Along Streets and Under Ground: Treasures from Point St. Charles

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Quebec Heritage News

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An Activist Community

The Parallel Institute, the Khadijah Centre, and St. Gabriel School

Good Neighbours

Local Legends and Local Hangouts

Going in Style

A History of Respectable Burial on Mount Royal

Quebec Heritage News

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Cover: Bracelet fashioned from debris in Point St. Charles, by Anja Novković.

EDITOR'S DESK

Rags and Bottles

by Rod MacLeod

Of the very small number of people who have actually laughed out loud at my jokes, Harry Gulkin, who died last July at the ripe old age of 90, laughed the loudest. I am eternally thankful.

It wasn't much of a joke, even for a kid: essentially a "shaggy dog" about a guy who was given a parking ticket which he contested at various levels of the court system, eventually serving jail time (the number of years depending on how long one was prepared to milk the thing) before suddenly remembering that he did not own a car. That Harry laughed uproariously – and, moreover, that I felt comfortable being the centre of attention for the time it took to tell the joke – speaks volumes about the kind of person he was.

I'm putting the cart before the horse, here. Which is hardly surprising, because I never saw the horse, except in the movie. Montreal West has never been all that keen on residents keeping horses, certainly not nowadays when you can't even park your car in the street without asking the town's permission. I'm quite sure keeping an old cart is also a no-no, now. Nevertheless, sometime in 1975 such a cart appeared in Harry Gulkin's driveway, and it remained there even after he moved out. The object of much local curiosity, it earned me a fair amount of badly needed street cred. Taking visitors a few doors along from my home to view the famous cart did much to bolster an adolescent self-esteem regularly undermined by acne, glasses, and the peach fuzz that wiser forces could not persuade me to shave off. And for that bolstering I am also thankful to Harry.

This cart was the actual one used in *Lies My Father Told Me*, the film about a young boy growing up in 1920s Montreal whose grandfather rode up and down the back alleys off The Main chanting "Rags! Clothes! Bottles!" in hopes of collecting refuse – the picturesque equivalent of today's recycling service, whose operatives sadly do not entice contributions by singing (or at any rate not in my neighbourhood). At fourteen, I was far too sophisticated to imagine myself as either the boy or his grandfather on the one occasion I sat on the cart to pose for a photo, and I was certainly not tempted to cry out for rags and bottles. But I made the connection through this clunky old cart to both The Main of the early twentieth century (a time and place I would eventually write a fair amount about) and the magical process of taking people back to said time and place through film. Harry's cart had been to The Main of long ago in more ways than one.

Posing on the old cart, 1975. Photo: MacLeod family collection.

For the previous couple of years I had heard all about the making of *Lies*, either indirectly from my parents or directly from Harry – on occasions such as the one where he and his wife Ruth came over for dinner and I told my well-received joke. *Lies* was not Harry's first project as a film producer, but it was the first big one, the kind that had the potential to make or break his career. I learned that the movie business was not all that glamourous – not when it meant chasing endlessly after sponsors and grant agencies and having to put operations on hold when the money ran out. I suspect Harry covered some of the expenses himself, and I know he did a great deal of the legwork, tracking down props and bits of costume with the unsqueamish devotion of the film's scavenger grandfather. I don't remember how and where he found the old cart, but it is indicative of his rags-and-bottles approach that he ended up having to store the thing in his own driveway.

Despite such hard work and cost cutting, it seemed on more than one occasion that the movie would never be finished. It was, in the end, only because Harry found a major investor whose proviso was to be credited as co-producer – an honour that seemed terribly unfair given that the effort of writing a cheque hardly compared to the years Harry had devoted to the project. But that is the way you make art.

It was also very clear that Harry was a genius at this sort of thing. To say that he was affable is an understatement; ditto that he had a knack for pulling people together and making things seem tickety boo when they were really only maybe going to work. He had, in short, a talent for laughing at other people's jokes. I acknowledge this now with a great deal of admiration and affection, knowing how important that skill is in so much of life. There is no art to making deals, but there is in diplomacy and negotiation.

Besides, *Lies My Father Told Me* was Harry's film. Sure, he brought the more famous Jan Kadar in to direct, and the story was by Ted Allan, based on his own childhood experiences. But Harry shared Allan's roots in the rags, clothes and bottles of The Main, though he was a decade younger. His parents were classic Eastern European secular Montreal Jews, and he came by his iconoclasm naturally; I remember delighting in Harry's description of his father pacing up and down in front of the local synagogue ostentatiously munching a ham sandwich just to disgust the congregation. But although Harry clearly inherited this irreverence towards orthodoxy, it did not get in the way of presenting the deeply religious grandfather in *Lies* as a beautiful and inspiring figure; it is the boy's father (the one of the film's title) who is raked over the coals for his small-minded efforts to succeed in business and his dismissal of anything magical. Even so, the sentiment at the heart of *Lies* is tempered by an acknowledgement

that the world is changing, that the rags and bottles of our childhood must eventually disappear.

Harry found a political soulmate in Ruth, who also came from hard-edged Jewish communist stock, though of the Manitoba One Big Union variety. Both Ruth and Harry were part of that wave that left the Party after Khrushchev's denunciation of Stalin in 1956, something I found seriously cool. Why and how these two ended up in Montreal West is a mystery, although it may have been my mother who alerted them to the house on our street that had just become available. (She and Ruth were both social workers at a rehabilitation centre, where they acquired reputations as rabble rousers in their willingness to go to bat for patients in disputes with bureaucratic management.) It is also true that having school-age children does tend to make the suburbs more palatable, and the Gulkins had two: Cathy, five or six years older than me, who seemed to personify the laid back essence of late 1960s youth (at least insofar as I was able to grasp the intangible essence of Flower Power), and Jimmy, her junior by a couple of years, who was rougher around the edges and always getting in trouble at school, though my mother insisted he just had to find his niche. They were both really nice kids – notably to me, despite the age gap between us.

But as the 1970s rolled on, I became aware that all was not well within the Gulkin household, and eventually I learned that Harry had moved out. The only other time I saw him in person was decades later at my mother's funeral, when he seemed very pleased to see me and we reminisced about the old cart and my joke. When I moved back to Montreal West in the 1990s I appreciated Ruth as a neighbour; our paths would cross in the street and we would exchange derisory comments about the politicians of the day and catch up on the antics of my children and her granddaughter. Cathy had gone to Toronto to (appropriately enough) make films, and it was there, a few years ago, that Ruth joined her, having decided that running the house was too much for her. As a frequent waterer of plants in that house, and having once painted and restored its façade as a summer job in my late teens, I was very fond of it; not only was it the oldest building in the area (1860s at least), but it was filled with exotic artwork from around the world. Most of this art Ruth had acquired over the course of numerous visits to her son Jimmy, who true to my mother's conviction (and contrary to every teacher's grim prediction) had found his niche: after making money on an Alberta oil rig he travelled solo through Africa and Asia (regaling us with wild stories on several occasions) and then settled in Thailand, where he founded a food export business and became a philanthropist. For Christmas 2004, Jimmy invited both his parents to a beach vacation in Phuket Province, where they narrowly escaped getting hit by the monster tsunami that reduced the coast to flotsam and waste.

Some years later, I ran into Harry in the archives – meaning that his name suddenly appeared in documents I was reading about the Saidye Bronfman Centre. I had forgotten that in 1983 Harry had given up as a film producer and signed on as the Saidye's artistic director, a position he held for several years during a difficult watershed period in the centre's history. Here, as always, Harry blended a cosmopolitan spirit with a sense of local colour, promoting innovative modern work that nevertheless spoke directly to Montreal's Jewish community – or at least to what he described as "the unaffiliated Jew" (meaning, I assume, those who identified with the community without necessarily adhering to its traditional institutions.) Among the achievements of his tenure was the exhibition *Jewish Painters and Modernity*, profiling the works of great Quebec artists such as Louis Muhlstock, Ernst Neumann, and Jack Beder, all of whom specialized in depictions of Depression-era Montreal: the unemployed, the down-and-out, and the back-alley life that would figure in *Lies My Father Told Me*. I remember going to that show at the Saidye with my parents in late 1987; more recently, I saw what was effectively a revival of the exhibition at the McCord, rekindling my fascination (see "Uncle Louis et al," *QHN*, March 2010). Again, I have Harry to thank for that.

Still from Lies My Father Told Me. *Photo: http://coolopolis.blogspot.com.*

And then just weeks ago I saw his obituary, and felt that little sad flutter one gets when absorbing such news. But accompanying it was another bombshell that had hitherto escaped my attention: Harry was the natural father to actor and film maker Sarah Polley. Wikipedia soon informed me that Sarah was born in 1979, and I felt another frisson realizing that her birth, or at any rate the affair that had led to it, had come in the wake of Harry's departure from Montreal West. I gather that Sarah herself only discovered the truth about her origins a few years ago, and has made a film on the subject (*Stories We Tell*) that I intend to see. I wonder if she knows about the old horse cart.

Now, you may find the following point a bit of a stretch, but I assure you it isn't. During the time when we were expecting our first child I worked with a fellow who was embarking on a relationship that included two young stepdaughters. I was surprised to hear him confess to having grown extremely fond of *Road to Avonlea*, a favourite TV show of his new charges – surprised because this fellow was a no-nonsense unsentimental historian of the working class and labour organizations, and it was hard to picture him scrunching down with the tots on Sunday evenings to watch the highly romanticized antics of an early twentieth-century PEI farming family. But I decided that if he could do it, so could I, and that since we were about to have a daughter we might as well get into the groove. And of course we fell in love with the kids of Avonlea, the key one of whom was played by Sarah Polley. Ever since, whenever I come across Sarah – be it as an actor, a director, or a political advocate – I remember that exciting time in our own lives and think of my daughter. That this should turn out to be yet another thing that I am thankful to Harry for is most curious.

And so I salute the passing of a long life devoted to the arts, to noble and worthy causes, and to the rags and bottles out of which our lives are made.

VOLUNTEERING MATTERS

Hey! Where's My Thanks?

Recognizing Volunteers

by Heather Darch

This is the last of eight articles by Heather Darch exploring the issue of volunteers and volunteering. It was inspired by her work on the QAHN project, FOREVER.

I've volunteered for many organizations over the years, like Girl Guides, church and school programs, parks, historical societies and hospitals. I'm sure I've been thanked many times for my time and service. But I only remember the time I wasn't thanked.

I was a 15-year-old candy striper at my local hospital, and at the end of the year the supervisor gave everyone a chevron to sew on their sleeve as a symbol of the time and care we gave to the patients and the assistance we gave to the nurses. All of the stripers got one – except me. "Oh I must have overlooked you, sorry about that." Let me tell you, that chevron was a big deal to all of us and, while years have passed since that fateful day, it still has a little sting to it. The goal was to get four – two on each pink and white striped sleeve; I quit before I even got one.

The Internet is filled with happy candy stripers receiving awards of recognition for their volunteer time. Alas, my picture is not among them!

For non-profit community organizations working with volunteers it can be difficult coming up with ideas to recognize them for their contributions. What awards should we give? What are the best tokens? Do we provide pins, certificates or fancy dinners? If our budgets are really tight, how can we afford to properly thank our volunteers?

At QAHN's 2016 *Volunteering Matters* conference, held at the Château Ramezay in Old Montreal, Louise Brazeau, the head of education and promotion, who oversees one of the most successful volunteer programs in Quebec museums, said that "true recognition of volunteers begins with everyday good practices." A team of 100 volunteers, both French-speaking and English-speaking, actually pay a fee for the privilege of being a volunteer at the museum. When they first sign up, each potential volunteer receives a thank you card acknowledging that they are going to be giving their time and effort. That's a great concept! We usually only think of sending letters after a task or project is completed. The Château Ramezay program recognizes that giving time is no small matter.

Simple gestures help build a positive working climate and a community of dedicated volunteers who feel connected to the museum, its visitors, the staff and board. This supportive atmosphere fosters the sense of personal belonging and ownership that is the greatest reward of volunteering.

The Château Ramezay volunteer program is inherently people-oriented, and that's the key. Unfortunately, we have a tendency to only see what a volunteer can do for our organization, not what the organization can do for the volunteer. Louise Brazeau outlined what their program gives back to their volunteers: opportunities for involvement in other museum learning experiences, field trips and outings, proper training using a "god-parenting" method of guidance from experienced volunteers, a well-prepared volunteer handbook, handwritten thank you notes, receptions for volunteers and board members to meet, an involved president and staff in the volunteer program, and regular group photographs of the volunteers that are displayed with pride for everyone to see.

"Volunteers need to know that they are welcome and needed and have real purpose within your organization." They need to know what is expected of them, be kept involved and informed in decision making and strategic planning and have feedback to their ideas and suggestions. The Château Ramezay's volunteers have an award pin program for years served but there is so much more involved in thanking them for their commitment.

The best way to show appreciation is to celebrate the value your volunteers bring to your group. Everyone deserves recognition, even newcomers. The Château Ramezay's program is a success because volunteers are at the core of what that museum does.

Annual volunteer luncheons, field trips, free parking, books donated to libraries in a volunteer's name, framed certificates or artistic prints, discounts for materials or activities, free admission for the volunteer and a family member to the museum, handwritten cards or meaningful inexpensive gifts, monthly or annual awards – all are really great ways to say thank you. More importantly, though, remembering to build community and creating connectedness among your volunteers, providing training, making volunteer work meaningful, explaining your expectations, getting to know the volunteers on a personal level and thanking them every single time is crucial for a well-balanced recognition element to your volunteer program.

George Brich, Candy Stripers get their pins, 1963. Photo: Los Angeles Public Library, (OCoLC) 898075895.

DONORS & DREAMERS

MAKING THE CASE

Fundraising begins with the case for support

by Heather Darch

This is the third in a series of articles by Heather Darch addressing the perennial question of Fundraising. It was inspired by her work on the recent QAHN project, DREAM.

Things you shouldn't talk about around the dining room table include death, sex, politics, money, religion and fundraising!

Well, I added that last one.

It's hard to bring up fundraising with our family and friends let alone complete strangers, but as Juniper Belshaw of the Centre for Community Organizations (COCo) says, "Talking about fundraising is a real opportunity to give people the chance to invest in what they care about, but you have to be prepared before you do."

We're lucky to be non-profit organizations in Canada. Here's why. According to *Sectorsource.ca*, the vast majority of Canadians (82 percent) donate annually to a non-profit organization, with $10.6 billion dollars being donated each year. Government funding for non-profits accounts for as much as 45 percent of total revenues and 17 percent comes from donor-based fundraising strategies. As Juniper Belshaw said at QAHN's DREAM conference in Morin Heights, "It's that 17 percent that can lead to growth and stability for our non-profits."

The money is out there, but first things first. Before you can begin a fundraising campaign, you need to have a clear cause. All good funding development plans must have a case for support or case statement. This is where we write down why our organization exists and what it does. It's where we identify and communicate our needs for increased funds; where we pinpoint the problems we are addressing, state what we are actively doing to address our issues and highlight what we have done so far that has been successful.

"The case statement emphasizes the need the organization was established to meet, the way it meets that need and the capacity of the organization to do so."

The case statement also says how increased funding will impact our organization and our community. If you don't have a case for support, your potential donors will have a hard time buying in.

A good case statement will help you to focus your goals, bring your team on board and present a unified message to the public.

The case statement is an internal document for your board. It's created so that you can focus your goals and bring your team on board. It's the basis for all donor information and communications, and from the case statement you'll build your fundraising plans, tighten your message and ensure that everyone involved presents a united front when you finally take your fundraising plan to the public to solicit donations. Juniper stressed the point that "the case for support will be the guide for the logic and language you are using to talk to donors."

Nothing produced by your organization for external use should contradict the case statement. Ever.

An external case statement is also adapted for the public. This one is shorter and donor-oriented but it draws from the original document. It should allow the donor to see how their support will be a good investment of their money; it should pull them into your vision.

A strong case for support will summarize your vision for the future, tell donors why you need funding, why you matter, what impact you will make in your community and why the donor should care.

How well you tell your story is crucial in the case statement. Juniper Belshaw says "we have to change the order of how we talk about ourselves; the why has to come first." It's the compelling and personal stories and that sense of authenticity that will attract a donor to your organization. If you are too technical and get bogged down in facts and figures, the donor will be turned off. We've all seen those heart-felt appeals for children's hospitals; their case for support is clear and emotional and very effective.

It's important to remember that donors are not ATMs. You have to connect to them as people, not just as sources of money. If you want them to stay with you forever, it has to be the one-to-one connection that makes that happen. "Effective fundraising is a result of telling your story" and the case for support will do just that.

Creating the case statement is time-consuming. Hurrying a fundraising plan along because you're desperate for money or think that everyone knows what they're doing will end up slowing you down and hurting your efforts. It's amazing to see how quickly a board can get "off-message" and lose enthusiasm for the task. Writing a strong and compelling case statement will be "worth the effort in the long run."

Photo: courtesy of the Missisquoi Historical Society.

Point St. Charles

An Introduction

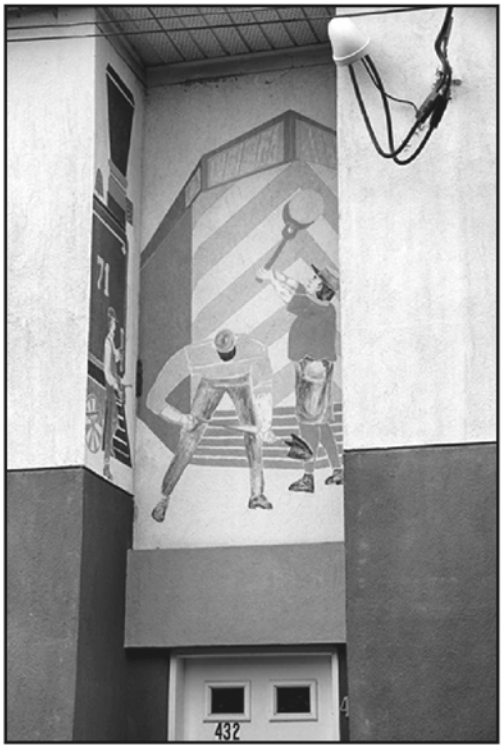
by Steven High

Do you know my most beautiful memory? It was New Year's Eve. To celebrate the new-year there were traditions. One of my mother's traditions was she would open the door at midnight. All the surrounding factories would sound their whistles, the sounds of the factories. All the whistles would go off together, all the CNR trains and all the boats, the boats would go "Mmm." And it would make a mysterious sound. And the trains going "gueding, gueding, gueding." It created a very mysterious atmosphere. I can't really describe it any other way. We were fascinated by the sounds. All the sirens, the firemen, all sorts of sirens would go off at midnight. A real celebration that was my neighbourhood.

-Élise Chèvrefils-Boucher

Childhood memories of the "sounding-in" of the New Year are cherished in Montreal's Southwest Borough, a reminder that many families once lived in close proximity to mills and factories. This was particularly true of Point St. Charles, which was forged in the fires of the industrial revolution. Located on the south side of the Lachine Canal, the Point was settled in the 1870s and 1880s by the Irish, English, Scots and French (later by the Poles and Ukrainians). The railway that runs through the centre of the neighbourhood was once the dividing line. On the south side lived the English-speakers; to the north, the French. Which side was the "wrong side" of the tracks very much depended on where you lived and what language you spoke.

Trains were a constant presence in our interviews with local residents. Richard Stillwell, who grew up just south of the tracks, vividly recalls the sounds of pigs and cattle emanating from the passing trains on their way to the slaughterhouse in neighbouring Goose Village. There was once a cattle bridge over Bridge Street, connecting the two parts of the abattoir. (Goose Village, where a Costco and some non-descript warehouses now stand, was demolished to make way for Expo 67.) Point St. Charles was a proud working-class neighbourhood. Thousands worked at the Grand Trunk Railway Shops,



building or repairing rolling stock. Thousands more worked at the giant Northern Electric building – which is said to be the largest brick building in Canada. Other major employers included Redpath Sugar, Belding-Corticelli, Sherwin-Williams, and Stelco; these buildings are now all condos. The only major neighbourhood factory still in operation is Dominion Glass (today Owens-Illinois), one of Canada's two remaining glass factories.

The Point was also known for its many taverns. They had names like the "Olympic," "Belmont," "Riverside," and "Chez Magnan." Their vernacular names were more colourful, my personal favourite being the "Bucket of Blood" on Wellington Street. One of the main reasons why the Point was so "wet" (or bloody as the case may be) was because neighbouring Verdun was officially "dry." The Point's taverns therefore had to quench men's thirst from two urban neighbourhoods.

For more than a century, Point St. Charles has been the subject of sometimes fierce public debate over the social consequences of industrialization, poverty, slum housing, violence, youth delinquency, deindustrialization, and now gentrification. It remains a neighbourhood "in transition." The Point lost half of its population between 1960 and 1990, as those who could leave did so once the factories closed. The 1970s and 1980s were therefore years of crisis. (For a glimpse, check out the 1978 NFB Film on the Point available online at https://www.onf.ca/film/point/.) Everyone we talked to said it was a "hard" neighbourhood. But it wasn't the Bronx, insists my next-door neighbour. Another long-time resident, Micheline Cromp, agreed, saying: "C'était un quartier où on disait que c'était dur, *tough*. Le vrai terme c'était ça. Un quartier de *tough*." You can hear the pride in their voices.

This toughness has served the neighbourhood well, contributing to its fighting spirit. The community health care movement originated here, as did the social-economy movement. The Point was also at the forefront of the struggle for cooperative housing and poverty rights. Community feeling was so strong that residents even faced down the city, first in the 1960s when it tried to build a major thoroughfare through the neighbourhood (which would have displaced hundreds) and later when it

Railway heritage looms large on the south-side of Point St. Charles, Sebastopol Street. Photo: David W. Lewis.

approved an unwanted casino in the old railway lands. These victories are remembered proudly, giving community groups continued strength and purpose.

While much has changed over the years, a few things have remained constant. Saint Columba House, part of the urban ministry of the United Church of Canada and a central hub of much of the neighbourhood's English-speaking community, recently celebrated its first century of existence. They do impressive work with some of the most marginalized people in the Point.

As someone relatively new to the neighbourhood (I am from a railway family in Northern Ontario), I therefore jumped at the chance to work with Saint Columba when they asked me to record people's stories.

History inhabits each of us, and oral history is an effective way to preserve histories that would otherwise be lost. First, we set up a "memory booth" at the big homecoming event in October 2017, recording the brief recollections of community members. Then, in early 2018, my students conducted life stories with nearly 30 local residents.

This course builds on two previous courses that I taught in the Point, as part of the Right to the City teaching initiative. Students in public history, art education, theatre and art history creatively engaged with the neighbourhood's past and present. One year, we even produced an hour-long audio walk through the neighbourhood, grounded in the memories of our interviewees. You can download the audio and the accompanying booklet at www.postindustrial montreal.ca.

What follows is a selection of student projects from these classes, as well as some of the visual art produced by students in Kathleen Vaughan's art education class. Students offer insight into the history of a number of the Anglophone institutions in the Point, ranging from Kiley Goyette's presentation on the Alexandra Hospital to Tanya Steinberg's essay on Saint Gabe's elementary school. We also learn about the Hogan Bath from Mab Coates-Davies. Even the streets themselves offer us insight into the Point's rich history and heritage. Lives lived and remembered offer another point of entry. For example, Laura Lasby travelled by bus to Cowansville to interview Tom Edmonds, who was active in the Parallel Institute in the early 1970s, the golden age of community activism in the Point. Others, like Holly Ghandi, interviewed ordinary residents such as Sylvia Muskoluk.

While this issue of *Quebec Heritage News* focuses on a single neighbourhood, the stories told in these pages have their counterparts in dozens of other communities across Quebec where Anglophones helped make history.

Steven High *teaches in the Department of History and is Co-director of the Centre for Oral History and Digital Storytelling at Concordia University.*

Note that all of the interviews cited here are available for public consultation at the Centre for Oral History and Digital Storytelling.

Top: Main Railway Mural, Sebastopol Street.

Bottom Left: Northern Electric, from Joe Beef Park. Bottom Right: St. Columba House is located on the north side of Point St. Charles. Photos: David W. Lewis.

Point St. Charles Street Stories

Collectively authored by Concordia Public History Students

Heritage can be found in unexpected places. Every street, park, and metro station on the island of Montreal has a vertical file at the city archives. These files contain invaluable information about the history of the street names as well as press clippings from the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s.

The following selected "street stories" were prepared by students in Steven High's Working Class Public History course in 2015.

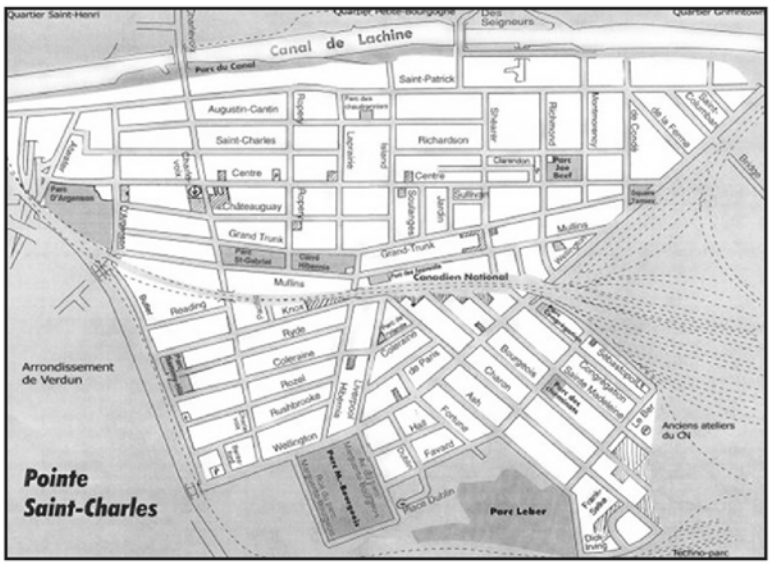
The south side of the Point (between the CN Tracks and the St. Lawrence River);

Bridge Street

One of Montreal's busiest thoroughfares, Bridge Street connects the island to the south shore of the St. Lawrence River. Since 1940, attempts to make this municipal gateway more appealing to tourists and passing motorists have often come at the cost of local homes. In 1956, widening the street resulted in the sudden eviction of eleven low-income families, some of whom had been living in their homes for more than 30 years. Less than a decade later, Expo 67 preparations forced another 1,500 residents from their homes in Goose Village to make way for short-lived venues and parking lots.

Sebastopol Street

Named to commemorate the Franco-British victory in Crimea, Sebastopol Street was constructed in 1957 by the Grand Trunk Railway. Located in the heart of this vast industrial complex, this street had the first housing for the company's workers. The six quadraplexes built became a veritable prototype for workers' housing across Montreal and the province. Threatened with demolition in the 1980s and 1990s, these heritage buildings were preserved thanks to the initiative of citizens. They were then renovated by architect Michael Fish, after getting authorization from the city in March 1993.



Bourgeoys Street

Running one-way, toward the railroad tracks, Bourgeoys Street is named after Margeurite Bourgeoys, one of the first female settlers on the Kanien'kehá:ka land that formed Point St. Charles, who founded the Congregation of Notre Dame and helped prepare the Filles du Roi for their role of populating the colony. In 1973, Bourgeoys Street became a site of struggle when, after four children were injured by cars, a citizens' group fought for lower speed limits and traffic control. The 1980s saw a rash of fires sweep the street, leaving several residents dead; one fire was started by a space heater that the family had been forced to use when their heating was cut off.

Dublin Street

On early 1910s maps, Dublin Street is not more than a short link between Wellington and Hall streets. Extended in the 1920s to Favard Street, it clearly follows the "southern" path of neighbourhood expansion towards the Nuns' Farm House – turned into the Maison Saint-Gabriel museum in 1966 – part of the Congregation of Notre Dame founded by Marguerite Bourgeoys in the late seventeenth century. Dublin Street became a crucial spot in Point St. Charles' activism when the Community Clinic took over the former presbytery at the back of St. Jean Church and began offering a pivotal experience of grassroots welfare and democratic medical and social care.

Parc des Cheminots

Located on Favard Street, in between Bourgeoys and St. Madeleine, Parc des Cheminots was originally the site of Riverside School. This Protestant elementary school was built in the 1870s and received the majority of Point St. Charles' Anglophone children. When the school closed about one hundred years after its construction, the city of Montreal outbid the Pointe Saint Charles Intervention Group, who wished to save the building and convert it into cooperative housing. After purchasing the plot of land in 1984, the city began converting it into a park. By 1988, the park was complete, and in May 1990, the city named it Parc des Cheminots, a reference to the railway workers who lived in the area.

Hibernia Street

Running between Wellington and Grand Trunk streets, Hibernia Street is home to the Saint-Charles Library, a symbol of Point St. Charles' history of resistance to forces of "progress" that

Photo: postindustrialmontreal.ca.

threaten residents' well-being and heritage. In 1973, a struggle arose between citizens' groups and the city of Montreal over plans to build a bridge and highway linking Downtown and the South Shore, which would involve widening Hibernia and Laprairie streets, demolishing the local fire station, redeveloping St. Gabriel's Park, and displacing 140 families. After petitioning the city, community groups achieved victory when the plans for the bridge were dropped, and Caserne 15 was converted into a library and community centre.

Parc Marguerite-Bourgeoys

Known locally as Maggie Bouggie Park, its history dates back to 1658 when Sister Marguerite Bourgeoys opened a school for children in an old barn on the site. Acquired in 1910 by the Sisters of the Congregation of Notre Dame when it was named Monahan Park, Maggie Bouggie became a site of strong local mobilization and activity over the years. In 1917, local residents lost a campaign to keep the name Monahan from being changed to Marguerite-Bourgeoys. In 1948, a plaque honouring her was replaced by a statue recognizing war veterans; this action was seen by the St. Jean Baptiste Society as "an act of vandalism."

Wellington Street

Named after Arthur Wellesley, the first Duke of Wellington, this street has been an important commercial thoroughfare for Point St. Charles. It connected this industrial neighbourhood with the rest of the city through the streetcar network until the 1950s when trams were replaced by buses and later the metro system. The Dominion Glass / Owen's Illinois factory beside Maggie-Bouggie Park is one of only two glass factories still operating in Canada. On the other side of the park, on Wellingon Street, is the Hogan Bath, which opened in 1932 to serve a neighbourhood of "cold flats" without running hot water.

Knox Street

Site of Montreal's longest mural, Knox Street has a long history of communal solidarity and pride. The original farmland owned by Marguerite Bourgeois was auctioned off to Irish immigrant Robert Knox in the 1850s. It soon gave way to duplex housing. Although the street's good reputation fell with the deindustrialization of the Lachine Canal, it has remained an area where neighbourly generosity and concern flourish. Whether through resident patrols in the 1970s, neighbours opening their doors for the victims of a major fire in 1988, or local initiatives (such as the mural), Knox Street holds much of the fighting spirit present in Point St. Charles.

The north side of the Point (between the canal and the CN railway tracks);

Charlevoix Metro Station

Charlevoix is a station on the Montreal metro's green line. After Atwater, it is the first stop that bears a different architectural style: the stacked platform. This design was not a stylistic choice, but rather an urgent response to nature. In 1977, as construction began on this part of the line, significant deposits of Utica shale were discovered, bringing the building project to a grinding halt. Architects Ayotte & Bergeron had to redesign the Charlevoix metro station as a stacked platform (see photo). This station bears the title of the lowest platform in the Montreal metro system, reaching 14 metres below sea level. Charlevoix station opened its doors to the public in September 1978.

St. Patrick Street

Saint Patrick Street runs the length of the Lachine Canal, whose waterfront industries provided jobs for Point St. Charles residents for more than a century. In 1985, following the canal's deindustrialization, local residents began organizing to save the factories where they had once worked from conversion into luxury condominiums. This struggle is ongoing, as redevelopment continues to threaten the availability of affordable local housing and access to the canal. These collective efforts to preserve the area's working-class heritage reflect the shared solidarity and pride that persists in the neighbourhood today.

Shearer Street

In its early years, the Northern Electric building on Shearer Street was more than a factory producing communications equipment. From 1923-1944, it housed the radio station, CHYC and radio ministry, known for transmitting Sunday evening services from one of Montreal's eight major churches. With sermons entitled "Take the High Road" or "Spiritual Cosmetics," these Sunday services kept the community in touch with religion and local, personal stories. Fast-forward to 1996 and you could climb, not to the heavens with Sunday sermons, but up the walls of Allez-Up, one of Montreal's first indoor climbing gyms, which remained open until 2012.

Ropery Street

Ropery Street, which links St. Patrick and Mullins streets, likely owes its name to the presence of a former

Top: Sebastopol Street houses. Drawing by David Hanna, Memorable Montreal, *http://www.memorablemontreal.com.*

Bottom: Charlevoix metro. Photo: Annick MF.

ropery, or rope walk, on St. Patrick Street. The factory, owned by John A. Converse, had burned to the ground by 1913. In May 1986 a fire caused the death of a man in his 30s in his home on the street. "Encore une cigarette!" the *Journal de Montréal* headline exclaimed, hinting at other recent fires with similar causes. The man had fallen asleep on his sofa cigarette in hand, according to firemen interviewed for the article.

Grand Trunk Street

In 1945, Councillor Frank Hanley brought forward a motion to city council for a new building to house the Point St. Charles police station and its two neighboring fire stations because the condition of the old buildings was insufferable. This project was to be built at the corner of Shearer and Grand Trunk streets, where the old police station stood. Unfortunately, Hayley's plan was put forward during the clean-up for Expo 67; the old police station was demolished and the department was sent to a new station outside Point St. Charles. The Point has not had its own police station since.

Joe Beef Park

Located on Centre Street at the corner of de la Sucrerie (formerly Richmond) Street, Joe Beef Park was named in 1988 after Charles McKiernan. An Irishman who had served in the Crimean War, McKiernan ran a tavern in Old Montreal. He earned the nickname Joe Beef during his years in the army for his ability to find meat and other provisions for the soldiers. McKiernan provided food and shelter to the poor in the city. More than a century later, he became associated with the Point through David Fennario's play *Joe Beef: A History of Point Saint Charles*. The park that bears his nickname was once the location of the St. Gabriel Cattle Market, a source of food for many in the community. The name also indicates the shared military past of the ethnically diverse population of the neighbourhood, who had to band together in times of war.

Mullins Street

In 1967, residents of the Point successfully lobbied for a much-needed high school on Mullins Street. The government earmarked $3 million for the facility, but costly delays and budget cuts resulted in a smaller building that lacked basic equipment such as books and seating when it opened in 1970. Without funding to support its students, enrolment at the school dwindled. In 1987, the building temporarily housed the Archives Nationales du Québec, one of North America's richest collections of historical and genealogical materials. The archives have since moved Downtown, and the Point remains without a high school to this day.

D'Argenson Street

In 1890, St. Luc Street was renamed d'Argenson in honour of Pierre de Voyer, vicomte d'Argenson, and fifth governor of New France (1657-1661) who, during his time, was involved in suppressing Iroquois resistance to colonization. But this is not the only connection the street has to power struggles and oppression: in 1989, residents of Point St. Charles took their fight to City Hall to demand the decontamination of soil on the site of a proposed housing cooperative at the corner of d'Argenson and Grand Trunk streets. Although it is a small street, colonization and industrial pollution have left their mark on d'Argenson.

St. Gabriel Park

The land between Grand Trunk, Mullins, Charlevoix and Hibernia streets belonged to the Sulpicians before the city of Montreal bought it in 1854. It would take until 1910 for it to become a park, after being sold again in 1862 and converted into a public square in 1900. The park underwent numerous renovations after 1916. The 1951 restoration accommodated the new hygiene centre at the corner of Charlevoix and Grand Trunk streets. In 1976, the park was completely transformed. After constructing a new kids' pool and chalet, the city added more greenery, a baseball field and play areas in order to revitalize this part of Point St. Charles.

Piyusha Chatterjee, Cassandra Marsillo, Kiley Goyette, Mab Coates-Davies, Lyann Murdock-Finegold, Olivier Pare, Tanya Steinberg, Kelly Norah Drukker, Jordana Starkman, Arwen Fleming, Ari Isensee, Annick MF, *and* ***Jackie Di Bartolomeo*** *are students at Concordia's Centre for Oral History and Digital Storytelling.*

Top: Concordia students analyzing the Knox Street Mural. Cover for the La Pointe audio walk booklet: www.postindustrialmontreal.ca.

Bottom: David W. Marvin, Children playing on St. Patrick Street, c.1970. Photo: McCord Museum, MP-1978.186.1.2678.

11,000 Square Feet

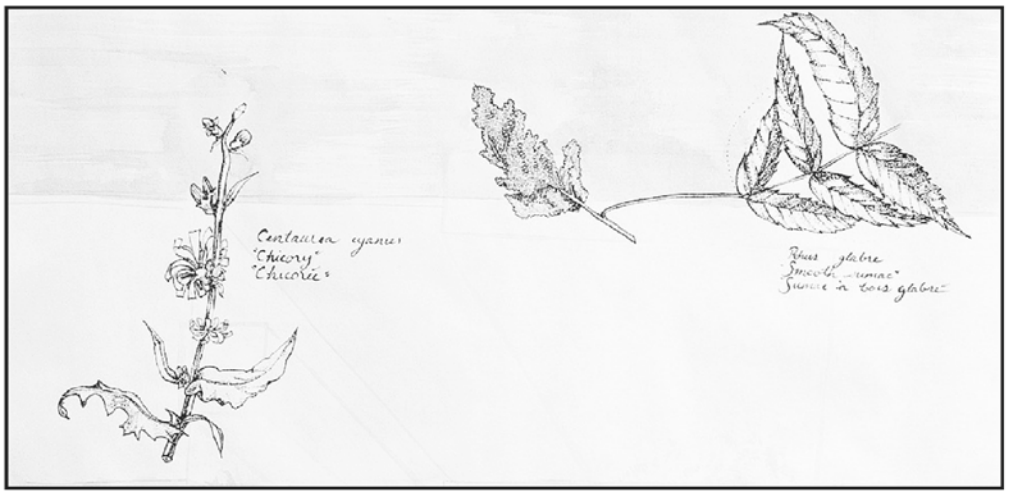
by Lucie Lederhendler

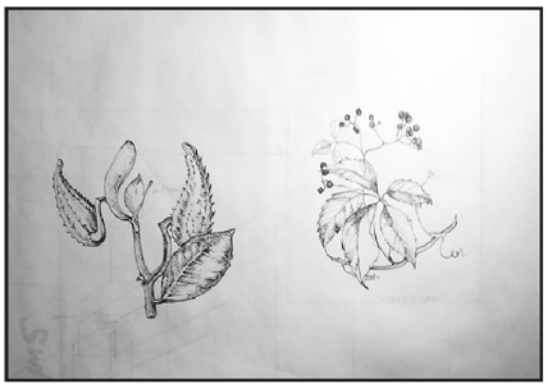
Lucie Lederhendler found herself repelled by and drawn to an empty lot in the post-industrial neighbourhood of Point St. Charles in the early autumn of 2016.

With exploration, the site revealed itself, not as a wasteland, as one would expect from the demonstrable neglect it had suffered, but as a veritable oasis of overgrowth and biodiversity.

After cataloguing these natural features, Lucie compared their current state to archived maps, and found that the plant growth, which emerged from cracks in the asphalt, followed the foundation lines of the building that once stood there – a YMCA for railway workers of the mid-twentieth century.

By recording particular specimens in the style of scientific drawings, this work is intended to complicate the division between garden and wilderness, and ruins and rubble.





Lucie Lederhendler *is an exhibition designer, curator, and artist based in Montreal. She is pursuing a Master's in Art Education at Concordia University, where her research focuses on the role that environmental art can play in forging connections between humans and nature.*

Images by Lucie Lederhendler and Google Street View.

From Point St. Charles to Crawford Park

Sylvia Muskoluk: A Collection of Family Stories

by Holly Ghandhi

So this real estate man... he says, Mrs. Muskoluk we have a house... Let's come and see it, 1204 Crawford. My mother, when she got out of the car, she said 'that's my house.'

Sylvia Muskoluk

In 1948, seventy years ago this year, the Muskoluk family moved into their very own home in Crawford Park, a growing town-house neighbourhood of Verdun. Sylvia Muskoluk was 24 years old when she moved into 1204 Crawford Ave with her parents, Adolf and Lina, and her two siblings, older sister Stephanie and younger brother Raymond.

Sylvia was born in November 1924 in her home on St. Charles Street in Point St. Charles and spent her childhood moving from house to house, living on Centre, Condy (today, "de Condé"), and Bourgeoys streets. Her memories of growing up in the Point include the small room where she lived with ten other family members, playing with her mother's wooden thimbles, and riding street cars, which picked them up on Wellington Street and after a couple of transfers brought them to the green spaces along the St. Lawrence River in LaSalle where they would have family picnics.

My mother was a good singer. She used to sing for us. [In Ukrainian] or in German too, because she was close to the Austrian border. And she sang for us. She has a good voice, my mother.

Sylvia Muskoluk

Sylvia's parents were originally from Ukraine, where Adolf had been a humble farmer and Lina a seamstress. Wanting a better future, they immigrated to Canada, in mid-1924 when Lina was pregnant with Sylvia. They remembered their voyage across the Atlantic as smooth, apart from Lina's motion-sickness. Adolf became a long-time, dedicated worker at Dosco, a steel company in Goose Village (a small enclave of Italians, Irish and French that was later demolished to make way for Expo 67).

The factory has since closed, though its building still stands near the Costco on Bridge Street. Lina worked as a housekeeper and travelled by foot to many nearby houses for work.

As Sylvia grew older, she helped her mother with the grocery shopping. They used to walk from neighbourhood grocery stores to corner fresh markets almost every weekend, picking up vegetables and meat that were too expensive to buy from the delivery man. With daily home deliveries of milk, bread and ice, the family lived within its tight budget. Lina used her sewing skills to make most of her children's clothes, and some of her own. Adolf continued to build the family's savings so that they would eventually be able to purchase their dream home.

So that's why he [her father] said when I get married and had children I'm going to look after my family.

Sylvia Muskoluk

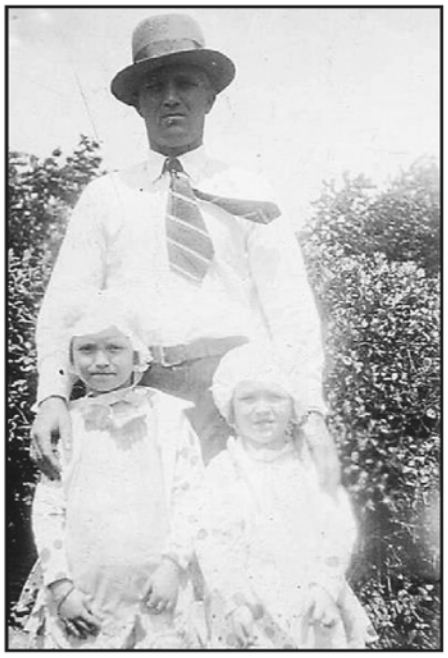
Moving to Crawford Park was a proud moment for the Muskoluk family, as they always wanted to buy a house and have land of their own. Sylvia's parents were happy there: Adolf had plenty of backyard space to garden, and there was a large kitchen where Lina baked her special holiday cakes and tortes.

[When] Lawrence Welk used to be on [TV], my mother and father in the kitchen, in Crawford... they used to dance, they used to do a lot of the Waltz... my mother and father back and forth... left and right... we used to clap for my mother and father... Dad, Mom, it's Lawrence Welk!... Everything had to stop, and my father [and] mother used to do their little dance."

Sylvia Muskoluk

While in her mid-20s, Sylvia started working downtown at the Bay department store, and she stayed there for over 45 years, until her retirement. Sylvia remembers standing with other youngsters at the bus stop on LaSalle Boulevard, since many of her neighbours also worked downtown, at Eaton's, Simpson's or the Bay. Sylvia began when the big store on St. Catherine Street was still known as Henry Morgan and Company; she fondly recalls the annual Christmas wishes from Henry and his wife as they visited and handed out individual

Sylvia, with Holly and Amanda Ghandhi in the Ghandhi yard, Summer 1999. Photo: Ghandhi family collection.



gifts to their employees. While working at the Bay, Sylvia purchased a whole new wardrobe at a discount; the girls in other departments would always let her know when items went on sale. Sylvia first worked in the Bay's hair salon dispensary, and quickly made her way to the appointment desk. A few years later she would become the assistant manager, and stayed in that job the rest of her career.

> *Henry Morgan, I remember, at Christmas time, or any holidays, he always used to be at the door when it was time for them to close at night, he used to say Merry Christmas or Happy New Year. He always was at the door and wished all his employees.*
>
> *Sylvia Muskoluk*

Sylvia loved working at the Bay because of the friendships she made with the other girls there. This group of friends gave her confidence to go out on Friday or Saturday nights to clubs. Their favourite was the Gaiety Cocktail Club on St. Catherine Street.

> *My mother waited, no matter, [when] my sister and I came home late, 2 or 3 o'clock in the morning... Oh boy, my poor mother, the next day she was like a wilted flower, but then we felt bad so we didn't stay too late...*
>
> *Sylvia Muskoluk*

Although Sylvia's parents died years ago, they are still very much present in her life. Her love for them has grown stronger over the years as she still lives in their family home. Although she claims her life experiences were simply "ordinary," I consider them "extraordinary" because of the way she took care of her parents and of how she carries her age today. As we spoke together about Adolf and Lina, the air in the room felt lighter and the smiles on our faces grew larger. It was an incredible experience to sit with a woman whom I have known for so many years and who has such a deep place in my heart to learn about the 70+ years before we met. Sylvia is one of the last members of her generation of our Crawford gang, and it was an absolute pleasure learning about her own history and her own story of hard work and kindness to others – inherited from her parents, of course.

> *I had the best, I don't know about anyone else, but my parents were the best for us.*
>
> *Sylvia Muskoluk*

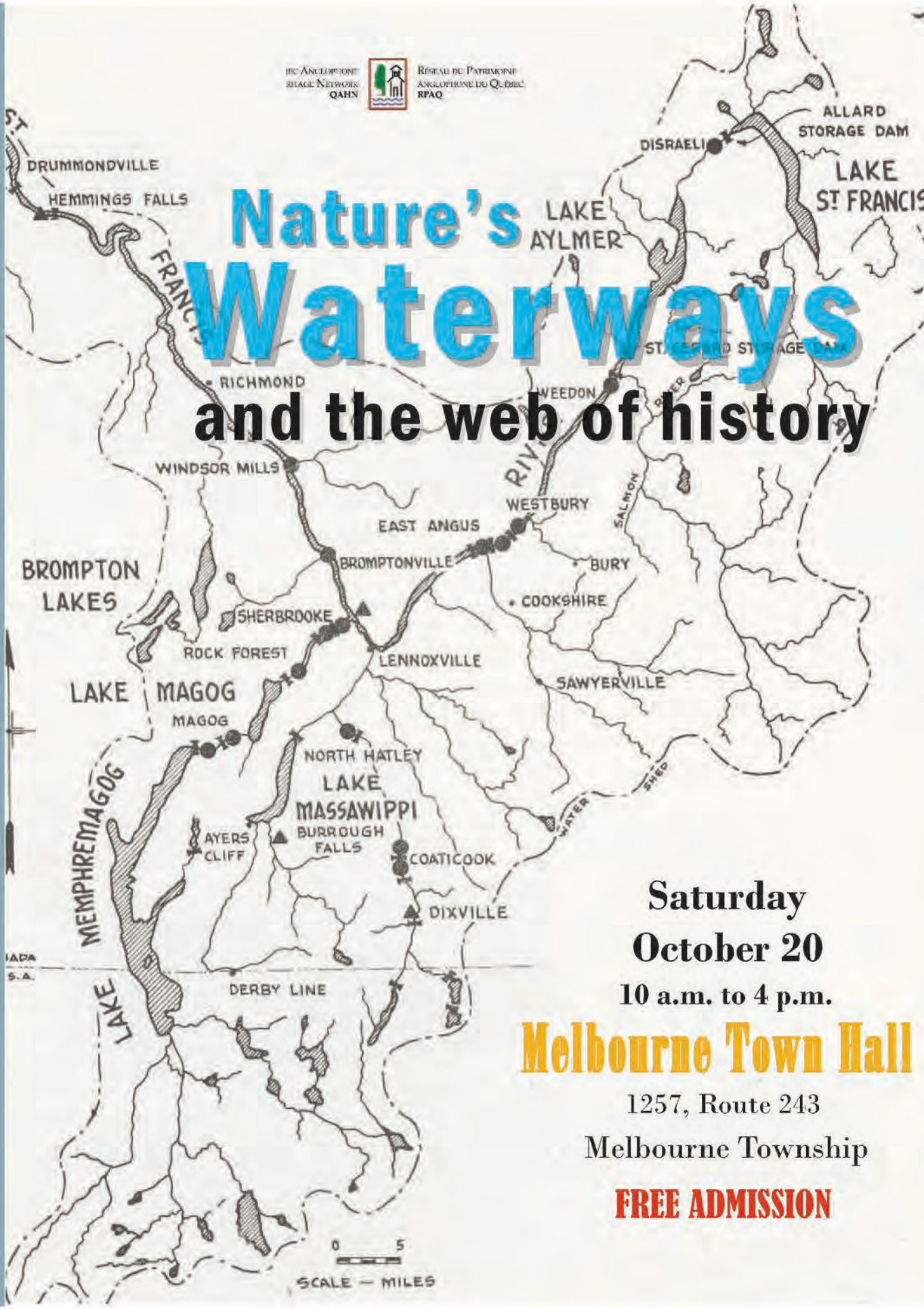
After knowing Sylvia for over two decades in Crawford Park, it was an honour to celebrate her life story with this article.

Holly Ghandhi *is an Honours Public History student at Concordia University with aspirations of working within museum collections – and lives four houses down from Sylvia Muskoluk.*

Top: Sylvia's father Adolf with Sylvia and her sister Stephanie.

Bottom: Sylvia's mother Lina with Sylvia and Stephanie on Condy Street, Point St. Charles. Photos courtesy of Sylvia Muskoluk.

Eastern Townships Heritage Fair



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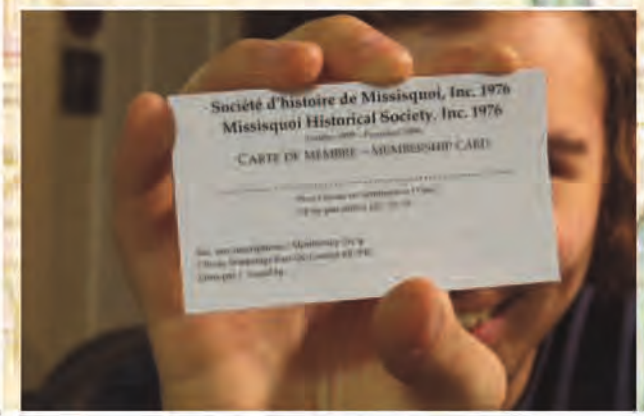


Get involved with your local history society

The Growth of a Community

The Khadijah Centre in Point St. Charles

by Leigh Pennington

Historically, Point St. Charles has a reputation of housing working-class families, the factory workers that pumped out Canada's industrial growth. Its Catholic and Protestant communities are widely acknowledged, their memories preserved and prioritized as central to Quebec heritage. But there are more marginal communities and stories that need to be considered within today's discussions of heritage. It is important not to gaze nostalgically from the multicultural present into a historically white past when we speak of heritage.

Located on Centre Street, the main commercial street in Point St. Charles, the Khadijah Centre and Mosque is just a three-minute walk away from the Charlevoix Metro stop. It occupies a building that was once an IGA supermarket, and then stood abandoned for a time.

The Centre has been a part of the Point's active and self-sufficient community for the last twenty years. It offers a wide range of both religious and non-religious activities, such as Arabic language classes, classes on the Quran and Muslim holidays, day-care services, and sports. Its services and doors are consistently open to the neighborhood, not only the Muslim community, but anyone in need of a moment of repose. Ashek Ahmad, one of the Centre's founders, maintains that all religious structures should provide an aura of peace. The Centre is a flexible and safe space for the Muslim community of Point St. Charles to exist and thrive.

I had the privilege of speaking with Ahmad and his daughter Fatima, two of the Centre's most integral actors.

Ashek Ahmad was born in Bangladesh and came to Canada during the 1990s; he and his family have resided within Point St. Charles since 1999. Ahmad is a very direct man and there are few subjects on which he does not have an opinion. His knowledge of the Point's history, as well as religion, culture, and economics, is quite extensive. But the most noticeable thing about Ashek Ahmad is his heart; he is a man devoted to the care and future of the Muslim community, both within the Point and beyond. Noticing a lack of support for the Point's Muslim community, Ahmad helped found the Khadijah Centre and Mosque, and serves as its treasurer.

Fatima Ahmad, was born and raised in Montreal, and moved to the Point with her family at the age of six. She has been very involved in the Centre and its activities from the time she was small. Fatima was my initial contact with the Centre and was integral in facilitating communication before, during, and after the interview. Although she projects a sweet and understanding disposition, like her father she possesses an unwavering assertion when sharing her thoughts. She has completed her second year of an undergraduate degree in children's education and development at McGill University, and this summer is doing an internship at St. Gabriel's School.

Centre Street, Point St. Charles. Photo: Google Street View.

Although Fatima and her father maintain that the Point is a peaceful and united neighborhood, there have been negative reactions to the presence of the Muslim community. The Centre has been the object of hatred on specific occasions, notably a case of vandalism in 2017 that clearly reflected Islamophobia and racism. According to Fatima, however, "the people in Point St. Charles, they all assembled and we received a lot of letters… Someone gave a cake, and it was really nice. They gave us phone calls saying, 'This is not a part of our community.' So, yes, the aftermath of it was way much more love than hate."

While some who live in the Point have been hostile to the growing presence of the Muslim community, they are the minority. The vast majority of Point St. Charles residents recognize the Centre and its members as a defined link within the larger chain that is the Point. Even so, Fatima, who has lived in the Point all her life, says that this change of attitude is very recent. "As a child, I remember I felt that I wasn't welcome… but as time progressed that changed… When we start speaking and talking, that's when their views change." There has been much effort between the Khadijah Centre and other established community organizations within the Point to build these bridges of communication, connection, and understanding.

Ashek Ahmad mentioned that after the Quebec City Mosque shooting on January 29, 2017, the Centre held programs in congruence with St. Gabriel's. "Whenever they have good program they invite us, and we always go, so we have very good relationship. We are trying to make bridges with other organization in this community." Practice of community ritual is what goes into the building of the Point's neighborhood spirit of involvement and support. Historic associations that built or continue to build the character of the Point – such as St. Columba, St. Gabriel's, St.

Charles', Leo's Boys – prioritized interactions and experiences that built community in addition to providing basic services.

The Khadijah Centre and Mosque is now a part of that significant neighborhood heritage, serving the needs of a growing Muslim population to the best of its ability. Similar to other community institutions in the Point, the Khadijah Centre was built from the ground up, in order to provide essential services to the community. In the process of building bridges with other community organizations, its members debunk stereotypes and construct a better collective life for the Muslim community, and other communities, in Point St. Charles.

At the close of our interview, Ashek Ahmad remarked, "I am very optimistic in the coming days. People will be more familiar and we can have a better future."

***Leigh Pennington**, born and raised in Richmond, Virginia, currently studies Anthropology, Art History, and Religion at Concordia University. She has been involved as an oral history volunteer at the Museum of Jewish Montreal since 2017, and for the last year has been working in the museum's live exhibition space known as Fletcher's Cafe, where Jewish food culture is researched and created. Leigh has also interned at the Israel Museum in Jerusalem in the Collections Database. Upon graduating in the fall of 2019, she hopes to pursue a Master's degree in Religions and Culture Oral History back in the United States.*

Parallel in the Point

by Laura Lasby

This year marks fifty years since the political upheavals of 1968. The public memory of this giant wave of political and social activism is now steeped in nostalgia. The 1960s and 1970s are usually remembered for political contestation and social struggle, the sexual revolution, and the counter-culture. Rock and roll gave the period its soundtrack. Likewise, the emergence of radical politics, and the "New Left," raised important questions about civil rights and social inequality.

Quebec's 1960s are dominated by the memory of the confrontation over language. But in places like Point St. Charles, located in Montreal's Southwest Borough and separated from much of the city by the Lachine Canal, the focus was on persistent urban poverty and the capitalist oppression of the poor.

According to Tom Edmonds, a United Church minister and former community organizer in the Point with the Parallel Institute for Social and Political Development from 1971 to 1974:

> Part of it was the spirit of Quebec. Quebec in the 60s, when separation was hot, was a boiling province: poets and song writers and movie makers and theatre people… it was a very boiling place. And the election of the PQ for independence. So, Point St. Charles was really part of that and it spread out. The anti-poverty movement, it started in Point St. Charles. It [then] went to Verdun, Lasalle, to Rosemount, to Cote-des-Neiges. And we had the greater Montreal anti poverty [coalition], GMAPP it was called.

This was one of the many activist stories that I recorded during my two hour interview with Tom. I travelled by bus to Cowansville in the Eastern Townships to talk to him, learning first-hand about the monumental changes that were sweeping Montreal during these years.

Once a heavily industrialized area, Point St. Charles was devastated by job losses as its factories closed down. The result was mass unemployment and an exodus of people out of the Point. The neighbourhood itself lost half of its population in just thirty years. It was during this period of crisis that Point St. Charles became publicly associated with intense political activism. New community groups were formed and old ones re-energized. Much attention has been given to the formation of the Point St. Charles Community Health Clinic (Quebec's first such clinic), or the community legal clinic, but St. Columba House was also a "central hub" of community activism with many "spokes."

At the centre of this activist wheel was the Parallel Institute for Community Social Development, which was made up of social workers and radical Christian socialists. Inspired by the work of activists like Saul Alinsky, author of *Reveille for Radicals*, community organizers like Tom Edmonds of St. Columba House were involved in block organizing. "We went to people's houses," Tom explained, "and we had the meetings in the houses block by block" in an effort to build parallel political structures. During these years, the Parallel Institute ran regular action campaigns: staging sit-ins at welfare offices, holding marches to the private homes of irresponsible absentee landlords, and storming city hall to demand reduced speed limits and increased signage.

Cooperative housing was another priority. Tom Edmonds explained that the Parallel Institute, along with students and professors from the McGill School of Architecture and the School of Social Work, developed a project that ended up as a Housing Co-op, called "Loge Peuple." This Co-op bought up slum houses, strategically; the houses were located on different streets "so that the bulldozers couldn't come in and bulldoze Point St. Charles down like they did in Little Burgundy." The houses were renovated and sold back to the original occupants,

The Khadijah Centre, Point St. Charles. Photo: https://www.facebook.com/1545870925658890.

members of the Co-op.

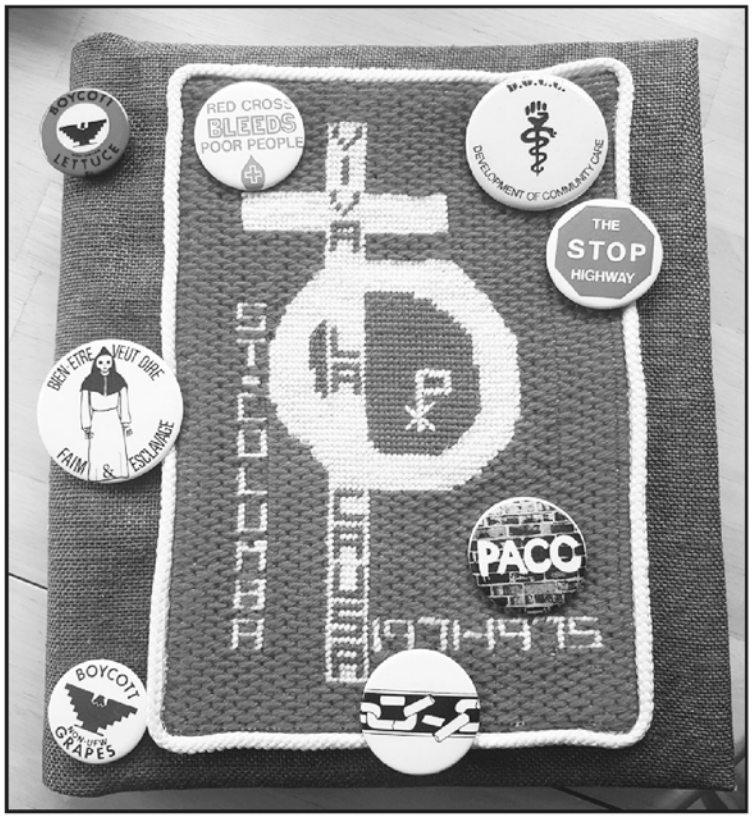
St. Columba House was a beehive of activity during these years. It was the site of many meetings, large and small, and press conferences. Through its close association with St. Columba House, where it had its office, the Parallel Institute was able to have greater access to community members for organizing purposes. When doing street organizing, for example, Tom Edmonds made use of a list of people who had used St. Columba's clothing exchange.

Within the Parallel Institute there was a conscious effort to dismantle power structures -- both the power structures inherent to the institutions they were protesting and also those within the Parallel Institute itself. By attempting to eliminate hierarchy, everybody and every institution would then be "parallel" – hence the name. There were several different ways in which hierarchical power was subverted: community meetings would be held in homes, with the locals chairing the meetings.

The Parallel Institute was not the only organization active within the neighbourhood, however. "So, Parallel," Tom Edwards explained, "its idea was to bring existing community groups into a network…. like just look at it as wagon wheels, we got a central hub and you got spokes. So Parallel was a central hub and there were other spokes, there were other wheels." Other radical groups like the Marxist-Leninists and Maoists were also active in the neighbourhood at this time.

Women were a central force within the activism in the Point. They were at the forefront of many community campaigns and occupied positions of power within the neighbourhood. For example, the head of St. Columba House at this time was Janet McGregor. One successful campaign in the neighbourhood was for improved health care services. In partnership with McGill University, the Point St. Charles Community Clinic was opened, becoming the model for Quebec's CLSCs. For a time, there was also a mobile health clinic. Tom Edmonds explained how the mobile clinic operated, saying: "You know, they'd bring a doll and we'd practice CPR. You can imagine, you know, somebody's house and a case of beer and we're all meeting and this medical person, a doctor generally, came with this doll. I mean you know it was fun but it was important." Though there were political differences among activist groups and underlying tensions between French and English-speaking populations in the neighbourhood, it is clear to Tom Edmonds that what was driving the political movement was a shared sense of community.

Though the Parallel Institute took a non-violent approach to activism, it flirted with civil disobedience. After a speeding driver killed a child, the community demanded that the city reduce the speed limit on neighbourhood streets and post new signage. When their petition went unheeded, locals took it upon themselves to paint the speed limit on the streets. Unfortunately, the 20-miles-per-hour campaign never saw success. While civil disobedience was on the activist agenda, Tom Edmonds and the other members of the Parallel Institute also engaged in more respectable politics. For example, when demonstrating, Tom would wear his minister's collar; in case there was a confrontation with the police, he could better serve as a viable spokesperson. This tactic may not have been the most successful: he fondly related a story where a policeman told him he would be going to Hell. He responded that it would in fact be the policeman who would spend his afterlife in eternal damnation.



Tom's photo album. Photo: Laura Lasby.

It is clear from my conversation with Tom that the history of Point St. Charles is part of the much bigger story of the "long 1960s" – a period that saw marginalized people (African Americans, LGBTQ, women, and anti-war protesters) demand change and make their voices known. Activists from the Point worked in solidarity with other marginalized workers, as can be seen in Tom's photo album decorated with various political pins: "Boycott Grapes" and "Boycott Lettuce" were worn in support of agricultural workers in California. The late 1960s and early 1970s also proved to be a unique moment in the history of Point St. Charles. Looking back from the vantage point of today, Tom told me: "We didn't bring in the revolution. We didn't change society. A lot of our goals were never met." But there were successes and people's lives were tangibly improved. St. Columba House remains an important neighbourhood institution, offering food services, men's and women's support groups, after-school activities, childcare, and a community garden, among many other programs and services.

Laura Lasby *is a recent graduate from Concordia University where she earned her B.A. in History. She plans to take some time away from school to work and travel before entering into a Master's program specializing in Oral History. She hopes one day to work in a museum and be a mother to a miniature dachshund.*

CHANGING SPACES: ARTICULATIONS OF HISTORY IN POINT SAINT CHARLES

Alexandra Hospital

The Alexandra Hospital for Contagious Diseases was an English Protestant hospital dedicated to treating children "of all creeds and nationalities." Few communities wanted a contagious disease hospital in their neighborhood, and the Pointe was no exception. Local representatives declared that "no stone would be left unturned to prevent the Hospital being erected on the site." Despite this opposition, the hospital was built at the end of Charon Street in 1906. The Alexandra treated contagious diseases such as scarlet fever, measles, diphtheria, and tuberculosis over the next 50 years.

With the steady decline in contagious diseases, however, the hospital's mandate changed. In 1967 they began providing care to children with severe physical and mental disabilities. 20 years later, the Alexandra was slated to close as part of the deinstitutionalization of mental healthcare. The community mobilized again, collecting 7000 signatures in support of keeping the hospital open. Their efforts failed to prevent the closure, although they did succeed in delaying it until all the patients had been placed in group homes. After this defeat, there was a relative victory. The Alexandra became the site for three housing projects built between 1990-1994, adding 117 units of social housing that had been long fought for in the community.

- Kiley Goyette

CHANGING SPACES: ARTICULATIONS OF HISTORY IN POINT SAINT CHARLES

The Hogan Bath

Opened in 1932, the Hogan Bath was an active swimming pool for almost sixty years. Named after city councilor Frank Hogan, the Bath was a source of employment for Point residents during the Depression. In a neighbourhood where it was common to live in a "cold water flat," many tenants lacked hot water or even washing facilities, the Bath became a place to wash. In the oral history memories of Point residents, the Hogan Bath is a place of utility, play, socializing and language contention. Primarily an Anglophone bath, the pool was a site of fights between Anglophone and Francophone children. Described as an important part of the Point's heritage, the Bath closed in 1991 and was disused for years. In 1996, a 'for sale' sign appeared. A group of Point residents and organizations mobilized to save the Bath, campaigning for it to be turned into a cultural centre. In 1997, it was turned into condos, but the façade of the building remains, a testament to the community memory of the Bath.

-Mab Coates-Davies

St. Gabriel Elementary School

A Site of Community Heritage and Resistance

by Tanya Steinberg

As Joe Mell, a long-time resident of Point St. Charles, so eloquently said, "When you lose your schools, you lose the soul of the community." The Point has lost many over the years. This is why St. Gabriel Elementary School (St. Gabe's) has time and again become a flashpoint: the school was up for closure in 2004, in 2006 and in 2011. That St. Gabe's has so far survived is not only a tribute to strong community spirit but also a recognition that saving the last English school in the Point was tantamount to saving the community itself. In a 2004 brief submitted to the English Montreal School Board (EMSB) contesting the school's possible closure in 2004, St. Gabe's Governing Board articulated this well:

> *A neighbourhood is more than a conglomeration of housing units. It is an organic plethora of relationships between people, institutions, self-help structures and political forces that are formed over time and by means of a variety of initiatives and struggles. Although Point St. Charles continues to be one of Canada's most economically disadvantaged communities, its strength resides in this intricate network of relationships that support and empower people. A neighbourhood school is integral to this community model, providing unique opportunities for collaboration with other groups and institutions…*

To learn more, I interviewed four lunch supervisors (known also as lunch ladies) at St. Gabe's: Debbie Fox, Carol Clifton, Mona Kirkoff and Natalie Sztych, all of whom have a four-decades-long history with the school as students themselves, as volunteers, as lunch ladies, and as mothers, aunts and grandmothers of students. For them, the school represents a second home and a second family. Natalie said: "It's our home away from home, I guess you could say, for all of us. It's our school family." To her, St. Gabe's is a "lucky charm," saved from closure three times. Like the other lunch ladies, Natalie is extremely protective of the school.

Community mural with school principal, Mr. Daskalakis. Photo: Tanya Steinberg.

Through their life stories and memories, we came to understand the history of St. Gabe's and changing life in the Point, a traditionally industrial neighbourhood that has been hit with decades of deindustrialization and, more recently, a wave of gentrification and urban revitalization. The result has been a drastically changed community. Still, the Point remains one of Montreal's poorest neighbourhoods. With a population of 14,000 in 2014, 37% live below the poverty line (compared with 25% in Montreal overall). A total of 49% of families are single-parent households, well above the 33% Montreal average, and at 51%, Point St. Charles has Montreal's highest high school dropout rate (double the city average).

Carol said of recent changes in the neighbourhood: "First, the condos, my goodness, it's like everywhere. That's a big change. Hopefully there will be families in there that will bring their children [to St. Gabe's] but, like I said, I've seen new faces, maybe parents that have bought housing or condos, maybe... they are coming to the school." She has yet to see this but hopes for the future. In musing about the importance of St. Gabriel School to community survival, Carol uses the analogy of a Rubik's Cube, where school, church and local organizations are each vital parts of an integrated whole. Lose one and the rest eventually follow.

Citing her experience in other neighbourhoods, Debbie related what could happen to local organizations if St. Gabe's closed: "Down the line they could close. If I looked back on Griffintown and Victoriatown, you lose schools, you lose churches, less people go to the community centres, to the boys' and girls' clubs. They can't stay open. They can't afford to. They don't have families. If you get schools that close, families that want to walk their kids to school and home at lunch, they're going to move to new areas… You start losing things."

The lunch ladies experienced decades of decline, job loss and outmi-

gration, accompanied by the loss of physical and cultural markers of community identity – factories, schools, churches, bingo halls, swimming pools, corner stores, community organizations – all sites of personal and collective memory. Amidst change, St. Gabe's took on great significance as a lasting symbol of shared history and community survival.

The original St. Gabriel School was opened in the late nineteenth century by the Congregation of the Sisters of Notre Dame, with a mandate to educate primarily Irish immigrant children whose families had come to Montreal to work on the Victoria Bridge and the Lachine Canal. From its previous location on Centre Street, built in 1909 (now, subsidized housing), the school moved to its current home in 1973 at the corner of Dublin and Wellington streets. Over time, Point St. Charles has lost all but one of its English schools – Lorne Elementary (now condos), Riverside School (since demolished and now a park), Kanamara and Startchfield Schools – all closed due to declining population numbers and family size. Initially part of the Montreal Catholic School Commission and later the EMSB, St. Gabe's remains the only English school in the Point. Since its creation in 1998, the EMSB has closed seventeen schools while Montreal's westernmost school board, Lester B. Pearson, has closed seven. (Luft) Time and again, St. Gabe's faced closure and in each instance, community response was resounding.

In meeting the lunch ladies, I'd expected to learn about rallies, sign making, letters of support and petitions – "how" the community mobilized to save the school. Yet, early on, I realized I already had most of these answers that could easily be found in EMSB documents. But as the lunch ladies told their life stories they answered the essential question of "why" it was so important to save the school – ultimately to safeguard a historical link to collective memory while ensuring the future of community in the Point.

While the neighbourhood changed around them, this group of incredibly resilient women turned to the school community and to each other for strength and support. Their mission to save the school was as much personal as it was for the community. Once a vibrant, densely populated neighbourhood with extensive intergenerational family linkages, Point St. Charles has been forced not only to adapt to great losses – employment, population, family and sense of belonging – but also to find new ways to cultivate community spirit and reimagine community identity in changing times. Numbers at St. Gabe's had been declining for years, due to shrinking family size and an increasing number of families that chose French programs for their children outside the Point – an option no longer possible. The EMSB also redrew school boundaries in 2002 effectively cutting off the entire Little Burgundy community, then a substantial proportion of the student body. St. Gabe's was left with a much smaller catchment area, basically limiting the school population to the geographic boundaries of the Point, a factor that contributed to its decline. Still, the school has survived and continues to grow. Natalie articulated so clearly what the school means to Point St. Charles: "I think it means everything to the neighbourhood. I think it's the centre of the neighbourhood. I think if we lost the school, there wouldn't be a neighbourhood. There wouldn't be a community because what would really be here?"

St. Gabriel School entrance. Photo: Tanya Steinberg.

Tanya Steinberg *is presently completing a Master's degree in History at Concordia University. Before returning to study oral history, she spent several years teaching in Montreal's inner city public schools focusing on community-based experiential learning and on intergenerational collaborative projects around visual arts and science education. Building on her PhD research in human geography, her oral history work focuses on issues of community, memory and place-based identity in postindustrial places.*

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Factory Found

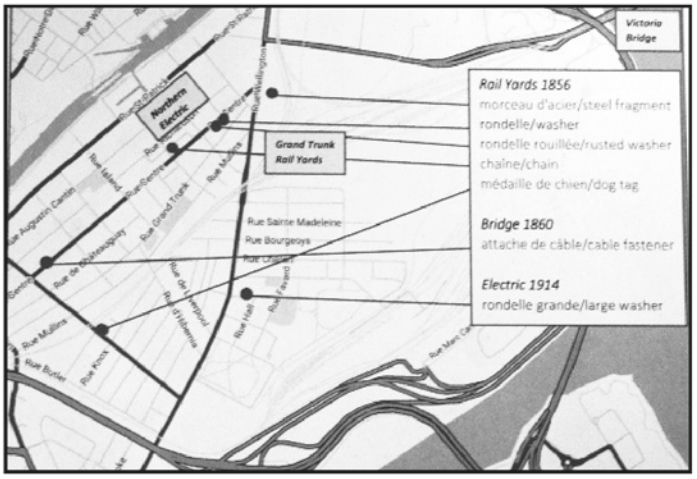
by Anja Novković

"Factory Found" is the result of my reflection on the Point's once industrial identity as a symbol of pride for its residents. Listening to the Lachine and Point St. Charles audio walks, I was continuously struck by how proud this neighbourhood was of its toughness and working-class status (Duncan, Sijpkes). These characteristics stemmed, of course, from the many industries in the neighbourhood, which employed both men and women.

As I listened to locals reminiscing about work in those factories – often dirty, difficult and dangerous – I realized that this part of the Point's history needed to be uplifted to match how beautiful it was in local eyes. I came to the decision that I wanted to make industrial workers shine in jewelry – something they themselves could wear as heirlooms.

Taking several trips throughout the area, I gathered discarded metals: rusted washers, cable fasteners, chains, and dog tags. These materials became the starting points from which I created the design of three pieces: two pendants and a bracelet. Hammering, welding, soldering and filing, I formed my pieces with many of the same actions that workers at Grand Trunk Rail Yards, the Victoria Bridge, and Northern Electric Company performed on a daily basis.

Focusing on these three industrial landmarks, I then layered photographs, sheet metal and wire in resin to bring wage labourers' undervalued tasks into the limelight, and preserve them as mini-monuments to an exceptional time.



Anja Novković *is a researcher and artist captivated by the power of personal narratives. Her first project, The Storied City: Montréal, a series of mapped, local narratives was recently featured in UQAM's Échelles Magazine. Anja is currently finishing her Master's in Geography and Urban Studies at Concordia University. In her thesis project, Alley Stories: Uncovering the Hidden Life of an Urban Backstreet, she is using first-person narratives, historical research and her own observations to create an atlas of the Bishop / Mackay alleyway.*

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Photos: Anja Novković.

Where Have All the Steamies Gone?

Paul Patates: a Remaining "Classic"

by Julie Santini

For 62 years, Chez Paul only served steamies and fries (and eventually poutine), at 2425 Centre Street in Point St. Charles. The white sign with a graphic of fries, hot dog, billiard sticks and red lettering indicating "Restaurant Chez Paul" no longer sits above the door. Today, it has been replaced by printed red lettering on white paper indicating "Fermeture Définitive" ("Permanent Closure") taped to the middle of its boarded-up windows. Above that, along the top of the windows, black print on white paper reads "Merci à notre clientèle d'avoir été aussi fidèle pendant toutes ces années."("Thank you to our clientele for being so loyal all these years.")

On September 2, 2017, Chez Paul's owner, Michel Lapierre, served his last steamie to his broken-hearted clients in the Point. The building had been sold to VSO Groupe founder and developer, Benjamin Papineau.

Michel Lapierre had worked in the family-run restaurant since 1983. It was started by his wife's uncle, Paul Gauthier, in 1955 and later owned by his in-laws. His father-in-law taught him everything. Following the death of his wife and father-in-law, his mother-in-law decided to sell the building. After purchasing it, Papineau offered Lapierre a new storefront location on Wellington Street. Lapierre refused and opted for retirement instead. Though I was unable to get an interview with Michel Lapierre, according to a published interview in *Journal Métro,* it is clear that he would have liked the business to continue for another year or two before selling it to someone who would continue the business.

What does the closure of a place like Chez Paul mean for Point St. Charles?

Locals have been known to see these types of closures as an erasure of history and further evidence of gentrification. A sense of belonging, of place, and of home become more fragile each time the community is forced to say goodbye to a place like Chez Paul. These old-time businesses seem to be slipping away, along with corner depanneurs, neighbourhood taverns, and old restaurants. The recent closure of Chez Magnan tavern made headlines across Montreal. More than hot dogs and beer, these establishments were centres of community life in the Point. They were also about family. For the most part, these were family-run businesses.

But all is not lost. Another family lives and works on the corner of Charlevoix and Coleraine streets at Paul Patates, where owner André Roy is lovingly called "Grandpa" by many regulars and "Monsieur Paul" by others. Going up the two little steps and walking through the door with its proud sign "Depuis 1958" represents a step back in time. A long chrome counter lined with stools extends from the entrance to the back of the restaurant where there are a few more tables. Memorabilia covers the walls of this retro blue and yellow tiled restaurant that is also renowned for its steamies. Paul Patates is one of the few "classic" family joints left in the Point.

Roy told me how he bought the place for his wife, Gigi. At the time, she was working with him at his other establishment, Roy Snack Bar. According to Roy, the conversation went something like this:

T'aimerais-tu, ça, avoir ton restaurant? (Would you like to have your very own restaurant?)

J'en ai un. (I have one.)

Comment tu en as un? (What do you mean, you have one ?)

Ben, c'est ici! (Well, this one.)

Ben, non. Ça, c'est à moi. (Well, no. This one's mine.)

Ah, ouais? (Oh, ya ?)

Ben, j't'en ai acheté un. Tu le veux-tu ou tu le veux pas? (Well, I bought you one. Do you want it or do you not want it?)

Roy recounts having met Gigi at Edgar Snack Bar during his off-time from working on the DEW [Distant Early Warning]-line in the Arctic. Shortly after, he bought a restaurant "juste pour l'avoir," he says. One day, Gigi walked in and, after some chatting, she volunteered to help him serve clients. She then quit her job as secretary for Mister Duquette, a cigarette and tobacco supplier. Ever since, they have formed a team that ran several businesses. They also raised a son and daughter, with whom they temporarily lived in what is now the restaurant's back-store before eventually moving to the South Shore. Today, their son Dany Roy runs the business while manufacturing their famous spruce beers: the Bertrand (which is exclusively available at the restaurant) and the Émile.

Over the years, Paul Patates witnessed many changes to the neighborhood. When asked about this, Roy emphatically responded: "Ah, mon Dieu! Oui! Parce que à la fête de la reine – on fêtait la fête de la reine ici… Ici, là, le dernier feu qu'y ont fait, c'était au mi-

Chez Paul. Photo: Julie Santini.

lieu d'la rue, là. Ici. Juste sur le coin. Ok? En plein milieu d'la rue…Le bâtisse bougeait…Y'avait une quarantaine de policiers, tsé. Pis ça bougeait pas. Les jeunes se promenaient pis les crachaient dans faces." (*"Oh God! Yes! Because on Victoria Day -- we celebrated Victoria Day here... Here, there, the last fire they started was in the middle of the street, there. Here. Just on the corner. Ok? Right in the middle of the street... The building shook... There were forty or so police officers, you know. Then quiet. The kids went around and spit in their faces."*

Another change to the neighbourhood Roy noted was today's greenery along Butler Street: the trees curve from one side to the other, creating archways over the road. Furthermore, Roy started his business at a time when linguistic tensions in the Point ran high. Historically, the neighbourhood was divided between French and English sides of the railway track running through the middle of the Point. Paul Patates was located on the predominantly English-speaking South side (near Wellington). When discussing the language conflicts of the day, he noted how "Ils voulaient me fermer. J'avais pas d'affaires là." (*"They wanted to shut me down. I had no business there."*) Though he was bilingual, he was a French-Canadian and therefore on the wrong side of the tracks. But the family has persevered, where other businesses have vanished.

Despite 62 years of business, with the sign gone, it seems too easy to forget

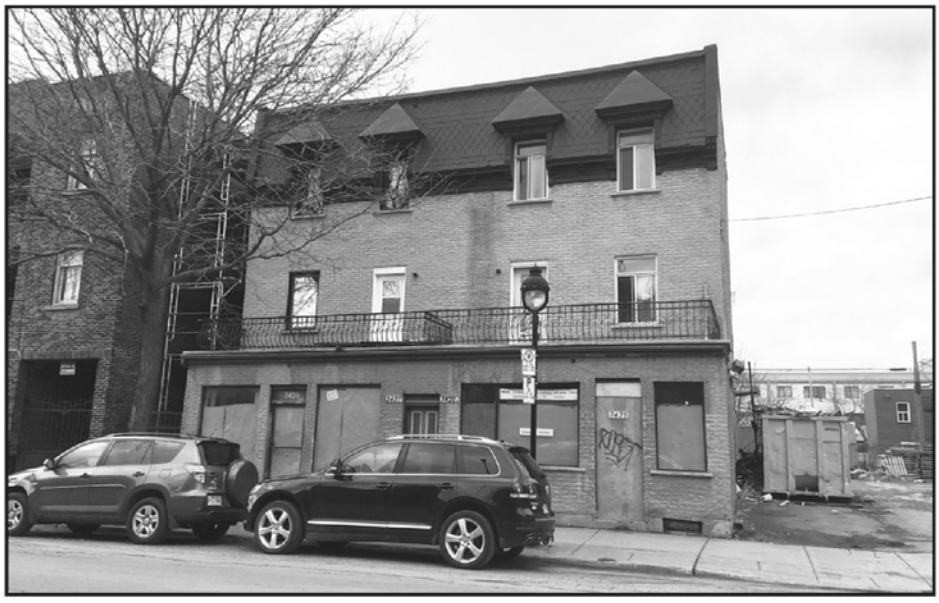
what once occupied 2425 Centre Street. What's in a name, anyway? And why are all the steamies in the Point being served by "Paul"? When I asked Roy why his restaurant was called Paul Patates he said: "C'était un nommé Paul Émile Haché qui avait acheté ça… Fac, j'ai gardé le nom Paul. Pis, moi, j'avais fait changer ça pour Paul, euh Paul Patates. Mais sur la rue Centre, y'a un pool room qui avait ouvert sous le nom de Paul Patates aussi. Fac, chuis allé lui voir… Fac, moi, c'est Paul Patates pis lui c'est Paul Hotdog. Mais, lui, il est fermé, là." (*"Someone named Paul Émile Haché had bought this… So, I kept the name, Paul. And, I had it changed for Paul, um Paul Patates, but on Centre Street, there's a pool room that opened under the name Paul Patates too. So, I went to see him… So, I'm Paul Patates and he's Paul Hotdog. But he's closed now."*) This now closed hotdog place on Centre Street called Paul Hotdog may very well have been Chez Paul.

Paul Hotdog, Chez Paul, Paul Patate: it gets confusing.

This confusion is reflected in my other interview, with Benjamin Papineau, a property developer who has been living in the neighbourhood since the early 2000s. When discussing the neighbourhood's remaining "classic" joints, Papineau mentioned how "Il y avait Paul Patates, que, c'est un immeuble que j'ai acheté qui a pris sa retraite. Le monsieur a pris sa retraite… juste ici sur la rue Centre." (*"There was a Paul Patates, that is a building I bought, who took his retirement. The man retired… just here on Centre Street."*) Again, he was clearly referring to Chez Paul of Centre Street, as Paul Patates continues to thrive on Coleraine Street.

In an attempt to diversify commerce and bring the old life of the main streets back to the Point, restaurant permits are no longer available. As Roy says about being in competition with others over the years, "*business is business*." Roy also made it explicit that "On ne juge pas chez Paul Patates. C'est ça que je veux. Ça va bien. On veut avoir une famille, ici. On est une famille." ("*We don't judge at Paul Patates. That's what I want. It's going well. We want a family, here. We are a family.*") But as things change, who continues to belong?

What does it mean for the identity of Point St. Charles if stories, like those of Chez Paul, are forgotten? How can we bring back the old life of the main streets if we erase their stories? Heritage is about more than museums and monuments.



Julie Santini *is an undergraduate student in Honours History at Concordia University. She also holds a B.A. in English: Drama and Theatre, with a minor in French literary practices from McGill University.*

Top: Paul Patates.
Photo: http://bieredepinette.ca/restaurant-paul-patates.

Bottom: Chez Paul.
Photo: Julie Santini.

Respectable Burials at Mount Royal Cemetery

by Mark W. Gallop

Most of the two hundred thousand people buried at Mount Royal Cemetery were interred within a few days of their death. This was the case for the cemetery's very first interment, that of the Reverend William Squire, in 1852. The Methodist cleric was called on a Friday to minister to a visiting merchant struck by cholera. As a result of that visit, Squire contracted the disease and was dead by Sunday morning. Two days later a cortege of seventy carriages followed his casket up the slope of the mountain. This was certainly the "respectable burial" that Montrealers of past generations would have wished. McGill professor Brian Young even chose this phrase for the title of his 2003 history of the cemetery.

But the demands of a growing metropolis and the peculiarities of individual circumstances did not always mean that dying wishes for a dignified and timely interment were respected.

As the cemetery was being planned and developed, John Rowand was winding down a highly successful career as a fur trader. Born in Montreal in 1787, he left the city as a youth to serve as an apprentice clerk in the west. Five decades later he was ready to retire as Chief Factor of the Hudson's Bay Company and decided to return to his native city. On his homeward journey in the spring of 1854 he died suddenly, probably of a stroke, while attempting to break up a fight between voyageurs at Fort Pitt, Saskatchewan. He was buried there, but his good friend Sir George Simpson, Governor-in-Chief of the Hudson's Bay Company, heard of Rowand's stated wish to be buried in Montreal. On his next visit to Fort Pitt he had the body disinterred and the bones packed in a keg of rum. It was deemed risky to entrust the barrel to superstitious voyageurs any further than necessary as they might be inclined to jettison the cargo along the way. So once the bones reached the shores of the Hudson's Bay they were discretely repacked and sent to London on the annual supply ship. From there they were shipped back to Montreal: a total voyage of over 13,000 kilometres that took more than four years. They now lie buried in Mount Royal Cemetery under an impressive monument, befitting a man of his wealth and standing.

While interment within a few days was the norm for most of Mount Royal Cemetery's first century, changing mortuary technology and social norms have made a wider gap between death and committal increasingly respectable. While the four-year journey of John Rowand's bones was unique, a look at some other unusual examples can shed light on the evolution of practice and custom.

As a National Historic Site and well-loved local landmark, Mount Royal Cemetery welcomes visits not just from the grieving, but from a broad spectrum of history and nature lovers, either to wander at their own pace or as part of a series of walking tours. An early stop on the historical tours is often a surviving architectural feature from its earliest days: the receiving vaults. In the cemetery's first decades, before advances in science and refrigeration, speedy interments were prudent, especially in the warmer months or when death was from an epidemic disease like the Reverend Mr. Squire's cholera. However the icy blast of Montreal winters created both the iron impenetrability of frozen soil, at least until the invention of mechanical diggers, and appropriate storage temperatures to preserve bodies until spring. The cemetery's receiving vaults have not stored anything other than gardening tools for a century. Yet somehow these semi-caves dug into the side of the mountain have survived in their original state.

In a sensational case, the body of Joseph Guibord remained in the vaults for almost six years. He was a typographer and a founding member of the Institut Canadien, a liberal thorn in the side of the Roman Catholic hierarchy. He had the misfortune to be on his deathbed in 1869 when relations with the Church were at a low point, and was excommunicated for refusing to renounce his membership in the institute. The immediate result of this was that his widow was refused permission to bury him in the consecrated ground of Mount Royal's Catholic neighbour, Notre-Dame-des-Neiges Cemetery. With the support of his friends, legal proceedings were brought against the bishop. After more than five years, the case was finally decided in the widow's favour by the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council in London. Guibord's casket was brought from its not-so-temporary resting place in Mount Royal's vaults in September 1875 only to be turned away at the gates of Notre-Dame-des-Neiges by an angry crowd. Two months later a second attempt was made with armed reinforcements. Once successfully buried, the tomb was over-laid with cement to preclude disinterment, and then the bishop promptly deconsecrated the plot.

Embalming to deter decomposition has been practiced since ancient times, most notably by the pharaonic Egyptians, but it was in the 1860s with the American Civil War that mod-

John Rowand monument. Photo: Mark Gallop.

ern techniques were developed and commercialized. It was embalming that allowed President Abraham Lincoln's body to travel for three weeks on a stately and circuitous train voyage to Springfield, Illinois, for burial. This funeral train trip did much to publicize the advantages of the embalming process.

The family of Mrs. Frances Stephens also chose embalming in a desire to see her laid to rest beside her husband at Mount Royal Cemetery. Alas, while her name and dates are inscribed on the Stephens monument, her remains are not there. The widow of George Washington Stephens, a wealthy businessman and provincial cabinet minister, Frances sailed to England in 1915 aboard RMS Lusitania with her eighteen-month old grandson, her maid, and his nurse, to join the boy's parents in London. All four died when the ship was torpedoed off the coast of Ireland. Frances's body was recovered but the others' were not. She was embalmed in the Irish port town of Queenstown (now Cobh), placed in a metal casket, then in a wooden crate and transferred to Liverpool. Four months later the casket was loaded aboard RMS Hesperian, bound for Montreal and carrying many Canadian war wounded. Once again, off the coast or Ireland, the ship was torpedoed by U-20, the same German submarine and commander responsible for the sinking of the Lusitania. The loss of life on the Hesperian was much more limited; the upset of one lifeboat while being lowered accounting for most of the deaths. However, Frances's casket went down with the ship and still lies in the wreck rather than with her husband on Mount Royal.

While the history of embalming goes back a long way, cremation is even older; there is evidence it was practiced in the Stone Age. It died out in the Western World with the end of the Roman Empire and the Christianization of Europe. However arguments grew for its return through the nineteenth century, especially from those concerned with sanitary conditions and increased urban density. Two Italian professors caused a sensation at the 1873 Vienna World's Fair with a working model of a cremating apparatus. From this design the first commercial crematoria opening in the United States in 1876 and in England and Germany in 1878.

Progress came slower in Canada. Mount Royal's Trustees discussed the technology as early as 1880. However, the cemetery promises perpetual care of gravesites, and so an important role of the board is the preservation of funds built through the years for this purpose. It was felt imprudent to diminish the capital for such an unconventional purpose. Although the cemetery has always welcomed burials from all faiths (or no creed at all), the founding charter requires that the Trustees represent the Protestant denominations. In the late nineteenth century some, but not all of these denominations were supporters of cremation. And the Roman Catholic Church's opposition, at least until the Second Vatican Council in 1963, set a discouraging tone provincially.

Brewer, banker and philanthropist John H. R. Molson was an ardent advocate for the practice of cremation. Although the Molsons were mostly an Anglican family, John married Louisa Frothingham, a remarkable woman and philanthropist in her own right and a pillar of the Unitarian Church. Unlike the more cautious Anglicans, Unitarians were early proponents of cremation. Molson's will included this instruction for his own remains and so upon his death in 1897 his body was transported by train to Boston for cremation and the ashes returned to rest in the Frothingham family plot. He did more for the cause however. His will also left $10,000 to Mount Royal Cemetery "for the erection and workings of a crematory furnace for the cremation of the dead." A close friend, the tobacco tycoon Sir William C. Macdonald, stepped forward with an even more substantial donation and so construction of Canada's first crematorium was launched in 1901. It remained Quebec's only such facility until 1975.

The new facility's first client was appropriately another fervent advocate of the practice: Senator Alexander Walker Ogilvie, of the flour milling family, a Presbyterian Trustee and Past President of the cemetery who died in 1902 a few months after the crematorium was ready for business. The Trustees had some justification in their hesitancy to commit cemetery funds towards this 'new' practice. Ogilvie's body was one of only three cremated in the first year of operation, and only six were cremated in the second year. The annual number exceeded one hundred for the first time in 1918, the year of the Spanish Flu epidemic. While slow to be justified from a commercial perspective, Molson and Macdonald's investment was culturally far-sighted. The movement toward cremation has been unrelenting, especially in recent decades. Cremated remains represented 68% of dispositions at Mount Royal Cemetery in 2017.

Overseeing a cemetery may seem like a timeless operation. However, the crematorium hasn't been the only significant development. Even a century ago the Trustees were aware that grave space on Mount Royal was a finite resource. Because less land is needed for the inurnment of cremated remains, the shift towards cremation has forestalled the point at which the last plot for full-casket burial is sold. However, in 1908 Mount Royal Cemetery bought land from George Irving, a Pointe-aux-Trembles farmer, and opened the Hawthorn-Dale Cemetery in east end Montreal. More recently, the organization acquired a 96-acre property on Montreal's West Island. Belvedere Cemetery formally opened in 2015 taking advantage of a rolling landscape with a mature forest. It can be seen on the north side of the Trans-Canada Highway in Senneville, adjoining Morgan Arboretum.

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HAVE
AMPLE SPACE FOR NEXT 100 YEARS

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Adult graves as low as $35.00	Adult graves as low as $10.00
Children's graves as low as..... $14.00	Children's graves as low as..... $5.00

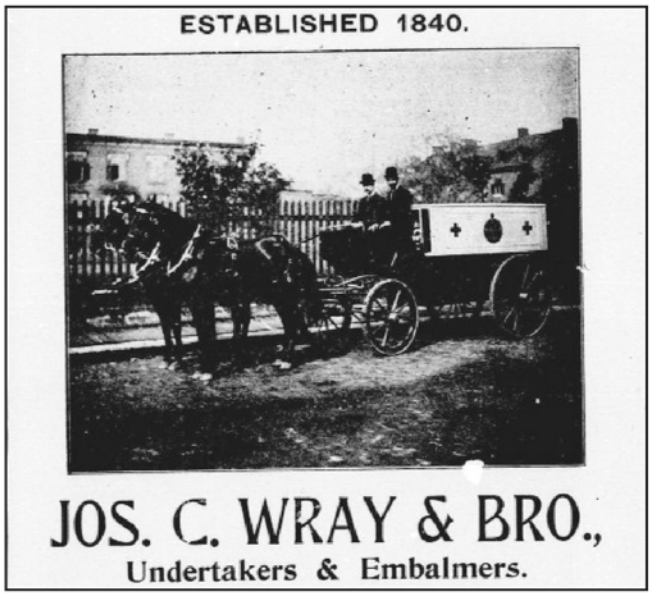
MOUNT ROYAL CREMATORIUM

The Crematorium was established in Mount Royal Cemetery 38 years ago and renders a similar service to those preferring cremation.

The Mount Royal Cemetery Company is administered by a Board of Trustees, who act without remuneration, solely in the interests and for the benefit of the Protestant population of Montreal

Top: Receiving vaults. Photo: Mark Gallop.

Bottom: Advertisement for burial space, 1939. https://mountroyalcem.com/ index.php/en/about-us/history.html.



Both of these properties were developed with the promise of perpetual care of gravesites in mind, and the need for a continuing flow of revenue to maintain the funds held in trust for this purpose. A similar motive was behind the 1992 acquisition of the Blythe Bernier Funeral Home (founded in 1928) in Park Extension. Full-service funeral complexes have since been opened at the three cemetery properties.

Professional undertakers and funeral parlours were a late Victorian-era development. The business advertisers section of the Montreal Directory listed none in 1852, the year the cemetery opened, but fourteen in 1902 when the crematorium opened. However several of the undertakers betrayed their origins in carpentry or transport. In 1902, Joseph Wray advertised his funeral business as established in 1840, but the 1852 directory listed him simply as a furniture dealer. Others in the 1902 Lovell's Directory included Tees & Co., "Undertakers, Office Desks and Revolving Bookcases," and Jos. Hoofstetter, "Master-Carter and Undertaker, First Class Coffins & Hearses."

Despite the Reverend Mr. Squire's death by a highly infectious disease, he was almost certainly laid out at home, in a coffin purchased from a local cabinet maker. The stately procession to the cemetery took place only after a funeral at his chapel. By necessity there was a close connection between the physical remains of the deceased and the family and friends in that era. The introduction of professional mortuary services, the option of cremation, and changing views within religions and away from religion, have all gradually weakened the connection between the body and the mourners. Memorial services (without the presence of the body) now often replace funerals (where the body is present). Travel for far-flung family and friends can be better planned with more time. It is now not unusual for death notices to read that "a celebration of her life will be held at later date." An expedient interment is no longer the mark of a "respectable burial."

Mark Gallop *spent three decades in the investment and financial services sector, and now devotes his time to historical research and writing. He is a Trustee of the Mount Royal Cemetery and a past President of the Atwater Library.*

Advertisement in Lovell's Directory, 1902.

Review

Unpleasant Echoes from Emigration Past

A Distinct Alien Race: The Untold Story of Franco-Americans, Industrialization, Immigration, Religious Strife

by David Vermette
Baraka Books, Montreal 2016

David Vermette's *A Distinct Alien Race* is an important study that goes well beyond just recounting an economic and social history of New England and Quebec. Vermette, an excellent and engaging writer / researcher, exposes an area of the past that has been somewhat dismissed and even discounted by both American and Quebec / Acadian historians who study the enormous French-speaking Canadian emigration from Quebec and the Maritimes to the textile industries of Massachusetts, Vermont, New Hampshire and New York from the 1840s to the 1930s.

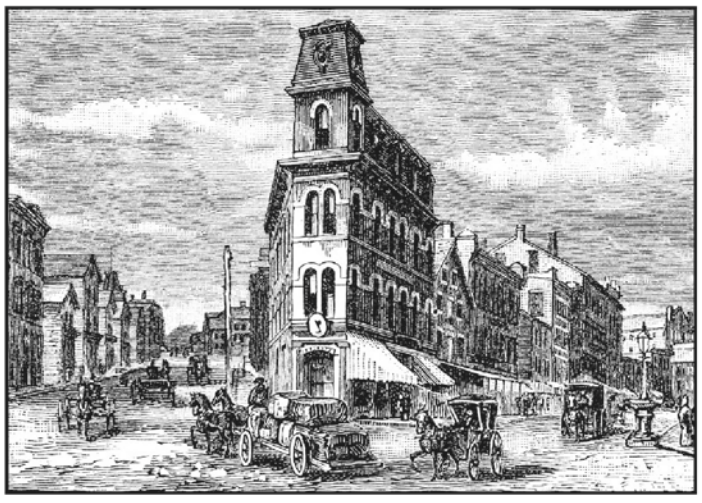
Over one million French-Canadians left Canada for the United States – a huge number, given the much smaller populations of both countries at that time. Their emigration was opposed by the Quebec elites, especially by the then very powerful Catholic clergy, and although their labour was obviously welcomed and even recruited, these French-speaking workers were viewed with suspicion and outright hostility from vocal elements of American society. Their presence was even attacked by violent organized hate groups like the Ku Klux Klan in the 1920s.

From the start of their appearance as a major part of the U.S. workforce, hostile, suspicious feelings were mounted against them – of course not by the bulk of the population but by extremist, right-wing Protestant groups who viewed them as a "Papist plot" coming to take over the country (!) and by protectionist political organizations who sometimes called even themselves the "Know Nothings" (an apt name if ever there was one).

Although most of this enmity is described in the now rather quaint language of yesterday's newspapers of Boston and other New England towns, it is impossible not to see the roots and precedents of today's anti-immigrant biases in the United States: the fear of the different "other" – now usually Hispanic or Muslim. Like the French-Canadians of former times, today's emigrants are essentially economic refugees coming from less affluent areas. Unlike them, however, today's emigrants are generally fleeing socially and politically dangerous and unstable home countries at much greater distances. The French-speaking mill workers often originated only a matter of a day's train journey away in the Eastern Townships or the Beauce.

Vermette examines in depth the puzzling reasons why so many left Quebec. Conditions were not that bad here, although perhaps the growth of the population outgrew good agricultural land. Although the textile mills did pay more in actual cash, living conditions were poor in the towns compared to the healthier rural life in Quebec. New England was closer and easier to access than the Canadian West and industries developed much sooner in the eastern United States than in Montreal or, later, mill towns like Sherbrooke or Drummondville. As with everything else, social trends also played a part: Vermette mentions the appearance of the "rich uncle from the States" in popular imagination and even in serious literature. The novel *Trente Arpents* (Thirty Acres) by Ringuet (Dr. Phillippe Panneton, 1895-1960) published in 1938, is the best-known example on this theme.

Although there were some French or bilingual schools established for the children of the textile workers, after two or three generations these families became assimilated, if not totally accepted, into the mainstream of American society and most eventually lost their identification with both their language and their homeland. Vermette covers this aspect very well and examines the ties that do remain to Quebec and Canada among the Franco-Americans of our time.



Top: Boy leaving work at Amoskeag Mills, Manchester, N.H. http://www.newenglandhistoricalsociety.com.

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A two component photography exhibition. The first offers an overview of Sherbrooke schools from the past 150 years, while the second, developed in collaboration with the Cégep de Sherbrooke, presents a retrospective of the college's first fifty years. In the spotlight: students and teachers in action!

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History, stories, traditions and winter family activities. Snowmen and snowballs included!

Fonds de la Famille Sévigny.

Collection Société d'histoire de Sherbrooke.

Société d'histoire de Sherbrooke.

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