

The Westmount Historian

NEWSLETTER OF THE WESTMOUNT HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

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Laying the cornerstone at Roslyn School, 1907

CREDIT: WHA ARCHIVES

COLLABORATIONS ACROSS GENERATIONS



Association historique de Westmount
Westmount Historical Association

The Westmount Historian

NEWSLETTER OF THE WESTMOUNT
HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

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EDITOR'S MESSAGE



This issue of *The Westmount Historian* features collaborations of Montreal architects and artists, and is based on the winter/spring 2025 WHA lecture series. Tristan Tondino describes the work of his artist father Gerry Tondino, who taught both artists and aspiring architects, and inspired Tristan's own creative work. Lucy Fellowes traces the careers of her father and grandfather, who designed, built, and lived in many innovative Westmount homes in the early decades of the past century. For their talk, DFS architects presented an overview of their firm's work up to the present. In this issue, architect Laurent G  n  reux of DFS delves into the early work in Westmount of George Allen Ross, the firm's founder, and his partners. I am very grateful for the time the writers have taken to produce these articles and provide the images.

In *Westmount Memories*, Matthew Elder remembers his boyhood visits to Sherbrooke Street and Greene Avenue in the 1950s and 60s, to shop and eat out with his parents. The Christmas family, many members of which have lived in Westmount over the decades, is featured at the end of this issue. Susan Christmas Falconer recalls some of her favourite activities, particularly sports, when she lived as a girl on Victoria Avenue. WHA archivist Jane Martin continues with an article about Susan's youthful achievements in competitive skiing. The newsletter concludes with *From the Archives*, which celebrates Susan's famous ancestor, Hall of Famer William (Billy) Christmas.

As always, we work as a team on the newsletter. Carolyn Singman, our archival assistant, provided a great deal of essential help with the images. Jane Martin edited and proofread the issue and contributed two articles. Member Susan Altschul helped finalise the text with speaker Lucy Fellowes on the Fellowes family. Thank you to all.

CAROLINE BRESLAW

New WHA Board of Directors



Standing, left to right: Caroline Breslaw, Marilynn Gillies, Jane Martin, Liz McCallum, Martin Cheffins. Sitting: Pierre Cenerelli, Claudette Stecher Lopez, Irina Nazarova, Louise Carpentier

CREDIT: JON BRESLAW, 2025

RECENT EVENTS

In February 2025, Montreal received the greatest snowfall since 1941 – 74 centimetres in four days. We were amazed, overwhelmed, appalled, and enchanted by the huge amount of snow blanketing our streets, sidewalks, and properties. Many of us went out and photographed the winter wonderland. Some of the images of local scenes sent to us can be viewed on the WHA website.

Board member Martin Cheffins' scale model of the Westmount Train Station was put prominently on display

in the Westmount Children's Library for the summer reading club's 'Around the World' theme.

The Westmount Children's Library received the prestigious John Cotton Dana Award from the American Library Association for its 125th anniversary campaign. The WHA celebrated the anniversary by holding a series of three lectures on the WCL and publishing a special edition of the newsletter in February 2024, which can be accessed on our website.



Cover of newsletter featuring Westmount Children's Library



The model of Westmount Train Station, made by WHA Board member Martin Cheffins and on display in the Westmount Children's Library during the summer
PHOTO: MARTIN CHEFFINS, 2025

WHA 2025 Fall Lecture Series

Living Together: History of Apartment Buildings in Westmount

At a time when urban planning and density are subjects of intense public discussion, the WHA's fall lecture series examines historical precedents for residential density in Westmount from an architectural and social perspective, and highlights the recent adaptation of an historic building to multi-unit residential use.

September 25, Thursday

How Architects Redefined Apartment Living in Westmount (1913–1960): From Servants to Elevators

Speaker: **Laurent G  n  reux**, architect, DFS

October 16, Thursday

Park Manor Apartments, 46-44 Academy Road, One Hundred Years: An Historical Interpretation

Speaker: **Pierre Anctil**, Canadian historian, professor emeritus, University of Ottawa

November 20, Thursday

LABO Apartments: The Third Life of the Charles E. Frosst Pharmaceutical Laboratory

Speaker: **Samuel Pouliot**, architect, NEUF architect(e)s

*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*

GENTILE TONDINO: ARTIST & EDUCATOR

BY TRISTAN TONDINO WITH JOSÉANE BRUNELLE



Early still life, c.1947 CREDIT: FRANCINE MARGOLIESE

Although my father Gentile (Gerry) Tondino never lived in Westmount, his artistic legacy is deeply tied to it. A celebrated Montreal painter and educator, he painted many Westmount residents and sold numerous works to local patrons. Hundreds of his students have lived – or still live – in the community.

His story begins with his Italian immigrant parents who were born in the 1890s. His father worked in Manhattan, while his mother raised their children in Montreal. The family reunited in 1919 when Gentile's father found work locally. Born in 1923, the sixth of eight children, Gentile left school after grade 2 during the Great Depression to help deliver bread and ice. When he was 12, he began apprenticing with a shoemaker.

His father serviced coal furnaces in Westmount apartments. In 1937, he took a moment to rest in a snowbank and never woke up. That traumatic event, coupled with the onset of WWII, led to Gentile's breakdown at age 16. During his recovery, he began copying European paintings from library books, as well as trying his hand at his own still lifes and landscapes – a discovery that changed everything for him.

In the early 1940s, Gentile knocked on the door of Westmount artist Adam Sherriff Scott and became his apprentice. Scott, a member of the Beaver Hall Group and longtime Westmount resident, introduced him to professional artmaking. Gentile stretched canvases, mixed pigments, and assisted with portraits and commissions, even learning restoration. When Scott left with his wife for



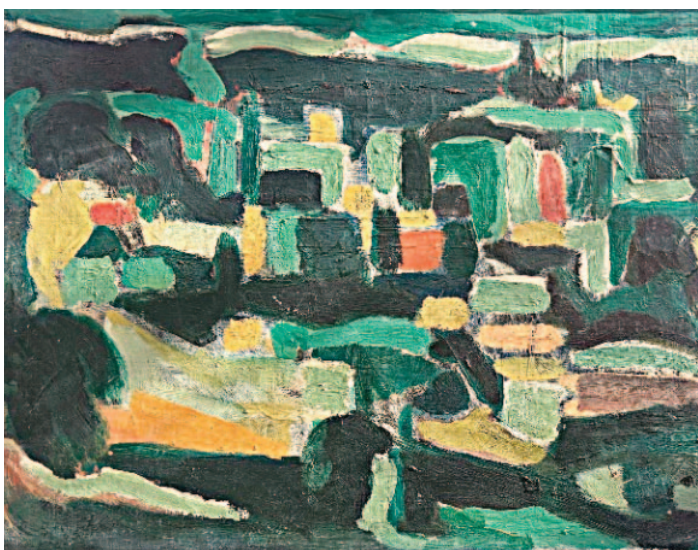
Self-Portrait, 1947

CREDIT: TRISTAN TONDINO



Boats, 1947

CREDIT: TRISTAN TONDINO



Abstract work from the late 1940s

CREDIT: TRISTAN TONDINO



Teaching at the MMFA, c. 1958

CREDIT: LIVIA MARTUCCI



Still Life, 1955

CREDIT: COLLECTION OF MMFA

summers in Ste-Agathe, Gentile used his Bishop Street studio.

In 1946, Gentile enrolled at the Montreal Artists School, founded by Ghitta Caiserman and Alfred Pinsky, who had studied art in New York. In 1947, Scott introduced Gentile to Arthur Lismer of the Group of Seven, then director of the School of Art and Design at the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts (MMFA). Lismer awarded Gentile a scholarship and became a lifelong mentor. That same year, Gentile exhibited *Studio Corner* and *Boats* in the Annual Spring Exhibition at the Art Association of Montreal (later MMFA). These prestigious shows were vital for Canadian artists, attracting thousands of submissions each year.

He also studied with Gordon Webber, who bridged modernist and traditional design, and with Fritz Brandtner, a German expressionist and political artist who inspired many local painters.

After WWII, artists demanded cultural change. This culminated in the 1948 *Refus global*, signed by 16 artists, many of whom had studied at the MMFA. They challenged tradition, religion, and war through art. Their movement paralleled abstract expressionism and emphasized the subconscious.

Though influenced by modernist ideals, Gentile's connection to art was deeply personal. He simply loved painting. By the late 1940s, he began exploring a semi-abstract expressionist style, shown in work which was recently displayed in the Campbell Gallery window in Westmount. One piece from that time depicts the fields leading up Côte-des-Neiges to the Oratory and another shows my mother fixing her hair in a mirror.

Post-war, many veterans received free education, and



Bird in a Tree, 1967

CREDIT: READER'S DIGEST COLLECTION



Portrait of Donald Hebb, c. 1978

CREDIT: MCGILL UNIVERSITY COLLECTION



A late work, c. 1996

CREDIT: GENTILE TONDINO

museums like the MMFA became vibrant learning centres. Gentile befriended war veterans, including my uncle, and that's how my parents met. As Montreal's middle class grew, more people had the means and the desire to buy art.

In 1951, the birth of son Guido added to the pressures of Gentile's artistic life, which became even more stressful with the arrival of daughter Lisa and second son Tristan. From 1953 to 1967, he taught at the MMFA, mentoring many architects and artists from Westmount.

My father's studio doubled as our living room and my parents' bedroom. For much of my childhood, they slept on a fold-out couch in a space heavy with the harsh smells of turpentine, lead paint, and glue.

A 1955 painting acquired by the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts shows Gentile's evolving style. He was exploring composition, shapes, and colour. He never settled on one style.

In 1959, he began teaching at McGill's School of Architecture, where he eventually became a full professor with a dual appointment at the Faculty of Education. Yearly "Sketching School" became a family adventure – traveling with students to paint outdoors in Ontario, Quebec, the Atlantic Provinces, and Maine. He taught many Westmounters, including David Fish, Irina Nazarova, Maurice Charney, and Moshe Safdie.

By 1961, Gentile was experimenting with minimalism and deriving influence from Asian art. In 1967, *Bird in a Tree* was purchased by Reader's Digest. He was increasingly focused on metaphor, exploring symmetry and structure in his paintings.

As space was tight, Gentile eventually converted a garage into a proper workspace. The death of Arthur

Lismer in 1969 was a profound loss for him, and he painted several portraits to honour his mentor. He continued to paint from life, adamant about not working from photographs, and believing that conversation with the model was key to the portrait process. In the late 1970s and 1980s, Gentile was commissioned to paint many portraits that hang in multiple locations at McGill, including one of Donald Hebb, the famous neuropsychologist.

In the early 1980s, Gentile's work explored psychological themes – aging, mortality, nature reclaiming what we build. Despite battling Parkinson's and Lewy body dementia in the 1990s, Gentile's work retained emotional weight and expressive power. It was acquired by banks, offices, private collectors, hotels, and large corporations such as Reader's Digest and Shell Oil. Though he never lived in Westmount, his paintings are found in many of its homes.

In the 1990s, my mother moved into Manoir Westmount. She died in 2003. My father passed away in 2001. Growing up, my siblings Lisa and Guido and I were immersed in art, spending hours in our studio-living room. While I was at McGill studying philosophy, I took many of my dad's classes, and for me, art became a way of being in the world. My father's legacy continues through my siblings, my wife Jos ane Brunelle, and myself. Whether through paint, film, books, or teaching, we strive – as he did – to explore and push creative boundaries. Art remains an evolving conversation, a way of seeing, and a way of questioning everything.

Credits: All the art shown in this article was the work of Gentile Tondino.

Tristan Tondino is a Montreal-based artist, philosopher, and award-winning art director whose multidisciplinary work bridges visual art, design, and critical thought.

FROM ROSS & MACFARLANE TO DFS: AN ARCHITECTURAL LEGACY IN WESTMOUNT

BY LAURENT GÉNÉREUX

At 120 years, DFS is Canada's longest continuously operated architecture firm. Over the years, many architects of the firm have called Westmount home, including David Fish, senior architect and honorary partner. Last February 20th, David gave a lecture to the Westmount Historical Association as part of the "Children Speaking about the Work of their Parents" series. The DFS portfolio includes many projects in Westmount designed over the years, mirroring the evolution of the city.

Ross and MacFarlane – known as Ross and Macdonald after 1912 – became one of the largest architectural firms in Canada during the first half of the 20th century. The success of Ross and MacFarlane rested in part on their capacity to design important buildings at a time when few firms had the capacity to deliver such projects. Some of the archives kept at the CCA of the earliest project by Ross include Roslyn School (1907-1908), as well as Ottawa Union Passenger Station (1906-1912) and the Château Laurier Hotel (1909-1912).

It was relatively difficult to obtain architectural education in Canada at that time. The first architecture school in Montreal, McGill's School of Architecture, opened only in 1896. Before that, architects in Canada were essentially crafts-

people, carpenters or stonemasons – who eventually learned to draw, or were trained through traditional apprenticeships. That was just 22 years after the architects of Quebec organized themselves as the AAPQ – the Association of Architects of the Province of Quebec, partly in response to the influx of American architects into the Quebec market.

George Allen Ross

George Allen Ross' path exemplifies these shifts, having taken both the apprenticeship path and formal university education in the United States, with a year at the Beaux-Arts school in Paris, France. He was born on October 24, 1878, the son of merchant Donald William Ross (1848-1921). Donald William Ross was a well-established merchant and involved in numerous business ventures. Historical sources mention that he was at some point the managing director of the Mount Royal Milling and Mfg. Co., a rice import business known today as Dainty Rice. He was one of the early wealthy Montreal businessmen to settle in the developing village of Côte St. Antoine.

In 1904-1905, the first year that George Allen Ross appears in Lovell's directory as an architect at the address 4619 St. Catherine, Westmount, his father is listed as the same address. George Allen Ross was not the eldest son, and as such probably wasn't expected to work in one of his father's



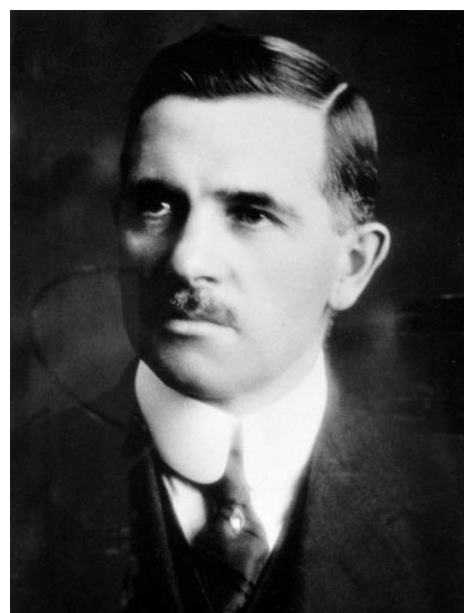
George Allen Ross

CREDIT: NOTMAN PHOTOGRAPHIC ARCHIVES,
McCORD MUSEUM



David Huron MacFarlane

CREDIT: COLLECTION OF M.I.T.



Robert Henry Macdonald

CREDIT: COURTESY OF DAVID ROSE,
COLLECTION OF DFS

businesses. This might explain his decision to pursue an architectural career.

One of his first jobs in architecture was as a draftsman for the Grand Trunk Railway. At the time, the large railway companies had sizeable architecture departments to support the construction of hotels, railway stations, and other structures for passenger service. Interestingly, the Grand Trunk Railway would eventually be one of the firm's major clients, commissioning both the Ottawa and Toronto stations and numerous quintessentially Canadian railway hotels throughout the country.

Due to the limited options for architectural education in Montreal at the time, Ross went to the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), where he studied until 1902. While in Boston, he worked for architects John A. Parker and Douglas H. Thomas Jr. In 1903, he was hired by the New York firm Carrère and Hastings. His time with this firm was key to gaining experience and knowledge about the new types of buildings emerging in the United States at the beginning of the 20th century. Changing trends in how people consumed, lived, and experienced cities led to the emergence of new architectural typologies – series of build-

ings of a similar type. At the same time, a new type of architectural practice was emerging in the U.S.: large commercial firms with vertically organized labour, where each architect had a specific role. These firms brought in engineering expertise as well. This allowed them to create complete designs and integrate considerations for mechanical and structural systems. These firms had large drafting departments, employing dozens of draftsmen working together in the studio under the supervision of the studio manager. This organization is reflected in the plan of the Ross & Macdonald agency from the time when it was in the now demolished Architects Building, corner Dorchester (now René-Lévesque) and Beaver Hall Hill.

During the 1910s, George Allen Ross resided at 200 Côte Saint-Antoine Road in Westmount. During the year 1912, before MacFarlane retired and before Macdonald became a partner, some of the staff worked on new projects for the second partnership on the second floor of his home. During the 1920s and the 1930s, Lovell's directory lists G. A. Ross' address as 56 Upper Bellevue Avenue. He stayed at this address until his passing. That portion of Upper Bellevue is now named Sunnyside.

David Huron MacFarlane

Born in Montreal on April 16, 1875, David Huron MacFarlane, studied architecture and engineering at MIT from 1897 to 1898. He then returned to Montreal, where he trained in the offices of Edward Maxwell and with Hutchison and Wood. However, he was not physically strong, which may have contributed to the decision to dissolve the first partnership in 1912.

David MacFarlane's family also had strong ties to the community of Westmount. His father, John MacFarlane, had lived for many years in the Metcalfe Terrace house on Côte St. Antoine Road, which he sold to Mr. J.B. Goode in 1884. He moved to Hazelbrae, a stone house at the corner of Churchill and Montrose avenues, now number 85 Churchill Avenue, where both father and son were listed in the 1908-1909 Lovell's.

Robert Henry Macdonald

MacFarlane was replaced by Robert Henry Macdonald, who had joined Ross and MacFarlane in 1907 as a draftsman. Macdonald was originally from Melbourne, Australia. Macdonald first worked as a draftsman for noted Westmount architect Robert Findlay, his uncle, but had also become familiar with American architectural practices before joining the firm.



Architects' Building, 1931, now demolished

CREDIT: REPRODUCTION FROM THE JOURNAL OF THE ROYAL ARCHITECTURAL INSTITUTE OF CANADA, VOL.VIII, NO.9 (SEPTEMBER, 1931)

Roslyn School

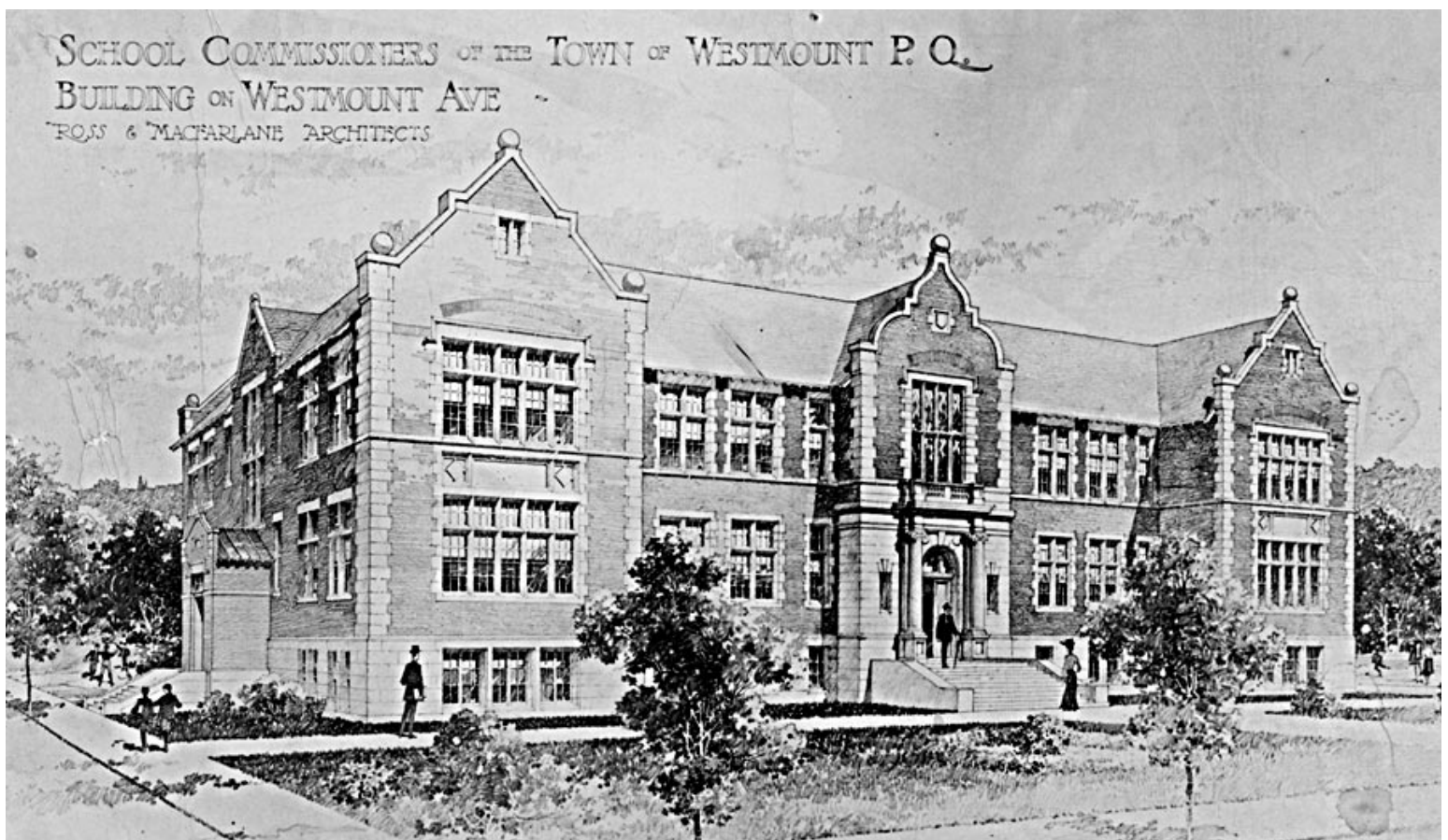
One of the first projects of the Ross and MacFarlane firm in Westmount was Roslyn School, which contributed to establishing it as a prominent architectural practice. By the beginning of the 20th century, as the public transportation system serving the area expanded, a neighbourhood of two and three-storey houses was starting to take form in the upper part of town along Westmount Avenue. Roslyn School was planned to serve this growing population.

William Douw Lighthall, mayor of Westmount from 1900 to 1903, was the chairman of the board of the Westmount School Commission when the commission to design the school was awarded to Ross and MacFarlane. The emphasis on design reflected W.D. Lighthall's belief that children are greatly affected by their environment. He insisted that the budget be increased to provide an attractive and airy building. The cornerstone was laid on October 12, 1907.

Roslyn School has more elaborate and more eye-catching architectural details than other elementary schools built around Montreal at the time. It is often described as Elizabethan in style. Chateau-style buildings were common in

early Westmount, emphasizing ties to the British Empire. The school features Ionic columns, a Tudor-style entrance, and stepped gables. As a Beaux-Arts building, it reflects historical influences and remains truly unique in Westmount. But it also has some interesting details reminiscent of Dutch influence, such as the stepped gables. Key architectural features included tasteful design, soft colouring, ochre-yellow sandstone, and fine equipment. The school was fireproof and had an innovative heating and ventilation system. The total cost of land, building, and furnishings was \$138,750, over \$4,000,000 in today's money.

The two-story building had an H-shaped plan. The central front doors were not used by children; boys entered from Grosvenor Avenue, and girls from Roslyn Avenue. The classrooms were stark by today's standards. However, the enormous windows made the school bright and sunny. The tall six-over-six sash windows with transoms were essential, as electric lighting and mechanical ventilation were uncommon. The second floor featured an assembly hall with a curved platform, medallions, stained-glass windows, and elegant lighting that was used for gym classes, assemblies, concerts, and competitions. The basement



Perspective drawing of Roslyn School's front façade, drawn by Robert Heughan

CREDIT: GIFT OF ROBERT HEUGHAN, JR., COLLECTION OF DFS



Exterior of St. Matthias' Anglican Church

CREDIT: COLLECTION OF ST. MATTHIAS' CHURCH. REPRODUCTION FROM THE DFS 100TH YEAR ANNIVERSARY EXHIBITION

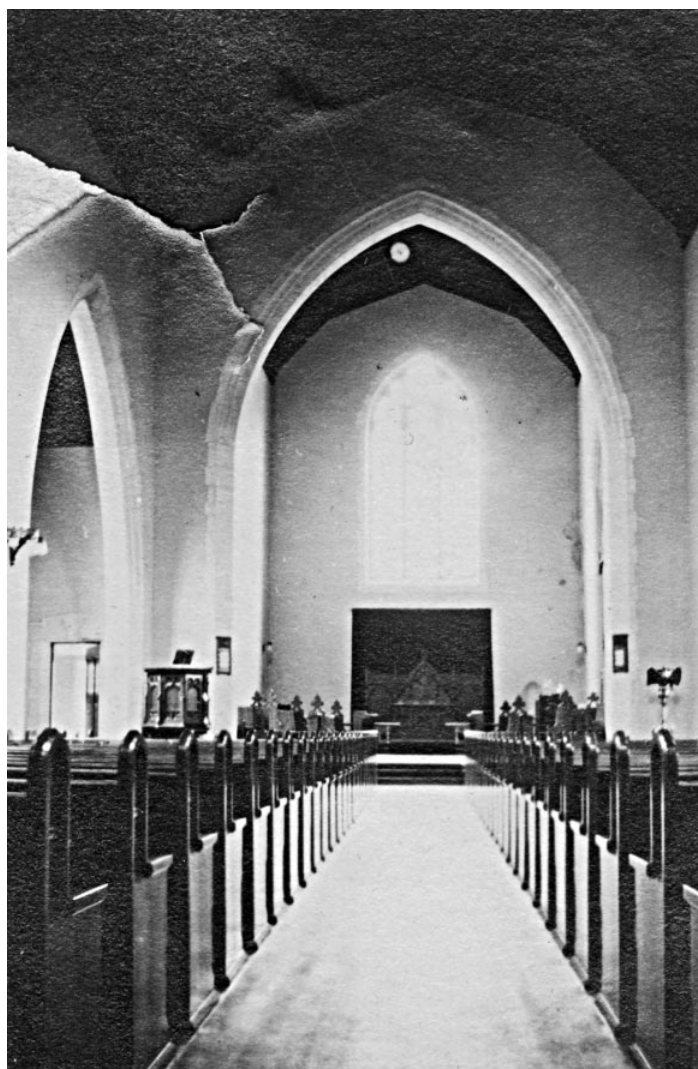
housed washrooms, a coal-fired furnace, and large playrooms for winter recess. The plumbing included a communal flush system.

Built to accommodate over 500 students, Roslyn School already had about 300 attending in its first year. Only 10 of the 15 classrooms were in use initially. The school was expanded in 1924 and again in 1952, maintaining the original proportions and style.

St. Matthias' Church

David MacFarlane's father, John MacFarlane, was a warden of St. Matthias' Church. The parish itself had been founded in 1873 as a mission of St. George's in downtown Montreal. When the parish outgrew its little wooden church, John MacFarlane called upon his son for a new design. Ross and MacFarlane were commissioned to design a new stone church in a neo-Gothic style, "of grand and elegant proportions". The new church was opened two years later.

St. Matthias' Church is another example of the versatility of Ross and MacFarlane, moving from the Elizabethan style of Roslyn School to a very elaborate example of neo-Gothic architecture. St. Matthias' is very much inspired by medieval English churches. The stone bell tower is a strong presence on the landscape of Côte-Saint-Antoine. The building is also a clever solution to the sloped terrain, with its raised entrances and porches. The western end wall, with its gable and rose window, is clearly visible when going down Côte-Saint-Antoine.



Interior of St. Matthias' Church

CREDIT: COLLECTION OF ST. MATTHIAS' CHURCH. REPRODUCTION FROM THE DFS 100TH YEAR ANNIVERSARY EXHIBITION

The church is also characterized by its big Gothic-arched windows on both the east façade and the south transept façade, as well as in the upper clerestory windows of the main nave, and by the use of Nepean sandstone for the walls, with details in cut stone made from Indiana limestone. This very soft, ochre-coloured stone was to become a fixture of the firm's designs during the first half of the 20th century.

Inside, Ross and MacFarlane followed traditional principles for the design of Anglican churches. The interior finishes are relatively simple and sober: plaster walls, stone trim surrounding the arches, windows, and a wooden ceiling with painted religious motifs.

On June 22, 1910, the Reverend Edward Bushell, Rector, and John MacFarlane laid the cornerstone. The new church was opened two years later. There is a stained glass window in the interior, given by John MacFarlane in memory of his



Exterior of the 1912 Westmount YMCA

CREDIT: McCORD MUSEUM

wife, Jane Black. When St. Matthias' was eventually expanded in the 1930s, the work was done by Charles Reginald Tetley, who had worked for Ross and Macdonald from 1909 to 1912.

Other Works in Westmount

Ross and Macdonald designed several apartment buildings in Westmount as well. On Academy Road, nearly an entire city block was eventually designed by the firm, including Westmount Park School and the Royal Montreal Regiment Armoury. This block is where George Allen Ross' father, Donald William, had his estate. Many of these large apartment buildings were built over what had previously been farms or large estates on expansive tracts of land. The buildings were akin to large hotels, with very functional floor plans. They were often steel structures clad in brick and stone. The designs were rooted in tradition but also employed modern construction materials and techniques.

The firm also had a strong relationship with the YMCA, contributing to several of its projects – including the North End YMCA on Park Avenue and its identical twin, the West End YMCA in Westmount, both designed in 1910.

This is a brief overview of the connections between Westmount and the firm of Ross and MacFarlane and its successor, Ross and Macdonald. It has focused on the first three partners, but many later partners, including David Fish and his father John also resided in Westmount and designed many buildings in the city.



Incorporated into the enlarged YMCA building

CREDIT: LAURENT GÉNÉREUX, 2025

In the end, the story of Westmount and DFS isn't just one of blueprints and buildings. Architects can shape buildings, but buildings can also shape a community and its sense of identity. The design of these early Westmount buildings contributed a great deal to the identity of the municipality as a city of refinement and elegance.

THE PARTNERSHIP OF J.B. FELLOWES AND N.A. FELLOWES

BY LUCY FELLOWES

Lucy Fellowes spoke to the WHA on April 17, 2025, about her father and her grandfather, who designed and developed Westmount homes from 1922 to 1955. She was assisted by WMA board member and architect Irina Nazarova, who explained many of the architectural features.

Constant and collaborative: such was the partnership of John Baker Fellowes (1872-1951), and his son Norton Alexander Fellowes (1903-1969). They were both ambitious and resourceful, seeing challenges as opportunities in their personal and professional lives. Their form of creative expression was building – siting, designing, constructing. Their field of endeavour was Montreal, especially Westmount. In their time – the first half of the 20th century – they were innovators.

J.B. and N.A. Fellowes sought to build distinctive homes of quality. To advance their vision, they opened up new urban areas and difficult sites for development, and styled their designs for changing times and tastes. They were interested in evolving building technologies and in materials – natural and fabricated. Their early homes were built of stone from local quarries; later ones featured glass brick windows and concrete.

J.B. arrived from Devon, England in 1921. In the census for that year, he is described as a photographer's assistant, the son of a labourer/mason. The first place he lived was Montreal's Annex (now part of Mile End and Outremont). It introduced him to the concept of the clean and green "garden city" in proximity to downtown. He adhered to this

vision throughout his career. In 1928, with his son N.A. having graduated from architecture at McGill the previous year, he bought a large plot of land on Forden Avenue in Westmount and had free-standing homes built on it to be sold. This was followed by similar innovative land use on Argyle, Sunnyside/Belvedere, and Willow, using stone, limestone, cement and other materials and nestling the buildings into challenging sites.

J.B.'s initial venture in Westmount was strategic: his first double house at 3778-3780 The Boulevard, 1922, built as a family home, and intended for sale when he built the next. N.A. Fellowes, still a student at McGill's School of Architecture, worked on it, and lived there with the family from 1924-1929. Certain features from these projects recur in their work: the double house makes efficient use of the lot, while making the two homes look more impressive together; sloping roofs overhanging front doors, gables and windows lend 'arts and crafts' character to modest brick homes.

The next Fellowes family residence from 1930-1947 at 3664 The Boulevard elaborated these same features: a double home skillfully sited on one lot, interesting volumes, sloped roof, gable windows. Varied colours and textures of locally quarried stone – seen on The Boulevard, Aberdeen, and Forden – characterize the designs of this period.

J.B.'s next move for the family also marked a change of direction in his architectural interests. Built in 1948, 30 Willow Avenue is thought to be the first concrete home in Westmount. J.B. and N.A. broke away from their conservative approach to introduce a modern home: geometric



3780 The Boulevard, built in 1922, right side of a double house where the N.A. Fellowes family lived from 1924-29

CREDIT: GOOGLE STREET VIEW, 2024



The back of 3664 The Boulevard, 1929, the N.A. Fellowes family home from 1930-47 (with 3637 The Boulevard in the background)

CREDIT: FELLOWES FAMILY COLLECTION



49 Forden Avenue, built in 1928 CREDIT: IRINA NAZAROVA, 2021

volumes, prominent garage, minimal detailing, wrap-around corner windows, lower level in back opening to a patio and garden.



Norton A. Fellowes with his sister Rae in front of 9 Willow Avenue, Rae's and their mother's home, 1967

CREDIT: FELLOWES FAMILY COLLECTION



30 Willow Avenue, an early concrete house from 1948 where J.B. Fellowes lived

CREDIT: IRINA NAZAROVA, 2025



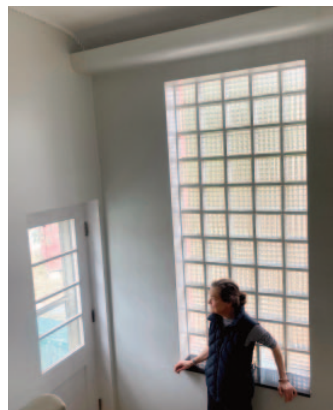
1 Sunnyside and 42 Belvedere, built in 1939 on a challenging site

CREDIT: GOOGLE STREET VIEW, 2009

I have fond memories of these family homes. The luminous interior of my grandparents' house on Willow impressed me as a small child. The rooms were bright spaces flowing one to the next. I remember the same radiance in the home N.A. Fellowes designed for our family in 1948 at 589 Lansdowne: pavilions of light cascading up and down stairs.

The last homes N.A. Fellowes designed for the family were also simple volumes of spacious light, with open plan interiors, flexible spaces, open to green space and gardens: 4854 Westmount Avenue was my home from 1953, 9 Willow was my grandmother's and aunt's home from 1955. The Westmount and Willow avenue homes – built on parts of land sold by the Congrégation de Notre Dame – continued the garden city vision of J.B. Fellowes' early days: low profiles, outward looking, respecting their natural settings and their neighbours.

Lucy Fellowes is a former curator of the Cooper-Hewitt, National Design Museum in New York, part of the Smithsonian Institution



View of the interior with Lucy Fellowes standing against the glass block windows.

CREDIT: LUCY FELLOWES, 2025



Wrap-around corner windows

CREDIT: IRINA NAZAROVA, 2025

SHOPPING IN THE 1960S IN WESTMOUNT

By MATTHEW ELDER

Westmount’s demographics and infrastructure may have evolved over the years, but our city within a city has for the most part retained its essential character of tree-lined homes, lovely parks and, notably, its two well-contained shopping districts. While the commercial boundaries of the Sherbrooke/Victoria and Greene Avenue sectors have remained intact, the shopping experience is quite different from a generation ago. My frequent forays there always conjure memories of my youth in the late 1950s and 1960s, when I would cycle down the hill from my home on Lansdowne Avenue (and laboriously ride back up) to spend my weekly allowance, or to accompany my

parents shopping.

My solo trips when I was around the ages of 8 to 10 were to blow my 25-cent allowance at Fry’s (on the south side of Sherbrooke between Gros-

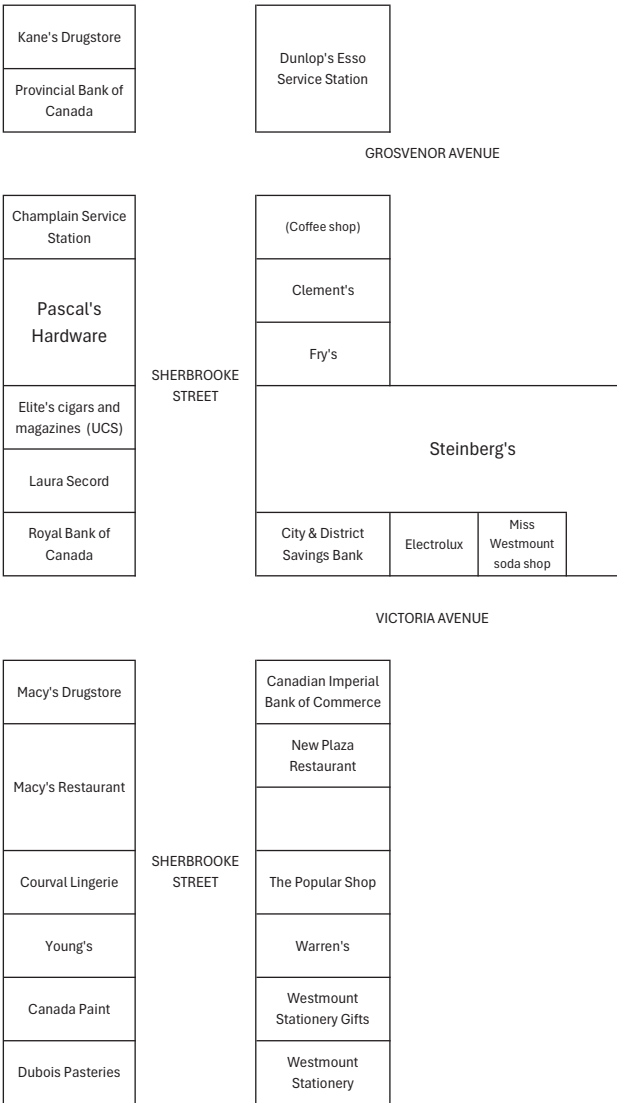
venor and Victoria, usually 12 cents for a Superman comic book and the rest on a chocolate bar and penny candy. I am grateful for my clear recollections of going into Fry’s, not just as nostalgia for my youth but because it provided a classic experience that was the norm even well before my time. Fry’s sold practically everything of interest to a youngster. Of course, there were the gumballs and other sugary delights that the clerk fished out from the glass display counters and dispensed into small paper bags. There also were toys and school supplies such as exercise books and pencils – hence the formal name of the store, Fry’s Stationery. Originally it occupied just one storefront but by the early 1960s it expanded to include the shop next door. Sadly, by 1970 Fry’s was no more.

Brian Gordon, who lived a block away on Roslyn Avenue, remembers the blackballs at Fry’s being his favourite and being fascinated by the store’s toy shelves, particularly the figurines of medieval knights on horseback, which were well beyond his weekly budget, but put on his Christmas wish list. But Brian’s favourite memory was going into the Westmount Hobby Shop, a couple of blocks west and a goldmine of model kits and other hobby items. “I would go in and lust over all the super cool boats and cars,” Brian recalls. “One day after I saved up, I bought a scale version of a Johnson 75-horsepower outboard motor. I still have it.”

Other than my solo trips to Fry’s, my main memories of Sherbrooke and Victoria in those days was going to Steinberg’s (a smaller version of today’s Metro supermarket) with my mother and to Young’s for fruit



Matthew Elder, age 7
CREDIT: MATTHEW ELDER ARCHIVES



Plan of the shops in Victoria Village in the 1960s
CREDIT: MATTHEW ELDER, 2025



Steinberg's on the north side of Sherbrooke Street before its move to the present Metro site in the mid-1950s; Pascal's took its place

PHOTO: CITY OF WESTMOUNT, 1947

and vegetables. I remember her taking me to the Royal Bank to open my first savings account at age 7. Somewhere in my 'archives' I must still have that original bank book.

We didn't get our school supplies at Fry's; instead, these were purchased at Westmount Stationery at its original location on the southeast corner of Prince Albert. A few doors along was Warren's, where they outfitted me in gray flannel pants and sports jackets for school. (By school decree, my blazers and ties had to come from Howarth's downtown.)

I would accompany my father to Pascal's Hardware. Dad was a pediatrician and, while adept at stitching and other precise medical procedures, this dexterity did not extend to household handy tasks. Thus, his infrequent trips to Pascal's for nails (which he regarded as far easier to work with than screws) and such tended to be frustrating affairs. Having communicated his vague needs to a clerk, what really set him off was the store's policy of requiring the customer to trek across the store to a central cash with a sales slip, paying, and then having to go to the back of the store to retrieve the goods. This he considered, in strong verbal terms, to be the pinnacle of inefficiency.

We had a charge account at Kane's Drugstore, where many of Dad's patients had prescriptions filled by Morty Schwartz. I didn't know anything about prescriptions at that age, but I did know I could get away with charging a Nutty-buttie or Fudgsicle at Kane's.

Across the street, the family station wagon was always filled up at Bill Dunlop's Esso station. I was certain the usual pump attendant was Murray Westgate, who did the Esso ads during hockey games, complete with an Esso cap and red plastic bowtie – but I now chalk that up to the imagination of a young lad. I was also sure that it was called Dunlop's because they sold Dunlop tires.

Mystery shops to me were Du Bois (pastries were not on my mother's shopping list), The Popular Store (which I think sold women's clothing) and Clement's market. I knew what Laura Secord's was, but it was well beyond my Fry's candy budget. Other food stores were National Foods (since relocated nearby on Sherbrooke Street) and Chatfield's, on the southeast corner of Sherbrooke and Claremont. I got my eyeglasses next door at McGregor Opticians.

Tony Hunt recalls randomly crossing Sherbrooke Street: "It was more often every pedestrian for him or herself, where you crossed the street quickly – but safely – and letting the car-drivers know who was boss." This was a few years before the city installed a three-cycle traffic light system at Sherbrooke and Victoria. It was so well designed that everyone actually obeyed the walk signals. (I can still recall the details of each cycle.)

In the mid-1960s our family began a tradition of going to Macy's Restaurant, for many years a fixture on the northwest corner of Sherbrooke and Victoria, for Sunday dinner. This seemed quite out of character for us, but in hindsight my theory is this was my parents' preferable alternative to stuffy Sunday dinners at my grandparents' house on The Boulevard. Around this time, I also would stop in at Macy's soda fountain after school for a cherry coke (made the old-fashioned way with ladles of cola syrup, cherry syrup, a scoop of crushed ice and soda from the tap), and French fries with gravy. At age 11 or 12, one's constitution was indestructible. Sadly, by the late 1960s Macy's and its connected drugstore went out of business. Family dinners were moved to Murray's, a very similar (but chain) restaurant just west of Claremont. This eventually was deemed not to be the same experience, so Sunday nights became the domain of take-out chicken from Chalet Bar-B-Q.



The block known as Drouin Terrace on the south side of Sherbrooke St., which in the late 1960s and early 1970s included Westmount Stationery, Warren's, and The Popular Shop



Greene Avenue, looking south from Sherbrooke in the late 1960s

Above Sherbrooke Street, there was the milkman from Elmhurst Dairy whose truck rolled down the hill from house to house with the engine off. He'd let you ride down with him partway. Even if nobody was home, deliveries were made by the back door (always unlocked) to leave milk and cream in your fridge, as needed. The POM Bakery truck came down twice a week and, while we were not customers, I'd occasionally save a dime from my allowance to buy an Alouette mini-cake.

Then there was Greene Avenue. This was out of cycling range for an eight-year-old on Lansdowne Avenue, although I do remember getting 50-cent haircuts at Shaftsbury's (and thinking, well, you got what you paid for). Of course, Greene Avenue is where our mother took us to buy footwear of all types, at the recently shuttered and much missed, Tony's Real Shoe Shop. Eddie would bring out your size in black oxford lace-up shoes for school, and those side-buckle winter boots. (We never called them galoshes.)

Down at Greene and St. Catherine was Gordon's market, from where my parents had delivered the odd combination of beer and fresh-cut bacon. As another charge-account establishment, in our late teens my sister and I were known to covertly order the occasional case of Molson Export.

Next door was Ohman's, a fine jeweller and a clocks expert. I can still remember the hum of crystal and the softly clicking clocks. It was a peaceful space. Ohman's trademark bow windows remain, now incorporated into individual storefronts. Jim Cleghorn, who grew up on Cedar Avenue, recalls: "I got my first watch there. Mr. Ohman would make the cuckoo clock go for the kids. There was always an air

of velvet and silver polish about the place."

Jim recalls "milkshakes, burgers, magazines and cap guns" at Eddie's Lunch Bar, later Oxford's and now the Avenue G coffee shop. The Avenue name was on a number of establishments. A favourite lunch spot was the Avenue Restaurant, run by Westmount High grad Eddie Khalil. "We went to Avenue Hardware for light bulbs," Jim recalls. "Everything else we bought at Pascal's." He admits falling asleep during a showing of *2002: A Space Odyssey* at the Avenue Theatre.

Greene Avenue also once had a gas station, a White Rose operated by Jim Periera, at Greene and Western Avenue (now De Maisonneuve Boulevard). It was closed in the mid-60s "because you couldn't have gasoline reservoirs over the Metro line," Jim explains. The coincidentally named Green Line west of the original Atwater terminus extended past Greene Avenue. We

fondly remember the train driver's announcement: "Terminus, Tout le monde descend, everybody out."

Matthew Elder is a former writer and editor with The Gazette and Financial Post. He and his three siblings grew up on Lansdowne Avenue. While he now lives downtown, he continues to do all his shopping at Sherbrooke and Victoria.



Ohman's Jewellers on Greene Avenue with its classic bow window, which remains today

GROWING UP ON VICTORIA

BY SUSAN CHRISTMAS FALCONER

These are some of my memories as a young girl during the 1940s and 50s, living with my mother, father, and older sister on Victoria Avenue, just above Sherbrooke Street. I played marbles, hopscotch, skipped, and roller skated outside my home.



Roslyn School grade 2 c.1944 with Sue in back row, middle



Inter-school tennis at Westmount Jr. High School 1950-51 with Sue in front row, left

My sister and I attended Roslyn Elementary School. It was a very long walk to and from school, and involved climbing all the way up Victoria to Westmount Avenue – twice a day. We were able to cut across the corner of Victoria and Côte St. Antoine, as it was a vacant lot. In those days, students went home for lunch, then back to school for the afternoon session. I remember the “Boys Entrance” and the “Girls Entrance” being clearly marked (engraved in the cement above the doors). All classes were co-ed.

I attended Westmount Junior High School on Academy Road for grades 7, 8, and 9. It wasn’t until I was an adult that I realized how fortunate I was to have attended this school. Sports became my main focus. There were always extra-curricular activities after school. I think I participated in most of them. The sports were basketball, volleyball, soccer, field hockey, track and field, gymnastics, tennis, ski team, and soccer baseball.

I then went on to Westmount Senior High School on Côte St. Antoine for grades 10 and 11. Again, I loved all the extra-curricular activities and was seldom home before six o’clock in the evening. I give thanks to the teachers who stayed after school hours so that these activities could take place.

Macy’s Drug Store was at the corner of Sherbrooke and Victoria. As I lived just up the street, after school I occasionally went to the restaurant part of the store and had a slice of rainbow sherbet with my friend Heather. This must have been a nuisance for the waitresses, as the tables were set for dinner and two young girls came in for probably a \$1.00 treat!

When my sister and I were very young, we would walk to Murray Park to ski on the big hill. The little hill beside the big hill was for sliding. Miss Barnes, the local police patrol officer, was always on duty at the park, walking up and down between the two hills. It turns out that Miss Barnes was the first female police patrol officer in Canada. I also spent many hours with friends using the parallel bars in other seasons.

Melody House was a record store on the south side of Sherbrooke near Claremont. I spent hours there, listening to music in the record booth. Records cost 95 cents, and I probably bought too many of them. At least my dad probably thought so! Nat King Cole, Harry Belafonte, Johnnie



Sue's sports badges from her years at Westmount Jr. High

Ray, and Patti Page were some of my favourites.

The first movie I ever went to in a theatre was as a 15-year-old. The ticket taker was so nice and let me in, even though I wasn't yet 16. He gave me a lecture and told me how lucky I was that he let me in. Every Friday night I went to see a movie at Dominion Douglas Church (Mountain-side), entering by the side door on Roslyn Avenue. The cost was 25 cents. Bob Hope's "Road to ..." series was always popular.

My interest in sports started early. I remember a red brick wall, marked with a white line the height of a tennis net, in the Steinberg's parking lot near my home. I have no idea who painted this line. However, in any free time I had, I would be there with my tennis racquet, trying to improve my strokes. I spent many hours doing this and feel it must have made me a better tennis player. I was a member of the Mount Royal Tennis Club at a very young age and had many lessons with the instructor, George (I think). The



The Girls' Athletic Association at Westmount Jr. High with Sue, the secretary, at right

lessons were always on court #6. I consumed lots of Lime Rickey – again, my poor wonderful father! Watching the workers deworm the grass court was quite something. They spread a product on the court which brought the worms to the surface. They then filled garbage cans, using shovels to pick up the worms. I think the worms were about one foot in length. Too many worms would make the court very slippery.

All in all, it was a wonderful experience growing up in Westmount!



Westmount High School cheerleaders in 1954 with Sue in front row at far left

ALL PHOTOS FROM SUE FALCONER

SUSAN FALCONER: NATIONAL SKIING CHAMPION

BY JANE MARTIN, WHA ARCHIVIST

When former longtime Westmounters Susan Christmas Falconer and her husband Ken visited the WHA Archives last year, it was to provide information and memorabilia related to Sue's once-famous ancestor from the beginning of the past century – Canadian sports legend William “Billy” Christmas (see back cover). Little did we know that she could reveal a championship story of her own.

As well as discussing Billy Christmas' remarkable achievements, Susan described how she had grown up on Victoria Avenue in a sports-loving family and participated in a full roster of athletic activities while attending Westmount public schools in the 1940s and 50s. Her devotion to alpine skiing reigned supreme in her teenage years, when she began training and entering amateur competitions with the Penguin Ski Club in St. Sauveur.

Sue's talents and dedication brought her resounding

public acclaim in 1956, while competing for the Canadian Alpine Skiing Championship in Collingwood, ON. She was in her first year of senior competition at age 18, skiing against 40 of the country's top racers. Described by officials as “a hot Olympic prospect”, Sue swept the downhill and slalom races, winning the combined crown to become the women's senior alpine champion. Only days later, she added the Quebec combined trophy (downhill and slalom) to her conquests, capturing the provincial alpine championship.

As much as she had enjoyed the thrills of competitive skiing, Sue admitted that she later decided “more racing was not for me” and declined a training regime aimed at higher achievements. She went on to an active and fulfilling secretarial career and married life, and continued to enjoy recreational sports over the years. Sue cherishes her memories, as well as a thick scrapbook of clippings and photos attesting to her youthful athletic pursuits.



Sue Falconer at the WHA Archives, October 2024



Sue Christmas before one of her winning runs, 1956

CREDIT: OTTAWA TELEGRAM, FEB. 11, 1956



Sue Christmas, Champion of the Canadian Alpine Ski Competition, 1956

CREDIT: CANADIAN PRESS, FEB. 11, 1956

FROM THE ARCHIVES

By JANE MARTIN, WHA ARCHIVIST

The WHA Archives was privileged in 2024 to receive two framed photo plaques related to William Cecil Christmas (1879-1949), a legendary local athlete from the early days of the past century who was inducted into Canada's Sports Hall of Fame, Legends Class, in 2015. The plaques had been given later that year by one of his descendants, Susan Christmas Falconer, for display at the Montreal Amateur Athletic Association (MAAA) in downtown Montreal. They honoured William ("Billy") Christmas' remarkable athletic achievements in four major sports around the turn of the last century, as well as his contributions to society during his later life.

As an early MAAA member, Billy Christmas excelled at rugby, hockey, lacrosse, and boxing. From 1897 to 1901 he starred on both the MAAA intermediate and senior hockey and lacrosse teams. He was also a star halfback for the Britannia Football (rugby) Club, and in 1899 won the MAAA lightweight boxing championship.

Billy Christmas came from a large Montreal family that relocated to the Town of Côte St. Antoine (later Westmount) around 1901. He was the most outstanding of eight athletic brothers. Once married, he resided at 61 Columbia Avenue with his wife Helen Turk and their four children. At least four generations of the Christmas family lived in Westmount for significant periods of time.

The plaques were presented to the WHA by former long-time Westmounter Susan Christmas Falconer – a great grandniece of Billy Christmas – who had attended his Hall of Fame induction ceremony with other extended family members. Susan also gifted the Archives with a copy of her famous relative's complete family tree, researched and documented by Girard (Gerry) Christmas, Billy's grandson who lives in Thailand. During major renovations in 2019, the plaques had been permanently returned by the MAAA to Susan Falconer. The Sports Hall of Fame Museum in Calgary has closed and its Legends exhibition turned over to the Museum of History in Ottawa.

Plaques donated by Susan Falconer to the WHA Archives, 2024

