

The Westmount Historian

NEWSLETTER OF THE WESTMOUNT HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

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Elm tree in Murray Park

PHOTO: RALPH THOMPSON, 2009

RESEARCHING OUR ROOTS



Association historique de Westmount
Westmount Historical Association

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HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

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EDITOR'S MESSAGE



The theme of this edition of *The Westmount Historian* is 'researching our roots'. Many of us have been doing just that, propelled by a longtime interest and enabled by a lot of time spent indoors in the past few years. So many fine articles have been submitted to this publication that there will be spillovers into future issues.

In the lead article, urbanist David Hanna writes about the Westmount Train Station and the CPR. He outlines possible uses for this municipal building, which he spoke about to a packed Victoria Hall in April. Jan Fergus, our Westmount Memories coordinator, presents a collage of anecdotes by Westmounters about the train station. Matthew Elder delves into his family's Westmount connection, initially explored in the *Westmount Independent* in November, 2022. Barbara Winn shares her information and sources about four generations of the Winn family and its many homes in our community. Sharon Gubbay-Helfer updates us on her ongoing research for a book about her mother Aline Gubbay's photography mentor Germaine Kanova. Maurice Poggi remembers his childhood in a home near King's School. Ralph Thompson has captured this issue's theme with his 2009 photograph of the sculptural roots of a spectacular elm tree in Murray Park. The elm had Dutch Elm disease and was later cut down.

Many other people are actively researching their own families and family businesses. The WHA is pleased to provide this publication and its archives, which can disseminate and safeguard this valuable work.

CAROLINE BRESLAW



Recent Event – David Hanna giving his talk in Victoria Hall in April PHOTO: WPL

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



The Westmount Historical Association had a busy spring and summer, beginning with the preparation for the lecture: Westmount Train Station: CPR History and a Future Vision, by guest speaker and Westmounter David Hanna, PhD, a heritage expert and former professor of urban planning. The very interesting and well-illustrated lecture was held on Wednesday, April 12, in Victoria Hall. It was presented in collaboration with the Westmount Public Library and was very well attended.

A 20-minute oral interview with the speaker by Board member Caroline Breslaw was previously emailed to members of the WHA as a lead-up to the lecture. In it, David provided background to his lifelong interest in trains.

Another highlight during this period was the forwarding to WHA members of a 10-minute recording by Sharon Gubbay Helfer, Aline Gubbay's daughter, about her latest research project. The recording is based on her mother's photography mentor, Germaine Kanova. Sharon continues the story of her discoveries in this Fall issue of the newsletter 'Researching Our Roots'.

The WHA held its Annual General Meeting (AGM) on Thursday, May 25th, from 7:00 to 8:00 PM. The meeting link and supporting documents were forwarded to members registered to attend the virtual event. The Board members welcomed the incoming member, Irina Nazarova, who was elected Secretary for the coming year. Irina is an architect, who graduated from McGill University and has worked worldwide.

The theme selected for the Fall 2023 WHA lecture series, as approved by the Board, is the "Westmount Public Library since 1899". We are pleased that this 3-part lecture series serves as a prelude to the WPL's upcoming 2024 celebrations. The free of charge in-person or Zoom talks will be open to all who register. We expect the talks by excellent speakers to be popular and well attended. The WHA is grateful to the Westmount Public Library for its collaboration in this series.

The members of the Board of Directors, who are all volunteers, appreciate the support of the WHA members. Henry Olders has provided his invaluable technical expertise by recording the David Hanna interview and lecture. We look forward to seeing you at our upcoming events.

LOUISE CARPENTIER

WHA FALL 2023 LECTURE SERIES WESTMOUNT PUBLIC LIBRARY SINCE 1899

This 3 lecture series is a prelude to Westmount Public Library's 2024 celebrations to mark its 125th anniversary. It begins with the evolution of the building complex, then goes inside to learn about the expansion of collection, programmes and services, and ends by delving into the treasures housed in its archives. The series is done with the collaboration of WPL.

September 21, Thursday

The Architectural Evolution of Westmount Public Library: 1899 to today

Speakers: **Julia Gersovitz & Rosanne Moss**, founding partners of EVOQ Architecture, with **Peter Trent**, former Mayor of Westmount

October 19, Thursday

125 Years of Collections, Programmes, and Services at Westmount Public Library

Speakers: **Peter McNally**, Professor Emeritus & Director, History of McGill Project; **Donna Lach**, Assistant Director, Library and Community Events, & **Wendy Wayling**, Children's Librarian at WPL

November 23, Thursday

Treasures of the Archives: art, postcard collection, ephemera

Speaker: **Lora Baiocco**, Online Services & Archives librarian

*All lectures will take place in Westmount Public Library, 4574 Sherbrooke St. W., from 7 to 9 pm
For more information & to register for free in-person and Zoom attendance: wha.quebec*

Series prepared by Caroline Breslaw & Louise Carpentier

WESTMOUNT STATION: CANADIAN PACIFIC HISTORY AND FUTURE VISIONING

By DAVID B. HANNA, PhD

The building at the foot of Victoria Avenue is familiar to all, both as one of Westmount's most iconic and historically important structures, but also as a monumental failure in repurposing. The Canadian Pacific station was abandoned in 1984. After 14 years of back and forth negotiations, the City of Westmount finally secured ownership in 1998.

One would think that finding a use for this former railway station would be a very simple task. It is well-located in one of the wealthiest and most heritage-conscious municipalities in Canada and is adjacent to a vibrant commercial and residential district. There is no shortage of money, either private or public, in Westmount. But a quarter of a century later, Westmount is still no closer to repurposing this iconic building, although other cities, towns and even small villages all across North America have successfully repurposed their stations with excellent results.

WESTMOUNT STATION'S HISTORY

Canadian Pacific was created in 1881 for the purpose of building a transcontinental railway from North Bay, Ontario, to the Pacific coast. In 1885 the last spike was planted. In 1886, the line was fully operational. By 1889, William Van Horne had pushed the system into Québec, Southern Ontario and to St. John NB, giving the CPR the coast-to-coast network it has today, minus its later US

extensions.

By 1889, the CPR was by far the longest railway in the World. By 1891, Van Horne had added a trans-Pacific fleet, and in 1903 he added a trans-Atlantic one, making it "The World's Greatest Transportation System". This year, Canadian Pacific formally acquired a vast US network reaching into Mexico, becoming the only North American railway to serve three countries.

Westmount entered the picture in 1887 when Van Horne decided to build a more direct line to downtown Montreal for his burgeoning empire and construct a Richardsonian Romanesque masterpiece of a terminal, Windsor Station. The CPR expropriated the entire edge of the coteau, running across several Westmount farms and the lawns of Montreal mansions to Windsor Street. A wooden trestle was built across the Glen in 1888, replaced by the current Glen Arch in 1892, which was doubled in width in 1919.

The first Westmount Station was erected at the foot of Abbott Avenue in 1896 (long gone), then the present station in 1907, in a respectable Prairie style, by William Painter, architect of the grandest extension of Windsor Station, the huge St-Antoine wing. Finally the enormous passenger car and locomotive facility, Glen Yard (now the hospital grounds), was added in 1905-06.

Some of the World's most famous trains have passed through Westmount. The "Pacific Express" was the first. Commuter trains also emerged from the beginning,



Westmount Station in 1909

CREDIT: CP ARCHIVES



Luxury sleeping car on the "Imperial Limited" in 1899

CREDIT: CP ARCHIVES



Inaugural departure of "The Canadian" in 1955

CREDIT: CP ARCHIVES

stopping in Westmount by 1892 and still running today. In 1899, the incredibly luxurious Baroque "Imperial Limited" to Vancouver was launched. In turn, it was replaced by the Neo-Classically styled "Trans-Canada Limited" in 1924. By this time, there were 31 major trains going by, including "The Red Wing" serving Boston, "The Montreal Limited" serving New York, and "The Overseas", originating in Chicago and connecting with CP's "Empress" and "Duchess" fleet of ships.

Not to be forgotten were the popular weekend "Ski Specials", originating at Westmount Station and ferrying enthusiasts all through the Laurentians during the 1930s to 1950s. The 1939 Royal Train began its tour carrying King George VI and Queen Elizabeth across Canada, roaring up the hill from Windsor Station behind a gleaming silver and blue locomotive and train. The grand finale was the launching of "The Canadian" in 1955, a shiny stainless steel Art Deco streamlined train with dome cars.

CONSTRAINTS ON REPURPOSING THE STATION

Zoning is the first hurdle to understand and work within when considering the repurposing of the station. By-law 1303 calls for the station's site to become a Heritage Interpretation Centre and/or an Exhibition Centre. What this means is that shops, cafés, a community centre, or office space are out of the question. The building must exhibit something and/or interpret something, preferably linked to our heritage. There is little point in attempting to change the zoning. This was tried in 1996, when it was to be zoned "community centre and protective services" and was soundly defeated by referendum.

The other constraints are of an urban planning nature. The housing built on both sides of the station stands close

to it. The boundaries between public and private space are unclear. For example, the residents have a right-of-access over the public park road leading up to the station for their rear parking. On the other hand, a sizeable green strip of land behind the houses is actually publicly-owned, but has been encroached on by the home owners. This is vital park space for any future project. Much needs to be done to protect everyone's interests, public and private.

What are the possibilities?

HERITAGE BASED PROPOSALS CONFORMING WITH THE ZONING

• Proposal #1: The Économusée network

The Économusée is a Québec invention with 120 registered establishments mostly in Québec, but increasingly in Alberta and BC, Ireland and the Scandinavian countries. As a formally recognized museum type, it seeks to revive traditional crafts, by actually engaging in their production, while exhibiting the craft to the public free of charge, and by offering paid classes training young people in the same. It runs by the slogan "Revive, Watch, Pass on and Live from the Craft". The network offers a 3-15 month Launching membership to develop a business plan, a 4-36 month Transition membership to help set up design, graphics and content, before requiring a Regular membership sustaining the enterprise and publicity concerns.

Three examples of Économusées, which conform to our zoning, are Papeterie St-Gilles in St-Joseph-de-la-rive, producing craft paper and art screen reproductions in a former schoolhouse; the Montebello CPR station converted to artisanal chocolate production; and Les Forges de Montreal in Point St-Charles, training blacksmiths and reproducing complex Victorian wrought iron work. These offer features



Les Forges écomusée in Pt. St. Charles PHOTO: DAVID HANNA

such as tours, products for sale, and historical exhibits.

• **Proposal #2: The CÉGEP Vieux-Montréal traditional crafts programme**

Another network worth exploring is the outreach traditional craft training programme offered by Cégep Vieux-Montréal. This innovative programme has partnered with enterprises across Montreal, offering on-site training in textiles, leatherwork, glass-making, ceramics, jewelry, cabinet-making, and lute-making.

An example is Espace Verre in Point St-Charles, housed an old fire hall. It resembles the Économusée concept but through a different network. On the ground floor is the actual art-glass making, while the second floor offers rotating glass exhibits and products by its own artisans for sale. Money is made from the training it offers in English and French.

For Westmount, no matter which network is used, an ideal fit might be architectural wood-working for porches, fretwork, gables and balconies; or a leaded glass and stained glass window workshop and museum, both traditional crafts which are in very high demand throughout the city.

Ancillary proposals incorporating trains:

Trains should be included in the repurposing project, since that is what Westmount Station was all about. This can be accomplished in two simple ways:

1) A Westmount CPR history exhibit:

With the exceptional railway history described above, an exhibit space must be set aside by the city within the station, perhaps in its Express wing. This space could profile some of Canadian Pacific's renowned art posters on trains. It could also feature residents' photographs of the immediate area.

2) A train-watching platform:

Train watching is a very popular pastime for young and



Custom ironwork made at Les Forges PHOTO: DAVID HANNA

old alike. The back of the station or part of the park could be converted to a safe train-viewing platform for the public and turned into an attraction for watching the 80-odd trains which pass daily. This is a prized addition to many US municipalities of late.

FUTURE ACTION

The formal presentation of this history and proposals was given by the author in Victoria Hall on April 12 before an audience of 200 people or 1% of Westmount's population. The next stage belongs to the city administration and the citizens. Ordering a clean-up of the interior would be a useful starting point; a public consultation might be ordered simultaneously. A citizens' steering committee might be created. Most importantly, an entrepreneur who can fulfill one of these ideas needs to be found. Perhaps a funding campaign, such as the one for the Recreation Centre, might be organized. It is up to us to do something now. Let's make 2024, the 40th year since the station's abandonment, mark a new beginning for Westmount Station.



Train viewing platform in Fairport, NY

CREDIT: CSX RR

MEMORIES OF WESTMOUNT TRAIN STATION

BY JAN FERGUS

The Westmount train station was once a community hub for both adults and children in ways very hard to imagine now. But fortunately a number of Westmounters responded to the WHA's call about 25 years ago for memories of the station. These remain in our archives and even a short selection from them can make Westmount Station come alive for those of us who have only seen it neglected and boarded up.

Most of the anecdotes and descriptions by adults recollect what it was like to visit the station when they were young. For children, the trains were thrilling – giant noisy monsters only partially tamed by riding on rails. As Annette Woolf described, "The big headlight on the front of the mighty engines and the bells on the top ... as the train glided into the station always announced an arrival, and one felt the power – the weight of that engine as it came to a stop." For an anonymous writer who lived on Western Avenue, now De Maisonneuve, whenever it "would not be very pleasant in the Park we were taken to the station.

There we could usually find places on the hard wooden seats while we waited for the exciting moment when there would be a puff of smoke, way down the track. Gradually the spot grew larger and the wonderful sound of those huge wheels on the tracks became louder – then the moment of great excitement when engine, coal box, baggage car followed by all the passenger cars slowly rolled past us all [and] gradually came to a full stop." One child saw the trains at night in the Glen behind the station as magical. According to Annette Woolf, "The main yards beyond the Station were a source of constant movement as the big trains – including the transcontinental ones – were made up there. There was constant shunting with whistles or bells ringing or yard engines puffing. After dark it was like a fairyland with men walking about, climbing on and off trains, moving switches, etc., always with a lamp swinging in a hand. ... On cold winter evenings the steam from these trains wafted about giving an even more ethereal atmosphere!"

Elspeth Angus, whose father worked for the C. P. R., made a game of the tunnel under the tracks which was



Children watching "CP Jubilee" on a test train to Smiths Falls at Westmount Station

CREDIT: CP ARCHIVES



Train tracks in Glen Yards

installed to make crossing them safer and whose “entrance was on the west end of the station.” She described the excitement that she and her friends felt while running to stand “in the middle of the passageway while a heavy locomotive rumbled overhead.” She continued, “I can not remember whether the structure actually shook but there was a creaking sound. Even better than this was when two trains passed each other. Then the dash upstairs to see if

you could count the number of cars involved; and, if it was a freight train, to wave wildly at the trainman in the caboose. How pleased and important we felt when one of the crew waved back.” Instead of this rush to the tunnel, which was the “more exciting choice,” Elspeth would sometimes head to “the tracks facing the main station platform “to place “a precious cent on a rail, no one-cent candy at Frye’s stationery store that day. You had to stand guard or the resultant flattened coin would be grabbed by someone else, or so one thought.” If Elspeth’s father was with them, she and her sister could learn whether a freight train was expected, either because of his “quiet word” with the station master or baggage handler, or perhaps because he could understand the Morse code transmissions that “rattled out” from a room with a table that “looked out over the main-line tracks.”



CP ski train at Val Morin in 1938

CREDIT: CP ARCHIVES

Already in these accounts we can see that for children, the powerful trains and their station stops naturally gave rise to fascination, to play, to games – so much so that adults could hope to amuse and distract children by taking them to the station. In fact, one writer, quoted by Aline Gubbay, described going to the station with his brothers and a nanny, who “loved to read lengthy, romantic novels. In the warm days she used to take us to Westmount station. The three of us sat on one of those long benches on the platform. We, the boys, had a whale of a time watching the activities of the station, while our nanny had the peace of a library to enjoy her hobby.” That is, the station was active,

bustling, labour-intensive. Long wooden benches inside and outside held passengers as well as eager children; Sally Landsey noted a counter at the east end of the waiting room where souvenirs, newspapers, candy and more were on sale, the “wickets attended by friendly clerks,” and the “baggage room at the east end of the station. A busy place.” Some of the outside activity was portrayed by the anonymous writer who lived on Western Avenue: “Down the track the station attendants pushed the wagon laden with trunks, suitcases and sometimes mail bags towards the baggage car and quickly unloaded their burden.” After conductors had helped passengers into the cars, and once the head conductor had looked up and down the platform, mounted the step, waved to the engine driver, and called out ‘All aboard,’ then “Immediately a man would come out, change the board which had the train’s destination printed on it, and replace it with that of the next train.”

Adults valued different aspects of the station than did children, especially the trains’ convenience and reliability. Once Una Wardleworth left her glasses on the train, which carried on to Windsor Station, and the next day she was impressed that she was able to pick them up at Westmount Station. Some used the station to commute – a healthy practice, since it often involved daily walks. Una recounted that the teacher Sally Landsey commuted from Hudson for 20 years, and when she “left the station she walked briskly

to the school to which she was posted, whether it was [on] Côte St. Antoine, Academy Rd., or St. Catherine St.” According to the Western Avenue memoirist again, “A daily occurrence in my home was the departure of my father to take the 8:20 train to Windsor Station; then he would [walk] the rest of the way to his office located near the canal, coming home the same way. I know he always had 2 pennies in his vest pocket to buy a ‘Star.’” Not everyone walked: Dr. Henry Scott recalled “Putting on skis before you left the house and skiing all the way to the station.” He was perhaps heading for a ski train. Una Wardleworth asserted that “Nobody will ever forget the ski trains which left Westmount Station on Friday night or Saturday morning during the winter season heading for the Laurentians. The cars were a forest of skis standing in the racks between the seats. It was always a noisy and colourful crowd of enthusiastic skiers. Get aboard Jack Rabbit!” The Western Avenue writer elaborated, “Those were wonderful trips as we always found plenty of pals aboard. A vendor of candy, chocolates, pop was always very popular.

After a busy day of skiing there would be one final ski to get the down train, back to the city and reality. In spite of weariness there was always plenty of singing and good fun.” Evidently, the station’s regular train services could sometimes create a joyous community among adults as well as children.



Front of Westmount Train Station in 1914

CREDIT: CP ARCHIVES

THE ELDER FAMILY: MEDICAL ACHIEVEMENT AND HISTORICAL ADVENTURE

BY MATTHEW ELDER

We all have at least some knowledge of our ancestral past, whether it be fairly recently on another continent, or from many generations in Westmount or in the Montreal area. The information we have may be purely anecdotal – verbal fact and lore passed on from our parents and grandparents. Or, particularly in the case of multi-generational Westmounters, our family story is supported by in some cases a plethora of documents: letters, essays, certificates, photographs, and perhaps even a laboriously handwritten (but invariably out-of-date) family tree.

In the case of my family, my siblings and I were raised knowing at least something of the two or three generations that preceded us. We were well aware of the medical and military achievements of our paternal grandfather and great-grandfather, and that our father was following in their footsteps on the same path of excellence in medicine

and social contribution. We had somewhat less information on my mother's family, although we knew our great grandfather, Wellington Dixon, had roots in Prince Edward Island, a heritage that saw us spend most of our childhood summers at a beach hotel there. Dixon was a prominent Montreal educator at the turn of the 20th century, and lived in Weredale Park.

My father was John Munro Elder, his grandfather's namesake whose inscription on the family monument in Mount Royal Cemetery would always give Dad pause on our visits up there. He was the Elder family's unofficial historian, and, as a history graduate and journalist, I instinctively inherited this role from him. Thus, most of my ancestral knowledge lies on the paternal side. During the years preceding his death in 2006, my father made me aware of a number of boxes of letters and documents that served as an impromptu family archive. It wasn't until recently that I mustered the energy – and courage – to delve into this sea



Great-grandfather, Lt.-Col. J.M. Elder, MD

CREDIT: ELDER FAMILY ARCHIVES

of material, much of it contained in old shirt boxes from long-extinct menswear shops. The contents, mostly letters exchanged between my father and family members during the middle of the last century, provide a lot of atmosphere (and some facts) surrounding my parents' and grandparents' lives. There are some true gems too, such as diaries and award certificates.

These archives added considerable spice to my knowledge of the pivotal roles played by my grandfather, John Elder, and great-grandfather, Herbert Elder, in the provision of medical services to the Canadian Army during both world wars. Herbert rose to the rank of Brigadier in charge of the Army's medical corps in Northwest Europe during the Second World War, following in the footsteps of his father, John, who was a colonel during the First World War, a Colonel and commanding officer of the McGill-operated No. 3 Canadian General Hospital in Boulogne, France. Herbert was also in France during the First War, as a 16-year-old bugler attached to the No. 3 Hospital. Among John's colleagues there was Lt-Col John McRae, author of the

iconic war poem, 'In Flanders Fields'. Early in John's medical career, he was posted to Manitoba as a Surgeon-Lieutenant during the Riel Rebellion. In peacetime, Herbert and John were senior surgeons at the Montreal General Hospital.

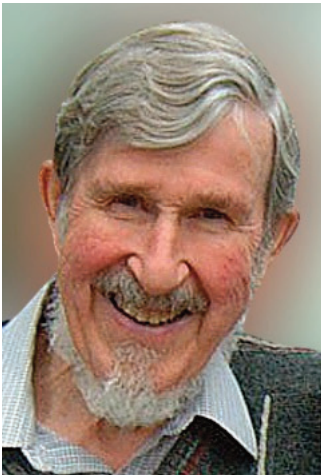
My father, John, was an artilleryman during the Second War, and went on to a career in medicine post-war, serving as perhaps Westmount's best-known pediatrician, practising at his office across from Westmount Park. He also served as a Westmount school commissioner, playing a key role in introducing a French immersion program in Westmount's elementary schools.

Perhaps the greatest archival find of all was a lengthy sociology paper my father wrote as an undergraduate at McGill. This essentially is a family history from the arrival in the Huntingdon area in 1813 of his great-great-grandfather, George Elder, from Scotland, until the time of writing in the late 1940s. This 24,000-word paper covers early family history, including detailed character profiles of his grandparents, parents, siblings and even pets. Beyond family information, it also provides a fascinating



Grandfather Herbert M. Elder, bugler

CREDIT: ELDER FAMILY ARCHIVES



Father, John Elder,
pediatrician

CREDIT: MATTHEW ELDER

description of life in Westmount and Montreal during the post-war years.

Relatives are another source of ancestral knowledge, often in regard to older branches of the family tree. In our case, a cousin has done considerable research into my paternal grandmother's family, the Pangmans, some of whom were Westmount residents. This area of my ancestry includes some truly interesting and accomplished individuals, including Peter Pangman, who explored

the Canadian Northwest with Peter Pond during the 18th century. He later settled in Mascouche, off the northeast corner of Montreal Island, by purchasing the seigneurie of a departing seigneur who was returning to France post-Conquest. Several years ago, a relative in Huntingdon area contacted me for information on my branch of the family and treated me to a tour of the area, including several cemeteries full of Elder tombstones, as well as a stop at the site of the family's original farm settlement in Hinchinbrook.

Of particular note is the story of my great-great-grandfather, William Robertson, who had come to Canada from Scotland by way of a shipwreck in 1805 off Cape Breton Island. He survived and took refuge in the home of Sir William Campbell, attorney general of Cape Breton, where he met Campbell's daughter, his future bride. After a number of years as an army surgeon, including participation in the War of 1812, Dr. Robertson established a medical practice in Montreal and subsequently was named the district of Montreal's medical examiner. He became a senior member of the new Montreal General Hospital's staff and, soon after, was a co-founder of the McGill Faculty of Medicine. Dr. Robertson later served as Chief Magistrate of the City of Montreal during the time of the 1837 Rebellion, and had to deal with a riot on Place d'Armes in which three Patriote rioters were killed. Accused wrongfully by Louis-Joseph Papineau of ordering the soldiers to shoot, Dr. Robertson challenged Papineau to a duel, which the latter turned down on the excuse he was condemning my ancestor for public, not private, acts. My genetic connection to William Robertson was through my grandmother, Mary Robertson Pangman, my father's mother and wife of

Herbert.

The above are examples of how certain individuals can dominate the results of ancestral research. A greater challenge is to fill in the literally hundreds of blanks representing the many other individual entries and branches of a family tree. Of course, this process is almost certain to reveal many other stories of interest. In the absence of information to support additions to a detailed family-tree document, online tools such as Ancestry.ca prove invaluable. I have made only limited use of this extensive resource, but intend to do so as I further explore the broader branches of my family history.

For more on the Elder family's medical story and their Westmount connection, see 'The Elder family: A study in medicine, wartime service and Westmount' in the *Westmount Independent* November 2022, page 22: westmountindependent.com/WIv16.11b.pdf



Painting of great-great-grandfather William Robertson, hanging in Holmes Hall, McGill Faculty of Medicine

PHOTO: MATTHEW ELDER

MY FAMILY IN WESTMOUNT

Few Westmounters can trace their family roots in Westmount back four generations. Barbara Winn can and over years has carried out research on her family and their homes here.

BY BARBARA WINN

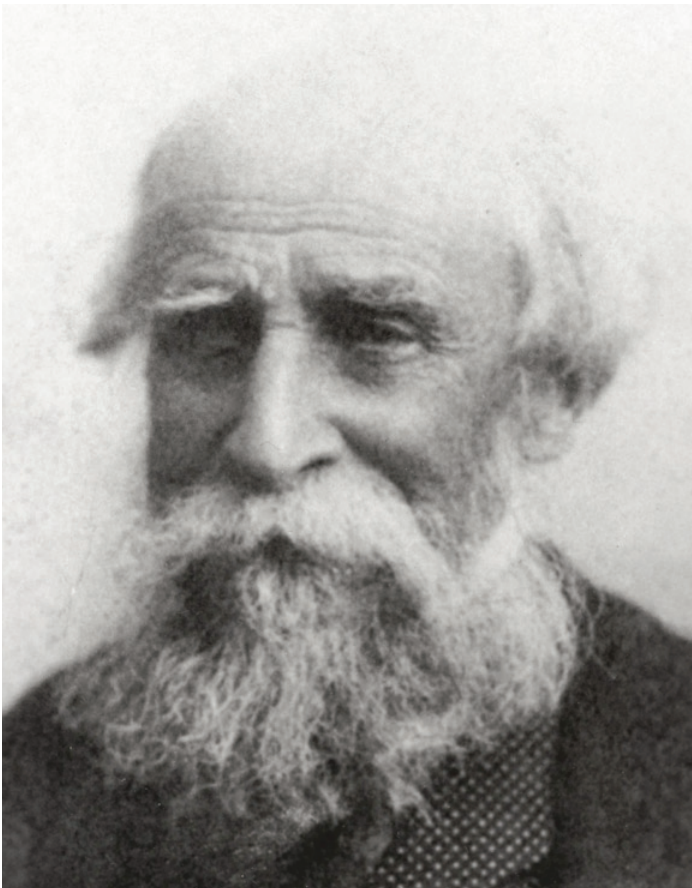
John Horner Winn Sr. is my first Canadian Winn ancestor. In his 1833 travel memorandum he writes: "letter sent home to Mrs. Winn, London, by post from Montreal Sept 7th", letting her know he had "arrived at Montreal (from Quebec City) by steamboat Sept 6th". He didn't stay long in Montreal and never returned. John Horner died in Toronto two years later, his wife and seven children having joined him there in 1834.

John Horner's son John Horner Winn Jr. moved here from Toronto about 1843 and subsequently ran a commission hardware merchant business. Having travelled to England several times on business and to visit relatives, in

1864 John married Anna Maria (née King), his first cousin-once-removed, in London. Shortly thereafter, the couple sailed for Montreal.

John Jr.'s first known venture into the Montreal area that became Westmount occurred in 1868 when he rented a cottage for the summer. Penciled faintly in his account book: "April 27th rented from A. Cross, **Hays Cottage** in Cote St. Antoine from middle May to middle October for \$150." Lovell's Montreal City Directory has an entry for one "Alex Cross, a lawyer". Reg Winn's grandmother Annie told him about having once rented a cottage near the corner of Stanton Avenue and Côte St. Antoine Road. According to the City's archivist, it is possible that the former St. Andrews Presbyterian Church (now Selwyn House School) was at the same location as the former Hays cottage.

From the 1840s to 1895 John and his family resided at a number of locations in central Montreal. In 1895 the family, consisting of John, wife Annie and sons Albert (known as



John Horner Winn Jr. in 1880s

CREDIT: WINN FAMILY ARCHIVES



32 Springfield Avenue in 1907 when it stood alone

CREDIT: WINN FAMILY ARCHIVES



Albert and Elizabeth Winn with son Reg at 32 Springfield Avenue c.1909

CREDIT: WINN FAMILY ARCHIVES

Bertie) and Frank, moved further west to **4477 Ste. Catherine Street**, to the community formerly known as Côte St. Antoine, now officially known as the Town of Westmount. Their stone-fronted house between Metcalfe and Elgin (now Melville) is still there. The property roll for 1897-98 indicates the proprietor was J. W. Ferguson, the renters being John H. Winn of Winn-Holland, A.F. Winn and Frank F. Winn.

Important family events happened in 1899. In July Bertie married Elizabeth Sutherland (known as Betty). In September, John Horner Winn Jr. died. There is no listing for either Mrs. J.H. Winn (Annie) or son Frank in the 1900-1901 Lovell's edition. In fact, none of the Winn family appears on the 1901 Canada Census.

About 1902, John's widow Annie moved to **247 Elgin Avenue** (Melville), the ground floor of a stone-fronted triplex. Owners of the property during this period were W. L. Hogg and George Hogg. Lovell's 1903-05 editions record Mrs. J. H. widow or Mrs. A. M Winn as living there. There is no listing for Frank who by 1908 was in Sudbury, Ontario where he drowned accidentally, late in September that year.

Following their marriage Bertie and Betty moved into **58**

Bruce Avenue, renting from owners Mary and/or Clara Bradshaw. In 1902, their son Albert Reginald Winn (known as Reg), my father, was born. By 1905 this family moved into 247 Elgin with Bertie's mother while they were waiting for a new house on Springfield Avenue, Westmount, to be completed. Having long pursued the hobby of entomology, Bertie joined the entomological staff at McGill's Redpath Museum where he held the position of curator from 1914 until shortly before he died.

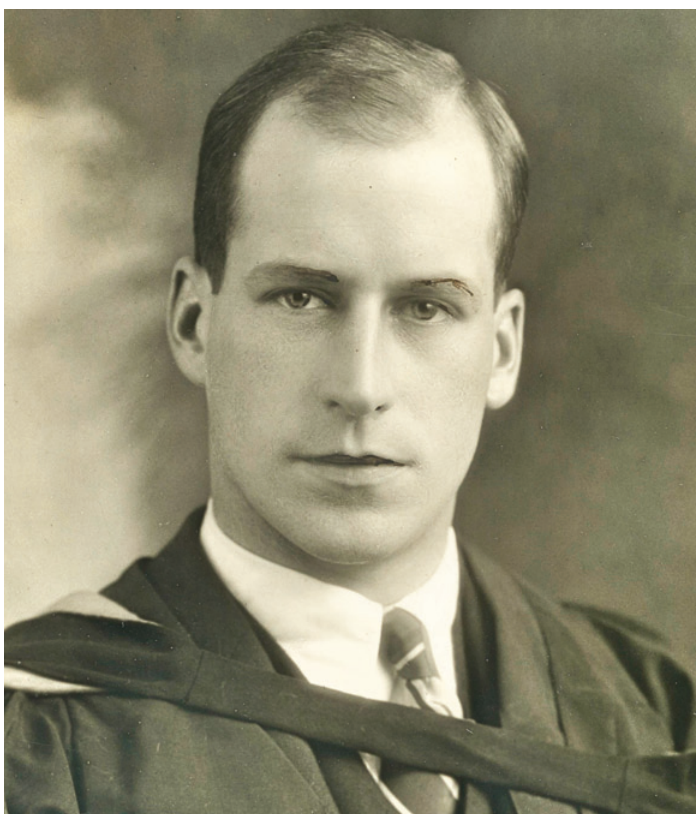
The 1903-4 and 1905-6 editions of Lovells list the last house on Springfield as #21. The house at **32 Springfield** does not appear on Westmount City Rolls for 1905, likely because it was under construction. Westmount City rolls for 1906 and 1907 indicate Albert F. Winn and William McKenzie as proprietors, Albert F. Winn as tenant of the Springfield property; the 1907-8 Lovell edition lists Albert F Winn at 32 Springfield Ave. Although married women and widows rarely receive a separate City Directory entry, John's widow Annie lived in the Springfield house with her son and his family until shortly before her death in 1931. Her name is entered as residing there on both the 1921 and 1931 Canadian Censuses.

When Bertie actually became sole owner of 32 Springfield is unclear. The 1935-36 the property roll shows the



Albert Winn, c.1899

CREDIT: WINN FAMILY ARCHIVES



Reg Winn before his marriage, late 1920s

CREDIT: WINN FAMILY ARCHIVES

property owner to be Albert F. Winn. An added inked-in margin note reads "Estate Mrs", implying Mrs. Albert F. The 1937 property roll indicates that the house is inhabited by the "wife of Albert Winn" when in fact Betty had died early in 1934! Bertie Winn died in July 1935. Their son, Reg, now a practicing orthodontist, was his parent's sole beneficiary. As such, he inherited 32 Springfield. Reg thought long about whether to sell or to rent out. Twice he managed to rent the property but by 1938 his mind was made up to sell because each time a light bulb burnt out the lady renters would phone him to come put in a new light bulb. Reg had enough of that.

My parents, Reg & Lois Winn née Burpe, married in February 1932 and soon moved into **757 Upper Belmont Avenue**. The 1931-32 roll indicated the house was built by Charles Brown, Ltd. Contactors. In the roll of 1932-33 the proprietors are listed as William C. Burpe & Dr. A. R. Winn. Reg soon paid off a previously agreed amount to his father-in-law. The property remained in Lois's name. Reg and Lois Winn resided at their Upper Belmont home from early 1932 to 1987. Between 1935 and 1950 five children were added to the family. In 1950 part of the building's roof line was extended upwards to form a third floor living space. At the time neighbours were heard to say, "Mrs. Winn is having



757 Upper Belmont Avenue, late 1940s

CREDIT: WINN FAMILY ARCHIVES

another baby. Dr. Winn is raising the roof."

Once the children married and left #757, Reg & Lois decided to downsize. In 1985 they purchased **351 Metcalfe Avenue**, a terrace house built about 1964. Reginald Winn died in 1988; Lois (Burpe) Winn died in 2010 at age 100. Two fourth generation Winn Westmounters currently reside on Metcalfe Avenue, my brother Chris at #355 and the author at #351 in our parents' former home. A fifth and a sixth generation live on Wood Avenue.

SOURCES:

Family records, including J.H. Winn Sr., "Voyage from London to Quebec & Sundry Memorandums"

Montreal City Directories – series known as Lovell's.

Westmount Library has most. McGill Library has full complement

Montreal City Directories on-line are searchable by year separately by surname and street sections at the site:

[Searching the Montreal City Directories in One Step](#)

City of Westmount Archives – Property information held by Westmount City Archives only starts in 1878.

Westmount Historical Association

SKETCHES FOR A PORTRAIT OF GERMAINE KANOVA

BY SHARON GUBBAY-HELPER

This article is a progress report on the book I am writing about Germaine Kanova, the charismatic French-woman who taught portrait photography to my mother, Aline Gubbay, in London between the wars, before returning to France in 1944-45 as war photographer with the Free French forces.

Until I began this research, the two main bodies of Kanova's work remained separate. In France, her war photos were known among the circles of those interested, but not so the portraits she took of George Bernard Shaw, Jean Cocteau, Colette, and others in her Baker Street Studio in London. And vice versa: her war work was unknown in England. Appreciation of Kanova has been further hampered by the large shadow that fell across her life after she returned to London with her war photos and "Nobody wanted to see them". As the story my mother told continues, Germaine then lost interest in portrait photography. She returned to France where she went through difficult times, drinking too much. Drawing on her musical background, having, according to my mother, studied with Debussy, she played piano in little bars and went downhill.

My primary goal for the book is to bring together the pieces of Germaine Kanova's legacy and to raise her profile as a photographer. I also want to fill in what I can of the personal dimension, to paint something of a portrait of her, including her boldness, her talent and passion, the light; and also the internal and external challenges, the shadows. The difficulties in this regard are substantial, as the evidence available is scanty. One aspect of the personal dimension where archival research has begun to yield new information – and new questions – is marriage.

When I initiated this project, we didn't know Germaine's maiden name or where she was born. Then Georgia Atienza, Assistant Curator at the National Portrait Gallery in London, discovered her birthplace: Boulogne-Sur-Mer, a working-class town on the north shore of France. Her birthplace, and also her maiden name, Osstyn, ostensibly more Belgian than French, were surprises. A further surprise was the discovery that in 1920 Germaine Sophie Osstyn, age 18, married Josiah Frame, a 33-year-old Scottish journalist. What was the story? Was she keen to get away

from Boulogne-Sur-Mer and forge her own path? What kind of life had she had until then? The First World War would have dominated her adolescence, as she was born in 1902. Did her father serve? Her brothers or uncles? Were they injured, physically or psychically? We don't know. However, the British Newspaper Archive yields intriguing details about the marriage.

The *Aberdeen Press and Journal* of Monday, February 22, 1926 reports that Germaine went with Josiah to live in Glasgow, but she was not happy. It would seem that she left him three times before returning to France and being granted a divorce there in 1926. Then in the same year, Josiah sought a divorce from her, since the presiding authority in Scotland, Lord Morrison, did not recognize the French divorce. Morrison said that "the French decree of divorce referred to [...] would not be recognized by the courts of any civilized country in the world." In granting Josiah Frame a divorce on the grounds of desertion, he added that "Statements in the French decree with reference to cruelty were entirely without foundation." In addition to



Germaine Kanova Photo: Aline Gubbay.

CREDIT: COLLECTION OF MICHELLE GUBBAY



Leamington Spa from Otta Kahn Guest Book CREDIT: TMUIC

this intriguing information, the same newspaper article gives our first documentary evidence of Germaine Kanová's intention to have a career as a pianist, "The evidence showed that Mrs. Frame hoped for a career as a pianist, but found married life in Glasgow, not to her liking."

The next confirmed event is her marriage to Otta Kahn, a Czech Jew, in London in 1928. A sense of Otta has been emerging, thanks in part to a Guest Book now archived at Toronto Metropolitan University's Image Centre (TMUIC). One of the first pages in the Guest Book is a charming watercolor with the title "My Studio/Leamington Spa". I now believe that this was Otta Kahn's studio, not Germaine's as I had first assumed. As well as being a businessman dealing in glass and crystal, Kahn was a photographer and may even have taught Germaine. As for Leamington Spa, it is a town some 150 kilometres from London where, as of 1940, the Free Czechoslovak Army found refuge. The importance of Czech nationality and the complex nature of Czech Jewish identity in the life of Otta Kahn remain to be explored, as does the role these elements may have played in their marriage. Whatever the role of politics

and identity, the marriage of Otta and Germaine retained its romance until the end, despite their living mostly apart, as Germaine wrote to my mother on 2nd Nov 1970:

For days, I meant to write to you but I fear I have been too upset and ill to do so [...] Although Otta's passing away was awaited, it still was a great shock [...] My sorrow is great, darling. I could not live with him (we were two poles apart) but I don't know how I shall live without him. Without his letters – you see, by correspondence, we loved each other so much – and as we mostly lived apart, it was such solace to receive love letters.

Would it not be lovely to have some of those letters?! Given that we do not, what tale might we imagine the two marriages might tell us about Germaine and her passions? How might what we learn contribute to a deeper understanding of her work as portrait photographer and war photographer?

Note: This project is made possible thanks to a grant from the Canada Council for the Arts.



Portrait of Otta Kahn PHOTO: GERMAINE KANOVA. CREDIT: TMUIC

WESTMOUNT MEMORIES

MY BACK YARD: KING'S SCHOOL

BY MAURICE POGGI

I was born in 1945 at the former Queen Elizabeth Hospital on Marlowe Avenue. For the first five years of my life our family lived downtown in an apartment on Mountain Street between St. Catherine and Dorchester. Author Hugh MacLennan lived in the same building, probably next to us, and certainly within hearing distance of me, because my mother said that she would hush me when I was making too much noise.

In 1950 my family moved to a house at 4789 St. Catherine St. West, between Lansdowne and Grosvenor avenues in Westmount. The large two-storey house became my father's stained-glass studio and our home for the next twenty years. We lived upstairs, and my artist father converted the first floor into the studio. The house overlooked the Glen Arch and Pom Bakery (now a condo). We reached the back of the house by a lane which ran off Grosvenor.

The house was demolished around 1970; the 222 Lansdowne condo now stands on part of the site.

My parents enrolled me in kindergarten at King's School on Western, now de Maisonneuve, between Grosvenor and Lansdowne. The 4800 Boulevard de Maisonneuve Ouest apartment building stands on the site. Mr. Sharp was the school principal. The teachers I remember are Miss McFeeters in an early grade, Mr. Barr in grade five and Mr. Kerr in grade six. Many readers will remember Mr. Barr as he became, I think, a guidance counselor at Westmount High School. Boys and girls had separate entrances. For recess, girls had the west side of the school yard and boys the east side. Some classes were mixed. Boys and girls had separate classes in grades five and six.

I could get to school in two ways. One was to leave the house by the back door and walk up Grosvenor to Western. The other way was quicker. Our backyard faced the school yard, and I crawled through a hole in the school fence at



Poggi home at 4789 St. Catherine Street West

CREDIT: MAURICE POGGI



Maurice Poggi at home with his mother c. 1950

CREDIT: MAURICE POGGI

the end of the lane. The school yard became my playground, an extension of my backyard. Most it was unpaved, and there I played softball and touch football. I spent a lot of time hitting a tennis ball and throwing a lacrosse ball against the outer wall of the school gym. Hopscotch, tag, trading hockey cards and playing marbles were popular in the school. There was a chestnut tree in the schoolyard. We played a game with a chestnut attached to a string. I remember the yo-yo man coming to the school and impressing us with his skills.

We sang O Canada and God Save the Queen in the

morning before class. One of the highlights for pupils was to be school monitor for a day. As monitor you would sit at a desk near the school entrance. You faced a large clock on the opposite wall. Your job was to ring the school bell to announce the start of the day, recess, lunch time and dismissal. We took the job very seriously. Another special event for us was permission, in grade six I believe, to watch an afternoon World Series baseball game on a portable TV in the classroom. I think the World Series was a bigger event for Canadians in those days.

We had a dog named Sandy. In those days dogs were not leashed. We let Sandy out the back door, and he barked at the front door when he wanted to come in. One day Sandy showed up in my classroom in the basement, causing an uproar. I suspect that, like me, he crawled through the hole in the school fence to get to the school.

King's School had an annual winter carnival in Westmount Park. It was held at the pond by the comfort station, before it was reconfigured into the present-day lagoon. In those days the pond became a skating rink in winter, with overhead lights for winter skating. A mothers' race was part of the festivities. My mother participated and won. Her win might have been surprising. My mother was probably older than the other mothers. She was thirty-three when I was born, so she must have been at least in her late thirties when she won the race. Having a first child at thirty-three was not

so common in those days. My mother said that when they went to see the doctor after she became pregnant the doctor criticized my father for impregnating a thirty-three-year-old woman. However, if you consider my mother's background, her win was not surprising. She used to jog on Fletcher's Field in her youth. On their honeymoon in the Laurentians, my father had a second set of oars installed in a rowboat so that they could row in tandem on the lake.

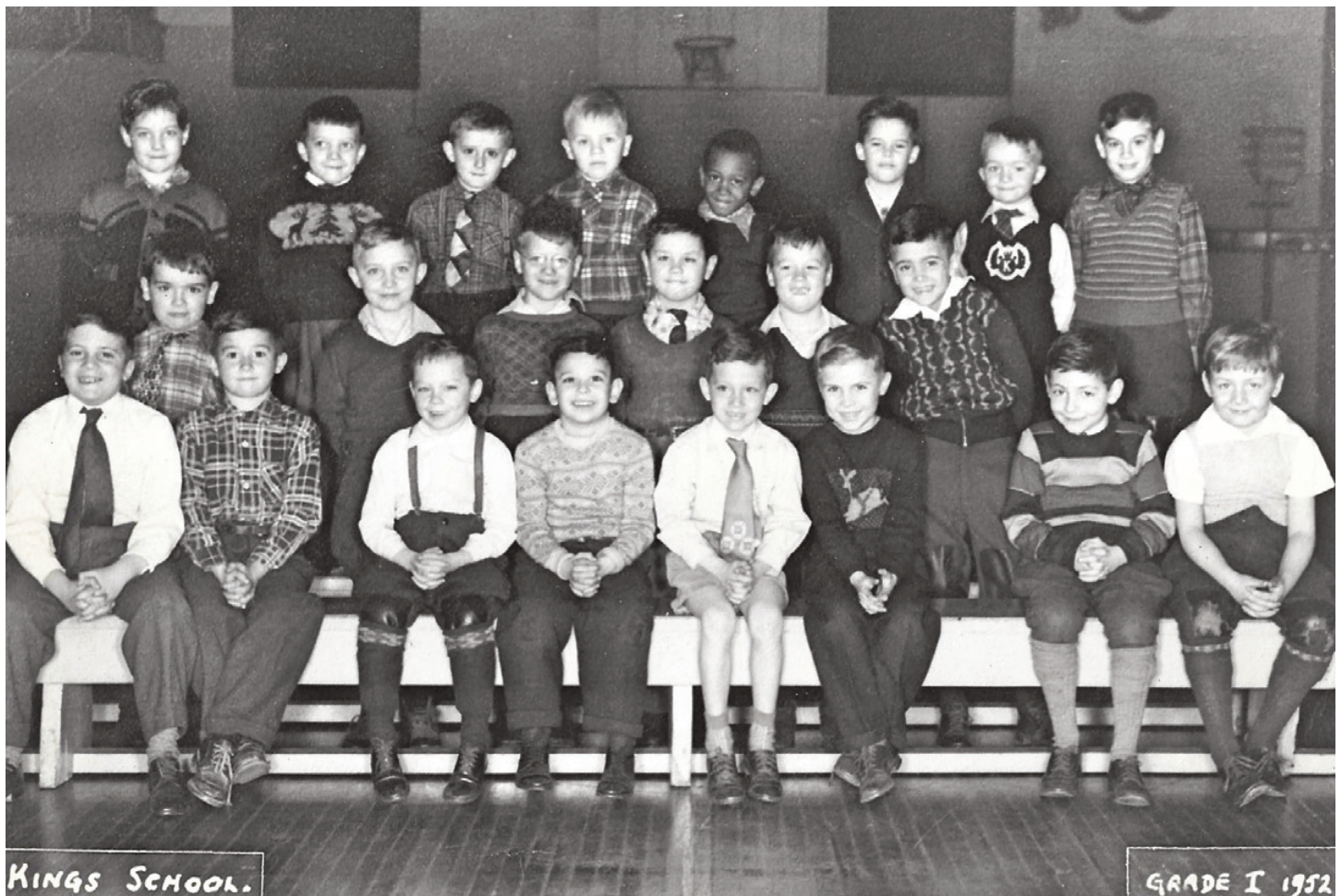
There are many more things I remember about growing up in Westmount. I learned how to swim at the Y and went to the Y's summer camp in Westmount Park. I remember the concerts held at the large elevated bandstand in the middle of the park. I often went to the Westmount Train

Station at the foot of St. Catherine and Victoria to buy a five cent bag of chips and a soft drink from the drink machine. Next to the train station was a small restaurant at the corner of St. Catherine and Victoria. My parents would occasionally send me there to buy a loaf of bread or a carton of ice cream. A condo now stands on the site of the restaurant

We shopped for groceries at Steinberg's on Sherbrooke between Victoria and Grosvenor, where the present-day Metro is located. In what was an unusual fashion in those days, my mother wore pants when she went shopping. She said she would overhear people saying, "There's the woman who wears pants." We shopped for hardware at Pascal's across the street from Steinberg's. One Saturday, the day of a Canadiens hockey game at the Forum, I met Doug Harvey, the great Canadiens defenceman, in front of Pascal's. Kane's at the northeast corner of Sherbrooke and Grosvenor was our drugstore. I bought candy, chips and comics at Fry's next to Steinberg's. Guaranteed Milk delivered milk to our back door. I remember the milk at the

top of the bottle would often freeze in winter. I saw horses drink at the trough at the north east corner of St. Catherine and Lansdowne. A little further up from the horse trough the Westmount summer carnival was held on the grounds where the Westmount outdoor pool is located. I remember the large tent and the carnival games.

After King's School, I attended Westmount Junior High (now Westmount Park School) for grade seven. I went to St. Leo's Academy (now École St-Léon) on Clarke for grades eight to eleven. As an adult I moved out of Westmount and lived in NDG. I worked mainly in advertising and returned to Westmount in 2016 after my retirement. My wife and I rented an apartment on the south side of Sherbrooke overlooking the mountain. I took our dog for walks to the dog run in Westmount Park and Murray Park. Every time I left the apartment, I marvelled at the beauty of the surroundings. We moved to Winnipeg in 2022 to be closer to our son and daughter-in-law. Westmount was a wonderful place to grow up.



Grade 1 class at King's School in 1952 with Maurice Poggi standing in the front row, 5th from the left

CREDIT: MAURICE POGGI