

The Westmount Historian

NEWSLETTER OF THE WESTMOUNT HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

VOLUME 21 NUMBER 1

45th EDITION

SEPTEMBER 2020



Hurtubise House on Côte St. Antoine Road during the ice storm of January 1998

PHOTO: DOREEN LINDSAY

FACING ADVERSITY



Association historique de Westmount
Westmount Historical Association

The Westmount Historian

NEWSLETTER OF THE WESTMOUNT
HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

September 2020
Volume 21 • Number 1

EDITOR:
Caroline Breslaw

COPY EDITOR:
Jane Martin

TEXT:
Caroline Breslaw
Jon Breslaw
Diana Bruno
Doreen Lindsay
Jane Martin

PHOTOS:
WHA Archives
unless otherwise indicated

WESTMOUNT HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION
BOARD OF DIRECTORS
2020 – 2021

Anne Barkman, president
Ruth Allan-Rigby, vice-president
Mavis Young, treasurer
Claudette Stecher-Lopez, secretary
Caroline Breslaw
Louise Carpentier
Jan Fergus
Jane Martin

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
© 2020 all rights reserved.
Reproduction without permission
of publisher is strictly forbidden.

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

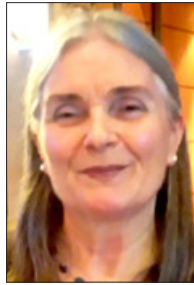
E-MAIL:
info@wha.quebec

WEBSITE:
www.wha.quebec

ISSN: 1496-4066

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

EDITOR'S MESSAGE



We have all been personally challenged by the Covid-19 pandemic. The Westmount Historical Association has also had to make changes in our normal activities. For the first time our members have been sent *The Westmount Historian* in an online format. Eliminating the use of paper and avoiding mail drop-off and delivery were important adjustments in its production. Our readers benefit by seeing some images in colour, while having the option to print a paper copy if they choose. Many of you may prefer to receive it this way in the future.

Normally the newsletter focuses on the content of the previous lecture series, but because of the pandemic the series was partially postponed. This edition's theme "Facing Adversity" has been prepared to reflect the times. There are articles on how the City of Westmount and its residents have met challenges in the past: the 1918 Spanish Flu; the razing of parts of Dorchester, Greene and Selby streets during the 1960s; the 1998 ice storm. Edith Paton, who was interviewed for the Oral History Project before the current crisis, talks about her childhood memories of influenza, polio, and World War II.

Putting this edition together was a challenge. Unable to access the WHA archives in Westmount Public Library, we received a wealth of images from Jon Breslaw, Doreen Lindsay, Patrick Martin, Brian Merrett, Laureen Sweeney, Ralph Thompson, and Robert Zimmerman. Their professional photographs have added greatly to this issue. We thank them for their generosity.

To end on an uplifting note, an introduction to the Goode estate's large donation to the WHA archives is presented here for the first time. You will learn more about this extraordinary family collection in future issues.

Good reading.

CAROLINE BRESLAW

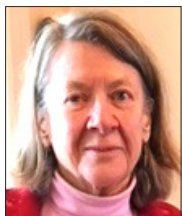


Ann Pearson (1935-2020) PHOTO: RALPH THOMPSON

Ann Pearson (1935-2020)

Although Ann Pearson served on our board of directors for under a year, she took an active role. In addition to participating in board meetings, she gave us valuable advice on the appearance of our website, was responsible for photographing the guest speakers at our lecture series, and also presented a lecture of her own on the Montreal Camera Club, of which she was a long-time member. We remember her fondly and will miss her presence at our events.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



The interruptions in our daily lives caused by the pandemic have been difficult for us all, and the Westmount Historical Association has been affected too. We have done our best to be flexible and to continue serving our members within the restraints imposed by this new way of doing things.

Our lecture series was cut short when the Westmount Public Library had to close, but the two speakers whose lectures were postponed will give them once we are able to gather together again. To compensate for the postponement, Caroline Breslaw rewrote the texts of several walking tours that we have conducted in the past to use as self-guided walking tours, and these were sent by email to our members. In addition, the Board of Directors has agreed to extend the 2019-20 membership year, which would usually have ended on 31 August 2020, until the end of the calendar year. As a result, our current members will receive a third edition of our newsletter in February 2021. Our fiscal year has also been permanently changed to coincide with the calendar year.

Since we were unable to have our Annual General Meeting in May, the board decided to poll our members on whether they agreed postponing it until next year (2021), while retaining our current board of directors until that time. There were no objections to either proposal.

With much sadness we must also announce the death of Ann Pearson, our friend and a member of our board since 2019. Ann's involvement and her skills as a photographer were much appreciated. We will miss her.

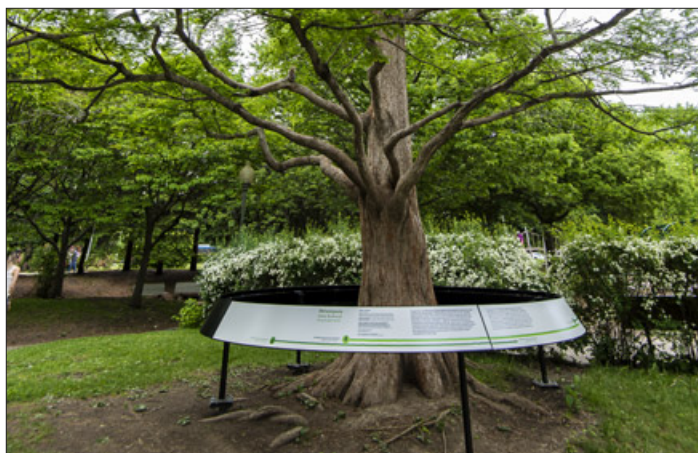
ANNE BARKMAN

Devastation by the Emerald Ash Borer



The City of Westmount's ash trees have been decimated in recent years by the emerald ash borer. Dead trees in the parks and along streets are being cut down and new species are being planted.

PHOTOS:
ROBERT ZIMMERMAN



◀The dawn redwood in Westmount Park now has a protective panel that provides information on this rare species of deciduous conifer from China.

PHOTO: RALPH THOMPSON, 2020

PANDEMIC: THEN AND NOW

When the Spanish Flu epidemic swept the planet in 1918, the world was very different than when Covid19 struck in 2020. Historical events can only be viewed properly through the context of their time. In particular, disease and death were a much more common occurrence than compared to now, and the role of government in dealing with public health was far less pronounced.

In 1918 five years of bloody conflict were coming to a close. With new military technologies and the horrors of trench warfare, WWI saw unprecedented levels of carnage. By the war's end, 16 million troops and civilians had died, with countless others left wounded and maimed.



Daniel Defoe, *A Journal of the Plague Year*

CREDIT: BETTMAN ARCHIVES

20 cases, with six deaths. Syphilis and gonorrhoea were rampant, with 29 per cent of Canadian troops infected in 1915. There were also some 40,000 cases of tuberculosis and 8,000 deaths from it in Canada annually. Each year there were some 300,000 to 400,000 measles cases in Canada with associated deaths, brain damage and deafness. Life-threatening diseases were a fact of life.

A new pandemic in the fall of 1917 was thus not unusual. What was unusual was the scale. Approximately one-third of the world's population became infected with a virulent strain of influenza, commonly known as the Spanish Flu. The flu raged for nearly three agonizing years, on a scale that had not been seen since the bubonic plague wiped out one-third of the world's population in the late Middle Ages.

Some 675,000 Americans died, more than the U.S. casualties of all the wars of the 20th century combined. In Canada 50,000 died, while worldwide between 40 to 100 million people perished.

In Westmount the health report recorded 1,130 cases in 1918. The scourge resulted in 31 deaths in the month of October alone:

We would see the steady stream of hearses winding up Côte des Neiges Road to the cemeteries on Mount Royal. The hearses for children stood out. They were white and drawn by ponies.¹

The flu epidemic lasted for several months, but the years when "catching" illnesses was widespread continued for a long time.



Daniel Defoe, "Bodies in an Open Grave", *A Journal of the Plague Year*.

CREDIT: BETTMAN ARCHIVES

In those days if anyone in your house had such an illness you put a bright red sign on your door, and if you were out walking and saw such a sign you crossed the street so as not to pass the house.¹

The second main difference between 1918 and 2020 was public health. Put succinctly, death was an everyday occurrence. During the 19th century, Montreal recorded the highest mortality rates of

all British North American cities. Montreal had become the industrial centre of Canada, and rapid settlement resulted in working-class families living in crowded, unsanitary, and poorly-built housing. Life expectancy in Canada in 1918 was around 60 years, almost 20 years less than today. The infant mortality rate in Canada, for children under the age of one, was 187 deaths per thousand births; today the comparable figure is 4.3. Mortality for children under five in 1920 for Canada was 239 per 1,000; that is, one quarter of children were dead by the age of five. Today it is 5 per 1,000.

Investing love in young children was so risky, so unrewarding, that it was suppressed as a pointless waste of energy.²

The third significant difference is in the role of government. By the 20th century, public responsibility for the



Volunteers wearing masks feeding children of stricken families during the 1918 Spanish Flu. CREDIT: BETTMAN ARCHIVES

health of the population became more acceptable and fiscally possible. Public health agencies and institutions existed, but mainly at the local level; there was no equivalent of today's Dr. Anthony Fauci. In February 1918 Westmount adopted Bylaw 331 concerning the Board of Health. It provided for the appointment of a medical health officer and the adoption of powers to regulate public meetings, schools, etc. with the intent of restricting the spread of communicable disease. Financially, however, you were on your own. There was no Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB); the only support was from charities.

And yet there were similarities with today. During the Spanish Flu, extreme measures were taken to prevent the spread of infection, such as the closing of schools, churches



In the barber shop during the Spanish pandemic CREDIT: BETTMAN ARCHIVES

and public assemblies. It was not uncommon to see store clerks, barbers, pedestrians, and police officers equipped with protective face masks. Public spaces were frequently fumigated for disease, and indoor gathering spaces such as courts and churches were temporarily relocated outdoors or closed. Non-pharmaceutical interventions, a traditional term for social distancing practices like closing schools and banning large public gatherings, prevented influenza deaths. The pandemic took a lesser toll on cities that implemented these interventions earlier and for longer periods. Quarantine was widely understood. The term originated back in the 1370s in Venice to combat plague. It literally meant 40 days; that was the amount of time that ships had to stand in the lagoon and not unload their goods or passengers.

A compelling difference between the situation in Westmount in 1918 and in 2020 is the fact that throughout 1918-1920, there is only one item noted in all the council meetings relating to the pandemic. On November 5, 1918 Alderman R.B. Common, Commissioner of Police, reported that the number of cases had dropped to four or five per day, and he expressed the opinion that the progress of the epidemic had been adequately arrested. The total number of cases reported to date at that meeting was 1,145, of which 124 were considered severe and called Spanish Influenza. Thirty cases in all had proved fatal.

Thus the means available in 1918 to combat the pandemic – masks, social distancing, quarantine, the closing of schools and churches, and the prohibition on mass gatherings – are the same tools that we use today. The efficacy of these tools depends now, as it did then, largely on the extent to which citizens respect the relevant guidelines and ordinances.

*...individuals are required to surrender individual liberties; responsibilities have to take precedence over rights in a situation like the one we're facing at the moment.*³

That sentiment still resonates with Canadians today.

JON BRESLAW

¹Aline Gubbay, *A View of Their Own, The Story of Westmount*, Price-Patterson, 1998.

²Barbara Tuchman, *A Distant Mirror*, New York: Knopf, 1978.

³Heather MacDougall, historian of medicine and public health, CBC, "The Sunday Edition", April 5, 2020

BRIAN MERRETT: EVOLUTION OF A PASSION

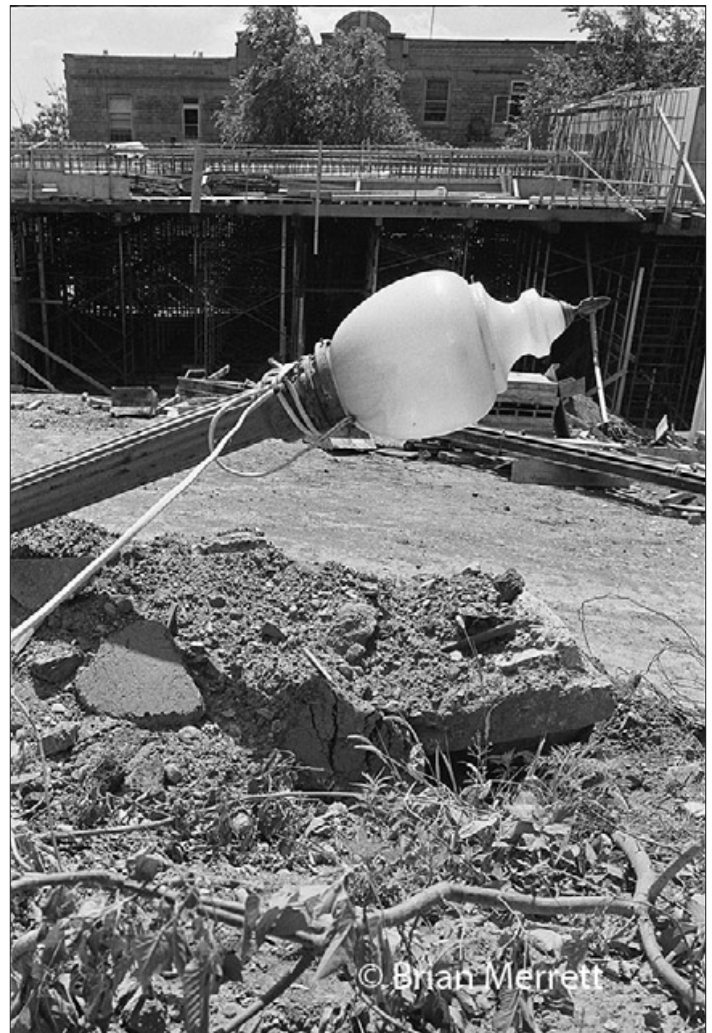
Photographer Brian Merrett has co-published several books with architectural historian François Rémillard. These works focus on built heritage in Quebec, mainly in the Montreal region. Westmount, with its rich architectural heritage, is well represented. Since he began this work in 1969, Merrett's passion for photography and creating awareness of the built environment through it has evolved.

Over the past decades, Merrett has used photography to document important buildings and to chronicle their restoration or their demolition. In the early 1970s when Montreal was undergoing widespread transformation, he recorded the destruction of parts of Shaughnessy Village for the construction of the Ville Marie Expressway and for the widening of then-Dorchester Boulevard. There were plans to replace the Victorian-era Shaughnessy mansion with a new hotel until architect Phyllis Lambert saw his photographs and bought the property, which she transformed into the Canadian Centre for Architecture (CCA). Merrett documented the mobilisation of citizens in Lower Westmount to oppose the tearing down of houses on Greene and Selby streets. He produced panels for the 1972 MMFA exhibition, *Montréal Plus ou Moins*, curated by Melvin Charney. The panels evolved from his Lower Westmount highway project with the Westmount Action Committee (WAC). With his associate, Jennifer Harper, he had photographed the highway demolition, construction, protests, and events from 1969 to 1972 and made the panels using some of those images. They were shown at various places, from Stayner Park to the Place Ville Marie plaza on Earth Day.

Heritage Montreal was formed in 1975 to create awareness of Montreal's built heritage, and Brian Merrett was a member of its founding board. An active campaign was mounted to save many Milton Park neighbourhood buildings, which were slated for demolition. Merrett and Rémillard first met through their involvement in Heritage Montreal in 1984. Three books have resulted from this association. In them heritage buildings throughout the island of Montreal are highlighted – for their beauty, their historical importance, and their architectural merit. In *Montreal Architecture, A Guide to Styles and Buildings*, many Westmount buildings are included in the chronological presentation of important architectural styles, from the Hurtubise House at 563 Côte St. Antoine Road, J. Omer Marchand's CND Mother House (Dawson College), the Church of the Ascension at



House in Lower Westmount slated for demolition

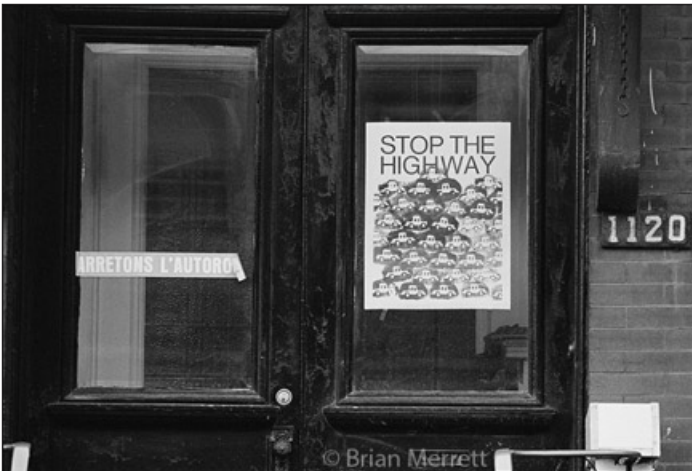


Toppled Westmount lamp post

ALL PHOTOS: BRIAN MERRETT, MONTREAL



Pipes for the construction of the Turcot



'Stop the Highway' campaign sign

Sherbrooke and Clarke, to many private homes.

Merrett emphasizes, with the example of the John Young residence at 16 Severn Avenue, published in *Belles demeures historiques de l'Île de Montréal*, that successive changes to a building over time provide a record of its evolution. Instead



Boarded-up Westmount Train Station in 1994, closed since the 1980s, and still awaiting a new use

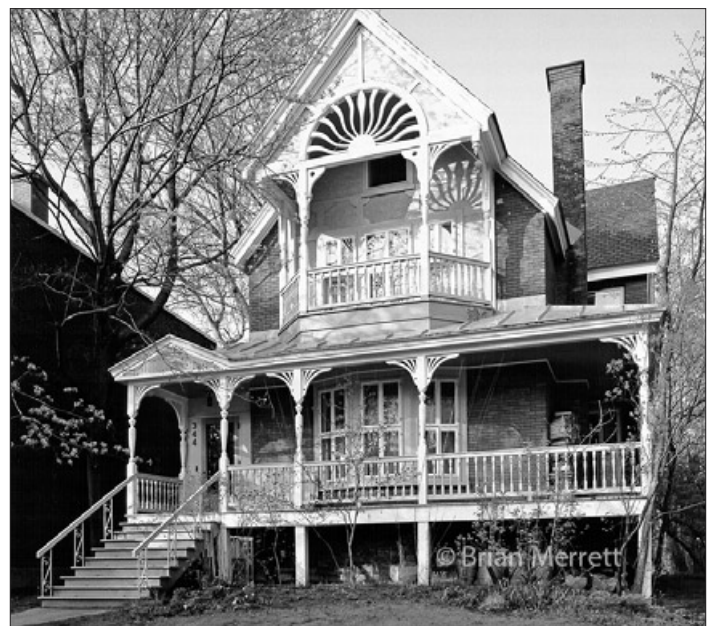


The John Young house at 16 Severn Avenue with changes in the façade reflecting its evolution over time

of demolishing buildings or gutting their interiors, these examples of historical evolution should be preserved. He believes that the greenest buildings are those that are currently standing; they can be repurposed. Through his photographs of many heritage buildings, Brian Merrett has drawn ongoing attention to the importance of heritage buildings. He believes that municipalities and citizens bear an important responsibility in the preservation of the built environment.

CAROLINE BRESLAW

Brian Merrett spoke to the WHA on January 16, 2020.



344 Metcalfe Avenue, a Queen Anne-style home with detailed wood ornamentation, including a rising sun in the gable

REFUGE DURING THE 1998 ICE STORM: THE SHAAR HASHOMAYIM SHELTER

It was 22 years ago – the ice storm started on January 4, 1998, hitting Montreal Island with about 40 millimetres of freezing rain and ice pellets. It lasted five days during which there were massive power outages that left nearly 1.4 million Quebec customers without electricity and at its peak affected 3.5 million Quebecers, some for days, others for several weeks. Downed trees and power lines made many roads inaccessible; vehicles parked outside were encased in ice. For some parts of the province, it took much longer than five days to get back to normal.

The immediate collateral damage of the ice storm: a sudden decline in employment and economic activity. Major hospitals relied on generators for power, traffic lights didn't work, the Montreal metro closed, banks closed, and banking machines short-circuited, limiting people's access to cash to buy goods. "At the elegant Five Seasons grocery store in affluent Westmount, there were so many would-be buyers

that the manager only allowed people in five at a time." (www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/ice-storm-1998)

The following interview with Karin Marks (Westmount City Councillor, 1991-1995 & 1995-2000; Westmount Mayor 2002-2009) was conducted by WHA member Diana Bruno via Skype on April 11, 2020, and edited for clarity, flow and length.

DB: On January 12, 2020 you mentioned that your role during the ice storm was the most memorable part of your time as a city councillor.

KM: Not only memorable, but the best experience. Over the years, people have asked me what was the best experience I had on council, and I think that was it. An odd thing to have



Westmount Park on January 6 during the ice storm

PHOTO: LAUREEN SWEENEY, 1998

as a best experience, but I think it was.

DB: The ice storm started on January 4th and ended five days later. How did Westmount respond, and as a city councillor, what did you do?

KM: Well, we had two shelters in Westmount, one at Victoria Hall, and one at the Shaar Hashomayim, and Mayor Peter Trent was coordinating all the efforts of the fire department, the police, and having daily briefings and meetings with them. I said whatever I can do, I'll be happy to do, and I went over to the shelter at the Shaar to see how I could help. There were people from the Shaar there, and over the next couple of days I ended up kind of coordinating all the efforts at the Shaar. Councillor Cynthia Lulham was tasked with doing the same thing at Victoria Hall, and so we ran two pretty full shelters during this whole period.

Two things made it such a remarkable experience. First, it was what our citizenry did, and it was really a beautiful experience watching people at their best, which is frequently the case when you have some kind of a disaster. And the other was that it allowed me to use my skills, or the things that I most enjoy doing, which is problem-solving and building community, and both of those were very much in need.

DB: Do you remember when the shelter opened and for how long it was open?

KM: I think it was pretty close to the first day of the storm. It may have been the second, but it was pretty close because I know we were there for several nights. The first night we didn't have enough beds and things, and then the army did bring us cots. I don't remember exactly whether people were sleeping on the floor or on the stairs or what was going on, but of course the number of people grew as the days went on. Also, as the days went on, we sent Public Security out to pick up people who were not necessarily willing to come out. Most of them were older people who didn't want to leave their homes, but as the temperature in their homes dropped, Public Security went out to really encourage them, require them, whatever, to come to the shelter.

DB: How did your problem-solving skills help make the shelter at the Shaar a welcoming place?

KM: Well, I think there were, like so many of those things,

issues and questions that came up all the time. Starting from, can anybody come in? What do we do when somebody comes in? There were many phone calls. On the second or third day, I got a phone call from a women's shelter in the east end of Montreal asking us to take in a group of African refugee mothers and their children. They were all victims of domestic abuse and the shelter was very concerned their spouses would find them if they weren't relocated. Somebody transported them, and we had about a dozen or so quite fearful women and children that we had to suddenly find a place for and make comfortable. They spoke little French or English; if we integrated them with everybody, would that work for them? We found a place in the basement, and we found tumbling mats so they could create their own quiet, sort of secure, environment with each other and their children.

There were medical issues. And fortunately a young man, a medical student, not quite an accredited doctor or maybe working at the Shriners, from Latin America, I think, dropped by. We said okay, we know you're not allowed to practice medicine, but if there's anything that you see, you can stay and tell us if we need to bring in a doctor for this.

It was finding resources, using the resources in the most effective way, and it was constant. I have to say that when I did become mayor, it was a bit like that: you'd start your day with the thought about what you were going to do, and then something came along and everything got changed and you had to respond to whatever crisis or whatever immediate need there was.

DB: It sounds like it was mainly Westmount residents, some seniors, and the women from the women's shelter. Was it different age groups? Mostly men? Women?

KM: It was mixed, and I don't know that I would say it was mostly Westmounters. I don't know what the breakdown would have been. I remember a young family from NDG who were so surprised that Westmount had kind of brought them in and not only given them shelter, but accepted them and made them part of this. I saw the father many times later in the park with his kids so he must have felt comfortable in Westmount.

There was also a man with his mother who came from another part of the city and what was so amazing for him was

that the shelter was in a synagogue. He had never been in a synagogue, he was Catholic, and he was also very surprised that he was feeling so accepted and welcome. And those were wonderful, wonderful experiences.

DB: Where exactly was the shelter set up?

KM: Most people were in the large, kind of ballroom-reception room, but the group of refugee women with their children were in the basement. We used the rabbi's study for a young family whose severely autistic son was having a very difficult time accepting and dealing with all of this, and screaming a lot. We used the anteroom to the women's bathroom, a kind of a powder room with mirrors and a little couch, for a woman who was over 100 brought in by Public Security. She was a bit disoriented so it didn't feel right to put her on a cot in the large room with everyone else. She was very happy to be there. In fact, one of my favourite things was that, when she left after five days, she told me this was the best hotel she had stayed in and would recommend it to her family when they came to Montreal.

DB: How were meals handled?

KM: The Shaar was remarkable. They had a full kitchen staff preparing meals; the head of operations and maintenance, Joseph, probably still at the Shaar now, made himself available to us for anything we needed, and the kitchen staff did the same, providing three meals a day plus snacks. Because it was, and still is, a kosher kitchen, we couldn't bring in any food from outside, which some of the other shelters did. The Shaar ordered food and many of their suppliers, butchers and grocers and so on, contributed the food. In fact, dinners were served on tablecloth-covered tables and sometimes the Shaar cantor or the music director played classical piano for us. It was really quite an amazing place.

DB: What did shelter residents do during the day? Just as we're experiencing now with confinement during Covid, people can go stir crazy.

KM: We had a lot of people, from Westmount and outside, who came to volunteer because they had fireplaces, or generators, or had electricity restored after the second or third day and could stay in their homes. We provided art supplies and we had games for the kids to play. Kit Finkelstein, a fitness instructor who now lives out West, came to do armchair

fitness with people every day, I think. A friend of mine, Susan Alain, a great knitter, came in with lots of skeins of wool and needles and taught people how to knit. For some older people who were initially unhappy being there, I assigned each of them a volunteer who would either take them for a walk outside, occasionally and not for long, because the streets were quite icy, or walk with them inside, or would sit and talk with them. The volunteers came as often as possible, some every day. One frequent volunteer was Councillor David Laidley and because he was so charming, he was very much in demand by many of the elderly ladies.

DB: Where did people sleep?

KM: We used the large banquet room as a multi-function place. We set up cots there at night and then moved them out in the morning to put in tables for mealtimes, and then did the reverse each night. There was physical labour necessary and we had to get a lot of healthy able-bodied people to do all of that. You know, my mother is now 103, and I can't imagine how difficult it would have been for elderly people to adapt to living and sleeping in the shelter; I don't think we understand when we're not at that stage of our lives.

DB: Some parts of Westmount lost electricity right away and others lost it a day or two later. What about the Shaar?

KM: I can't remember exactly; the Shaar may have lost electricity but had a small generator. The electricity substation is next door, under the Bowling Green, and at some point electricity was restored; City Hall, across from the Bowling Green, may even have had electricity.

DB: What else stands out for you about the shelter at the Shaar?

KM: I guess it's just the sense that everybody wanted to help and participate and it was almost as difficult to find enough for volunteers to help out with as it was to oversee the shelter. A man I knew brought his two kids saying, "This will be a memory for them, and I want them to see what it's like when people pull together and volunteer." One evening, in the smaller ballroom, a wedding took place as planned because the family had brought in extra generators and, by pure coincidence, the bride was the niece of a very good friend of mine. I'm sure it was a very memorable wedding for the young couple.



Academy Road during 1998 ice storm, with car heading north towards De Maisonneuve with former junior tennis courts on the right. The arena and new junior courts now stand where the road ran.

PHOTO: WHA ARCHIVES

We hoped that the activities we organized would make things normal, but it was a surreal time. The routine, the sameness, and the comfort of the things that we have at home are absolutely essential to our daily lives. To think of people being taken out of their homes and put into this kind of situation, well, it's actually remarkable that there weren't more people who didn't get really ill and suffer serious consequences as a result.

The outside was frightening and dangerous. There was ice falling off the roof of the Shaar; the fire department came to clear everything away to make sure there wouldn't be any danger. There were traumas and there were difficult times, but it was like a small community where people mostly put forward their best. And inside the shelter, there was a certain sense of belonging that was quite amazing. Not always without problems – there was the gentleman with Alzheimer's who began to physically abuse his wife when he woke up because he didn't know where he was and was frightened. The police came in and called for an ambulance to take him

away because it wasn't safe for him or his wife.

Remember the young Latin American man who came by. When he had left his apartment that morning, he found the army outside his building and immediately felt very tense. In his country, when the army is on the street, it's not usually for very positive reasons. He was astonished to find them helping people dig out their cars and breaking up the ice to help them get from point A to point B. And, of course, the army had come to the shelter to deliver and set up all the cots, just another reminder of how incredibly fortunate we are in this country compared to other countries and the kind of fear that some people live under.

And, you know, you like to think that people look at the situation and say, well, we're all in this together. But it wasn't necessarily so for absolutely everybody. I got a phone call from a man who lived at the top of the mountain berating me because he had no electricity while his neighbours did, demanding to know why he didn't have any, insisting his



Sherbrooke Street looking west during the ice storm

PHOTO: LAUREEN SWEENEY, 1998

house to be connected right away. That was distressing because, of course, it was not something within our control.

Then there were the “shelter-shoppers”, not many, who’d been to another shelter, had heard ours was good, stayed, or continued their quest for the shelter with the most amenities. Of course, at that time, we didn’t have the same Internet, the same video, and people were not on their phones all the time. It would be a very different experience today. I don’t think you’d have that same sense of community with older and younger people talking and spending time together. I think today people would be isolated in interactions with their devices.

DB: At the peak, how many people do you think were sheltered at the Shaar?

KM: I don’t know why the number 125 sticks in my mind, but it might have been more.

DB: What was the Mayor’s involvement?

KM: Peter Trent would have met every day with the fire and police and Public Security, to go over all of the things that they were doing, and what needed to be done. He was very active; he came to the Shaar every day, and to the Victoria Hall shelter, just to check in, to say hello to people, to keep in touch. He may or

may not have been staying at the shelter; I don't recall. But he was certainly very present!

DB: And how were the other city councillors involved?

KM: David Laidley would come to talk and walk with people; all the other councillors came and helped out in whatever ways they could. Everyone on council supported the work that Cynthia Lulham and I did coordinating our respective shelters.

DB: As electricity was restored and people started heading to their homes, how did your role change?

KM: When the seniors were ready to go, I made sure a volunteer accompanied each senior and, because we were fairly sure that whatever was in their refrigerators had spoiled, we wanted to make sure we cleaned out their fridges. Most amazing, several people didn't want to leave the shelter. This made me realize there is a real unfilled need for seniors who live alone and who are lonely, and I'm sure it's happening again, now, during the pandemic. I'm sure they didn't want to come to the Shaar but, in the end, they preferred being in that unfamiliar, uncomfortable situation with the kind of company and support and interest they did get to going back home and back to being all alone.

DB: After the ice storm, did Westmount write a playbook to pass down to future councillors or mayors for these kinds of crises or disasters?

KM: Bruce St. Louis, director general then, was very concerned with preparedness for these kinds of situations, and put together a manual and an entire playbook, so to speak, of things that needed to be done. Whether it's still available, whether it's still being used, whether people know where it is, I don't know, but I do know he was also very concerned about Y2K and went above and beyond to get the city ready for all the technological impacts of Y2K.

One of the lessons we learned and, unfortunately, couldn't use later was how important it was to have our own fire and police department. In 1985, our police had become part of the MUC, but they were still Westmount police. In 1998 we

still had our local fire department; under Chief Jim Adams, they worked tirelessly to get ice off people's houses and public buildings, make sure it wasn't falling in the streets, and clear away everything from the fire hydrants to be ready for emergencies. They knew our community and so they knew where the vulnerable places would be; they knew where the seniors' residences were; they knew where they had to make sure that things were carefully attended to, and they did.

After the ice storm, the city passed legislation requiring all elevator apartment buildings over, I think, six stories, to have a backup generator. That's because the fire department and Public Security had had to rescue people with mobility issues stuck in their apartment buildings with no electricity, no working elevators and, of course, no generators.

DB: What happened as people left the shelter and afterwards?

KM: People were so appreciative. And we were so appreciative of the Shaar. They just went about helping in every way, placing orders for food every day, not knowing how long shelter would be needed and not expecting anything in return for their help. Of course, the city reimbursed them, and bought them a generator, which was our way of saying thank you for what they had done and appreciating the way they had opened their doors and their hearts to the community and to the wider community.

DB: A wonderful gesture on the part of the Shaar and a brilliant thank-you gift on the part of the city. Thank you very much.

KM: My pleasure. It's been fun to rethink about it and to relive it. It has brought back very warm and wonderful, wonderful memories.

DIANA BRUNO

PHOTOGRAPHING SHERBROOKE STREET

Did you ever try to remember what existed before in a certain location after a new store opens? What retailer was at the corner of Sherbrooke and Claremont before the new Patisserie Christian Faure opened at the beginning of January 2020? One of the values of making photographs is the memory imbedded in them. I simply look back at the photographs I took the year before to find out it was Swiss Chocolatier and before that it was Mochico shoes and before that, I think, American Apparel that closed in 2017. I am very aware of the changing nature of our busiest street, with new stores side-by-side with long-time businesses: National Food Shop, Papeterie Westmount, Hogg Hardware, Metro, Salon Sophie Coiffure. It is valuable, I think, to document things while they exist. I learned during my years of experience with the Westmount Historical Association how exciting and educational it is to have a photographic record of something from the past.

At noon on Sunday I am getting ready to go out and walk down the gentle slope of my street, Grosvenor, to the corner of Sherbrooke where I will turn west to photograph every



PHOTOS: DOREEN LINDSAY, 2018

building on the sunny north side of the street. I will return along the south side in the shade and adjust my camera lens to zoom slightly so I can frame each building on the opposite side. The sun is bright, but not too bright. I want it to illuminate the front of the building and cast a shadow from each window and doorframe onto its brick or stone frontage to define its shape.

To produce clear photographs of the buildings that stand tightly side-by-side together on this busy, west-end commercial street in Westmount, I rely on the direction and strength of the sun to give me clear sharp photographs.



Collage of businesses on the north side of Sherbrooke Street

The north side of the street gets morning sun and the south side gets afternoon sun as it moves across the sky. Some days the sun can be too bright and cause dark shadows. So a slightly overcast day can be more advantageous.

Of course seeing the world through a camera lens is not equal to seeing the world with our naked eyes. A lens selects things. It leaves out things. If I move closer it exaggerates things. There are many considerations to make when photographing a street. Time of day and position of the sun are paramount. The passing of cars, trucks, bicycles, taxis, buses, people, adults and children and dogs between me and what I want to photograph have to be considered, sometimes avoided. Of course there are traffic lights at the corners that periodically notify all traffic to stop so I have an opening.

Do I want to include the car whizzing past, or the man with his dog standing outside the bank? Most of my time is spent waiting for the right opportunities and conditions. Waiting for the cars and buses to pass, waiting for the street light to change, waiting for the sunlight to be just right. There is less traffic on Sundays when some businesses are closed. Of course I cannot recapture the past, but I can photograph the present now, which will soon become the past.

DOREEN LINDSAY



The former Murray's Restaurant (now McDonald's) at the corner of Sherbrooke and Claremont

PHOTO: GABOR SZILASI, 1992



Salon Sophie on the south side of Sherbrooke Street near Claremont Avenue

PHOTO: DOREEN LINDSAY, 2018



PHOTOS: DOREEN LINDSAY

ORAL HISTORY: EDITH PATON

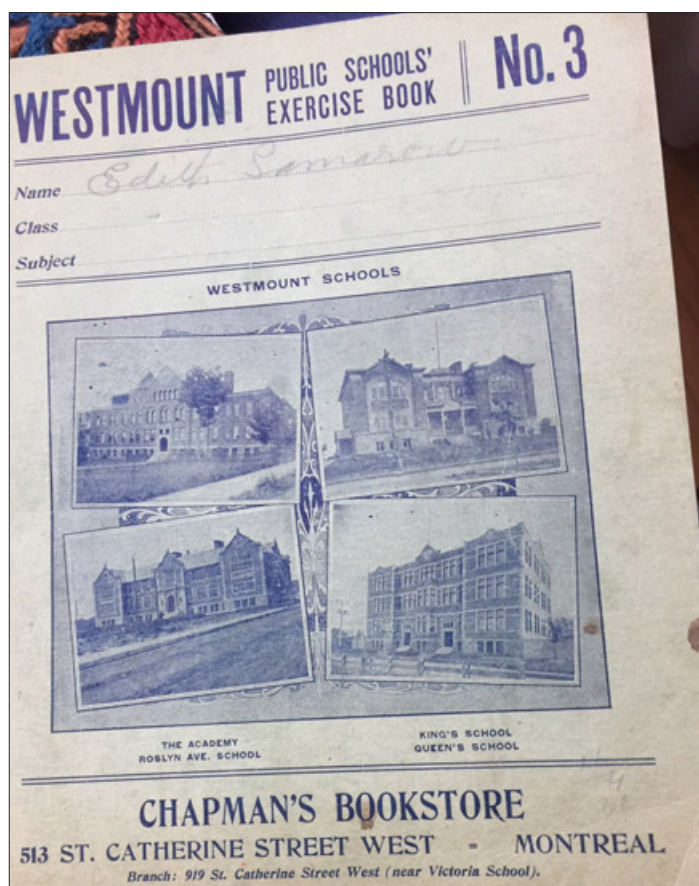
Edith Paton has vivid memories of her happy childhood in Westmount during the 1930s and 1940s. She grew up with her younger brother Anthony Hugh (Tony) in homes on Grosvenor, Belmont, Roslyn, and Sunnyside. Her father, Hugh Paton, had emigrated from Scotland where he had apprenticed as an engineer, and had no relatives in Canada. Her maternal grandmother Samarow's family had a mixed German, Russian, and Scottish background. Edith's mother and aunt were born Westmounters.

In Edith's childhood children were left to their own devices. She walked to Roslyn School on her own, joining a train of children as she went along Roslyn or Victoria Avenue. The school had separate entrances and classrooms for girls and boys. It was wartime, so most of the teachers were older women.

"We had to do certain drills, often to the tune of "Onward Christian Soldiers"! We'd all go in silent lines down to the basement for 'shelter'. We collected five cent war stamps and

filled our books with them. During recess we played ball, skipped rope, or shot marbles, and the boys tussled together or teased the girls... When we got home, we could go all over the place. In those days, children had more freedom than now. We played up and down the Roslyn steps and around the Lookout. Or we rambled in the bushy fields and woods at the crest of Côte St. Luc Road where huge blocks of apartment buildings now stand...The attitude...was that children are strong and can reasonably be left on their own when close enough to home."

Edith's visits to her grandmother hold a special place in her memories. She lived with an elderly lady in an imposing apartment on Western Avenue (De Maisonneuve) where Alexis Nihon Plaza is now. To the young Edith, the old-fashioned apartment seemed vast and splendid. One bedroom off the kitchen was for the maid from France who



The school notebook of Edith's mother with images of Westmount schools on the cover



The Paton family at Lac Oureau in the Laurentians during World War II



Edith Paton with her brother Tony and their grandmother, celebrating his birthday

would be summoned to the dining room by pressing a button under the carpet. Edith slept in her grandmother's room and still treasures the grandfather chair where her dolls slept. She spent time with the elderly lady in her flower-filled bedroom, listening to music on a floor-model radio, and playing with toys in a pan of water. Sometimes



Edith and her friend Anne Hervey on Grosvenor Avenue on their way to Roslyn School c.1938/39 PHOTOS: COURTESY OF EDITH PATON

she leaned out a front window to drop paper-wrapped pennies to the organ-grinder on the street below, who then played her a tune.

Edith went shopping with her grandmother on Greene Avenue. The old Banque Nationale building still stood across from the Post Office at the corner of Western Avenue. Greenberg's Grocery on the corner of St. Catherine Street had a "humungous yellow cat", and old biscuit boxes with exotic scenes on them were piled on the shelves. Dionne's grocery store across the street had sawdust on the floor. Two elderly ladies ran Maitland's Bakery with delicious bread, cakes, English pastries, and Charlotte Russes. "On a summer day a Charlotte Russe was beyond soft, it was in a little paper cup, with a little ... cat's tongue around a cream centre and a maraschino cherry right on top." They took her aunt's Scottie dog for walks in the 'scrappy' baseball field near the apartment.

In the summer of 1939 the family stayed at a cottage in Morin Heights by a little lake and a field full of black-eyed Susans. On the drive back to Montreal at the end of vacation, Edith's father said to her mother, "I'm afraid that we are in for it." And war was declared in September. The whole community was affected by the war. Many people were doing war work and went away. Families tried to help each other. During this time, her 14-year old cousin from England came to stay with them and was like an older brother.

In 1944 the Paton family moved to Belmont Avenue. "We loved our Belmont home and the beautiful street that swept down from The Boulevard to Murray (King George) Park. I enjoyed the street in all seasons, but I remember particularly the autumn when Italian gardeners piled heaps of leaves into expertly-built bonfires that filled the chilly air with smoky-sweet scent. These same gardeners fired up the coal furnaces and cared for the gardens, often growing tomatoes for the house and themselves. Our Murray Park was the ideal place for winter sports. In summer there was the old-fashioned pleasure of taking our beautiful miniature sailing ships to the boat pond. In those days there were many horses in the street. Milk and bread were delivered to the door, and the horses knew where they could expect a treat. During the time we lived on Belmont, my father caught scarlet fever, which was very serious. My mother and grandmother cared for him at home, so our house was under strict quarantine and my brother and I had six weeks out of school...My father recovered, and in 1945 victory ...was declared. Every house was decked with a flag, and we all stood out in the spring sunshine." It was May of 1945.

Edith started her high school studies at Trafalgar School in 1945. When she was still under 16, her mother smuggled her in to see the movie *National Velvet* at the Kent Theatre, with Edith wearing lipstick to make her look older. After her graduation, she was given a black and tan corgi. Edith went on to study for an arts degree at McGill University. From 1950-1952 her family lived in NDG, where Edith recalls buying vegetables at a farm kiosk on Upper Lachine Road and getting flowers from Neilson's Florist with its greenhouse on Decarie at Snowdon Avenue. After the family moved to Roslyn Avenue below Sherbrooke in 1952, she took her dog for walks through Westmount Park every day. In 1956 they went to Sunnyside, remaining there for six years. They were back within steps of their home on Grosvenor.

In 1962 her parents bought the house at 61 Windsor Avenue, which remains Edith's home today. After graduating from McGill, she went to the Mother House secretarial school to learn to type. Then she began to work at ICAO. Edith took the bus to the office which moved its headquarters three times over her career. Her brother returned from a CIDA contract in Peru with his Peruvian wife, and they joined the family on Windsor until moving to B.C. Edith's two nieces took their first hesitant steps at Prince Albert Park. Large extended family gatherings ended as her brother and then her grandmother moved out west. Edith's mother passed away in 1988. Doris Mofford, a lady from the Caribbean who worked for her next-door neighbour Aline Gubbay, helped her care for her father. Edith spent time at the Gubbays watching as Aline's daughters grew up, and continued visits at Aline's apartment when she moved. The elderly Alice Lighthall once gave Edith a treasured private guided tour of the Hurtubise House up the hill.



Edith and her neighbour Dr. Fred Wiegand on Windsor Avenue in the 1980s



Edith on her friend Erin Hogg's back porch on Windsor Avenue in 2020
PHOTO: ERIN HOGG

Edith took early retirement so she could spend more time with her father who had suffered a severe stroke. He spent two years in Goodwin House, a care home on Metcalfe Avenue, until he died in 1998. Her two nieces lived with her while at university in Montreal, as have other students. Edith was the "happiest of 'aunts' to attend four graduations during those years." Doris still continues to help her. Edith enjoyed taking tai chi classes at Victoria Hall with Andrew Dearlove until arthritis forced her to give it up.

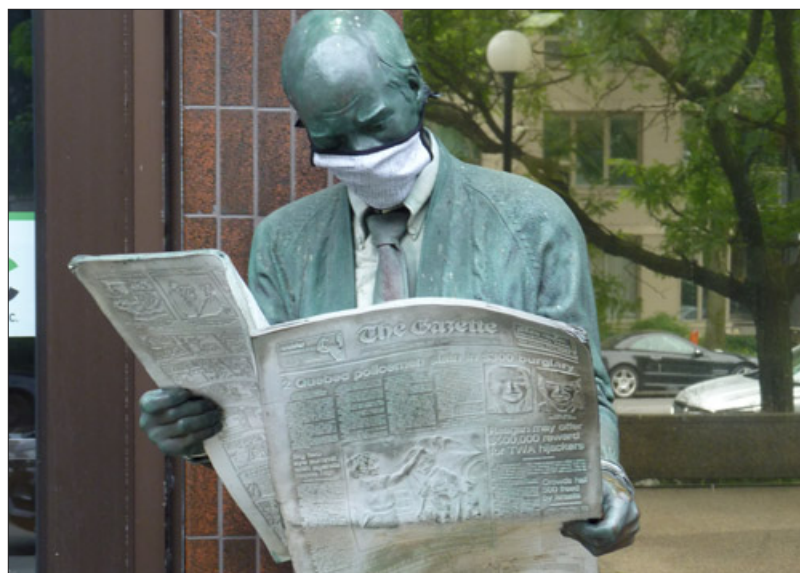
Edith's interviews revealed her joy in life and a wealth of happy memories. She observed that there used to be far fewer cars, even into the 1970s. "There was a lot of walking on the street, and you got to know people just from the bus...There was a certain togetherness of people." Nowadays Edith enjoys her Westmount community on Windsor Avenue, spending time with her great friends of over 50 years, Erin Hogg and Pam Davy. Music has continued to give her pleasure, whether going to the Cammac Music Centre or attending SMAM concerts at St. Léon de Westmount. Despite the restrictions of arthritis, she continues to take delight in the birds and squirrels in her garden and feels great appreciation for the kindness and generosity of her friends and neighbours. At a summer picnic for elders last year at the Hurtubise House, "we felt such delight, chatting to each other and exchanging experiences."

Edith Paton was interviewed by Caroline Breslaw before the Covid-19 pandemic.



Westmount Lookout

COVID-19 IN WESTMOUNT



Sculpture, Sherbrooke near Greene



Sherbrooke St. 'parklet' near Victoria



Tent on City Hall lawn



Lawn Bowling Clubhouse



Greene Ave. 'parklet' lane



Pedestrian lane on Côte St. Antoine



City Hall back entrance

PHOTOS: PATRICK MARTIN & JON BRESLAW, 2020

FROM THE ARCHIVES



Brothers T.G. (left) and J.D. Goode at home, 1891



Back view of Goode House, 1890



St. Germain farmhouse on Côte St. Antoine Rd., 1892



Côte St. Antoine Rd. at Lansdowne looking east, 1890



Mirror commemorating Queen's Diamond Jubilee, 1897

Announcing the Goode Fonds: a Significant New Acquisition

With gratitude, the WHA acknowledges receiving an invaluable collection of family documents and photographs from the estate of Larry Goode, long-time owner of 178 Côte St. Antoine Road, the historic Metcalfe Terrace residence that had been home to members of the Goode family for almost 140 years. In 2018 Larry Goode was interviewed for the WHA's ongoing oral history project and featured in that fall's issue of this newsletter. Larry Goode died last December at the age of 87.

The donated materials, which span many decades from as far back as the mid-1880s, comprise an archival collection now known as the Goode Fonds. Although the current pandemic situation prevents a complete examination and inventory, it is clear the contents of the new fonds are both varied and extensive. There will be significant new material to enjoy and share with other researchers into our local history. The first boxes to be opened have revealed a wealth of handwritten correspondence, legal documents, diaries, a detailed gardening journal, and many photos. Many of the latter were taken by patriarch J.B. Goode, a passionate amateur photographer who brought his bride back from England in 1883, moving into the Metcalfe Terrace house. J.B. Goode

recorded Westmount in the 1880s and 90s. Later his son, John Dudley Goode (Larry's father), used a panoramic camera to capture images of family members and local scenes that he developed in a basement darkroom in the same house. The diaries and gardening journals provide a personal glimpse of life here long ago through a woman's voice – in this case that of Ellen Goode, the wife of J.B. Goode (and Larry's grandmother). The collection also features an item of late Victorian memorabilia that is possibly unique in Westmount. Shown here along with a sample of other photos from the Goode Fonds, it is an ornamental brass wall mirror with candelabra that commemorates Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee in 1897.

Earlier this year, the house at 178 Cote St. Antoine was sold. Westmount's Local Heritage Council has studied the property, and the Goode House will be given a special heritage designation by Westmount to acknowledge the uniqueness of the home's interior and of its garden.

You will learn more about the history and significance of the Goode House and the family who cherished it over the years in next year's February issue of the *Westmount Historian*.

JANE MARTIN, WHA ARCHIVIST