. No dice. Mayor MacCallum frowned at me and intoned, “We on Council are more interested in your safety that you seem to be.”

I then wrote a report that argued that the city should stop any further installation of the tall poles, and listed sources



New lamp standard erected at the corner of Greene Avenue and Dorchester Street in 1913 as a proposed type of light for the City
PHOTO: WESTMOUNT NEWS, APRIL 11, 1913



Washingtonian street lamp today on Montrose Avenue



Cobra-head light today, corner of Sherbrooke and Clarke



Washingtonian lights seen at dusk in Westmount Park
PHOTO: RALPH THOMPSON, JANUARY 2019

of replicas of Washingtonian lampposts. I recommended these replicas be placed every 60 feet and have a 70-watt high-pressure sodium light source casting the light downwards. I calculated this would give excellent illumination, and the lower height would eliminate obscuring by mature trees. By September 1981, the relighting programme was stopped dead in its tracks.

In 1986, with my chivvying as a city councillor, Westmount again started the relighting programme – but this time with replica Washingtonian lampposts. In fact, 100-watt high-pressure sodium lamps were to be installed every 90 feet. Eventually, City policy required that all “highway”

lights were to be replaced with upgraded Washingtonians whenever streets were reconstructed. As of 2015, we had roughly 1,100 Washingtonians lighting streets, 750 of them in parks. Some 700 cobra-heads were left (mostly on main streets).

The credit for making this unprecedented about-face happen rests with Bruce St. Louis, Director of Hydro Westmount when I was a councillor and Director-General when I was mayor. Mr. St. Louis turned the idea of bringing back Washingtonians into reality, and won the war of “keeping up our standards.”

PETER F. TRENT, FORMER MAYOR, CITY OF WESTMOUNT



Washingtonian light in 1929 on Côte St. Antoine near Lansdowne, looking east

PHOTO: CITY OF WESTMOUNT

ORAL HISTORY: AUGUSTA (DUSTY) VINEBERG SOLOMON

Dusty Vineberg's newspaper article entitled "Westmount's past relived in flood of memories" was published in the *Montreal Star* on Friday, June 21, 1974. It was Westmount's centennial year and as Dusty wrote "all roads lead to Miss Alice Lighthall who had lived here for 89 years." The full-page article, with accompanying photos of the city and of Miss Lighthall, was typical of the hundreds that appeared under her byline from 1957 to 1974. In her polite, conversational style, Dusty wrote about Miss Lighthall's accomplishments, including her long-time involvement with the Westmount Historical Association and the Canadian Guild of Crafts.

Years earlier, in 1955-56, Dusty was writing radio and television reviews for the *Star* under the title "Tuning In" without benefit of a byline or photo. One of her first credited articles appeared in January 1958, when she wrote about the Montreal artist Mario Merola. Over the years her varied subjects included portraits of people, personal accounts of cities,

science, medicine, opera, children, and parks. Her knowledge and love of the art world was shown in an October 1957 story about the award-winning film *City of Gold*, a National Film Board production co-directed by Colin Low and Wolf Koenig. She described how the filmmakers created a new technique to show movement by moving the camera over old 1898 photographs.

Among Dusty's numerous papers are many letters complementing her on her truthfulness, honesty and well-written articles. One letter dated February 8, 1973 stands out. It was addressed to the *Star's* entertainment editor from Canadian author Robertson Davies in response to an article about him by Dusty.

...Miss Vineberg seems to be a virtuoso listener to tapes, which is a very rare sort of journalist... (Please) convey my thanks and congratulations to Miss Vineberg for a splendidly coherent and carefully balanced article...

When Augusta Vineberg was born in 1926 at Royal



Dusty Vineberg at her desk in the city room of the *Montreal Star*, April 1970

PHOTO: MCCORD MUSEUM



Dusty Vineberg Solomon at home today

PHOTO: DOREEN LINDSAY, 2018

Victoria Hospital, her parents Herbert Vineberg and Eva Friedman bought the family home at 603 Belmont Avenue in Westmount. She and her younger sister Trina grew up here, just two houses from their now-famous cousin Leonard Cohen, whose family lived at 599 Belmont. Dusty's grandfather and Leonard Cohen's grandmother were siblings. Dusty remembers the two families getting together to celebrate the Jewish New Year and she and her sister "running into Murray Hill Park behind the houses, even in wintertime when the snow covered the fences."

Memories from her childhood include being given a "Hermès baby typewriter" by her father after she broke her leg when she was 10 years old. She took lessons on how to use it. "I was a big reader as a child. I was always buried in a book, starting with the Bobbsey Twins." She also remembers excursions with her father. "My father took me to Belmont Park. We went on the rides; father had white trousers and I rubbed my hands on his pants so hard that I rubbed a hole in them I was so afraid."

Dusty's schooling was typical for a young girl growing up in Westmount. She attended Roslyn Elementary School, Westmount Junior High (Argyle School), followed by McGill University where she was in Honours English. While at McGill during the 1960s she wrote for the alumni magazine, *McGill News*. Although modest about her writing accomplishments, she still keeps a copy of the *McGill News* from 1964 in which one of her articles appeared. Dusty chaired the magazine's editorial board during the 1970s.

After McGill she went to New York to take a one-year journalism course, before returning to Montreal to write for *Montreal Scene* magazine, and the *Montreal Star*. "I wanted



The Vineberg family home at 603 Belmont Avenue

PHOTO: DOREEN LINDSAY, 2018

to write for them. The editor was Mr. Walter O'Hearn, and I pestered him." "I have always found my own stories," she says. Two early articles that she wrote for *Montreal Scene* show the diversity of subjects she was interested in. On February 17, 1973 she describes the McCord Museum as "a jewel box setting for an historical collection." Two months later, on April 21, she wrote about the Stilwell family candy factory founded in Verdun during the Depression by Richard Stilwell. She interviewed his daughter Kay to explain how they still made candies in the old way.

Dusty was married for 34 years to Dr. Samuel Solomon, a leading Canadian medical researcher and an administrator at McGill University. After his death in 2008, she and her family established a fellowship in endocrinology at McGill's Faculty of Medicine in his name.

Interviewed in her sunny apartment, Dusty lives comfortably surrounded by friends' paintings and some of her mother's elegant furniture. "I have moved three times," she says. "I lived on the second floor when I was single, then I moved to the sixth floor, and later on moved up here to the eighth floor. I like being in the heart of Westmount."

Dusty Vineberg Solomon was interviewed by Doreen Lindsay on October 16, 2018.

The Montreal Star articles are in the Augusta Vineberg Solomon archival fonds at the McCord Museum, Montreal.

89-year resident

Westmount's past relived in flood of memories

IN a sense, during Westmount's centennial year all roads lead to Miss Alice Lighthall, who moved into Westmount from Stanley Street 89 years ago, when she was three years old.

Her father, a lawyer and litterateur, was three times mayor around the turn of the century and founded Westmount Public Library. She herself is president of the Westmount Historical Society.

At 92, almost as old as Westmount itself, she is living on a street about two minutes' walk from her first Westmount residence. Her phone hardly ceases ringing. She has a part-time secretary. She has a boarder. And she has a life-long interest in native crafts and last week the Canadian Guild of Crafts took her to Toronto for the opening of the first world crafts exhibition at the Ontario Science Centre.

Occasionally she consents to an interview, and perhaps because she

through the house and she still speaks vividly of its beauty. Its many doors were each outlined in hand-carved molding. Two wide halls leading from the central section to east and west wings were each pierced by three oval skylights, garlanded by deep plaster moldings.

There were fireplaces in every room, made of hand-carved black, white, and pale pink marble. There were 14 chimneys — some had to be pulled down because of the weight of the chimney caps — and a great ballroom which she says was of outstanding beauty because of its proportions, space and height.

Many Westmounters were dismayed when the house was bought in the late 1940s by Gerald Broniman after the death of the last Baynes daughter, and was razed and replaced by three modern houses.

Miss Lighthall takes some slight comfort in the fact that it served as a lesson which helped save the Hurtubise house at Cote St. Antoine and Victoria Avenue, the oldest surviving house in Westmount.

And since he also founded the Canadian Union of Municipalities and was an early member and long-standing president of the Canadian Authors' Association, his red brick house was full of the municipal and cultural luminaries of the day.

Miss Lighthall recalls that the Indian poet Pauline Johnson gave one of her first readings in the Lighthalls' library.

It all sounds very citted. But the house was built on farmland bought from William Murray of the Beaver Steamship Line, who also was a gentleman farmer.

by **Dusty Vineberg**

Dusty's 1974 article about Alice Lighthall in the *Montreal Star*

THANKS TO DUSTY VINEBERG SOLOMON

FROM THE ARCHIVES



Mr. Venner and children across from their home at 254 Olivier Ave., c. 1905

PHOTO: MCCORD MUSEUM

please contact the WHA. We would be pleased to add the scanned images to our collection. JANE MARTIN, WHA ARCHIVIST

Anyone who lived in Westmount years ago will remember winter in the city, when immense snowbanks lined the streets and children walked to school no matter how low the temperatures, when home fireplaces burned logs and the scent of wet wool permeated every entry hall.

From the WHA Archives, we present a selection of outdoor winter scenes from our community's past. If you have photos of your own that depict earlier winters,



Skiing on Westmount slopes, 1938



Tobogganing at Murray Park, 1931



Snow casting on Melville Ave., c. 1960 PHOTO: CITY OF WESTMOUNT



Roslyn school hockey, ca. 1950