

The Westmount Historian

NEWSLETTER OF THE WESTMOUNT HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

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Mrs. George Lighthall at 435 Elm Avenue, 1897 CREDIT: WHA

WOMEN IN WESTMOUNT



Association historique de Westmount
Westmount Historical Association

The Westmount Historian

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HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

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EDITOR:
Caroline Breslaw

COPY EDITOR:
Jane Martin

TEXT:
Ruth Allan-Rigby
Caroline Breslaw
Jon Breslaw
Marlene Chan
Doreen Lindsay
Jane Martin

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WESTMOUNT HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION
P. O. Box 23037 Vendome
Montreal, Quebec H4A 3V4
514-989-5510

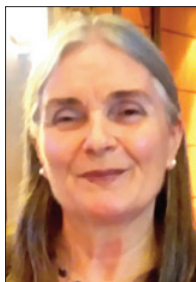
E-MAIL:
info@wha.quebec

WEBSITE:
www.wha.quebec

ISSN: 1496-4066

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

EDITOR'S MESSAGE



Looking through Aline Gubbay's 1998 social history of Westmount, *A View of Their Own*, I noticed that the first portrait of a woman shown because of her accomplishments was of early Westmount librarian Mary Saxe on page 57. If this history extended to the present, a very different reality would be reflected. Westmount, like much of the western world, is no longer a male bastion. Women play an active and important role in our community and beyond its borders, as professionals or as valued volunteers. This has been clearly shown in our lecture series on three prominent Westmount women. Joan Rothman, May Cutler, and Marion Dale Scott were spirited, talented individuals who had an important impact. The Winter 2020 issue of *The Westmount Historian* continues the theme of the Fall 2019 talks, showing how the role of women in Westmount has evolved over the centuries and highlighting some of these individuals.

CAROLINE BRESLAW

WHA 2020 WINTER LECTURE SERIES DOCUMENTING LOCAL HERITAGE

The four talks in the WHA's Winter/Spring Lecture Series focus on Montrealers – writers, photographers, and architects – who have dedicated their work to the city of Montreal, its architecture and history.

Thursday, January 16, 2020

Montreal's Architecture: a Co-authoring Partnership
Speaker: **Brian Merrett**, photographer for *Mansions of the Golden Square Mile*, *Montreal Architecture: A Guide to Styles and Building*, and *Belles demeures historiques de l'île de Montréal*

Thursday, February 20, 2020

Based on Familiar Territory
Speaker: **MacKay L. Smith**, author of *Montreal's Sherbrooke Street*, *Montreal's Golden Square Mile*, *Memories and Profiles of McGill University*, and *Montreal's Three Mountains*

Thursday, March 19, 2020

Looking at Montreal's Contemporary Architecture
Speakers: **Nancy Dunton & Helen Malkin**, co-authors of *A Guidebook to Contemporary Architecture in Montreal*

Thursday, April 16, 2020

Inspired by Victor Bourgeois's Churches
Speaker: **Peter Lanken**, architect whose elevations and photographs document many churches designed by Victor Bourgeois

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



In addition to the ongoing work on our lecture series and oral history interviews, much of what the WHA worked on over the summer and fall involved making increased use of technology. The security of our website was improved, and we planned some changes to its appearance and accessibility that will be implemented early in 2020. In the Fall we replaced our office computer and updated some of its software, and transferred several computer programs and many important data files.

Digitization of the Aline Gubbay Photo Collection continues. When it is finished, we will start to digitize some of the many other photographic images we have collected over the years to ensure that they can be more easily accessed and reproduced. Our membership records were computerized some time ago, so we can easily obtain general statistical data when required. We depend increasingly on email to communicate with our membership and among the members of our Board of Directors. We also plan to acquire a portable sound system to be used at our lectures so that everyone is able to hear not only the lectures themselves, but also the questions and answers afterward. And lastly, it was decided at the AGM to shift our fiscal year to coincide with the calendar year in order to simplify required government reporting of our financial records. So although we are an historical association whose main interests lie in things of the past, we are changing our ways of record keeping to methods of the present and future.

ANNE BARKMAN

WHA/AGM May 21, 2020

The WHA will hold its Annual General Meeting on Thursday, May 21, 2020 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.

CANNON RETURNS – NOV. 10, 2019



Following recent restoration, one of a pair of historic Westmount cannon makes its first appearance at Remembrance Day ceremonies at the Cenotaph.

PHOTO: PATRICK MARTIN

DONORS for 2019

The following members have made donations of over \$20, helping to support our lecture series, newsletters, and other activities.

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WOMEN IN WESTMOUNT



Mary Solace Saxe, chief librarian of Westmount Public Library from 1901-1933

CREDIT: WHA



Alice Lighthall, as a volunteer nurse for VAD in France during World War I

CREDIT: WHA



May Cutler, Canada's first female publisher of children's literature and the first female mayor of Westmount

CUTLER FAMILY, 2010

The role of women in Westmount has changed dramatically over the past 300 years. From the early French settlers through the Victorian era, most women were wives, mothers, and daughters whose activities centred on the house and the family. Of the original French families who settled on Côte St. Antoine Road, the only woman still mentioned today is Justine Solomée-Hurtubise, the daughter of the family that owned the Hurtubise House.

The one group of women in Westmount's early history who were able to work outside the home at this time were Catholic nuns. The sisters of the Congrégation de Notre-Dame were active teaching in the community from about 1898. Based from 1908 at the Mother House (now Dawson College), the nuns taught Catholic girls at St. Paul's Catholic Girls' School on Sherbrooke Street at Clarke, at Notre-Dame Secretarial School, and at l'Institut Pédagogique de Montréal which now houses Marianopolis College.

From the mid-1800s the women of mostly British origin whose families owned properties here carried on the tradi-

tion of philanthropy with volunteer work in churches, hospitals, and other organizations. Spinsters, such as the two unmarried Murray daughters of 'West Mount', and Miss Raynes, who lived at 'Forden', were expected to remain in the family home. However, the majority of women in Westmount had much more freedom than their Catholic counterparts in the rest of the province, since they came from prosperous families, did not have to work to support themselves, and were not under the influence of the clergy.

Women's educational opportunities and ability to work professionally were severely limited until the 20th century. Beginning in 1884 women were permitted to attend classes at McGill University, sitting at the back with chaperones or in separate classrooms. Nevertheless, most parents of single women frowned on them obtaining degrees, since higher education and paid work were considered obstacles to marriage. Even a university education did not guarantee a woman anything but a teaching job; most professional associations barred women. Nursing, teaching, and secretarial

work were the careers open to bourgeois women. This situation began to change around 1900 when English-speaking women slowly started to graduate from university. Middle-class women could work, but once married, gave up their jobs to look after the house and eventual family. In general, education and career opportunities were far more limited for francophone women.

Alice Lighthall, daughter of Mayor William Douw Lighthall, was one of the bright Westmount young ladies who attended classes at McGill without gaining a degree, since her mother was opposed to having a daughter who was a 'bluestocking'. The First World War provided her with the opportunity to become a volunteer nurse (VAD) and serve in Europe. She went on to become actively involved in the Canadian Guild of Handicrafts. She was a founding member of the Westmount Historical Association in 1944 and in 1955 saved the 1739 Hurtubise House from demolition. Her life as an unmarried woman was filled with meaningful volunteer work.

The career of Mary Solace Saxe, a single professional woman, reflects the shift that was occurring in Quebec's English community. Soon after the building of Westmount Public Library, Mary Saxe became its chief librarian. She remained in that position from 1901-1931, during a period when the library acquired two major additions, a much larger staff, and a growing book collection. With her strong personality and good political skills, Mary Saxe worked efficiently at making the library an important institution in the cultural life of the community. She chose her own successor, Kathleen Jenkins, who remained at the library for 31 years and had a history of Montreal published in her retirement.

Quebec lagged behind the rest of Canada in terms of women's rights. Although all Canadians could vote in federal elections by 1920, the same year that the right was won by American women, only in 1940 did women gain the vote in Quebec's provincial elections. Westmount resident Thérèse Casgrain was a pioneer in the battle for female suffrage in the province where the Roman Catholic Church placed a strong emphasis on the traditional role of women. However, the 1960s' Quiet Revolution



Canadian postage stamp honouring Thérèse Casgrain

CREDIT: CANADA POST

brought radical social change. Quebec education became secular, rather than religious, as the influence of the Church diminished. In 1994 the new Civil Code of Quebec came into effect, based on gender equality. Nowadays, women are able to attend university and enter the work force as professionals in unlimited fields, and increasingly in previously male-dominated ones, such as medicine, law, and engineering.

Although there were town councils in the municipality from 1874, the first female city councillor in Westmount was only elected in 1977. Publisher May Cutler became the municipality's first female mayor and held that office from 1997-2001. Karin Marks and current mayor Christina Smith have followed in her footsteps. Many women currently sit on Westmount City Council and hold positions in the city's administration, urban planning, library, recreation, and public works' departments. Westmount women work, attend classes, run households, and still find time to volunteer in the community. From the past to the present, Westmount has gained immeasurably from the contributions of many women.

CAROLINE BRESLAW



VAD (Voluntary Aid Detachment) recruiting poster

CREDIT: VAD.REDCROSS.ORG.UK

Much of the historical information about the status of women in Quebec was found in Quebec Women: A History by M. Dumont (1987).

JOAN ROTHMAN: AN EDUCATION PIONEER



Joan Rothman speaks to the WHA, 2009
CREDIT: WHA



Joan Rothman with grade six students at Westmount Park School, c.1990s
CREDIT: CAROLYN SINGMAN

Former School Commissioner Joan Rothman has long been recognized for her achievements in local public education, as well as for serving as one of the first women on Westmount City Council. She is well-known for her leading role in bringing French immersion classes to Roslyn Elementary School and fostering their growth throughout the English school system.

Joan Elizabeth Presant was born and grew up in Toronto, attending public schools and the University of Toronto. Her first visit to Montreal included an exchange between U of T and the Université de Montréal, where she first learned of the complex politics in Quebec, as well as Montreal's diversity and multiple solitudes. After a year on a Woodrow Wilson Scholarship to Cornell where she completed a one-year M.A. in anthropology, she moved to Montreal to marry Mel Rothman, the "love of her life" who passed away in 2019. They were married for 65 years.

Beginning in 1954, Joan and Mel Rothman lived in Westmount, an almost entirely English-speaking and Protestant community in an era of increasing diversity of language and culture in Montreal and throughout Canada. The young Jewish lawyer was well-connected in both English and French circles. He and Joan

had an eclectic and inclusive network of friends in Montreal's three biggest communities of the time – English Protestant, French Catholic, and Jewish.

The Rothmans' three daughters – Ann, Claire, and Margot – all attended Roslyn Elementary School. In the mid-1960s, parents at the school began asking for more relevant French instruction for their children. At that time, French was taught for only 30 minutes a day in English schools, beginning in grade four. With much dedication and commitment, Joan Rothman and her friend Carol Kahn began investigating ways to bring about the desired changes. They



Roslyn School, where the first French immersion programme in Quebec was launched
CREDIT: WHA

researched second language learning and visited Margaret Pendlebury Elementary School in St. Lambert, QC, a school already experimenting with French immersion. They noted that the famed Montreal neurologist Dr. Wilder Penfield had made pronouncements concerning second language acquisition and the brain. Early childhood was considered a critical period.

Roslyn School principal Scott Kneeland offered his school premises free-of-charge for extra-curricular classes in French for Roslyn students if demand existed. In 1965, under the auspices of the Home and School Association, four teachers were hired with the help of Carol Kahn, who had attended evening French conversation classes at Université de Montréal prior to this hiring process. The four teachers were from France and brought French workbooks and great teaching ideas into the new Roslyn program. Classes were offered at lunch and after school for a modest fee to cover pay for the teachers. Groups were kept small and at the end of the 22-week course, report cards were sent to the parents. Scott Kneeland quickly understood what a gem Joan, Carol, and Charles Burgess had created and requested the program be brought into the curriculum. In 1968, Roslyn became the first public school on the Island of Montreal to offer French second language immersion education. The Joan Rothman Prize for leadership is still presented at the school.

In 1970 Joan was elected Commissioner for the Westmount School Board and the following year, she was voted Chair, a post she occupied until 1973, when the Quebec government abolished municipal school boards and established the Protestant School Board of Greater Montreal (PSBGM). Over 30 years (1973-2003) she served as a school commissioner with the PSBGM, with three Westmount schools in her charge: Roslyn, Westmount Park School, and



Joan Rothman with family members after WHA lecture

CREDIT: JOHN ZIMMERMAN, 2019

Westmount High.

Joan recruited Paul Saunders as principal for Westmount Park School. He served there from 1987 until his retirement in 2003. Shrinking enrolment in several city schools led to changes at Westmount Park. For the first time in its history, it was categorized by Quebec as an inner city status school. It therefore qualified for almost \$100,000 a year in extra funding for teachers' aides and expenditures for athletic uniforms and other needs. Joan came to the rescue when Westmount Park School lost its inner city status. She obtained equivalent support from the Molsons and several other prominent Westmount families, organizing a tea and raising close to \$100,000 in donations. The teachers' aides kept their jobs, the teams their uniforms, and eventually, the school regained inner city status.

In 1983 in addition to working as a school commissioner, Joan ran for City Council in the Westmount municipal elections. She was the third woman to ever be elected to Council. Under Mayor Brian Gallery, Joan was appointed to the portfolio for Light, Power, and Data Communications.

When May Cutler was elected Westmount's first woman mayor in 1987, Joan was re-elected councillor, taking charge of Leisure and Recreation. She also became a trustee of Westmount Public Library. One of the forward-looking changes she made under Mayor Cutler was getting Council to drop the term "alderman" from its lexicon and replace it with the more gender-neutral "councillor".

In 2010 Joan was awarded the English Board Association Award of Merit for work and dedication as a school commissioner, having served 33 years in that role. Joan Rothman spent over 66 years serving her community of Westmount and English education – a formidable achievement.

Based on the talk given to the WHA on September 19, 2019 by Claire Holden Rothman

RUTH ALLAN-RIGBY



Joan and Mel Rothman at the McGill Faculty of Law, 2014

CREDIT: FACEBOOK

MAY CUTLER: PUBLISHING & POLITICS

May Ebbitt Cutler (1923-2011) was a dynamic, feisty, and accomplished woman. Her parents were Irish Protestants. May's family, including her two older brothers, lived in the east end of Montreal. She received an MA from McGill in 1945 and then obtained an MA in journalism from Columbia University in New York City. She worked as a journalist for the *Montreal Herald* and the *Montreal Standard* newspapers. In 1952 she married trade union organizer Philip Cutler who later became a labour lawyer. They had four sons – Keir, Adam, Michael, and Roger – whom they raised at 3200 The Boulevard in Westmount.

May Cutler's foray into the world of publishing in Canada was motivated by her desire for children's books to be viewed as works of art. In the process she effected major policy changes to the Writing and Publications Program of the Canada Council for the Arts. She founded Tundra Books in her home in 1967, becoming Canada's first female publisher of children's books. Many titles originally published by Tundra are now considered children's classics, including *Mary of Mile 18* by Ann Blades (1971), *A Prairie Boy's Winter* by William Kurelek (1973), and *The Hockey Sweater* by Roch Carrier (1979). Cutler ran Tundra Books until it was sold to McClelland and Stewart in 1995. Throughout her life she promoted original Canadian works in all fields of artistic endeavour.

When Phil died in 1987, May bought a house at Sherbrooke Street and Mount Stephen Avenue. She planned to



May and Phil Cutler, 1953

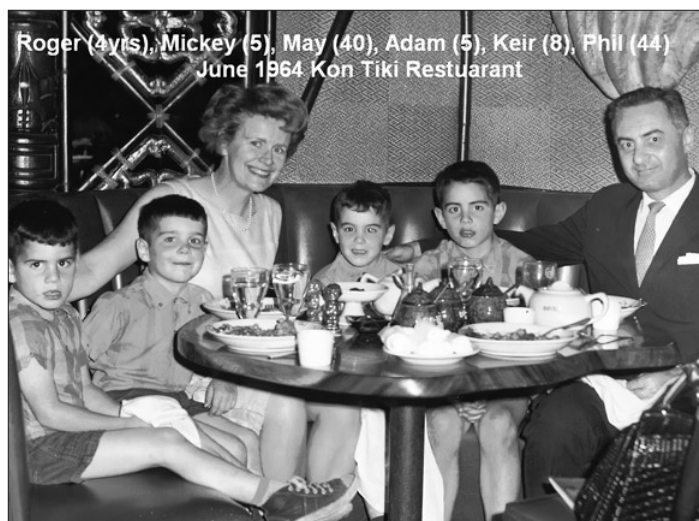
CREDIT: CUTLER FAMILY

use it for her home and publishing office, but after Westmount Council prevented a zoning change, she decided to run for mayor. When she entered the battle for the position of Mayor of Westmount at age 64, she proved to be no lightweight, although she had no experience in municipal politics. Her campaign slogan was "We want May in



May Ebbitt with her family, c. 1931

CREDIT: CUTLER FAMILY



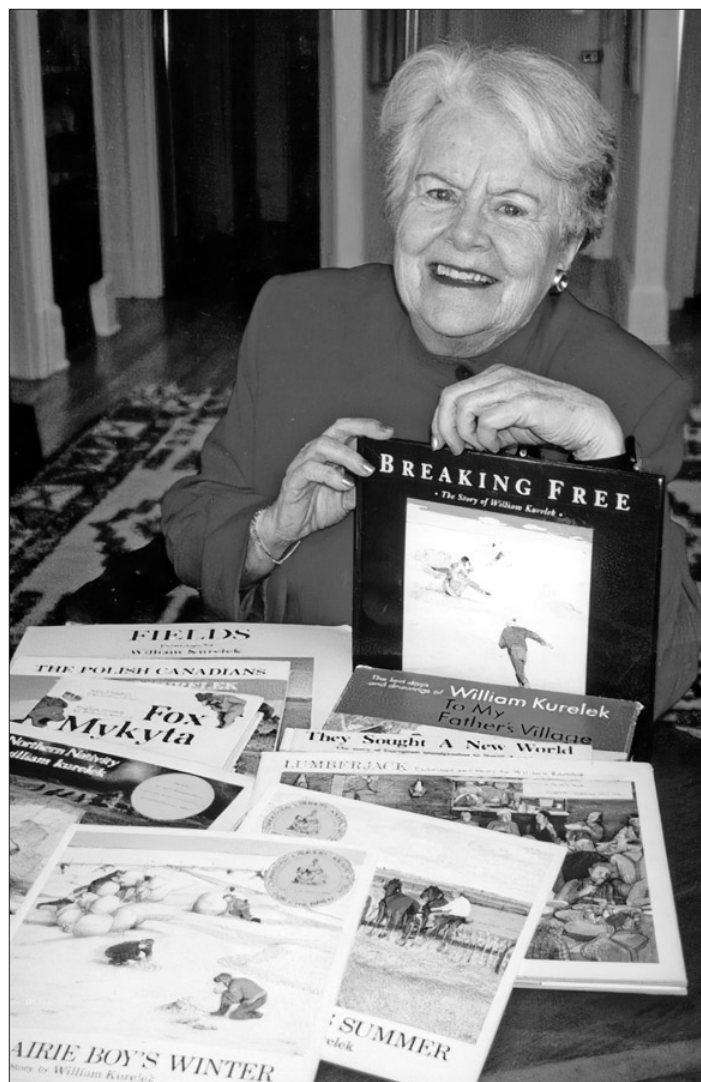
May and Phil Cutler with their four sons, 1964

CREDIT: CUTLER FAMILY

November". She defeated the incumbent mayor Brian Gallery and served a four-year term as the first female mayor of Westmount from 1987 to 1991.

The beginning of her mayoral mandate was contentious, with conflicts between herself, Council, and the Director-General. The dynamics changed over her term. Her major project of expanding and restoring Westmount Public Library, with Councillor Peter Trent's assistance, received support from Council and residents.

Among other initiatives, May fought successfully for Dorchester Boulevard to keep its name in Westmount when it was changed to Blvd. René Lévesque in Montreal. She established an official Westmount honour roll, updated periodically, that recognizes deceased citizens who have made outstanding achievements in various fields. With a lifelong love of art, she obtained two donations of paintings



May Cutler with some of her early Tundra Books publications

CREDIT: TUNDRABOOKS.COM



"Westmount's May Cutler hands over mayoral reins to Peter Trent with a hug..." PHOTO: ALLEN McINNIS, *THE GAZETTE*, OCTOBER 1991.

by Marian Dale Scott for Westmount City Hall, as well as works by other local artists. She commissioned nine stained-glass windows for the Council Chamber. A portrait of May Cutler, which bears no resemblance to the formal paintings of previous mayors, was installed at City Hall at the end of her term.

Her interest in Westmount affairs continued into retirement. During the hard-fought municipal merger/demerger battles of 20 years ago, she gave outspoken support to Westmount's fight to retain its municipal independence from the City of Montreal.

May Cutler was a formidable force as Mayor of Westmount. She was a strong advocate for English-speaking Montrealers and publishers. She fought and won against a proposed PQ law in 1991 that would have forced all Quebec publishers to obtain a license in order to exist. She was a well-known Canadian author, journalist, playwright, and publisher, as well as a wife and mother and dear friend to many.

The article is based on the talk about May Cutler to the WHA on October 17, 2019 given by her son Adam Cutler and former Westmount mayor Peter Trent.

MARLENE CHAN

MARIAN DALE SCOTT: A STUDIO OF HER OWN

The artist Marian Dale Scott (1906-1996) mastered every style and new direction she explored. She was born Marian Mildred Dale in 1906 in Montreal to prosperous parents. Until 1920 she was educated at home by a French governess and then attended The Study for three years. She was one of the first students at the École des beaux-arts de Montréal in 1924 and went on to study at the Slade School of Art in London (UK). In 1928 she married Frank R. Scott, an Oxford-educated McGill law professor and poet. The couple lived with their son Peter Dale Scott at 451 Clarke Avenue in Westmount from 1940 and spent time in North Hatley in the Eastern Townships. They were well-known in intellectual and political circles.

Marian Dale Scott was active in the anti-fascist movements of the 1930s and in the CCF (Cooperative Commonwealth Federation) which was co-founded by her husband and was the precursor to the New Democratic Party (NDP). In the 1950s she campaigned against nuclear weapons and in the 1960s opposed the Vietnam War.

Marian Dale Scott was a founding member of the Contemporary Arts Society of Montreal (Société d'art contemporain, 1939-48), and was elected to the Royal Canadian Academy of Arts in 1973. She taught art at St. George's School, the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, and Macdonald College and interacted with disadvantaged children at the



Young Marian Dale in an undated photograph

CREDIT: NGC

Children's Creative Art Centre, set up by her close friend Norman Bethune in 1936.

The subtitle *A Studio of Her Own* links Scott to Virginia Woolf and Woolf's essay *A Room of One's Own*. This groundbreaking feminist text advocated for personal income and private space for women writers within a tradition dominated by men. Scott's home studio remained off-limits to most visitors, including her husband and son. Other than an insightful, recent analysis of Marian's artwork by Esther Trépanier in her book, *Marian Dale Scott: Pionnière de l'art moderne*, little attention has been paid to her as a major professional artist in her own right. Scott forged her own path as her art and her interests evolved. She was recognized during her lifetime with



Marian Dale Scott in her studio on Clarke Avenue, c.1940s

PHOTO: SAM TATA, NGC



Marian Dale Scott's husband, lawyer F.R. Scott, 1949

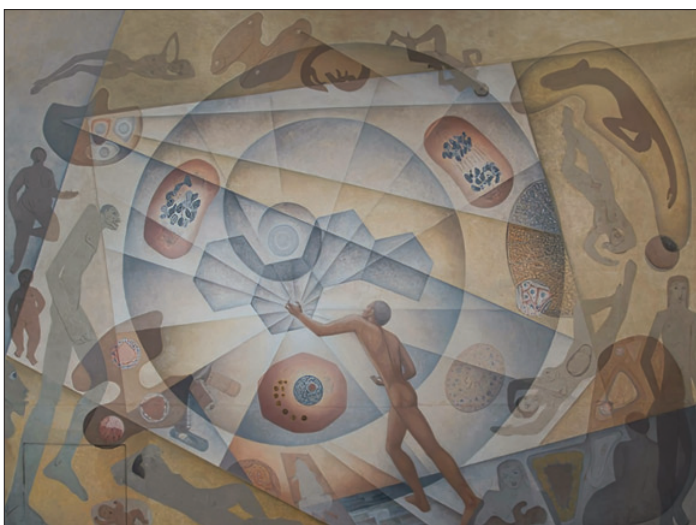
CREDIT: LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES CANADA



Untitled abstract painting donated by the artist to the City of Westmount for display at City Hall CREDIT: GWENDOLYN OWENS

the Baxter Purchase Award at the Ontario Society of Artists annual exhibition. An article in *The Globe and Mail* of October 6, 1969 reviewed the event. It addressed her as Mrs. Marian Scott and described her as a 'housewife-artist' under the unintentionally ironic headline, 'Housewife's prize means larger studio.'

Marian Dale Scott initially painted landscapes and cityscapes, turning to abstract art in the 1940s. She was a pioneer



Large mural "Endocrinology", 1942-43, commissioned by Hans Selye, in the McGill University Visual Arts Collection

PHOTO: BRIAN MERRETT



"Cement no. 1", 1939, in the McGill University Visual Arts Collection PHOTO: BRIAN MERRETT

of modern art as can be witnessed in her sketches, paintings, and murals. This is underlined by Scott's journals, as well as in newspaper articles and poetry written by her son Peter Dale Scott, an academic, author, and diplomat.

Endocrinology (1942-1943), a large avant-garde mural, is one of 14 works by Marian Dale Scott in the McGill Visual Arts Collection. It marks a turning point towards abstraction in Scott's art. The work, representative of a style called biomorphism, was commissioned by internationally known scientist Dr. Hans Selye, famous for his work on stress. Scott studied the anatomical, histological, and biochemical elements of stress research and the principles of scientific investigation to produce the work. She remained an activist whose work consistently engaged and reflected social concerns.

Marian Dale Scott made a unique contribution, nationally and internationally, to the world of art. She emerged from the shadow of her famous husband, as well as the confines of feminism, patriarchy, and nationalism.

Gwendolyn Owens, Westmount resident and director of the McGill University Visual Arts Collection, shed a spotlight on the life and work of artist Marian Dale Scott at the final lecture of the WHA Fall series on November 21, 2019.

MARLENE CHAN

THE VOTE FOR WESTMOUNT WOMEN

Gaining the right to vote in municipal and provincial elections was a long and rocky road for the women of Westmount and Quebec. But it didn't start out that way. Amazingly, the *Constitutional Act of 1791* gave qualified land owners the right to vote, irrespective of gender, and thus some women in Lower Canada became the only women in the British Empire who had a right to vote. But this did not last. In 1849 under the Baldwin-LaFontaine ministry, this "historical irregularity" was rectified by formally prohibiting women from voting.

In 1890 the town of Côte St Antoine was incorporated. Shortly after, in 1892, the province's Conservative premier, Charles-E. Boucher de Boucherville, spearheaded the passing of legislation granting single and land-owning women and widows the right to vote in municipal and school elections, so long as they did not run as candidates themselves. Married women in Canada still remained the chattels of their husbands and could not vote.

"Now you forget all this nonsense about women voting... You're a fine smart young woman. I can see that. And take it from me, nice women don't want the vote."

Manitoba Premier Rodmond Roblin, 1913



"WOMAN'S KINGDOM IS AT HOME."

CREDIT: THOMAS NAST FOR HARPER'S WEEKLY



CREDIT: GRAIN GROWERS' GUIDE, 1913

Three years later in 1895, Côte St Antoine was officially renamed Westmount. The first suffragettes' association in Canada, the Women's Suffrage Society, was created in 1883, with the aim to eliminate electoral discrimination against women.

In 1912 the Montreal Suffrage Association mobilized its forces to fight for the right to vote in federal elections, finally achieving that goal in 1918. By 1922 every province except Quebec had passed legislation permitting women to vote in provincial and municipal elections.

The main obstacles in *La Belle Province* were the Catholic Church and politicians:

"French-Canadian women risk becoming 'public women,' veritable women-men, hybrids that would destroy women-mothers and women-women."

Henri Bourassa, politician and founder of *Le Devoir*, 1918

"The entry of women into politics, even if only by suffrage, would be a misfortune for our province. Nothing justifies it, neither natural law nor the social interest; the authorities in Rome approve of our views, which are those of our entire episcopate."

Cardinal Louis-Nazaire Bégin, 1922

"The argument of the similarity with the other provinces is cited, as if for some, progress consists of aping what others do. Quebec has its traditions, its customs and they are its strength and its greatness." Louis-Arthur Giroux, politician, 1940

Westmounter Thérèse Casgrain led the women's suffrage movement in Quebec prior to World War II. She founded the Provincial Franchise Committee in 1921 and campaigned for women's rights and for the right to vote in Quebec elections. Between 1927 and 1940 twelve bills were introduced in the Legislative Assembly of Quebec to grant provincial female suffrage; they were all rejected. It took 22 years after women could vote federally before Bill 18, supported by Premier Joseph-Adéland Godbout, was passed on April 25, 1940, finally putting an end to electoral discrimination against women at the provincial level. It took until 2012, another 72 years, for Pauline Marois to become the first woman to serve as Quebec's premier.

Reference: *Élections Québec (2014): Right of Québec women to vote and to stand for office.* JON BRESLAW



Suffragettes taking a petition to the Quebec National Assembly, 1927 CREDIT: COLLECTION ALAIN GARIÉPY, ASSEMBLÉE NATIONALE DU QUÉBEC



Thérèse Casgrain campaigning during the 1967 election CREDIT: CANADIAN PRESS



Quebec's first female premier, PQ leader Pauline Marois, 2014 CREDIT: GLOBALNEWS.CA

ORAL HISTORY: MARK BOUNDY

Mark Boundy grew up at 3210 The Boulevard, between Clarke and Mount Pleasant Avenue. The Boundy home was one of two adjacent dwellings designed by Westmount architect Percy Erskine Nobbs. They appear to be modest two-storey red brick houses from the street, but they actually descend two floors in the back to follow the slope of the land. Mark remembers looking out his bedroom window across the street at night towards the historic Braemar villa (now mostly obscured by modern homes) and seeing lights flashing among the trees. Mrs. Thompson, who lived alone there, hired security guards to patrol around the house at night.

Mark was born on March 18, 1942 when his parents lived in a duplex on Prince Albert Avenue. The family stayed there only four years. His mother was Alice Heather McFarlane from Quebec City, and his grandmother was Alice Maude Renfrew. Hugh Boundy, his father, was born in Chile and worked for Alcan in Montreal's Sun Life Building.

Mark clearly remembers 21 other children with whom he played while living on The Boulevard from 1946 to 1971. Their family names included Hausner, Fitzpatrick, Stern, Petrie, McRobie, Sullivan, Paperman, Turnbull, Nesbitt, McLernon, Horner, and Cooney. "In the winter time, if there was a lot of snow, we would build a fort. We also were blessed with a large open space of land which had a hill and we could do some tobogganing and sleighing. In warm weather there'd be games of hide-and-go-seek outdoors. And it seemed that there was no property that was out of bounds. If we knew someone who had a garden and they grew chives and mint, for instance, we would go and help ourselves. On the 24th of May weekend we enjoyed eating food and watching fireworks at a street party organized by parents. Miss Kane, who lived at 3194 The Boulevard, arranged to have ice cream delivered for all the children, although she herself never came."

Deliveries were made by horse-drawn wagons in those



Notman & Sons studio photograph of young Mark Boundy
COURTESY OF MARK BOUNDY



Mark Boundy at his former family home at 3210 The Boulevard
PHOTO: DOREEN LINDSAY, 2019

days. There used to be a horse-watering trough at the corner of The Boulevard and Argyle. The horses would zigzag across the street when going uphill. "The milkman from Guaranteed Pure Milk, owned by the Hogg family, would let the children ride in the open wagon on Saturdays. Bread was delivered by Wonder Bread or POM Bakeries. My mother ordered groceries on Tuesdays and Fridays from Dionne's on St. Catherine Street. For ice delivery she put a sign in the window that said '50 lbs.' on one side and '25' on the other. If she was not at home, she asked for 25 lbs. because she could not carry any more."

To get to Selwyn House School on Redpath, Mark would take the number 14 streetcar along The Boulevard, down through a private right-of-way and then along Côte-des-Neiges Road to McGregor. He'd be let out at Sherbrooke Street. He remembers when bus service began in 1955. "I woke up one morning in June on The Boulevard when buses were on the street. They were much quieter than the streetcars. Streetcars still ran on Sherbrooke Street, Atwater, Greene, Victoria, and St. Catherine." He has fond memories of going to the Avenue Theatre on Greene Avenue where parents could rent a room above the cinema to watch the film showing below during children's birthday celebrations. At Smithers', on the northwest corner of Greene and St. Catherine, "I bought my own shoes, paid out of my allowance." He says the owners made no changes to the shop over the years.

At 3 o'clock on Sunday afternoons, Mark went to Sunday school at Dominion Douglas Church on The Boulevard. "All children went there regardless of what denomination they came from. My parents did not belong to Dominion Douglas. There was an atmosphere



The Avenue Theatre on Greene Avenue operated from 1947. It was demolished in 1983 to make way for a supermarket.

CREDIT: CINEMATREASURES.ORG



Brothers George and Donald Smithers in Smithers' Shoe Shop, a once long-established business on Greene Avenue at St. Catherine Street

PHOTO: GABOR SZILASI

that made the children want to go. We were divided into age groups. The girls were all together and the boys were all together. Each child got a birthday card, and all the names of the different children that had birthdays that week were read out and they sang *Happy Birthday*." There were also movies at the church on Friday nights.

Mark went to boarding school at Trinity College in Port Hope, ON from 1955-1960. Returning to Montreal, he enrolled at Sir George Williams University while living at home. As soon as he graduated from Sir George in 1964, he began working for Sun Oil (Sunoco), doing the books for five years. Then he became manager of the pension department for Crown Trust from 1971 to 1975. In 1978 he completed a Bachelor of Theology degree (B.Th.) at McGill University. Mark has a tremendous interest in the churches and cemeteries of the anglophone communities in rural Quebec. He pursues his passion for the social and religious history of the many small town communities in Quebec by holding memberships in seven historical associations.

Mark's other great interest is helping the blind. He taught English at the Canadian National Institute for the Blind on Crescent Street and befriended boys who attended the boarding school for the blind, l'Institut Louis Braille, once located at Claremont and Windsor in Westmount. The boys went to Macy's soda fountain at the northwest corner of Sherbrooke and Victoria on Saturday afternoons. Mark still wears his Braille watch from those days.

Mark Boundy was interviewed by Doreen Lindsay on September 12, 2019.



A customer picks up milk from the Guaranteed Pure Milk Co. delivery cart, c.1940

CREDIT: CITY OF WESTMOUNT

FROM THE ARCHIVES



Judith Mappin (1928-2014) Photo: 2005
Co-founder and owner of the former
Double Hook Book Shop on Greene Ave.

Capping the theme of this past season's lecture series, December's WHA Social featured a presentation by board member Caroline Breslaw, celebrating prominent Westmount women of the past. Caroline's commentary on a selection of 31 of these memorable women was illustrated by projected portrait photographs, many of which are preserved in the WHA Archives. Some of these same images are seen here, representing different periods of history and areas of achievement.

JANE MARTIN, WHA ARCHIVIST



Norma Shearer (1902-1983)
Photo: c.1930s Hollywood film star
of 1920s and 30s



Helen McCall Hutchison Photo c.1950s
Community volunteer, co-founder of
MGH women's auxiliary



Aline Gubbay (1920-2005)
Photo: c.1990s Historian, photographer,
WHA President 1995-2000



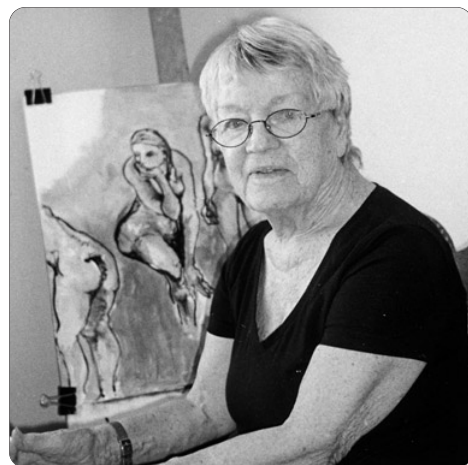
Kathleen Jenkins (1904-1992)
Photo: 1959 Chief Librarian of
Westmount Public Library, 1931-1962



Eva Prager (1912-2010) Photo: 2005
Fifth generation artist, Order
of Canada recipient



Ethel Raynes (1870-1950) Photo: 1938
Last member of the Raynes family
to live at Forden villa



Virginia McClure (1928-2012)
Photo: 2010 Artist, active in Potters' Club
& the Visual Arts Centre on Victoria Ave.