

The Westmount Historian

NEWSLETTER OF THE WESTMOUNT HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

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Edith H. Mather, *Greene Avenue*, 1968

CREDIT: McCORD MUSEUM

Edith H. Mather, *Greene Avenue, Formerly Southeast Corner of Selby*, 1969

CREDIT: McCORD MUSEUM

DOCUMENTING OUR
LOCAL HERITAGE



Association historique de Westmount
Westmount Historical Association

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HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

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EDITOR'S MESSAGE



The principal mandate of the Westmount Historical Association is to collect, conserve, and disseminate information about Westmount's heritage. Our WHA archives facility, situated in Victoria Hall since 2020, houses a large collection of research materials and original historical items that has grown considerably over the past five years.

As described in this newsletter issue, the theme of the past lecture series was documenting Westmount's heritage. The three lectures in the series highlighted the work of individuals who have added to our knowledge of Westmount through different approaches. Donlon Hurtubise, a descendant of the original owners of the Hurtubise House, carried out extensive research into the roots of his own family while clarifying previous knowledge about the Hurtubise House and family. Pierre Beupré and Josette Michaud,



Edith Mather, 12 Sunnyside Ave., from *Touches of Fantasy*

mandated by Westmount over 40 years ago to survey the city's buildings, systematically documented local heritage structures. Edith Mather pursued a personal mission from the 1960s to 1980s to photograph threatened local buildings and quirky design features, thereby preserving images of Westmount and the larger city for future generations.

Many of us are intrigued by the history of our own families, the homes we live in, or other aspects of the community. I followed my interest in the RMR Armoury on St. Catherine Street, did research to learn more about its origins, and made rewarding discoveries which are presented in the article on the Ross family.

The WHA recently received the donation of an oil painting of the Wardleworth House at 168 Côte St. Antoine Road. Its extensive restoration was carried out by local business Campbell Framing. The history of this family business and a description of the long restoration process are included in this issue.

Finally, WHA archivist Jane Martin describes several archival items selected for display at the December Social. It was an opportunity for guests to view at close hand some particularly interesting artifacts not usually seen by the public.

Work on this issue was aided by three WHA members. Former journalists Jane Martin and Susan Altschul helped edit the articles. WHA archival assistant Carolyn Singman once again provided invaluable assistance with the many images.

CAROLINE BRESLAW

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



On behalf of the Board of the Westmount Historical Association, I extend heartfelt best wishes to all our members and supporters for a healthy and happy New Year 2025!

Looking back over the Association's activities and accomplishments during the final quarter of the past year, I am pleased to report a successful fall lecture series comprising three talks focused on the contributions of individuals who documented different aspects of Westmount's history, architecture and streetscape.

The series opened in September with a lecture by a direct descendant of the Hurtubise family in Westmount. Donlon O. Hurtubise, Ph.D. and retired geologist, covered the "Maison Hurtubise: Ancestry of the *First Family* of Westmount's oldest house".

It was followed in October with an illustrated lecture by speakers Pierre Beaupré, architecte senior, and Josette Michaud, architecte senior, Ateliers Beaupré Michaud. They are the authors of the 1988 seminal Heritage Study of Westmount. This extensive survey became the basis for new Westmount bylaws and heritage guidelines intended to protect Westmount's built heritage.

The final lecture in November introduced the work of Edith Mather, a former resident of Westmount, and street

photographer in Montreal in the 1960s and 1970s. We welcomed speaker Zoë Tousignant, Curator, Photography, McCord Stewart Museum, who discussed Edith's contributions within the larger context of street photography as practiced in Montreal.

The December Social, our first year-end event held since 2019, returned with an exhibition of selected artifacts from the WHA Archives (including a restored painting by Westmount artist Lillian Hingston, 1881-1967), as presented by Archivist Jane Martin and VP Caroline Breslaw. This informal event featuring holiday refreshments was held in The Gallery at Victoria Hall.

Administrative and outreach activities over recent months included the laying of a wreath from the WHA at Westmount Remembrance Day ceremonies, annual submission of a grant request to the City of Westmount, and signing of a service contract for technological assistance with our evolving website.

This new calendar year represents the 81st year of the WHA's service to the community. We encourage our members who have not already done so to renew their memberships for 2025 – thereby continuing to support this community organization and its committed volunteers in our work and initiatives.

LOUISE CARPENTIER

WHA Winter/Spring 2025 Lecture Series Collaborations Across Generations

The three talks in the WHA's 2025 winter/spring lecture series will be given by the children and grandchildren of artists, architects, and developers. The speakers will share personal stories of how their predecessors contributed to Westmount's heritage.

Thursday, February 20, 2025

From Ross & MacFarlane to DFS: David Fish on Father and Son Architects

Speakers: David Fish, architect, Pascal Létourneau, architect and Laurent Généreux, architect

Thursday, March 20, 2025

Gentile (Gerry) Tondino: The Artist, Educator, and his Westmount Connection

Speaker: Tristan Tondino, artist

Thursday, April 17, 2025

The Partnership of John Baker Fellowes, builder, and Norton Alexander Fellowes, architect

Speaker: Lucy Fellowes, curator, Smithsonian's National Design Museum

*Westmount Room at the Westmount Public Library, 4574 Sherbrooke St. W. from 7 to 9 pm
Admission free for members. \$5 for others at the door. For more information contact www.WHA.quebec
Series prepared by Irina Nazarova & Louise Carpentier*

WHA/AGM May 15, 2025

The WHA will hold its Annual General Meeting on

**Thursday, May 15,
2025 at 7 pm**

WHA members will receive advance notice of nominations for the election of officers and directors and the agenda for the meeting.

EDITH MATHER: MONTREAL STREET PHOTOGRAPHER

By SUSAN ALTSCHUL



Edith H. Mather, detail of *Edith Mather Mirrored Three Times!*
Notre-Dame Street West, 1966 CREDIT: McCORD MUSEUM

Like many young mothers, Edith H. Mather would try to get her youngest son to sleep by bundling him into his pram and walking for hours around the streets of Westmount and Montreal. But, unlike other mothers, along with the toys and snacks, she would pack her Yashica 35 mm camera and snap pictures of the buildings and landmarks she passed. In her own words, "I just liked walking, and I had this urge to take pictures, that's all. I had to take the baby for walks, and I just kept going. I just found the architecture interesting." From her home at the corner of Greene Avenue and St. Catherine Street, she explored the changing urban landscape of Westmount – including the development of Westmount Square in 1964-67 – and many other Montreal neighbourhoods.

Edith H. Mather (1925-2017) was a not-so-typical



Edith H. Mather, *Seaton's and Westmount Square, Greene Avenue, 1968* CREDIT: McCORD MUSEUM



Edith H. Mather, *East Side of Sussex Street, North of Dorchester, 1966* CREDIT: McCORD MUSEUM

Westmount housewife of her time. She earned a Bachelor of Science degree from McGill University in 1946, was divorced twice, raised four children, and returned to college at the age of 60 to obtain a diploma in Library Studies from Concordia University, where she was subsequently employed as a librarian and book restorer for 25 years.

Edith Mather was one of Montreal's first street photographers – taking pictures of day-to-day life in a public setting – and she developed a body of 4,293 prints which she later meticulously documented and archived before passing it on to the McCord Stewart Museum. The photography collection she donated to the McCord Museum comprises the work of 20 years: 1965 to 1985. It covers a period of great change and demolition in Montreal, with whole neighbourhoods disappearing to make way for highways and high-rises.

Mather's largest collection, "My City, Montreal," consists of 16 ring binders, each with a handwritten index that lists each print by negative number, street depicted and date taken. Wherever possible, specific addresses or street corners are identified, and Ms. Tousignant, the McCord's Curator of Photography, has made considerable efforts to find those locations, so they can be traced and identified today – mainly parking lots or condo towers. Printed by Mather herself in her home darkroom, each photograph offers a distinctive take on the built environment as she encountered it.

Edith Mather was especially captivated by the decorative and non-essential details of late 19th century and early 20th century "vernacular" architecture, dependent on a craftsmanship that is very local. What upset her most was that all this was disappearing, to be replaced by glass and con-

crete. In 1977, in collaboration with author René Chicoine, she published a bilingual book on Montreal architecture titled *Touches of Fantasy on Montreal Streets*. Mather's photographs focus on these architectural fragments from the vantage point of a pedestrian, often contrasting them with the new, generally much larger, constructions. One particularly striking image shows a huge span of the Ville-Marie expressway dwarfing an old wooden building far below it, which has not survived.

Although she was never part of any organized anti-demolition movement, Mather made a point of documenting whole swaths of the quirky architecture and streetscapes, decorated with stone carving, intricate ironwork, wooden details and Montreal's signature outdoor spiral staircases, that would soon be lost. She had a knack for finding them and preserving them in print, providing an invaluable visual historical record of the old city. Receiving no institutional or financial backing, and with no formal training, she practiced photography as an amateur, for herself. The enduring value of Mather's work is her contribution to the history of visual culture in Montreal and its visual memory.

Edith Mather's life and work were the subject of the Westmount Historical Association's November 21, 2024 lecture at the Westmount Public Library, presented by Zoë Tousignant, Curator of Photography at the McCord Stewart Museum. Ms. Tousignant is currently preparing a major exhibition called "Pounding the Pavement" which will showcase the art of some 30 Montreal street photographers, starting with William Notman and including Mather. It will open in April 2025.

Most of the images shown here are from the McCord collection and were included in Ms. Tousignant's presentation.



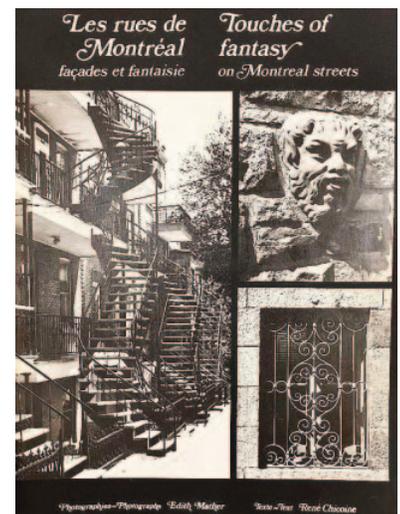
Edith H. Mather, *My City, Montreal: Volume 2 – Houses and Streets, 1967-1985*

CREDIT: MCCORD MUSEUM



Edith H. Mather, *Ness House, 177 Metcalfe Street, 1966*

CREDIT: MCCORD MUSEUM



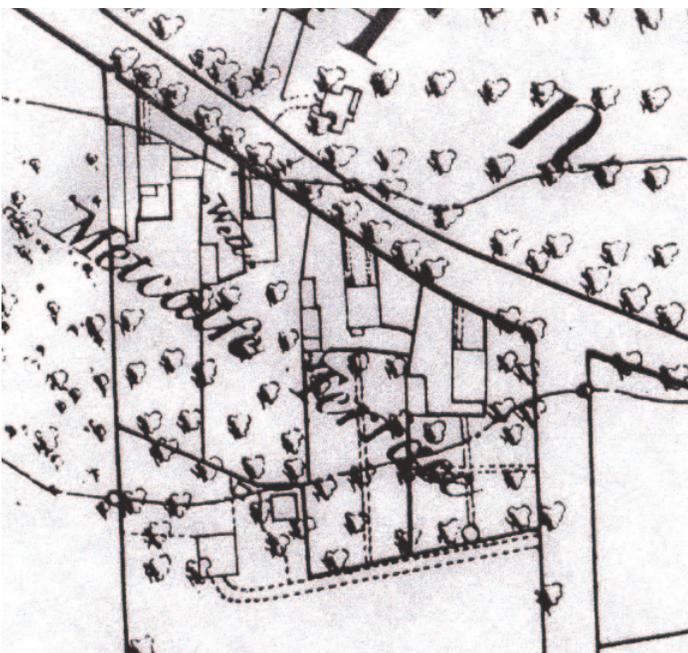
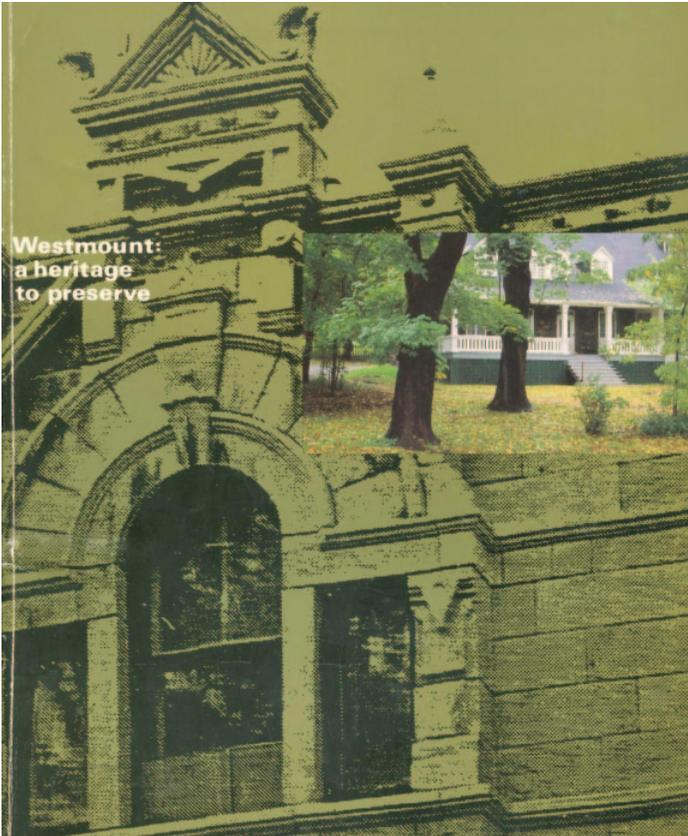
Cover of *Touches of fantasy on Montreal streets*, Edith Mather and René Chicoine, 1977

PIERRE BEAUPRÉ AND JOSETTE MICHAUD: THE 1988 HERITAGE STUDY OF WESTMOUNT

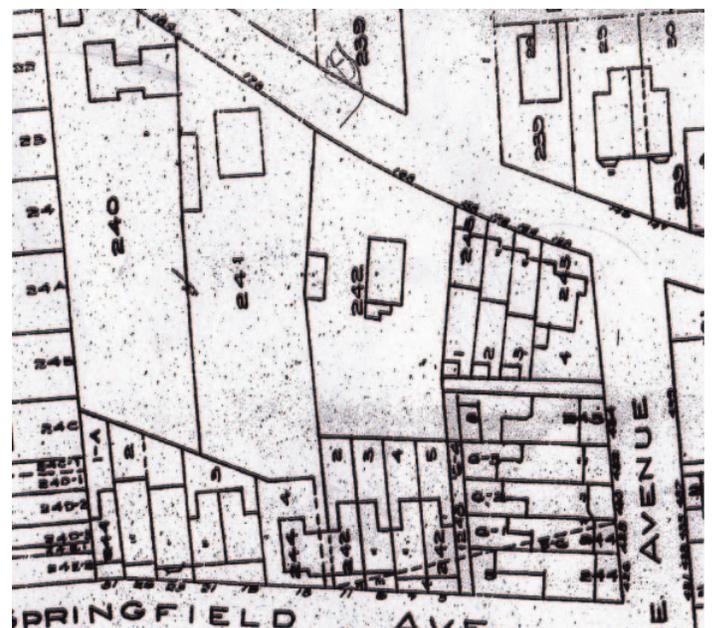
BY CAROLINE BRESLAW

In 1987 the City of Westmount commissioned architects Pierre Beaupré and Josette Michaud from the firm Beaupré et Michaud, architectes, to write a heritage study of Westmount. In it they were to identify 400 of the city's most important heritage buildings. The multiple volumes of the complete study were published in 1988 and can be consulted in the reference section of Westmount Public Library. They are invaluable preliminary sources for information about Westmount's heritage buildings. A condensed version of the study was issued by the city in 1991 in a booklet called Westmount: A heritage to preserve, which is available on the WHA website (wha.quebec) under Local History.

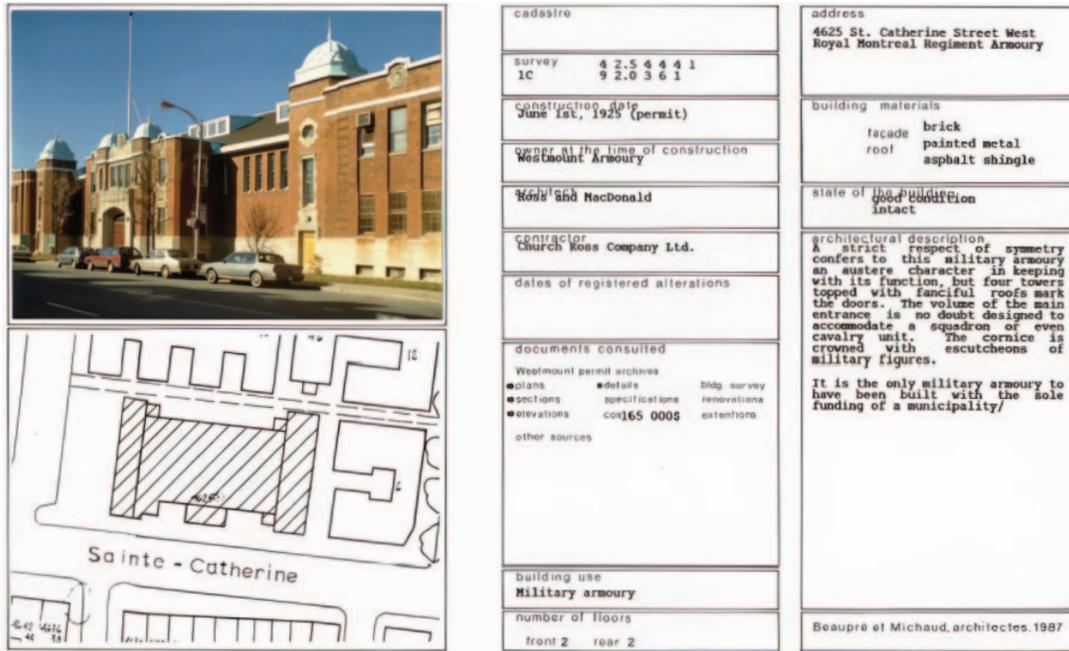
Architects Mark London and Jean-Louis Lalonde on Westmount's Architectural & Planning Commission supported hiring Pierre Beaupré and Josette Michaud to carry out the studies. With two assistants, the architects consulted the archives of St. Sulpice, the City of Westmount, and Les archives nationales. The Sulpicians' archivist, Bruno Harel, provided them with contracts for the French settlers who had exchanged their original land grants for concessions higher up in Westmount. The MUC books on Montreal's traditional architecture were also



Fortification Survey Map of 1866-72, showing Metcalfe Terrace houses with Goode House and its well 2nd from left
CREDIT: BANQ



Goad insurance map of 1913, showing three Metcalfe Terrace houses with Goode House in middle
CREDIT: BANQ



Entry from the Beaupré et Michaud Heritage Study (Volume B) for the RMR Armoury

consulted. Archival maps, such as the 1867 Fortification Survey maps and those from insurance companies, were important in their research.

The task was a huge challenge. Nearly 4,000 buildings were constructed before 1945 in Westmount, and only about 400 were to be selected. The architects developed a notation system, using a form based on ones accepted by the Ministère de la Culture et de Communications du Québec and Parks Canada, noting various elements in order to determine the heritage value of each building. The building's age was the foremost factor, but the style, role in an architectural ensemble, quality, modifications, and factual information such as materials used, number of storeys, and roof treatment were also considered. Personal sensitivity was involved in placing a heritage value on the buildings.

Many of today's technologies were not available for the work. There were no scanners or digital cameras. A photographer neighbour and friend, Jean-Claude Hurni, previously an architect in Switzerland, took the photographs.



Beaupré et Michaud Heritage Studies in the Westmount Reference section of Westmount Public Library

The negatives unfortunately no longer exist. Computers were not in common use. Texts were handwritten on the street and then typed. For each file, a map, text, and photograph were needed. The architects proceeded house by house.

The work of many important architects in Westmount was included. There was an eclectic mixture of architectural styles, primarily from the 19th century - Neo-Romanesque, Richardsonian, and Neo-Gothic among them. The architects and firms were numerous: Robert Findlay, the most important of Westmount's architects; the two Maxwell brothers; A.C. Hutchison of Hutchison, Wood & Miller; Saxe & Archibald, Ross & MacFarlane, Shorey & Ritchie, Perry & Luke, Nobbs & Hyde, Cox & Amos, Georges-Alphonse Monette, J.O. Marchand, Aristide Beaugrand-Champagne, Cajetan Dufort, Wright, MacDuff & Lemieux, and Alcide Chaussé. Many of these men also designed important buildings in Montreal.

No formal architecture profession or training existed in the 19th century. Many noteworthy Westmount buildings were constructed without an architect or a known architect. These include the Hurtubise House of 1739 and the two remaining Metcalfe Terrace houses of 1840.

The studies did not cover buildings put up after 1945, which should be considered for inclusion in an expanded, revised version of the study. The works of contemporary firms and architects, such as Joe Baker, Dimitri Dimakopoulos, Victor Prus, and Arcop, should be included to bring these studies up-to-date.

LA MAISON HURTUBISE: A JOURNEY OF UNDERSTANDING

BY DONLON O. HURTUBISE

La Maison Hurtubise, a fieldstone farmhouse at 561-563 Côte Saint Antoine Road, was recognized in 1912 as the "Oldest House in Westmount" (The Westmount News, December 13, 1912). When the house seemed destined to be demolished in 1955, its rescue became the focus for the revitalization of the dormant Westmount Historical Association (WHA). In 2004 the house was designated a 'site historique' by the Province of Quebec.

As a descendant of the house's first occupants, Jean and Marie-Anne (Tessereau) Hurtubise, I am summarizing my understanding of events and developments leading to the 2004 historical designation. This journey fueled a deeper understanding of the history of the Hurtubise House, as well as the heritage of my earliest Hurtubise ancestors in Quebec. Jean Hurtubise (husband of Marie-Anne Tessereau), was the son of Louis and Jeanne (Gateau) Hurtubise who acquired the Westmount property in 1699. Jean was the grandson of Quebec's French pioneers Marin and Étienne (Alton) Hurtubise. Ownership of the Hurtubise House eventually passed to Jean and Marie-Anne's youngest sons, Antoine and Pierre-Jérémie.

The Hurtubise family history was featured in two significant books on early French-Canadian heritage, one in 1955 by Roland Auger and another in 2002 by Peter Gagné. Auger's book *La Grande Recrue de 1653* established that Marin Hurtubise arrived in 1653 and married Étienne Alton in 1660. They were the progenitors of all Hurtubises, since Marin's brother André, the only other Hurtubise in Quebec, died in 1659 before fulfilling his marriage contract. Gagné's book *Before the Kings' Daughters: The Filles à Marier, 1634-1652* established that Étienne Alton arrived in La Recrue in 1659. Marin and Étienne Hurtubise had four sons, but only two of them, Pierre and Louis, had male children. Pierre's line died out in the 1700s. Consequently, Louis Hurtubise, who acquired the Côte Saint Antoine property in 1699, is the ancestor of all French-Canadian Hurtubise families living today. After a court decision in 1724, all of Louis' children had part interest in the Côte Saint Antoine property, and therefore all Hurtubise families living today share in the heritage of Westmount's historic site.

As a descendant of the 1739 Hurtubise House's 'First

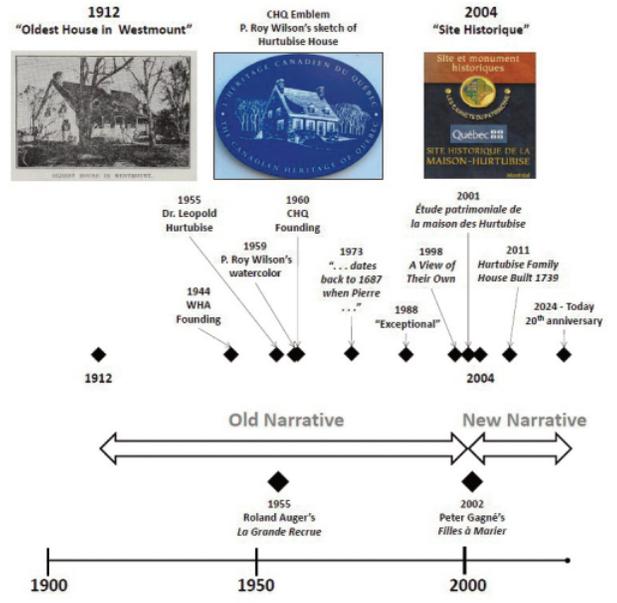
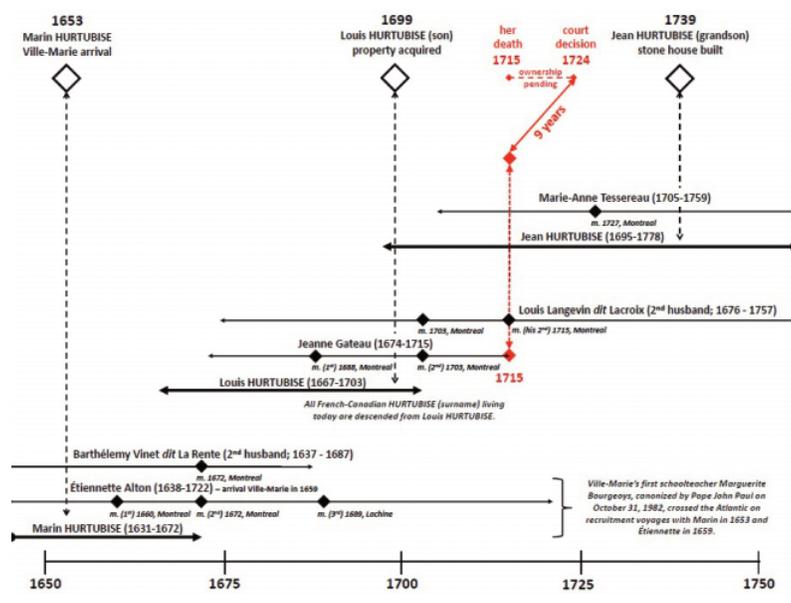


Alice Lighthall of the WHA in front of the Hurtubise House



Leopold Hurtubise, second from the left, with his brothers

CREDIT: SUZANNE MASSON HURTUBISE COLLECTION



CREDIT: DONLON O. HURTUBISE, 2024

Family', Jean and Marie-Anne Hurtubise's oldest son, Jean-Louis, I know that my branch of the Hurtubise family over time migrated south and west, eventually off the Island of Montreal to Beauharnois (Saint Timothée), Quebec, and then by the mid-1800s to Bourget, Ontario.

In 1917 Oliver and Olive (Pilon) Hurtubise of Bourget, Ontario moved permanently to Richford, Vermont, where they established the O. Hurtubise & Sons dairy farm. That original family farm is where my father was born and raised, and it is now part of the larger Lyle Hurtubise & Sons dairy farm (my uncle and cousins), established in 1946, that extends across the border and into Abercorn, Quebec. The Hurtubise border farm was featured in the National Film Board of Canada's 1976 book *Between Friends/ Entre Amis*. Oliver Hurtubise of Richford was my great-grandfather, and he was the fourth cousin of Dr. Leopold Hurtubise, the last family occupant of the Hurtubise House in 1955.

The Westmount Historical Association (WHA) was founded in 1944 by a group of Westmounters, led by Alice Lighthall, who were concerned about preserving local historic buildings and areas of natural beauty. In 1955 Miss Lighthall learned that developers intended to purchase the Hurtubise House from Dr. Leopold Hurtubise. She launched a public effort to preserve the house through the news media, capturing the attention of Colin J. G. 'Jack' Molson, a chartered accountant in Montreal with a passion for heritage. A special WHA meeting, convened in Victoria Hall on October 2, 1955, focused on the fate of the Hurtubise House. Alice Lighthall reviewed its early history, and Colin

Molson presented an estimate of the cost to acquire, repair, convert, and maintain the house as a museum. The WHA effort to get a local municipal group to acquire the Hurtubise property did not succeed, and Dr. Leopold Hurtubise passed away on October 23, 1955. Colin Molson, his aunt Mabel Molson and family friend James Beattie purchased the property from the Hurtubise estate the following year to prevent its demolition.

In 1960 a group led by Colin Molson created the Canadian Heritage of Quebec (CHQ), a foundation mandated to acquire and preserve heritage properties. The Hurtubise House became its first holding. P. Roy Wilson, an architect associated with the founding and naming of the CHQ, wrote one of the first articles about the house, titled *Hurtubise House Links Montreal Past To Present*, that served to put it on historians' radar. The article appeared in the *Montreal Gazette* (January 10, 1959) and included his now well-known watercolour rendering of the original house. Wilson subsequently published books in 1975, 1977, and 1989 featuring his sketches of the Hurtubise House. Today, the emblem of the CHQ is Wilson's sketch of the Hurtubise House.

A comprehensive new narrative on the history of the Hurtubise House was revealed in 2001, contradicting an older narrative articulated in various articles and books published since P. Roy Wilson's 1959 article (see graphic). In 2001 Alan Stewart and Léon Robichaud completed the report *Étude patrimoniale de la maison des Hurtubise* for Quebec's Ministère de la culture et des communications. The report firmly established that the Hurtubise House was built for Jean Hurtubise and his wife Marie-Anne Tessereau



Leopold Hurtubise, the last family owner, on the Hurtubise House steps

in 1739, rather than, as reported previously, by Pierre Hurtubise and his neighbours in the late 1600s.

Alan Stewart presented his results in a WHA (February 2003) lecture and stated “The Hurtubise House is important because it is one of the oldest houses on the Island of Montreal that can be documented as to its history.” Stewart and Robichaud’s 2001 report was pivotal in the province of Quebec’s decision to designate the Hurtubise House and associated land as a provincial ‘site historique’ in 2004 (see graphic). Their report is available in hard copy only at the BANQ (provincial archive) at Montreal’s La Grande Bibliothèque, which meant that many of the details of the Hurtubise House and its “first family” remained largely unknown until 2011.



Hurtubise House today

PHOTO: DOREEN LINDSAY

Doreen Lindsay wrote an article in the WHA’s February 2011 newsletter, a publication available online. Her article titled *Hurtubise Family House Built 1739 On Côte Saint-Antoine Rd.*, leveraged WHA lectures given by Alan Stewart (February 20, 2003) and CHQ’s Jacques Archambault (October 21, 2010) as sources. Lindsay very concisely outlined the generational order of the Hurtubise family which occupied the house from its construction in 1739. I knew from my own family history that Jean and Marie-Anne (Tessereau) Hurtubise, the house’s ‘First Family’, were in fact my sixth great grandparents. The new narrative of 2001 therefore directly connected me to the Hurtubise House in contrast to the older narrative that simply linked me via my surname.

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The Westmount Historical Association wishes to thank the following people who have made personal donations for more than \$25. We appreciate the generosity of the 2024 patrons.

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THE CAMPBELL FAMILY: CAMPBELL FRAMING

BY JOHN AND GLENN CAMPBELL

Our family business, Campbell Framing, has been based in Westmount since 1936. We are the third generation to own our store which specialises in custom framing and art restoration. Our grandfather, Alexander Campbell, met his wife Gwyneth while serving as a soldier in the First World War. They settled in Sydney, Nova Scotia, where he learned his skills from a framer and cabinetmaker. In the early 1920s, they moved to Montreal. Our grandfather established a carpentry and framing shop in Verdun in 1924 and then relocated with his family to Westmount. First he rented a building at 4119 St. Catherine Street West, then in 1940 bought 4150 St. Catherine Street between Greene and Gladstone where the business remained for 37 years. The family of six lived above the shop, which was standard practice at the time. Our father Ian, the eldest son, apprenticed with his father for 15 years, learning how to restore paintings and frames. After the death of his father in 1958, he took over the business, with his mother helping to run the shop.

In 1977 our father bought the greystone building at 4916 Sherbrooke Street W. All three sons, Steve, John, and Glenn, apprenticed with him. While the older sons moved out, John lived above the shop with his parents for 14 years, happy to be near the downtown music and art scene. Our father retired in 1994 and passed away in 2009. After John married, his family at first also lived above the shop.

All our children have worked at the business at some time. Our brother Stephen worked here part-time. We remained, complementing each other, and are now partners. Glenn, who is eight years older, worked side-by-side with Dad, who let him open a shop downstairs for lamination and posters. John learned mostly from Glenn. For many years the framing shop was installed downstairs with our art gallery upstairs. Today the building houses the framing business and rents spaces both upstairs and downstairs. John is usually in the shop doing framing, including the repair, gilding and restoration of frames. Glenn interacts with clients, does the ordering, and specialises in restoring oil paintings. Glenn's son Kevin is with us now, the fourth generation to be involved in the business.

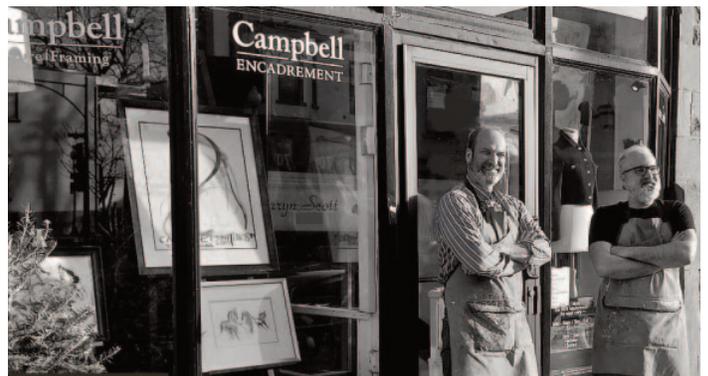
There have been changes over the years. The



4119 St. Catherine St. W., the Campbell family's rented shop and home in Westmount
CREDIT: CAMPBELL FAMILY



4150 St. Catherine St. W., the building purchased by the Campbells' grandfather in 1940
CREDIT: CAMPBELL FAMILY



Campbell Framing at 4916 Sherbrooke St. W. with brothers Glenn (l.) and John (r.) in front
CREDIT: CAMPBELL FAMILY



Restored painting in its original frame

PHOTO: PATRICK MARTIN, 2025



Wardleworth House at 168 Côte St. Antoine Rd. today

PHOTO: JON BRESLAW

Sherbrooke Street shop has been renovated many times, as the top floor was transformed from a family home to a rental space, and the bottom floor also became a rental. Methods have changed with the times as modern machinery and computers were introduced. The stock of frames has moved from the ornate ones of the past to the flat and simple styles favoured today.

In April 2024 we received an intriguing new challenge. An oil painting of the Wardleworth House at 168 Côte Saint Antoine Road by Montreal artist Lillian Hingston was brought to the shop by the WHA. The painting and its original frame were not attached; both were filthy and in great need of attention. A dark line was clearly visible around the sides of the painting where the frame sat. Since it had probably been hanging above a fireplace, this was undoubtedly soot. Before beginning the restoration, the painting's

surface had to be tested. To do this, we checked the canvas and stretcher bar, looked for insect infestation and previous repairs, and noted any cracking and crazing of the surface. We tested the surface layer of the painting for dirt accumulation and determined whether the painting was varnished or unvarnished.

After carrying out this assessment, slow and painstaking work on the oil painting began. The surface had to be slowly cleaned as each step of this restoration work was carried out. First, the top dirt was removed with a cotton swab, and the surface was stabilised. Having established that the work was varnished, we removed all the varnish using a neutralizing agent, once again with a small cotton swab. The varnish itself had a sooty tone. Then we touched up small surface chips. After this, we applied fresh varnish, selecting a semi-satin finish. The varnish was applied in many



Stages in the restoration process

PHOTOS: GLENN CAMPBELL, 2024

thin layers. Final minimal touch-ups were then made with varnish and paint. The painting was now restored.

The frame was original to the painting and fitted it perfectly. However, the wood had dried out over the years. We checked for insect damage and wood warping, afterwards

cleaning it thoroughly. The corners were mitred and re-joined, as they were loose. The gold liner was touched up. Wax and a bit of lacquer were applied to the frame, which was then refitted to its painting. The restored work of art was now ready to be hung once again.

December Social

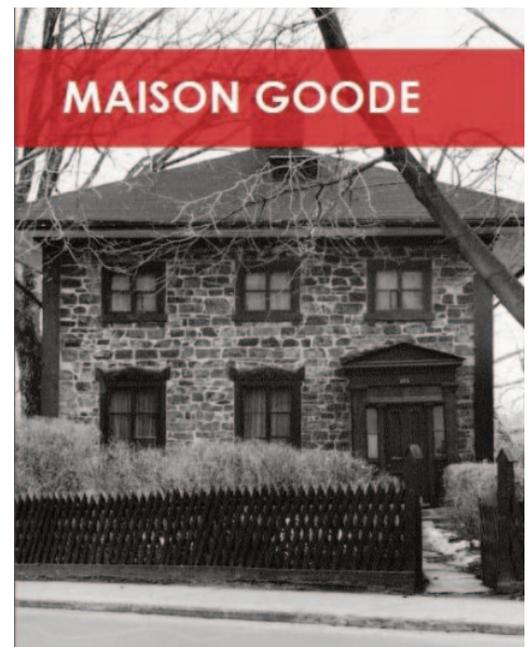


The December Social took place in the Gallery of Victoria Hall on December 18th and featured selected items from the WHA Archives

CREDITS: 3 men, JANE MARTIN; Painting, JON BRESLAW; Patrick Martin, JANE MARTIN

The Goode House Heritage Studies

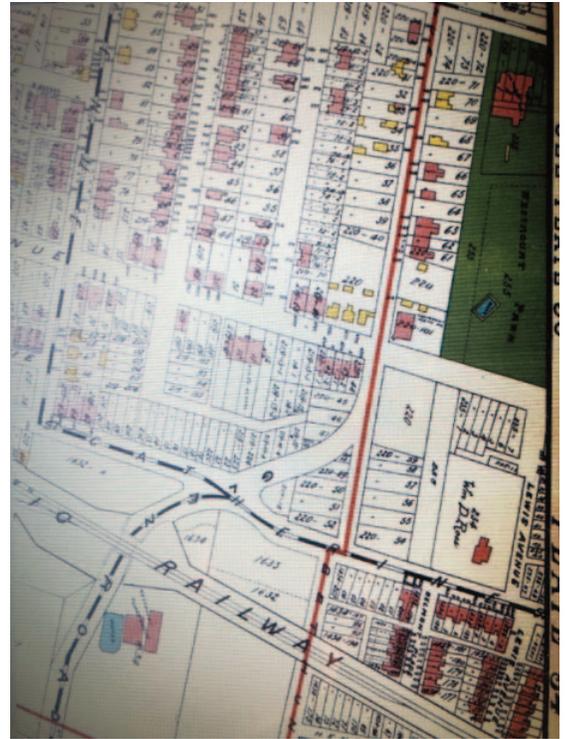
The two Goode House heritage studies commissioned by the City of Westmount during the heritage designation process for the property at 178 Côte St. Antoine Road are now accessible on the Publications page of the WHA website: www.wha.quebec



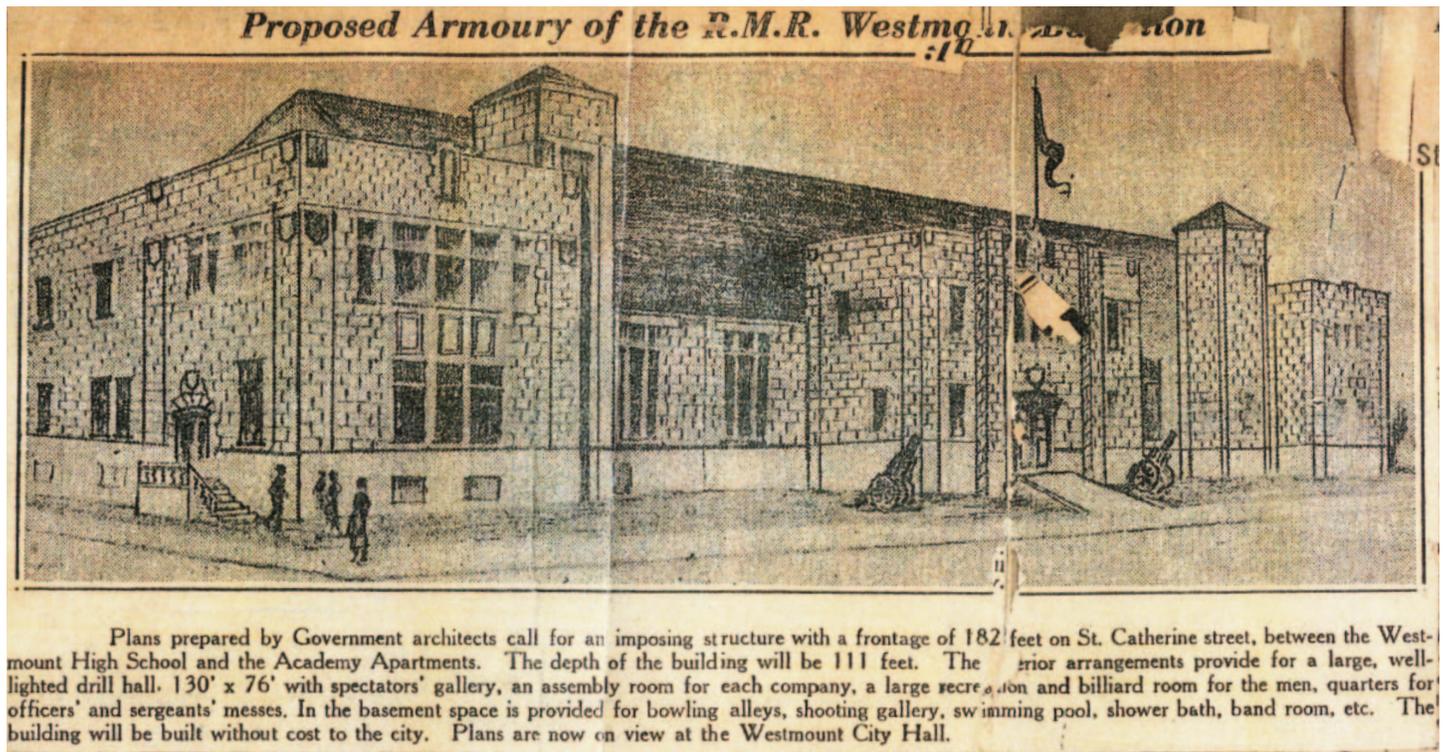
THE ROSS FAMILY & THE RMR ARMOURY

BY CAROLINE BRESLAW

The Royal Montreal Regiment (RMR) Armoury at 4625 St. Catherine Street in Westmount is designed in an unconventional style for this type of federal building. Instead of a severe, fortress-like facade, its street-front features four towers with copper domes, symmetrical bays, and two castle-like entrances. The escutcheons of the cornice hold statues of military figures. Up until World War II, armouries in Canada were designed by the Chief Dominion Architect. The federal government's initial elevations for the armoury were more traditional. However, the architecture firm of Ross & Macdonald received a mandate to redesign the project. Architect George Allen Ross, one of the firm's partners, had a personal interest in the property. From 1894/95 onwards, his father, Donald W. Ross (of D W Ross Co. and managing director of Mount Royal Milling & Manufacturing Co.) was the owner of the building at 4619 St. Catherine Street. The house sat on a large piece of land stretching from Glen Road (today's Lansdowne Avenue) to Elgin Avenue (today's Melville Avenue) and up to Western Avenue (today's De Maisonneuve Blvd.). It is clearly shown on the 1907 Pinsonneault map. The rest of the north side of St. Catherine Street was vacant. As reported in the Nov. 14, 1910 edition of *The Herald*, the City of Westmount purchased the Ross property for



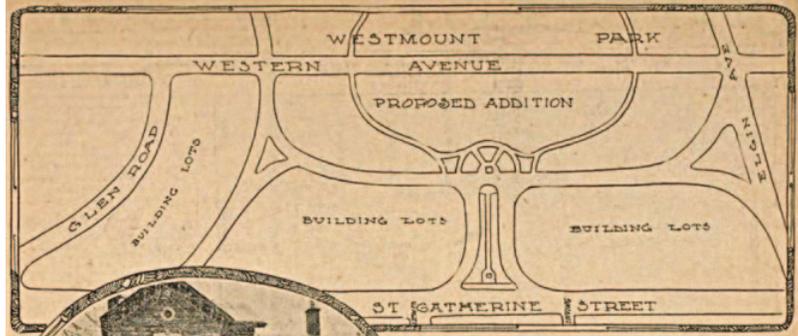
Pinsonneault map of 1907 showing the Wm. D. Ross house and property
CREDIT: BANQ



The DND's original elevation for the RMR Armoury

CREDIT: MONTREAL HERALD, JUNE 9, 1924

WORK COMMENCED ON WESTMOUNT'S THREE HUNDRED THOUSAND DOLLAR PARK EXTENSION SCHEME



The residence of Mr. D. W. Ross, 4519 St. Catherine Street West, purchased by the City of Westmount, with the surrounding real estate, for \$100,000. The residence may be used as a club house for the Westmount Bowling Club.

With great zeal last week work began on the \$300,000 extension that is the intention of the Westmount Council to make to their present municipal park and which when completed will in their estimation help to make Westmount, the model city of the province.

For the planned extension, in July last 186,219 square feet of real estate has been bought by the municipality. This big block of land lies between Western Avenue and St. Catherine Street, beginning at Elgin Avenue and ending just above the church.

It is the intention of the Westmount Council to lay out a curved boulevard through this big block of land. It will open at both ends upon Western Avenue and will be met at the centre of the drive by a one hundred and twenty-five foot boulevard opening upon St. Catherine Street.

These boulevards will be lined with trees, in the case of the curved boulevard down either side and by the corner of the St. Catherine Street boulevard down either side and the centre as well.

What will make the whole plan unique is the fact that it is the intention of the city to subdivide the land fronting St. Catherine Street West and the land fronting on the southern side of the boulevard into building lots and make it conditional with the sale of these lots that only a certain kind of building is to be erected.

FOUR APARTMENT HOUSES.
The council favor the erection of four storey fireproof apartment houses of an artistic design. It is their intention to compel all those who wish to build on lots facing this part to follow a certain plan.

It is the belief of the gentlemen most interested in the work now starting, that the sale of these lots and the revenue which will come from them in after years will in a very short time make the park practically pay for itself.

That the park will become in a very few years the choicest residential district in Westmount and possibly Montreal, the Council feel assured.

NEW PLAYGROUNDS.
The ground remaining after the completion of the building lots has an area of 112,000 square feet and will be laid out as playgrounds. In all likelihood the Westmount Bowling Club will move from its present situation at the corner of Kensington Avenue and Sherbrooke Street and take up a spot in the new park.

The work of making this big block of land into a playground for Westmounters started this morning with the construction of a fountain shaft for the amusement of the Westmount children during the coming winter. As the shaft is being placed it will provide for a run of a quarter of a mile to be taken.

AN EXTRA BREATHING SPACE.
The new park will provide a playground for the whole of Westmount and will provide for the time being a greater population than it has at present—old and young—who have been one of its strongest workers in support of its scheme. But best of all though, when the land clears we will be able to sell in the future at a good profit an ultimately the park will pay for itself.

1910 newspaper article about the planned extension of Westmount Park on the former Ross property

CREDIT: BANQ

\$50,000 in 1910 in order to expand Westmount Park. Following the purchase, the house lay empty. Millie Hickmore described "a large abandoned house built with many wings and set in an overgrown garden....This house with its decorated halls, carved ceiling and elegant stairways was a great attraction for children who played here during the summer." (WHA Archives) Some of the land to the east was sold by the City; apartment buildings and a school (today's Westmount Park Elementary) were built on it. After the demolition of the D.W.Ross home, planning began for an RMR armoury on the western portion of the property facing St. Catherine Street The armoury was to stand on city-owned land, which would be leased to the federal government's Department of National Defence for 99 years. Architect George Allen Ross (1878-1946) must have taken a special interest in the projected armoury because of his family's connection to the site. G.A. Ross was a partner in Ross & MacFarlane from 1907-1912, before partnering with Macdonald in 1913. The company was involved in large projects across Canada. The Dominion Square building, Holt Renfrew, Les Cours Mont-Royal, and Le Chateau Apartments were among its many buildings in Montreal. In Westmount the earlier partnership of Ross & MacFarlane had designed Roslyn School (1907) and St. Matthias' Church (1909-11). Both Ross and Macdonald lived in Westmount at a time when important Westmount municipal



Architect George Allen Ross

buildings were designed by architects who were also residents (Westmount Public Library by Robert Findlay in 1898, 1910, and 1924; Westmount City Hall by Robert and Frank Findlay in 1922, Victoria Hall by Hutchison & Wood in 1925). There might also have been a family connection to the contractor, the Church Ross Company Ltd. The cost of construction was \$165,000 in 1925. Based on CPI data, the equivalent price at the end of 2024 would be \$2,923,000 for the building alone! Nothing remains today of the Ross house. However, during construction of the Westmount Recreation Centre (WRC), some bricks and other small items were found where the parking lot is now located. This area between the RMR Armoury and the WRC swimming pools may well have been the location of architect George Ross' family home.



Main entrance to the RMR Armoury today

PHOTO: JON BRESLAW, 2025

FROM THE ARCHIVES

BY JANE MARTIN, WHA ARCHIVIST

Due to space restrictions and conservation challenges, small historical archives typically limit their holdings mostly to documents and photographs that can be kept in file folders or standardized, acid-free boxes on shelves. However, we allow certain exceptions, as some items are simply too historically significant to turn away. At the WHA's December 2024 Social, the Archives presented an exhibition of six interesting artifacts that we have never formally displayed in the past.

Attention was focused on a recent acquisition – a

mid-20th century original oil painting donated in 2024 by Canadian Heritage of Quebec (CHQ), and sent by the WHA for professional cleaning and restoration. It is a charming and evocative depiction of the historic Wardleworth House on Côte St. Antoine Road, painted by Lillian Hingston (1881-1967), a Montreal artist who lived for many years in Westmount and was well-regarded in her time, especially for her floral paintings. Hingston was a regular exhibitor with the former Art Association of Montreal, and had a solo exhibition at the West End Gallery (later located in Westmount) in 1950.



Painting of the Wardleworth House by local artist Lillian Hingston (1881-1967)

DONATED BY THE CHQ IN 2024



Plaque from the office of architects Robert and Frank Findlay

DONATED BY HELEN FINDLAY IN 2006



Tray from the Westmount Lawn Bowling Club

DONATED C.2014



Scale model of components of the "Robertson Gully" street drainage system, designed c.1900 and later used in Westmount

DONATED BY FAMILY OF G.A. ROBERTSON IN 2000



Mirror from the Goode House, commemorating Queen Victoria's 1897 Jubilee

BEQUEST OF LARRY GOODE, 2019



Trophy awarded in 1902 by the Westmount chapter of the Sons of England

DONATED IN 2012