

RIOTS: GAVAZZI AND THE ONE THAT WASN'T

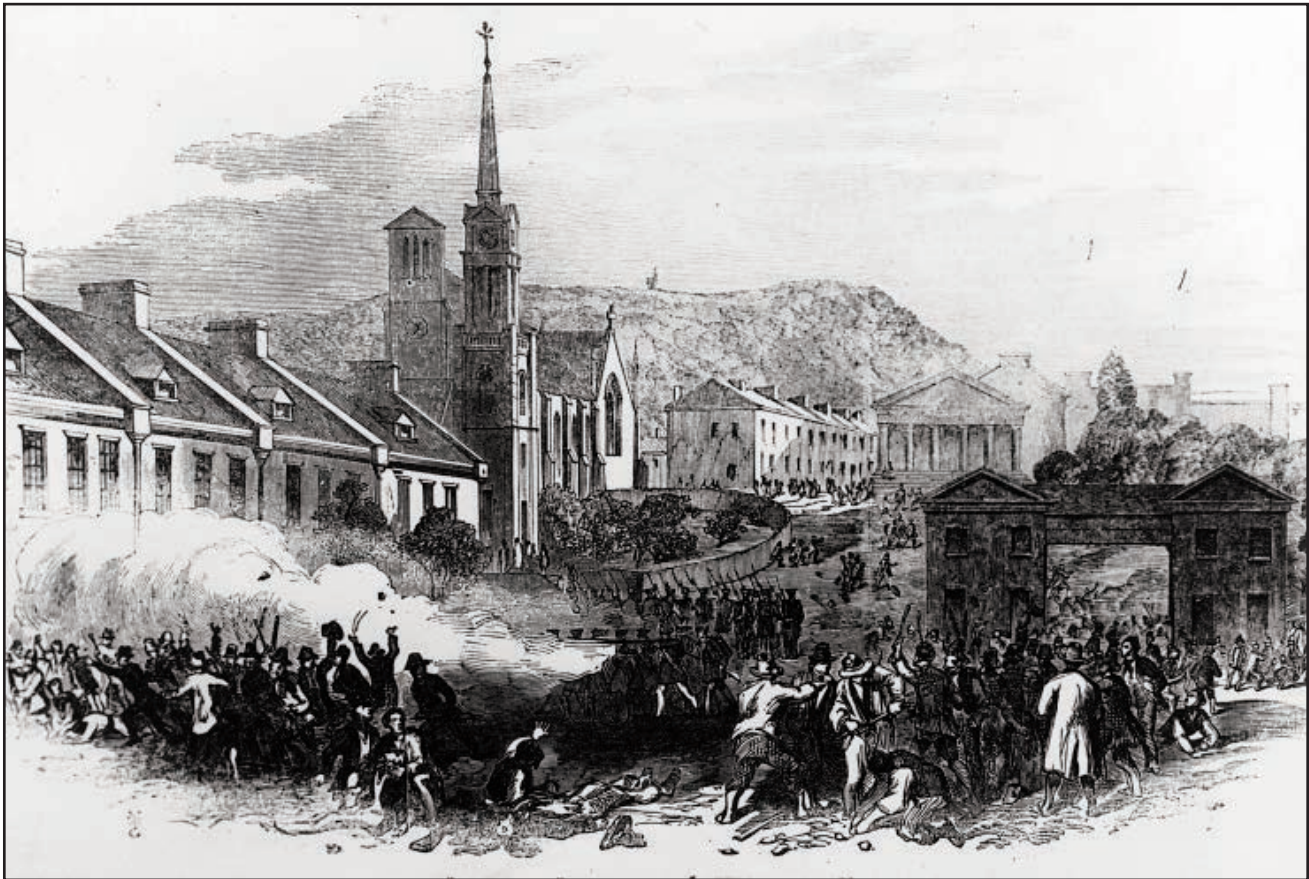
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# Quebec Heritage

VOL 5, No. 8

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## News



### Montreal Mosaic

Online snapshots of today's urban anglos

### Tall Tales

Surveys of historic Mount Royal and the Monteregian Hotspots

### The Gavazzi Riot

Sectarian violence on the Haymarket, 1853

# Quebec Heritage News

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## CONTENTS

**Editor's Desk 3**

The Reasonable Revolution *Rod MacLeod*

**Timelines 5**

Montreal Mosaic : Snapshots of urban anglos *Rita Legault*

The Mosaic revisited *Rod MacLeod*

How to be a tile *Tyler Wood*

**Reviews**

**Uncle Louis et al 8**

Jewish Painters of Montreal *Rod MacLeod*

**The Truth about Tracey 10**

The Riot That Never Was *Nick Fonda*

**Sectarian violence on the Haymarket 13**

The Gavazzi riot of 1853 *Robert N Wilkins*

**"A very conspicuous object" 18**

The early history of Mount Royal, Part I *Rod MacLeod*

**Monteregian Hotspots 22**

The other mountains, Part I *Sandra Stock*

**Quebec Family History Society 26**

Part IV: Online databases *Robert Dunn*

**If you want to know who we are... 27**

MWOS's Multicultural Mikado *Rod MacLeod*

**Hindsight 29**

A childhood in the Montreal West Operatic Society *Janet Allingham*

**Community Listings 31**

Cover image: "Gavazzi Riot, Haymarket Square, Montreal, 1853" (Anonymous). McCord Museum, MP-0000.812.2

# The Reasonable Revolution

by Rod MacLeod

Half a century ago this past New Year's Day, Quebec premier Paul Sauvé earned his fifteen minutes of fame by collapsing while shaking hands with potential voters. His sudden death, just weeks after that of "Chef" Maurice Duplessis, put the nail in the coffin of La Grande Noirceur and paved the way almost inevitably for the Quiet Revolution. Fifty years later, Quebec society is so confident in its embrace of modern liberalism that it cheerfully oozes self-righteousness at the prospect of certain private schools opening on Sunday and women who choose to wear veils over their faces.

I come back to a subject I tackled a few years ago because it's come back, with something of a vengeance, or what I fear may soon look like vengeance. And this is not to imply that the subject ought to have gone away, because quite frankly all societies, and certainly ours, need to talk as much and as openly as possible about what our values are and how we acquired them, and about why we recognize other values as foreign and what we should do about that.

I despair at polarized debates, where an issue must be either one thing or another, either right or wrong, without any sense of context. Context is history, of course. History will remind us, if we listen, that fifty years ago Quebec was more or less a lip-service democracy ruled in Tammany fashion with the support of organized religion and big business—all those lovely things the 60s were against—in which dissent of any significant sort was dangerous, at least socially. History will also remind us that until twenty years before that, women did not vote in provincial elections; they did, however, have the right (and still do) to wear specially concealing clothes which marked those that did so as having a religious vocation and being, by implication, sexually off-limits. Since those days, thanks in large part to several gentlemen who came to power after the revolutionary election of June 1960, Quebec has seen its institutions become more democratic and open, from government itself to the broad

workforce, to the family. Control is no longer the privilege of one gender, nor entrenched in one religious organization. The public face of Quebec half a century after the Quiet Revolution is both male and female and has many different shapes and complexions.

Now, all this is wonderful and we are quite right to defend this situation against its critics. But we must be clear in our own minds that we are this way because we chose this path, by consensus, deliberately if not always unquestioningly or even happily. It's a work in progress. It's also an education; it doesn't come in a bundle for us to file away, but must be gone over all the time, practiced and polished. We don't own it; we make use of it. It does not define us; we are certainly not alone in taking this path, and others may come to take this path who seem very different from us.

If I sound like a mystic, my apologies. I'm talking about a way of life—a set of values, if you will—that I call modern and liberal. Some people say Western, but that is to take Quebec's problem and write it on a global scale: the West may be largely modern and liberal, but that doesn't define it, and to claim so is to open up modern liberal values to all accusations aimed at the West. The West did invent a kind of democracy, one that has met with much success on the whole, but it did so as a counter to other classic Western institutions like absolutism and fascism. The West did invent a kind of feminism—maybe not the only legitimate kind, I don't know—as a counter to centuries of entrenched patriarchy, gross prejudice, sexual bondage and, if you go back far enough, polygamy and chattel. Improving on all that certainly seems like a no-brainer, which is not to say there aren't plenty of men who believe firmly in women's rights but still wouldn't want their spouses to beat them at golf.

Matters get dicier when we acknowledge that modern liberal values are by implication secular. Probably no other word today provokes such polarization,

and not just because atheists have gotten more vocal lately in their critique of religious movements and vice-versa. Most people tend to see "secular" as the opposite of "religious"—which is correct but not in the sense that secular forces are necessarily unaccommodating or even hostile towards religion. In Christian tradition, the secular was "of the world" as opposed to of God or the spirit; priests were "secular" because they worked in the world, as opposed to monks, who didn't. This distinction became clearer to people who argued that actions in this world did not specifically affect one's lot in the next; Calvinists grew particularly adept at this argument, making commercial fortunes even as they crossed their fingers about the pits of Hell. Modern liberalism has developed this line of thinking to an extent, maintaining that church and state should be separate, and that when entering public institutions one's religious beliefs should be checked at the door.

But many religious people (Muslims are a classic example) believe that creating a just society is a spiritual duty, and so exactly what they are expected to check at that door is unclear. Moreover, isn't it a little absurd to ask someone to abandon the very thing that made them want to do good... in the name of doing good? If a man wishes to build a shelter for the homeless, does it matter if he is influenced by the Koran, *Das Kapital*, or JS Woodworth's *My Neighbour*?

Increasingly, we seem to be ready to answer Yes. We are suspicious. Religious people are always out to convert people, aren't they? Let them build a homeless shelter and the next thing you know the homeless are being harassed by Bible thumpers. (Sally Ann, anyone?) Or worse: fanatics are getting a foot in the door, and if they do, it will be only a matter of time before there are inquisitions and witch hunts. Now, many people who argue this way have seen inquisitions and witch hunts first hand; others, closer to home, may be remembering life under La

Grande Noirceur. But the rest of us suspicious people seem to be driven by fear. The sectarian violence that plagues the world today makes it quite natural and practical to be fearful, and by and large we have opted to try to assuage these fears by imposing restrictions on our liberty, from enforcing body searches at airports to prohibiting people who dress a certain way from receiving government services.

The latter measure (Bill 94), however, is not really about security but rather about something deeper and even less rational: a fear of The Other. Unfamiliar habits make us uneasy; arguably it's natural, part of a human defence mechanism. As we grow used to these habits, they lose their peculiarity and cease to distress us, although their potential to irritate us remains—particularly if we feel people are receiving special treatment because of their habits. It's dangerous for kids to bring knives to school, and yet Sikhs may do so, for religious reasons. Some people find this objectionable because they feel religion shouldn't trump public security; others are irritated because they always are when someone appears to be getting a bigger piece of pie, or even a different kind of pie, than they do. Still others merely cry that this is not the way "we" do things.

On the whole, religion shouldn't trump public security, not in a modern liberal society. The extent to which our fears curtail our liberties is a matter for serious debate, but that there are limits to our personal freedoms is part and parcel of living in any kind of society. A secular society is one in which religion does not dictate the law and in which one religion is not privileged over others. Secularism does not mean there can be no compromise: the resolution of the kirpan issue is a good example of reasonable accommodation, and is perfectly consistent with secular values. Secularism is also not about enforcing the absence of religion—something that the United States, and now France, seem to find extraordinarily confusing. For public institutions to display religious symbols sends a message of exclusion to those who do not embrace these symbols, but people who work for public institutions should be allowed to display on their person whatever symbols they wish to; what difference does it make to me what the person who

issues my passport believes? Our fear of religious difference, and especially of the trappings of religion, has caused us to retreat to a position of intolerance, wherein we see all difference as a threat to what we claim to hold dear. This is to seriously undermine the values of modern liberal society, which by its very nature allows for, and thrives on, cultural differences.

**A**s always, everything is polarized. On the one hand, there are people who argue for cultural relativism, and by extension moral relativism. By implication, none of the great achievements of modern liberal society are worth more than what they replaced; democracy is no better than totalitarianism, for example. Now from a certain perspective this is perfectly true: everything is relative. But to claim so across the board is to overlook the importance of certain things people have strived and sacrificed themselves for over the centuries. On the other hand, there are people who start making all kinds of claims for the values they posit as an alternative to cultural and moral relativism: they speak of Judeo-Christian values, Western values, or simply Our values. And others who don't feel part of all that get naturally defensive, often aggressively so.

Let's not be afraid to recognize the achievements of modern liberalism and to uphold its values, but let's be clear why. From far out in space everything may look the same, but up close there should be little doubt that modern liberalism—with all the freedoms and, yes, grey areas and contradictions it contains—makes for a better society than most practical alternatives. The path we've taken over the last five decades in Quebec, as in much of the world, has led us to a society that benefits from many points of view, from the experiences (never mind the products) of many different cultures, and from the thoughts and actions of women as well as men. It is complex, and does not fear complexity. It embraces challenges and even contradictions. Religion is one of these challenges, perhaps its greatest one, but this is not to say the challenge cannot be met. The presence of the niqab is not a threat to "our way of life;" it is "our way of life," now.

Above all, let's stop insisting that modern liberalism is what defines Us and, worse, claiming that it always did.

This argument is hypocritical wherever one finds it, but in Quebec it is particularly odd. It's as if our memories did not extend back beyond June 1960. Or rather, as if that revolution has been erased and we have come to believe that what was gained had always existed. When we say that newcomers have to adapt to our ways, we aren't taking any particular trouble to ask ourselves what those "ways" are, let alone trying to explain them. Maybe we really feel there's no point, since at the end of the day our values are ours and newcomers are, at best, a nuisance which, we concede, must be accommodated. This essentialism is, of course, the antithesis of modern liberalism. Our secularism sounds suspiciously like the belief that all religions are equal but some religions are more equal than others. The "mainstream" culture being touted by increasing numbers in Quebec looks about as closely linked to modern liberalism as the crucifix on the walls of the National Assembly.

**Query from New Zealand:  
Information needed for a biography of Harry Norris**

I was intrigued to read Rod MacLeod's "Harry Norris: Ode to Montreal West's wandering minstrel" in the March-April 2009 issue of the *Quebec Heritage News* which was sent to me by a Montreal contact.

One aspect of Norris' life that was not dealt with, however, was his association with the Montreal Junior Symphony Orchestra, which was formed in 1947 by Lewis V. Elvin and continued until 1973. Harry Norris was stage manager and a tutor for this orchestra, at least during a July-August 1954 tour of England. I am trying to ascertain if Norris's involvement was actually wider than just this single tour. I would be grateful on any information anyone might have that would reveal the extent of Norris' association with the group, or any additional information on Harry Norris' activities in Montreal.

*Peter Downes*  
*peterdownes@paradise.net.nz*

# Launch of the Montreal Mosaic WebMagazine

**O**n March 26, 2010, the Montreal Mosaic WebMagazine was launched at the Atwater Library, capping a half-day conference on Arts Culture and Heritage issues facing the English-speaking communities of Montreal. The conference was one of a series on the city's diversity put together by the Greater Montreal Community Development Initiative (GMCDI), a community organization that seeks to engage and consult English-speaking Montrealers on key issues.

After words of welcome from Lynn Verge, the Atwater Library's executive director, a series of presentations were made: Sylvia Martin-Laforge (executive director of the Quebec Community Groups Network) on the role of Official Language Minorities, Guy Rodgers (executive director of the English Language Arts Network) on the history of ELAN, Kevin O'Donnell and Rod MacLeod on QAHN's involvement in Montreal, and Solange Bourgouin (Department of Canadian Heritage) on PCH's support for Arts Culture and Heritage.

A stimulating round-table discussion on issues facing the city's English-speaking community ensued, led by GMCDI coordinator Nina Kim. The Montreal Mosaic WebMagazine was then launched by Matthew Farnan (QAHN's web editor) and Tyler Wood (Montreal Mosaic project coordinator).

The following are excerpts from the conference and its accompanying literature.

## Webmagazine to draw portrait of Greater Montreal

by Rita Legault

**M**uch of this city's history, culture, and art is appreciated by far too few. "Montreal Mosaic" ([www.montrealmosaic.com](http://www.montrealmosaic.com)) hopes to change that.

"Like a true mosaic, our WebMagazine is an assemblage of small pieces that come together to create a picture of Metropolitan Montreal," said Guy Rodgers, chairman of the Arts, Culture and Heritage Council of the Greater Montreal Community Development Initiative (GMCDI). "And, in the image of our diverse cosmopolitan community, every piece of the mosaic maintains its own identity while contributing to the overall picture."

"There is no thriving artistic scene in the world that does not have strong connections with its local community, and no dynamic population that does not have its own artists to tell its stories," commented Rodgers, who is the Executive Director of the English-

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**WELCOME**

It's hard to be bored by Montreal, but it's easy to be overwhelmed—by our amazing history, diverse culture and vibrant arts scene. Montreal Mosaic is a place to rediscover your city. A meeting place: a place for sharing stories, a place for personal reflections and community perspectives on the past, present and future of a great Canadian metropolis.

[Read more](#)

**UPCOMING EVENTS**

- **Wednesday, 21. April 2010 - 13:45**  
Blue Metropolis International Literary Festival
- **Sunday, 2. May 2010 - 11:30**  
St. Columban Irish Pasta Fundraiser
- **Thursday, 6. May 2010 - 15:31**  
Festival Accès Asie Festival

A new beginning: When she suffered a serious knee injury, Janet Lumb was forced to give up one of her vocations and end an 8-year career as a teacher who specialized in working with autistic children. While convalescing, she was approached by Bernard Nguyen about co-founding a multidisciplinary festival that would promote artists of Asian origin. Even though she was confined to home, she decided to take on the challenge. It would involve breaking down... [Read more](#)

Language Arts Network (ELAN).

“One of the advantages of a WebMagazine is that contributors are not bound by conventional magazine article format,” said Mathew Farfan, editor of the Quebec Heritage Web. “Montreal Mosaic hopes to integrate many forms of artistic expression including memoir, fiction, photographs, music, video, and other media that help artists to tell the story of their Montreal roots and the city’s dynamic cultural and artistic scene.”

Farfan noted the wide variety of voices already reflected in Montreal Mosaic: Black historian Dorothy Williams, artist Cheryl Braganza, historian and community volunteer Fergus Keyes, and Janet Lumb, founder of the Acces Asie festival. These stories examine how individuals and groups fit into and add to the social fabric of Greater Montreal, what identity or identities they’ve adopted, and how this city has shaped them.

The goal of Montreal Mosaic is to showcase a diversity of local perspectives and identities, said project co-ordinator Tyler Wood, who put together the first edition of the web magazine. Thus, for Wood, the most dynamic section of the WebMagazine is the list of “reflections” – those articles that are written with some introspection on the part of the contributor. “A visitor to the site can see all of these listed together. Artist profiles, tales of immigrant experiences, and musings on the importance of particular Montreal institutions, intimate histories of neighbourhoods: here we get the full variety of stories, diverse and unfiltered.”

Wood noted, however, that the WebMagazine is organized to appeal to visitors with different interests. “If you’re interested in a particular organization, you can quickly find all the articles it has contributed in one place. If you’re only interested in the history side of things, we’ve set up the site so you’re free to explore only those articles – likewise for arts and culture.” The site also offers a selection of historic images and maps, as well as an events calendar to keep track of all that’s going on in the area. Wood notes that the WebMagazine makes it easy for visitors to add an event to the calendar, and that Montreal Mosaic especially appreciates bilingual submissions of articles, reflections and organizational profiles.

## The Mosaic Revisited

*by Rod MacLeod*

**T**he Montreal Mosaic WebMagazine is the latest in a series that QAHN intends to produce for the entire province. So far we have five to our name, beginning with the “Townships Heritage Webmagazine / Patrimoine des Cantons Cyber Magazine” and continuing through the Laurentians, the Outaouais, and the Gaspé – the latter in collaboration with CASA. This time, we are very pleased to be collaborating with the Greater Montreal Community Development Initiative, as well as the English-Lan-

guage Arts Network whose contributions will make Montreal Mosaic a showcase for arts and culture as well as heritage.

Montreal Mosaic is also part of QAHN’s own ongoing Montreal initiative, which began nearly four years ago as we canvassed writers, researchers and historical groups across the city to see if they would be willing to share their stories with us. We secured a number of articles for our print magazine, the Quebec Heritage News; these articles were from people representing a wide variety of cultural backgrounds who wrote about their own experiences, the history of their communities, and the often fragile landmarks in the city that represent their heritage.

We discovered a number of challenges in talking to Montrealers about “Anglophone” heritage. One challenge was countering the idea that QAHN must have some political angle if it was emphasizing the “Anglo” element: very few people in arts, culture or heritage are interested in taking part in debates about language rights – and neither is QAHN. Another challenge was simply convincing people they could talk about themselves as “Anglophones” or even part of an “English-speaking” community. Neither term is popular: “Anglophone” comes up against the very deeply ingrained belief in Quebec there is something called “allophone,” or else it suggests a narrow identification with the culture of Britain, or else it’s just too unsexy for words; equally, the phrase “English-speaking” seems absurd to most Montrealers when the vast majority of Francophones are English-speaking.

We decided it made sense to stop using these terms and simply ask people to tell their stories.

The first round of QAHN’s Montreal initiative culminated in a one-day symposium, which we called “Montreal Mosaic,” held in April 2007 at the McCord Museum. The symposium brought together over 100 people who found they had much in common, despite many different backgrounds, including Irish, Jewish, Indian, Chinese, Greek, Jamaican, and Inuit. Proceedings unfolded in English, with the occasional French intervention, although the initial welcome came in both languages, as well as Spanish, German and Italian – the latter from the keynote speaker, the Honourable Marlene Jennings, who speaks it with her in-laws. The presentations and stories were interspersed with films, dance numbers and musical performances reflecting several widely differing cultural traditions. Above all, there was plenty of that ultimate networking tool: food – by most accounts much better and much less familiar than what one normally finds at conferences. But food for thought was the day’s best legacy, as participants went home pleased they had found a forum where notions of identity and culture were so easily, if tentatively, explored.

For the last year and a half QAHN has been looking for an occasion to take the achievements of Montreal Mosaic to the next level. It became clear to us that this involved creating a WebMagazine for the

Greater Montreal area. Just as clearly, we needed to put a much greater emphasis on multiculturalism than we had in the other webmags, given the city's enormous diversity and the consequent multiple layers on which Montrealers consider themselves and their heritage. There also had to be much more emphasis on arts and culture, given how closely the two (or three) are intertwined in the city. The timing was right. QAHN and ELAN were already working closely within the Arts Culture & Heritage council of the GMCDI, and taking on the WebMag project as part of the GMCDI's projected conference series on Diversity seemed the perfect venue. So here we are!

QAHN is now also launched on a major redesign of its own website, which will include the overall look and flavour of the WebMag series. Montreal Mosaic will therefore serve as a model for the other regions: more diverse in content, and more friendly and informative in form.

## How to be a tile

by Tyler Wood

It's hard to be bored by Montreal, but it's easy to be overwhelmed—by our amazing history, diverse culture and vibrant arts scene. “Montreal Mosaic” is a place to rediscover your city. A meeting place: a place for sharing stories, a place for personal reflections and community perspectives on the past, present and future of a great Canadian metropolis. It's a place to explore, question and celebrate English-Montreal's evolving cultural identities.

In particular, Montreal Mosaic is keen to look at how groups and individuals contribute to the local arts, culture and heritage scenes. The WebMagazine features an inventory of organizations and places active on these fronts.

A wide array of voices has already contributed to

Montreal Mosaic by providing their personal reflections. These stories examine how people and groups fit into and add to the social fabric of Greater Montreal, what identity or identities they've adopted, and how this city has shaped them.

Some concentrate on the history and development of a particular neighbourhood, town or ethnic group. Others focus on a particular institution's role and place in the metropolitan region. Still others are the unique perspectives of individuals, whether they are artists that deal with these themes professionally or simply citizens with their own take on things.

Montreal Mosaic encourages individuals and organizations to add their own stories to our collection. Here are some of the questions we aim to explore:

- How did you come to be living here, to be a Montrealer? If you work with an organization, when and why was it established?
- What has been the historical experience of a community with whom you identify or serve? (This could be an ethnic group, religious community, cultural troop, a profession, a gender or sexual orientation, a particular generation, etc.)
- What identities have you or your group developed, living and working here? How are you unique?
- How do these identities relate to one-another? How have they evolved over time?
- How do you, your organization or your group contribute to community-building?
- How and why do you use the English language? What other languages do you use?

Of course, there are no wrong answers to these questions. The goal of Montreal Mosaic is to showcase a diversity of local perspectives and identities. Nevertheless, this is a place for respect and sharing.

One of the advantages of a WebMagazine is that contributors are not bound by conventional article format; we happily include poems, photographs, video, audio and other media that help to tell the story. The

editorial staff at Montreal Mosaic suggests that the written component of any contribution be no longer than 1,000 words. We appreciate bilingual submissions.

*Rita Legault is Director of Communications at the Quebec Community Groups Network*

*Rod MacLeod is past-president of the Quebec Anglophone Heritage Network and sits on the board of the Quebec Community Groups Network.*

*Tyler Wood is project co-ordinator of Montreal Mosaic and a historian at the Centre d'Histoire de Montreal*



Tyler Wood with featured author Fusun Atalay, his high school English teacher (Photo courtesy of Fusun Atalay)

REVIEWS

# UNCLE LOUIS ET AL

*Jewish Painters of Montreal: Witnesses of their Time, 1930-1948*  
 McCord Museum of Canadian History

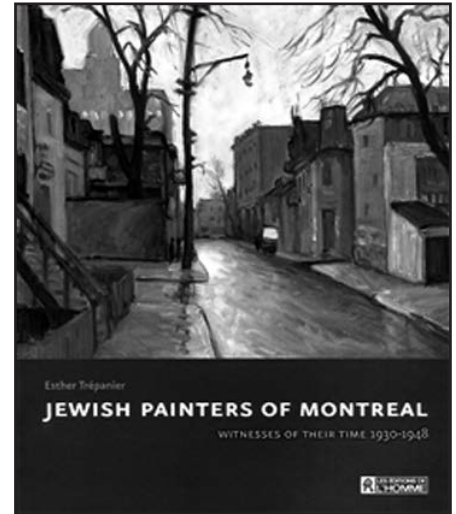
Review by Rod MacLeod

When I was about six or seven my parents sent me to art class on Saturday mornings, partly as an alternative to TV cartoons but mostly because they thought I'd have fun. And I did. They were encouraged by the teacher, who was a great believer in art being fun, in self-expression, and in not sticking slavishly to the rules—all things that appear to have fallen out of fashion in recent pedagogy. As my mother often reported it, the teacher believed his main job was to undo what we'd learned in school. One of my mother's colleague had been instrumental in setting up the class, located in the recently-acquired meeting house of the Society of Friends near Atwater. The colleague's daughter, whom I knew well, also attended the class, which was a source of comfort for me, hopelessly shy at meeting new kids. But you couldn't be shy around "Uncle Louis," the wonderful old guy who taught us. Or, according to his philosophy, untaught us.

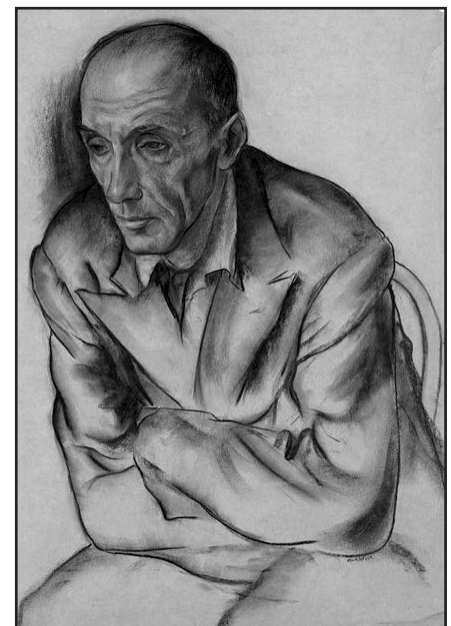
Two decades after these madly creative mornings with me and Laura in the Quakers' basement, Uncle Louis—better

known as Louis Muhlstock—was, along with several other painters active in the 1930s and 40s, the subject of a retrospective exhibition at the Saidye Bronfman Centre: *Jewish Painters and Modernity*. The show was a highlight of the 1987 season, when the Saidye was in the throes of a major structural renovation that prevented any theatre or outreach activities from taking place. *Jewish Painters* was a landmark exhibition on its own terms, profiling as it did the careers of some of Canada's best, if undersung, artists and positioning them in a time and place that underscored their vital contribution to Canadian art. Moreover, the show's curator was a francophone, Esther Trépannier, a young art historian and subsequently professor at UQAM whose expertise in modernism led her to appreciate these innovative artists from the Jewish Main, the YMHA and the Art Association of Montreal. In the wake of the exhibition, the Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec proceeded to purchase over 200 of the works in question, then largely in private hands. In 2008 these works went on exhibit in Quebec City as part of the quadracentenary celebrations under the title *Jewish Painters of Montreal: Witnesses of Their Time, 1930-1948*, again with Trépannier as curator. A portion of that exhibition is now on display at the McCord Museum in Montreal.

"Modernity" is an overused word, but if it describes the ability of artists to reflect their own times, including the harsh social realities of an industrial age in crisis, it applies to these artists, whose work echoes the best of early twentieth-century avant garde from Fauvism and Cubism to Italian Futurism and German Expressionism. As a group, they—Muhlstock, Ernst Neumann, Harry Mayerovitch, Jack Beder, Alexander Bercovitch and Ghitta Caiserman-Roth, just to name the more productive—ran rings around their counterparts in Anglo-Protestant and French-Canadian Montre-



al in terms of insight and sympathy. The Great Depression drew them to the wretched for subject matter, and the result was incredible dignity. Neumann's series, "Unemployed" shows men without hope who nevertheless retain self-worth and surprising beauty; it is not their fault that the world is too harsh even for heroes. Muhlstock's subject even has a name—"William O'Brien, Unemployed"—and looks as if he'd worked in a bank or a law office not so long before. (What was his story?)

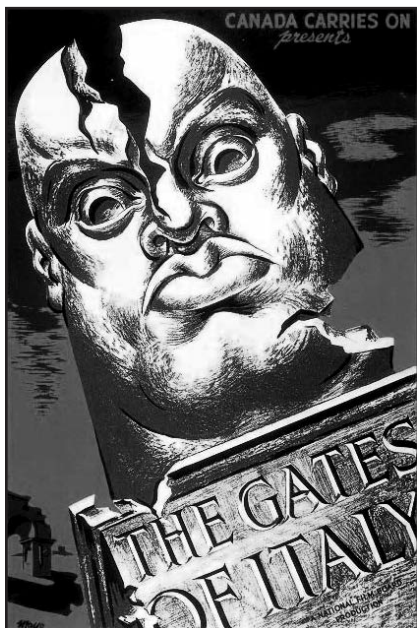


Ernst Neumann, "Unemployed No.5," 1933, lithograph, Musée des beaux-arts du Québec. Louis Muhlstock, "William O'Brien, Unemployed," 1935, charcoal and brown chalk on paper, Musée des beaux-arts du Québec.





These artists also cast critical eyes on the urban world around them, showing the seamy side of pre-war Montreal life—sailors, drunks, hookers—as well as the hypocrisy of the legal system and social mores that regulated them. Mayerovitch, in particular, skewers lawyers and petty officials in biting caricature as if he were illustrating Dickens. The satire is often subtler: I was drawn right in to Beder's "Café Scene, Silver Door" from 1934, in which a group of middle-aged people sit around a table in their coats and hats, possibly to keep off the chill but more likely because such garments spoke of social status. The woman in the centre is pontificating about something with a sneer on her face that you know is perpetual, and another clearly shares her sour disapproval while somehow suggesting weariness, as if she's heard it before. The men,



by contrast, are passive; we can't even see the faces on two of them. The third sits with eyes closed, a model of tired resignation; his mind may be miles away—someplace warm and bright, perhaps with Jazz in the background—but his life is solidly here, in a well-fed but strenuous 60-hour work week and the Silver Door as the height of excitement. This is the world artists run screaming from—though Beder caught this image brilliantly as he looked back.

With the outbreak of war, these painters did their bit, in keeping with their social convictions and a more deeply-felt hostility to fascism than that expressed by most non-Jewish artists. Muhlstock turned his attention to factory workers on whom he bestowed the same dignity as the unemployed: William Frechette, a real guy in a welder's uniform, might well have been William O'Brien, once again among the ranks of the waged. Mayerovitch, the born caricaturist, produced striking images of Goebbels as a nightmarish rat and, closer to home, sketches of Duplessis as "The Laurentian Napoleon." Eventually Mayerovitch went to work for the National Film Board, producing noble if stylized posters featuring industrial workers for inspirational films; perhaps his most effective is "The Gates of Italy" from 1943, showing the huge cracked head of Mussolini amid classical ruins, crumbling while "Canada carries on!" It is to Mayerovitch's credit that he didn't go in for an advertising career after the war, but remained a light-hearted but sharp cartoonist, publishing right up to his death in 2004.

Not all is topical and critical. Some of the most beautiful pieces in the exhibi-

tion are self-portraits or portraits of family members, neighbours, children playing. The port of Montreal has never looked so gloriously moody as in Neumann's lithographs, and neither have the streets off The Main that Beder painted: "Grey Day, Prince Arthur East" is absolutely haunting, its rain-slicked streets gleaming despite the scene's bleak Novembrish chill. So much of Montreal was like this—and still is, in carefully watched pockets—but it took the Jewish Painters to bring it to life.

Uncle Louis was 97 when he died, but spry to the end. A few years before, a reunion of the art class families took place with Louis the guest of honour. It was fun to cross paths with Laura again—curiously, she also did a degree in History, although her subsequent career went in an entirely different direction—and to reminisce about those crazy Saturday mornings. Louis said he remembered us, which may well have been true, but even if not it was clear he was delighted to see his protégés. He sat, Chaplinesque, his hands on the top of his cane, looking not so very much unlike those battered but dignified subjects from the 1930s. There was a moment in the evening when everyone expected him to speak words of wisdom, but instead he grinned and declared:

"I was once at an antiques market where a fellow tried to sell me a skull, which he said was the skull of Chaucer, the great English poet. I said to him: 'But this is the skull of a child!' He replied: 'Oh yes. It's the skull of Chaucer when he was a child!'"

This from one of the great generation of Quebec painters, one that straddled some of history's darkest years. This from an artist who believed in having fun and in not sticking slavishly to the rules. We all have much to learn. Or unlearn.

*Jewish Painters of Montreal: Witnesses of their Time, 1930-1948 runs at the McCord Museum to May 2, 2010. The catalogue of the full 2008 exhibition is available in the museum bookshop.*

*Rod MacLeod is the author of Spirited Commitment: A History of the Samuel and Saidye Bronfman Family Foundation, to be published in June by McGill-Queen's University Press.*

# THE TRUTH ABOUT TRACEY

*The Riot That Never Was: The military shooting of three Montrealers in 1832 and the official cover-up*

by James Jackson  
Baraka Books, 2009

Reviewed by Nick Fonda

Many years ago, I read a curiously captivating novel entitled *Daughter of Time* by Josephine Tey. The protagonist was a Scotland Yard inspector confined to bed with a broken leg. To pass the time, and with the help of friends who researched reference libraries for him, he set out to solve a crime familiar to British schoolchildren: the death of the Princes in the Tower. History has always pointed a finger at Richard III for the death of his two nephews and he has been vilified by writers as eminent as Shakespeare and Thomas More. But before the inspector leaves the hospital, it's clear that Richard is the fall guy in an official cover up orchestrated by Henry VII who took the British throne by defeating Richard III at the Battle of Bosworth Field.

James Jackson's *The Riot That Never Was* reminded me strangely of *Daughter of Time*. At first glance the two books—like the two authors—might seem to have very little in common. The *Riot That Never Was* is a meticulously researched piece of nonfiction, not at all a novel as Tey's cleverly structured story within a story unmistakably is. James Jackson is an academic with a list of scholarly publications to his credit; Josephine Tey was a Scottish teacher-turned-writer whose most successful novel, *Daughter of Time*, was published a year before her death in 1952, at the relatively young age of 56.

And yet...

Even though my Grade 9 History course was the History of the British Isles, the story of the young sons of Edward IV meant nothing to me before reading Tey's book. Similarly, even though I have at least a cursory acquaintance with the Rebellion of 1837, I had never heard of the events in Jackson's book. The central events of both involve

the tragic loss of innocent human lives; although, listed with the litany of atrocities committed by one figure or another in a quest for power, these murders will remain footnotes, albeit interesting footnotes. Both books appeal to the armchair historian in us, and turn us into armchair detectives. Both books use the magnifying lens of time to trace myth and uncover, bit by bit, the vein of truth which runs underneath. The title of Tey's book is the second half of the old proverb: Truth is the daughter of Time. The Carrollesque title of *The Riot That Never Was* speaks for itself.

The events Jackson traces in *Riot* are deceptively simple. During a vigorously-contested spring by-election in Montreal, in 1832, British troops were called to the vicinity of a polling station, ostensibly to quell a riot. A few hours later the troops fired a volley down St James Street, and killed three innocent bystanders. A grand jury investigated the shooting and much to the relief of the Governor of Lower Canada, Lord Aylmer, a career military officer and later general, the army was absolved of any wrongdoing. In the 178 years since the shooting all historians have accepted the grand jury's verdict.

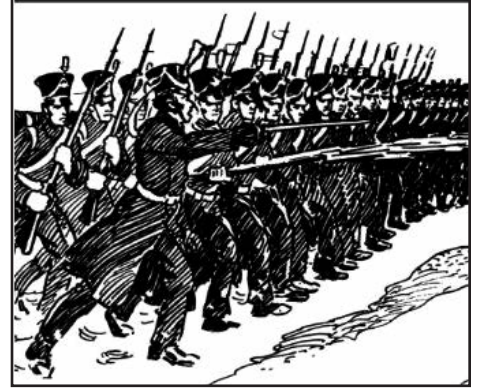
James Jackson patiently and systematically roots out primary sources and through the voices of those who witnessed the events of May 21, 1832, we come to the inescapable conclusion that the grand jury was rigged and Aylmer was involved in a cover-up.

He sets the scene very nicely for us. Montreal, in 1830, is a city of 27,000 souls, bursting with an energy that is about to turn it into the economic engine of Lower Canada and British North America. There are lucrative opportunities awaiting the burgeoning merchant class, among other things over a million acres of densely forested land are about to be opened up for exploitation. Demo-

# THE RIOT THAT NEVER WAS

The military shooting of three Montrealers in 1832 and the official cover-up

JAMES JACKSON



graphically, Montreal is about to become predominantly English-speaking. There are tensions that stem from both religion and language. Politically, there's an increasingly insistent yearning for representational government while the British governor and his appointed Legislative Council are growing testy and vindictive.

Jackson's book is documentary and we are introduced to hundreds of individuals. Daniel Tracey—an Irish medical doctor turned newspaper editor—is one of those who cuts a compelling figure. He is released from prison in time to win, surprisingly, a tightly contested by-election, only to die—not of a musket wound but of cholera—days later. As vivid is the picture Jackson paints of daily life: women can vote, not because of universal suffrage which would take almost a century arrive, but because some women are property owners. Elections last for days, even weeks; polls stay open until an hour after the last voter leaves the polling station. Voters can expect thugs, hired by the candidates, to be lurking near the polling station. Special constables can be identified by their blue staves. Montreal is served by five different newspapers.

The story behind *Riot* is almost as interesting as the book itself.

James Jackson grew up in Liverpool, England in the 1950s. "My father worked at the docks," he explained in a recent interview, "and we lived on Scot-

land Road, near the city centre. It was supposed to be a tough neighbourhood—the bobbies always patrolled in pairs—but I don't remember it that way. It was a neighbourhood that produced a few names. My best friend was Allan White who had an older sister, Priscilla, determined to make it into show business. She struck up a friendship with John Lennon, changed her name to Cilla Black and became a successful singer and entertainer.

"The French language came into my life when my parents billeted two members of a Paris-based boys' choir which had come to perform at St. Anthony's, where I was an altar boy," he recalls. "They were a little older than I was. I attended their rehearsals and showed them around Liverpool. I was with them for three full days and when they left I promised myself that I would learn to speak French as well as they did."

A strong student, Jackson had earned a place at grammar school when he expressed an interest in the priesthood. At the age of 11 he entered a junior seminary and learned Greek, Latin, and his favourite subject, French. A year later, he travelled to Rome with several classmates in a minivan. Both his French and his Latin came in useful.

"In France, I was the group's interpreter and I spoke French every chance I got," he says. "One Sunday morning, near a small Italian town, I was sent out to find the church. It was hot. There was no one on the streets. Then, I spotted a priest. I approached him, and because I didn't know a single word of Italian, I asked him, *ubi est ecclesia catolica?* It worked. The priest understood me!"

In 1966, with the Second Vatican Council, there was a change in the air. A third of the way through his theological studies for the priesthood, he asked to attend university. "I went to Birmingham to study French," he says, "because it would permit me to study abroad. During my third year, I went to Montpellier, in the south of France. That was where I realized that I should go into academia and not the church. I realized that what had so appealed to me as a child was the priest speaking from the pulpit. I wanted to have the fluency to speak to people."

After graduating at the top of his class he taught for a year—at Montpellier—and then went to Oxford where he earned his doctorate, a degree which led to a 25-year career as a professor of French at Trinity College in Dublin, Ireland.

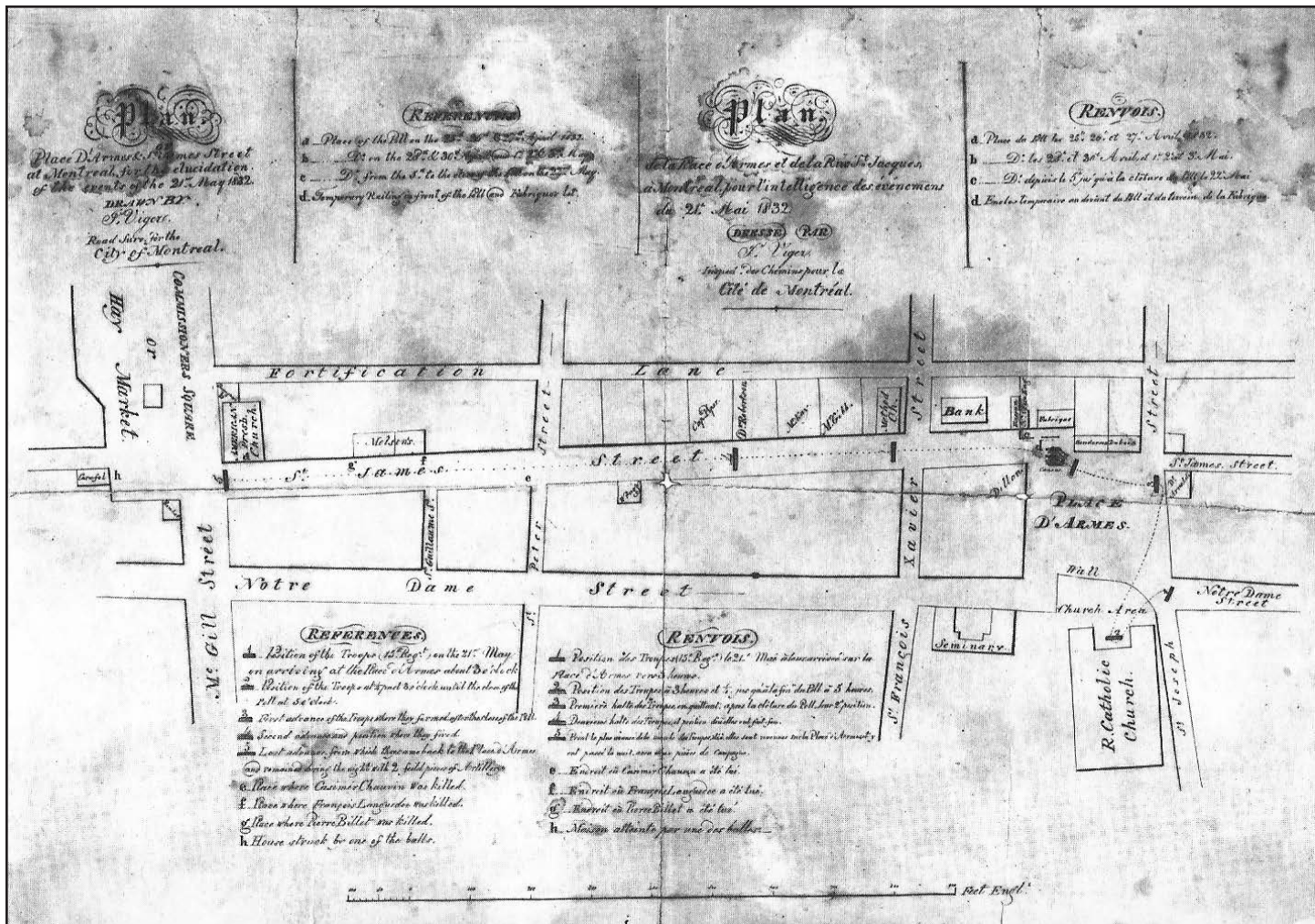
Jackson's particular interest in Quebec (he was twice president of the Association for Canadian Studies in Ireland) started at the end of his first year at university. "At the very end of the year we were each given a French-Canadian novel," he recalls. "I was assigned *Une Saison dans la vie d'Emmanuel* by Marie-Claire Blais. The book was so different, so fresh compared to everything else I'd read until then, that I was captivated."

He went on to specialize in the eighteenth-century and the work of Diderot, the editor of the famous *Encyclopédie*, but Quebec continued to beckon. At Oxford he'd met and struck up a friendship with Patrick Vinay, son of the former Professor of Linguistics at the Université de Montréal, who was to go on to become Dean of Medicine at the same university in Montreal. Two or three years after starting his career at Trinity College, Jackson started giving a course on French-Canadian writing.

"Diderot is my favourite," he confesses, "but I was growing more interested in what was happening here. Because my field was 18th century, that's where I looked first, but what really came to interest me was the great activity that was occurring in the early part of the 19th century."



Robert Sproule, "St James Street, Montreal, 1830," watercolour. McCord Museum M300



By the 1980s, Jackson was coming to Montreal quite regularly to do research. “Often, I’d stay with Patrick and his family,” he says. “On Saturday mornings they’d get *Le Devoir*. I used to read it and in particular a columnist by the name of Denise Bombardier.”

Originally, Jackson began research for a book on two pro-Patriote newspapers, the *Canadian Spectator* and the *Vindicator* and their three Irish-born editors between the years 1822 and 1837. “Given what was happening in Ireland at the time, you would expect that as Irishmen they would be violently anti-British,” he notes. “Surprisingly, they weren’t.”

Daniel Tracey was one of those three Irish editors. Dealing with him meant writing about the riot that had preceded his eventual election victory. Jackson thought it could be covered in a page or two.

Although it started to seem a most unusual riot. “How often,” Jackson asks, “do the supporters of the winning side start a riot?” The book on the Irish edi-

tors was never written and what Jackson thought might be a page or two on a minor incident turned into *The Riot That Never Was*: 350 pages, of which the last 20 are notes and bibliography. While James Jackson’s intention was to avoid a scholarly work, he was determined to be thorough and precise. He gives an entire chapter over to the short 15-minute period during which the shooting took place.

Jackson began working on *The Riot That Never Was* in the spring of 2001. In 2002, at a conference in Belfast, he gave a paper on some of his preliminary work. As one of the organizers he invited, as a guest speaker, Denise Bombardier. “I married her 11 months later.”

The book, dedicated to Bombardier (a writer/broadcaster who is much better known in Quebec than her husband), took six years to research and write. “All the historians that had written on the period were unanimous in saying that there was a riot caused by Tracey’s Irish followers, and I had no reason to

question their version,” Jackson explains. “But as I looked at their sources, I realized that everyone was basing himself on Aylmer’s version of the events. No one apparently had taken the trouble to consult the Journal of the House of Assembly (available now on the Internet) for the years that covered the Assembly’s own investigation of the events of May 1832, an inquiry that lasted many months from 1832 to 1834 and that took evidence from some sixty witnesses.”

*The Riot That Never Was* is a very thorough examination of a tragic, but relatively minor event. It’s an interesting read, but why is it important?

“I’m not expecting Prince Charles to come over and make an apology,” James Jackson says with a smile, “but truth is important.”

Josephine Tey would certainly agree.

*Nick Fonda is the current president of the Richmond County Historical Society.*

# The Gavazzi Riot

*Sectarian Violence on the Haymarket, 1853*

by Robert N. Wilkins

Ask any Montrealer to tell you about one or more of this city's infamous riots. Chances are that you will be told about the 1955 Maurice Richard Riot, or the 1968 tumult at the Saint-Jean-Baptiste Parade, or, more recently, the violence and vandalism associated with two Stanley Cup victories, one in 1986 and the other in 1993. Again, chances are no one will mention the Gavazzi Riot of 1853. Maybe it was just too long ago, but as we approach the 157th anniversary of this terrible tragedy, it is perhaps worth remembering that in terms of loss of human life, it was by far and away the most serious civil disturbance ever to occur in our city.

It was with bated breath that Montrealers awaited the arrival in this city of the controversial preacher and Italian nationalist, Alessandro Gavazzi, who was to reach Montreal from Quebec the morning of June 9, 1853. Admittedly the town's anxiety was heightened by the fact that, only a few nights earlier, a riot had broken out in Quebec as a result of a stirring address by the Bologna-born apostate, an expelled Barnabite monk.

His arrival in Canada East could not have come at a more inopportune time as the provincial parliament was involved in a heated debate over the ever thorny question of separate schools for the Roman Catholics of Canada West. Protestant cries of "papist domination" and "Roman enslavement" could be heard throughout the Canadian colony and events would later show that the municipal authorities had reason to be apprehensive about the imminent visit of such a notorious and outspoken anti-Catholic prelate.

So it was in this context that Alessandro Gavazzi, still bearing the physical scars of the brawl in the "Vieille Capitale," arrived in Montreal on the steamer "Québec" early in the morning of June 9. With him was his badly injured personal secretary, Paoli, who was carried on a stretcher from the ship. Gavazzi and his "delegation" of about fifty Orangemen (most of

whom were carrying concealed arms) were quickly escorted under the protection of Police Superintendent Lt. Col. William Ermatinger to the recently opened St Lawrence Hall on Great St James Street. Paoli was so badly injured that the Italian prelate signed the hotel register for both of them: "Father Gavazzi and secretary." The former was assigned Room 12 and the latter Room 18.

Later that day, while Gavazzi toured the city in the company of the zealous Reverend Alexander Digby Campbell, Mayor Charles Wilson was busily overseeing plans for the maintenance of public order in the event that trouble should break out. Later that same month, the Montreal Transcript reported that government authorities had cautioned Superintendent Ermatinger to "make every arrangement for the preservation of the peace.. Those who had sponsored the Italian priest's visit to Montreal had originally been granted the city's concert hall in Bonsecours Market for the three public meetings which they had envisioned. However, after some intense lobbying by the Irish Roman Catholic commu-

nity against the idea, the mayor reneged, forcing the Protestants to look elsewhere. They eventually came up with Zion Congregational Church on Beaver Hall Hill (today where stands the "Banque Nationale" building).

During the course of the day, Mayor Wilson met once again with the Police Superintendent and his brother, the Chief of Police, Charles Oakes Ermatinger. The mayor wanted a minimum of fifty constables standing outside the Congregational Church, a figure which was later increased to eighty men with the inclusion of a number of constables from the Water Police. Nevertheless, the municipal authorities were still apprehensive to the point where Wilson and Lt. Col. Ermatinger personally visited the Quebec Gate Barracks (foot of St. Hubert Street) to request the availability of troops from the garrison for later that day.

Although the calendar indicated that it was still



spring, the temperature was that of a hot, very hot, July or August day. In fact, it seemed that that year Montreal had passed directly from the dead of winter to the oppressive humidity of a moist continental summer, a phenomenon not totally unheard of in this city. Hand bills and word-of-mouth spread throughout the city the news that Alessandro Gavazzi had arrived from Quebec and was to speak that evening at Zion Church. The night promised to be hot in more ways than one.

The walk from St Lawrence Hall to Beaver Hall Hill was all of five minutes for Gavazzi, an imposing and powerful man. Yet surely he could not have helped but wonder (in the light of the events in Quebec) about the intentions of those beginning to gather around the church at the foot of the hill. His presence in Montreal was especially irking to the Irish Catholic population, most of whom lived in nearby Griffintown.

As Gavazzi entered the stifling church building, a picquet of 100 men from the newly-arrived 26th Cameromians was discreetly hidden in a small engine house at the foot of Haymarket Square (today Victoria Square). The regiment had just arrived in Montreal that very morning from a three year stint in Gibraltar. Not knowing the city, they had to be led from their barracks to the square by Mayor Wilson himself. Historian Elinor Kyte Senior wrote: "When they reached the engine house, the Cameromians were within a stone's throw of the spot where British troops had marched into the city for the first time less than a hundred years earlier. A little to the south were the ruins of the Parliament House, a silent reminder of what an angry Montreal crowd could do." To complicate matters even further, most of the officers were at that very moment at the wharf saluting the departure of the previous garrison, the 20th Regiment of Foot, who had just completed their three-year tour of duty in this city.

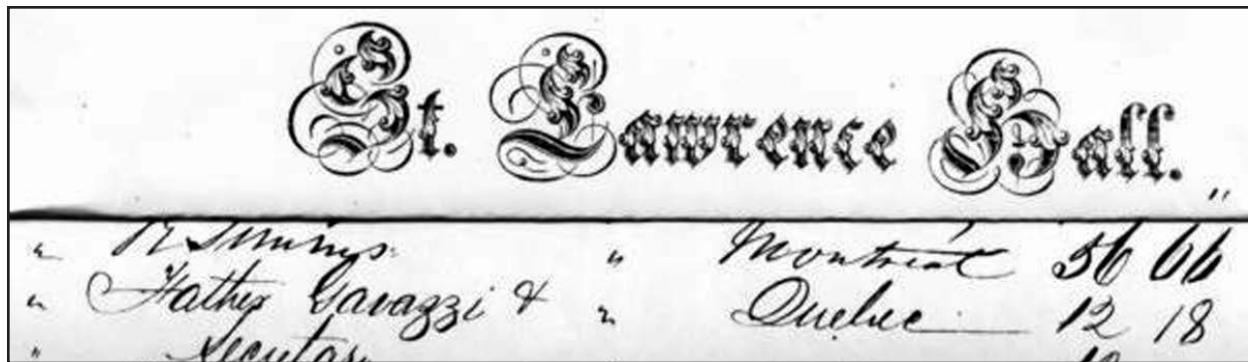
By all accounts, Gavazzi's lecture was startling, to say the least. Sir

James Alexander, aide-de-camp to the commander of the forces Lt. Gen. William Rowan, was present in the church at the time. He arrived there from the ceremonies at the wharf just after seven. Outside the church, Alexander noted the presence of about forty policemen armed only with their blue batons. In the square itself, he could clearly see bands of "rough-looking" men.

Describing the event some four years later, Alexander wrote: "Father Gavazzi was addressing the audience in Zion Church from the front of a temporary platform. On three sides, behind him, were seated about a dozen and a-half gentlemen, among whom were some clergymen. Gavazzi was conspicuous by his commanding figure, long hair, and black gown, with large crosses on the breast and left shoulder, as he is usually seen in pictures. He spoke in English, and it was not easy to follow him at first. He was discursive,



James Cane, "Topographical and Pictorial Map of the City of Montreal," 1846, McCord Museum, MI2019



and his accent was of course peculiar. He was calm, energetic, and violent by turns". Earlier in his memoir, Alexander presented the Italian clergyman as "one of the most remarkable men of the nineteenth century."

Within the church, the mood was electric. The windows on the south side of the building had been boarded up in anticipation of problems from the Griffintown slums below the hill, although the Catholic Institute had advised the faithful to ignore Gavazzi's invective.

#### "CATHOLICS OF MONTREAL!!

Keep the peace, and let Gavazzi say what he will; do not disgrace yourselves by creating a disturbance for the sake of a worthless fellow; keep quiet, and take no notice of what he says. Your Protestant fellow-citizens will be ashamed of their renegade friar yet.

By order of the Catholic Institute. S. O'Grady, Secretary (Signed)  
Montreal, June 9, 1853"

Nevertheless, for nearly an hour, the firebrand orator railed on about the "errors of Popery," "the threat posed by Roman Catholic education," and the "blessings of British rule." He had in no way toned down his presentation in light of the events a few days earlier in Quebec. The tension grew but his captive Protestant audience maintained a stony and stoic silence throughout most of his discourse. Alexander later wrote that the "whole scene and appearance of the lecturer must have been startling to those with weak nerves.....I also wondered at the boldness of the man, and how little he seemed to regard his own life, or the peril he then was in, and of the dangers he had already so frequently passed."

Suddenly, the inevitable happened: a violent commotion due to the possible presence of a Catholic within the church itself spilled over into the streets where

more than three hundred angry individuals had gathered. About twenty or thirty men left the building armed with clubs, hand pistols, fowling pieces, and even one double-barrelled shotgun to confront them. Shots from both sides were fired and a quick retreat was made to the relatively-safe confines of Zion Congregational Church, with one individual, a Mr Broomer, severely wounded in the head. For a brief moment, Gavazzi stopped speaking only to continue his virulent diatribe minutes later. Only a few seconds passed when the church was attacked by the infuriated mob. This time, Alexander left the building for good.

The situation outside was even more chaotic. The badly out-numbered police had been beaten off by the rioters leaving both Ermatinger brothers injured and bleeding profusely from the head. For all intents and purposes, only the church party was left to defend the besieged building. Nevertheless, the rioters were eventually repelled to the bottom of the square where they were seen to be defiantly reorganizing. It was at this moment that Alexander noted that he first saw the troops emerge from the nearby tiny engine house where they had been hidden away for a couple of very unpleasant hours. With their heavy military wool garments, they were perceived to be somewhat dazed and confused but above all, suffocatingly hot.



*Gavazzi's signature from the St Lawrence Hall Hotel, courtesy of the National Archives of Canada, MG28, Series 3 - 10, Vol. 1. Anonymous, "Gavazzi Riot, Haymarket Square," 1853, engraving, McCord Museum, MP-0000.812.2*

In due time, after some initial military manoeuvring, two lines of fifty soldiers each were drawn up in such a way that they were back to back with each facing one of the two disputing religious parties. The two lines were about fifty yards apart. Generally speaking, the Catholics were at the bottom of the hill while the Protestants were to the north, clustered in and around the church. Many, in fact, were just emerging from the torrid edifice in question. It was dusk, nearly 8:00 P.M., there being no Daylight Savings Time in 1853. Gavazzi and most of his party were still safely within Zion Congregational Church and, therefore, totally unaware of what was about to happen in Haymarket Square.

Suddenly, almost unbelievably, shots were fired in the direction of the soldiers, several missing the mark but by little. Many rioters, unaware that the soldiers had already loaded their muskets before arriving on the scene, then rushed towards the beleaguered troops. Mayor Wilson, who was present on the square throughout the sweltering evening, quickly and inaudibly read the infamous Riot Act. "Our Sovereign Lady the Queen chargeth and commandeth all persons, being assembled, immediately to disperse themselves, and peaceably to depart to their habitations or to their lawful business, upon the pains contained in the Act made in the first year of King George the First, to prevent tumults and riotous assemblies, God Save the Queen." No sooner had he finished when someone called out "Fire! Fire! Fire!" Many believe that it was the much agitated mayor himself who gave the order but to this day, no one is certain.

The lower division fired first and was immediately reprimanded by Lieutenant Robert Quartley. However, no sooner had he done so the upper division also opened with a volley and, at that point, the bugle sounded loudly to cease fire. The whole totally unexpected affair lasted no more than half a minute.

Sir James Alexander observed the incident firsthand and noted that "some of those about me laughed, and thought that the troops had fired blank cartridge." Sadly, nothing could have been further from the truth as nearby a young boy of ten, the son of Mr William Hutchinson, fell over, his leg being struck by a bullet. Amputation was performed the next day with death taking the young lad shortly thereafter.

With a sudden eerie silence settling in, people re-

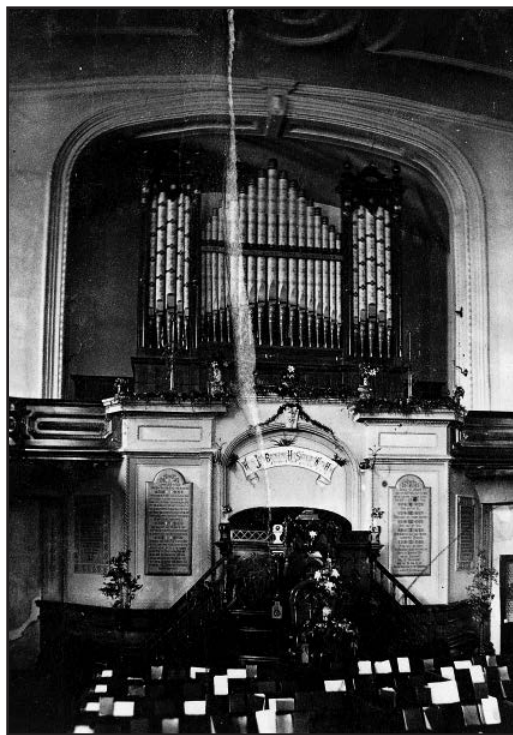
gained their composure and looked about. All around them was to be seen human carnage. About a dozen individuals were killed outright. Another forty or so were injured with many of those eventually succumbing to their wounds in those pre-antiseptic days of medicine. Alexander wrote that "persons from ten years of age to sixty suffered, including gentlemen and workpeople, with English, Scotch [sic], and Irish names, two ladies were wounded, and some good people, though apparently not dangerously wounded at the time, died afterwards with much suffering." One of the more fortunate individuals to survive his injuries was Hugh Mackay

who later in life helped found Montreal's Mackay Centre "for deaf mutes." He was shot in the leg outside Zion Congregation Church and carried the scar and, by all accounts, the memory with him until his death in 1889.

Alessandro Gavazzi was still in the basement of the church during the fusillade. He was discussing with the friends the latest incidents while all- along removing his religious apparel. Suddenly the shots were heard. Gavazzi's first reaction was to attempt to head outside to see what had happened and if he could be of assistance (he had, after all, been chaplain to Garibaldi's army in 1848!). However, his Montreal acquaintances, sensing that his life would be in peril, blocked

his path. He was eventually hustled from the building under an armed escort of fifty soldiers back to St Lawrence Hall where an all-night watch was put around the hotel. According to information found later in Gavazzi's autobiography, the thirty year old valise containing his very colourful soutane and coat was, in the midst of the chaos, handed to someone who promised to forward them to the Italian prelate's hotel. Neither were ever seen again! Meanwhile, the much humiliated Mayor Wilson was also whisked away from the bloody scene to his home by the same picquet of soldiers and a guard was then placed around it as well.

Throughout the night, a palpable tension could be felt everywhere within the shocked city. Not suprisingly, there was a great deal of irony found in the tragedy that many found very difficult to overlook. The newly arrived Cameronians – a regiment which was two thirds Protestant and one third Catholic, and all under Presbyterian command - had killed and wounded, for all intents and purposes, only Protestants. Not to be forgotten of course was the fact the mayor, who was strongly suspected of having given the order to fire,



*William Notman, "Interior, Zion Church," 1878, McCord Museum, II-50277.1*



was a Roman Catholic. In short, neither the incident nor the regiment was to be forgotten or forgiven quickly by this city's Protestant community. Indeed, in the July 15, 1853 edition of the *Montreal Witness*, a reporter still felt angry enough to write that on June 9 in Haymarket Square "defenceless Protestants had been massacrated [sic] by a rabid Popish Mayor."

The following day, Friday, June 10, Alessandro Gavazzi remained sequestered in Henry Hogan's hotel on Great St James Street. There was still the question of the other two lectures (as mentioned previously three had been planned) upon which to decide. Delegation after delegation came to attempt to sway the flamboyant Italian nationalist to their point of view. In the end, after much equivocation, Gavazzi thought it best to return to Montreal another day (he never did) and to leave for New York as soon as possible. This the ex-Barnabite did the following morning when on June 11 at 5:00 under heavy military protection he left the St Lawrence Hall by a side door, again carrying his still-injured secretary in his arms. A closed cab took both of them to the dock where they caught the steamer-ferry "Iron Duke" for Laprairie. They arrived by train in New York City that very evening.

**N**ot surprisingly, a Coroner's Inquest was held, although the authorities hesitated in convoking it for fear of re-opening sectarian wounds. Nevertheless, it sat for some twenty-five days, ending its deliberations on July 11. It was, by all accounts, impartially chaired by Messrs. Jones and Coursolle, the two coroners for the city. It heard from some 106 witnesses and in the end could not supersede its own religious divisions (nineteen jurors: ten Catholic and nine Protestants). Evidence seemed to point to the notion that the division facing the Protestants (north) who were still in the process of leaving the church intentionally fired high in order to prevent injury. However, the scene of the tragedy was a hill – Beaver Hall Hill – and this fact weighed heavily against the other. Autopsies also revealed that some people on both sides of the religious divide were killed by small arms fire and not by larger military "balls."

The question which always came back to haunt the inquest, however, was who exactly gave the order to fire upon the crowd. Protestants steadfastly believed that it was the "papist" mayor while Roman Catholics had their own theory which was articulated by a recent arrival to Montreal, a widowed school teacher from Canada West by the name of Margaret Brown Parker. According to her testimony before the Coroner's Inquest in early July, she was standing between the two divisions to one side of the crowd in Haymarket Square. Mrs Parker continued by saying that an unidentified man in the crowd gave the order to fire as well as any commander could have. She described him as "a common Irishman...who wore a blue coat, made in the real old Irish fashion, corduroy moleskin pantaloons that came to his boots, and a home made straw



hat." When she later reproached him for causing trouble, he responded with a smile: "It's nineteen years since I took the lousy shilling [enlisted], but all that time I had not the satisfaction I have this night." A few moments later, she saw him again, this time with two or three others, one of whom said: "It was not him gave the word, it was the Holy Virgin."

The issue and tension associated with that unfortunate day's events in this city's history remained present for several years to come. According to historian Robert Sylvain's 1962 biography of Alessandro Gavazzi, one of the injured parties, a Mr Stevenson, who was severely injured in the shoulder at the time, even under took legal action in 1857 – four years later – against the then former Mayor Wilson. His suit was in the due course dropped for lack of evidence. The issue then as to who gave the order to fire was never really resolved.

As for Gavazzi, he never came back to Montreal. He did, however, return to his beloved Italy, defiantly establishing a small Christian Church directly across the Tiber from St. Peter's in Rome. His church still stands today. He died in the Eternal City in January of 1889 and is buried in that city's Protestant Cemetery.

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# HIGH GROUND

## *Early encounters with Mount Royal: Part One*

by Rod MacLeod

**G**ranted, it's not very much of a mountain. Visitors from BC take one look at it and laugh, thinking of their own magnificent coastal range and pitying what Montrealers have made out of a molehill.

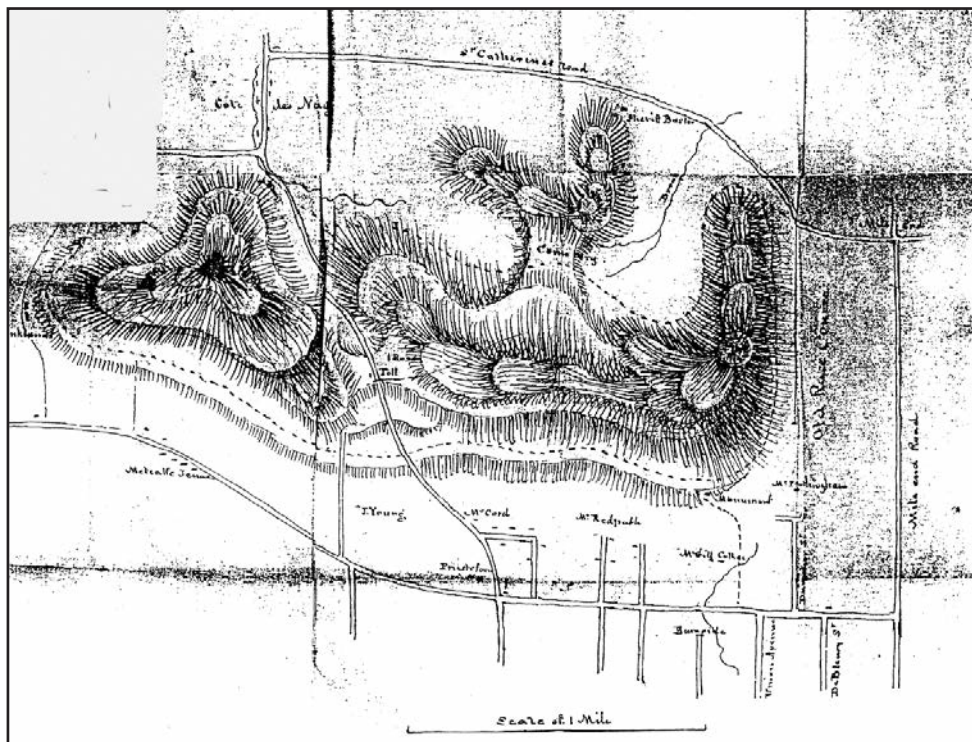
But the significance of Mount Royal lies not in its size but rather in its cultural weight and geographical proximity to one of Canada's largest urban concentrations. Arguably, no other city in the world has such a big chunk of relative wilderness practically at its centre —although that this is still the case in the early twenty first century is in no small measure due to the vigilance of “Les amis de la montagne” and other watchdogs. New York's Central Park, London's many “lungs,” Berlin's Tiergarten, Paris's Jardin du Luxembourg, and Madrid's Retiro, are all lovely, but they are flat —and, whatever genuine dangers may lurk within them, they are not wild. Mount Royal has preserved its wild state, at least in pockets, despite being —or, perhaps, because it has been — prime urban real estate, with a view.

**I**t's a mountain with three peaks, if we can call them that. This feature has had a pronounced effect on the development of both Mount Royal itself and the city around it. The main summit, really a ridge but 233 metres at its highest point, rises fairly steeply from the downtown area and then slopes gently downwards to the north. Its progress is interrupted by a spur of the ridge whose peak (211 metres) is now known as Outremont but which for many years went by the name of Mount Murray, after the long-serving president of the

Mount Royal Cemetery, William Murray. Ironically, the Murray family are better commemorated to the west, where a third peak (the shortest of the three, at 201 metres) derived its name from the Murrays' home, West Mount, which also became the name of the separate municipality to the west of downtown Montreal. Between West Mount and the main summit there is a gap in the ridge, cut by the path of the principal north-westward-heading artery, Côte des Neiges Road.

Apart from its unusual geography, the mountain has tremendous mythological importance for Montreal, beginning with the site of Hochelaga—which, if not located on the southern slope on what is now the McGill campus, most likely lay on the northern side. In either case, its early Iroquoian inhabitants clearly positioned their village so it would have a commanding

view of the valley, unlike the Europeans who preferred to be near the water. Even so, Maisonneuve chose the highest ground around in which to plant his cross, so that object could shine its spiritual beacon as far as possible. His bosses the Sulpicians, who acquired the title of seigneurs of the Island of Montreal in 1663, had their headquarters in town but built a fort on the slopes of the mountain where they could conduct missionary work in isolation. Ville Marie's gradual shift to commercial preoccupations was symbolized by the development of farmland on the slopes of the mountain once the threat from the Iroquois had been neutralized early in the eighteenth century. Prominent fur traders, having made their pile, acquired land from the Sulpicians —becoming “censitaires” under the terms of feudal tenure—and created rural estates where they could be gentlemen farmers, at any rate in the summer months.



With the acquisition—or more significantly the occupation—of mountain land, the high ground above Montreal became politically charged. The cross and the Sulpicians marked the mountain as Christian space, but encroaching private ownership raised the spectre of profit to be made from its resources. Obviously, property owners could make full use of the crops that grew on the mountain slope and the timber that could be cut at the summit—and, it followed, they could prosecute poachers or anyone who confused this terrain with the natural wilderness much of it resembled. The question of rights and access was resolved only in the 1880s with the creation of Mount Royal Park, which meant the mountaintop, at any rate, was public space. The park created new problems, however, as working people argued that it was really a playground for the wealthy who lived closest to it or who could drive there in carriages, while the city's elite worried that too easy popular access via funiculars and street railways would destroy the park's natural beauty. This tension continues to this day—though the park thrives.

This being Montreal, the mountain has also been subject to rival claims from linguistic communities, though rarely articulated with any fervour. One major exception was the St Jean Baptiste festivities of 1975 and 1976 which left Mount Royal the worse for garbage—and, symbolically, several monuments in the adjoining Mount Royal Cemetery the worse for vandalism—much to the distress of the city's Anglophone population, among others. At that time, the mountain retained the Anglophone aura it had acquired over a century and a half earlier. Its development as inhabitable space since the early nineteenth century, including the creation of the park, was largely the work of Anglophones. Both the Golden Square Mile and Westmount have been famously Anglophone, while the Anglo-Protestants in the municipality of Outremont only lost their majority status around 1900. When Newton

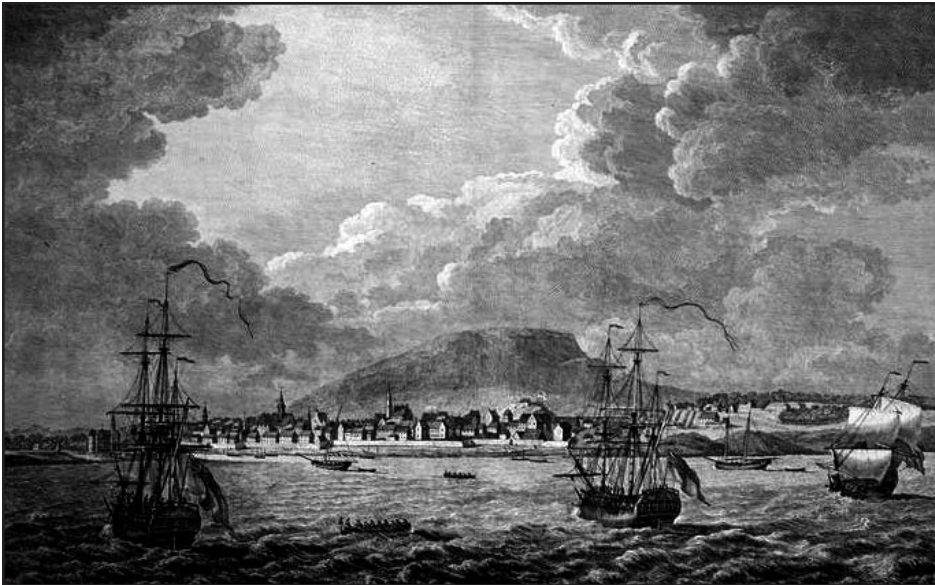


Bosworth referred to Mount Royal as a “very conspicuous object” in his 1839 *Hochelaga Depicta*, he might well have been describing the city's English-speaking community, prominent in its isolation amid the vast plain of Francophonie stretching into the distance—beginning with the ironically-named Plateau Mont-Royal.

Of course, Bosworth was actually referring to how prominent the mountain was when viewed from the town. If people looked out—and they did, notably from Champ de Mars—they could not help but see the mountain's bulk rising ahead of them. Although not all that far away, it was a different world: rough, mysterious, impenetrable. In 1839, the idea that it could ever be developed as a place to live, much less that the mountain's lower slopes would become the city's commercial heart (to-

day's Downtown), would have seemed farfetched to say the least. Even so, Bosworth was writing on the threshold of enormous change, for Canada overall but certainly for Mount Royal.

For years, artists had depicted Mount Royal as a huge, monumental mass overshadowing the town with almost Vesuvian menace. This tendency was a product of eighteenth century romanticism: nature was imbued with a sense of the “Sublime,” reflecting Europeans' fascination for, and considerable fear of, the majesty of the natural world in exotic and uncivilized places such as the New World, the South Seas, the Swiss Alps and the Scottish Highlands. If the opposite of nature was civilization, Thomas Patten's iconic 1762 view shows Montreal as a very tiny bit of civilization indeed—which of course it was. Seven decades later it was not all that different, although the



sense of nature had changed. Instead of depicting Montreal as a South Sea island, as Patten does, Frederick Clinton's 1839 view from the opposite side of the river shows the city spread along the water's edge and the mountain rising dramatically, but unthreateningly, behind it. The mood is no longer sublime but pastoral. Nature, if hardly less extensive compared to the city, has become civilized.

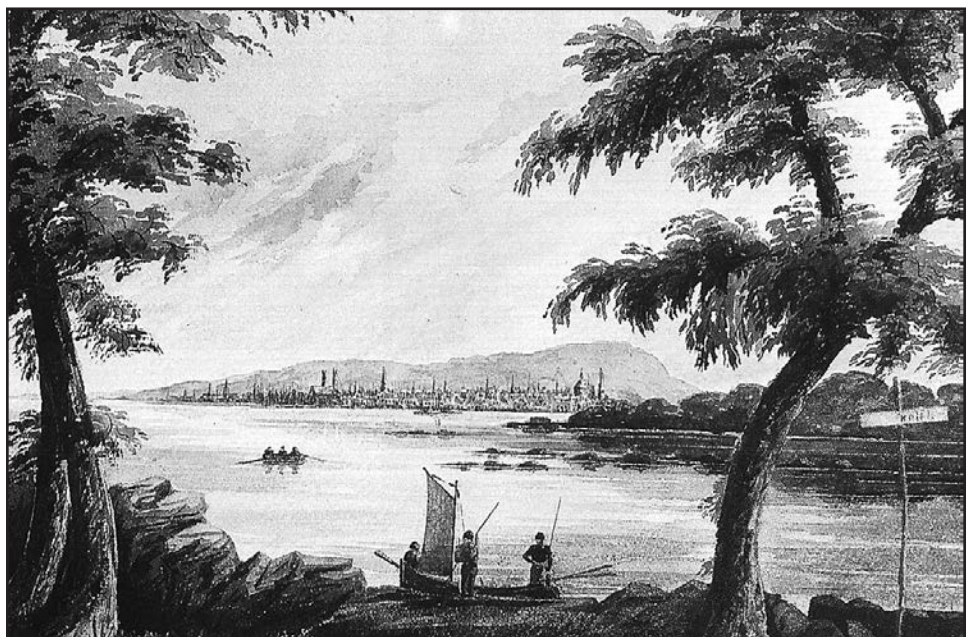
Over the course of these seven decades, Montreal itself had evolved from a (not terribly well-defended) corner of the Empire to a small New World town whose defining feature was the mountain that gave it its name. When the defences finally came down between 1804 and 1817, they were replaced by broader streets than the town had previously seen—Craig, McGill, St James—and squares, such as the Champ de Mars and the Haymarket (later renamed Victoria Square), which not coincidentally afforded commanding views of the mountain. Without walls, the city literally spilled over into what had once been “faubourgs”—medieval-style extramural settlements: Ste Marie to the east, Recollets to the west, St Laurent to the north and St Antoine to the north-west. People built even further along the main access routes, including the Lachine Road, which led along the canal westward past the rapids, and St Antoine Street, which zigzagged up the side of the mountain to connect with Côte des Neiges Road and the parish of the same name on the other side of the mountain. The moun-

tain itself, however, remained essentially an obstacle—at least so far as urban development was concerned.

This modest urban sprawl barely registered with the gentlemen farmers whose estates ran up Mount Royal's southern slopes. In keeping with New France tradition, which persisted long after the British “conquest,” these farms were long and narrow: most were a couple of hundred metres in width but they extended up to the mountain's summit and in many cases over and down the other side. Access to these farms was via lanes running up from St Antoine Street. “Up” was the operative word, as a veritable escarpment separated the street and its faubourg from the southern edges of these farms.

(Later, the CPR tracks would run along the line of this escarpment, and later still the Ville Marie expressway.) These lanes led to farmhouses, which were the summer homes of the landowners (if they chose to keep house there) or the year-round homes of farmers (if the landowners chose to lease out their estates). Just above the escarpment, the gentler sloping land lent itself to grazing, while further up the more sharply inclined ground served as orchard; sheltered by the ridge above, these orchards were famous for their fertility. The arable portions of these estates were extensive, but in most cases the largest part by far was mountain wilderness, useful essentially as a source of timber and fuel.

For several generations, these landowners had been largely fur traders who had made their fortunes as voyageurs or members of large trading companies; a mountain estate was the investment opportunity of choice for such men. By the end of the eighteenth century, the leading figures in the fur trade were Scots, who had gained commercial prominence in large part through marriage. James McGill, Simon McTavish and Alexander Mackenzie all married the daughters of prominent Francophone fur traders and all acquired mountain estates—though Mackenzie was an entire-



Thomas Patten, *An East View of Montreal, 1762*, print, McCord Museum, M19848. Frederick Clinton, *Montreal from the opposite bank, 1839*, watercolour, private collection

ly absent landlord. McGill, for example, married Charlotte Guillemin, widow of Amable Desrivières, whose son François owned one of the largest estates on the mountainside with probably the most comfortable house. McGill's own estate lay some distance to the east, and was relatively small, extending only part way up the side of the mountain. By contrast, the Mackenzie, Desrivières and McTavish lands extended up to the summit wilderness and some distance down the other side; the heirs of these estates would negotiate with the city for the creation of Mount Royal Park eight decades later.

Of all the Scots fur traders, McGill took his role as a mountain landowner the most seriously, even though his main residence remained in town. He called his mountain property Burnside, after the small stream ("burn") running across it, and appears to have valued the farmhouse and its surrounding gardens and orchards as welcome retreat—as well as a working farm. One famous portrait of James McGill shows the mountain estate in the background, as if, despite his significant accomplishments as merchant, politician and urban planner, it was Burnside that he considered his greatest achievement. The estate also figures in an 1842 engraving by John McNaughton, showing a typical New France farmhouse with sharply sloping tin roof, with gardens and outbuildings, surrounded by a neat fence and connected to the town below

via a wide clean path. The image belies the estate's turbulent history in the intervening three decades since McGill's death. In his will, McGill left Burnside to the Royal Institution for the Advancement of Learning for use as a college, but litigation held this up and in the 1840s the property was still in dispute

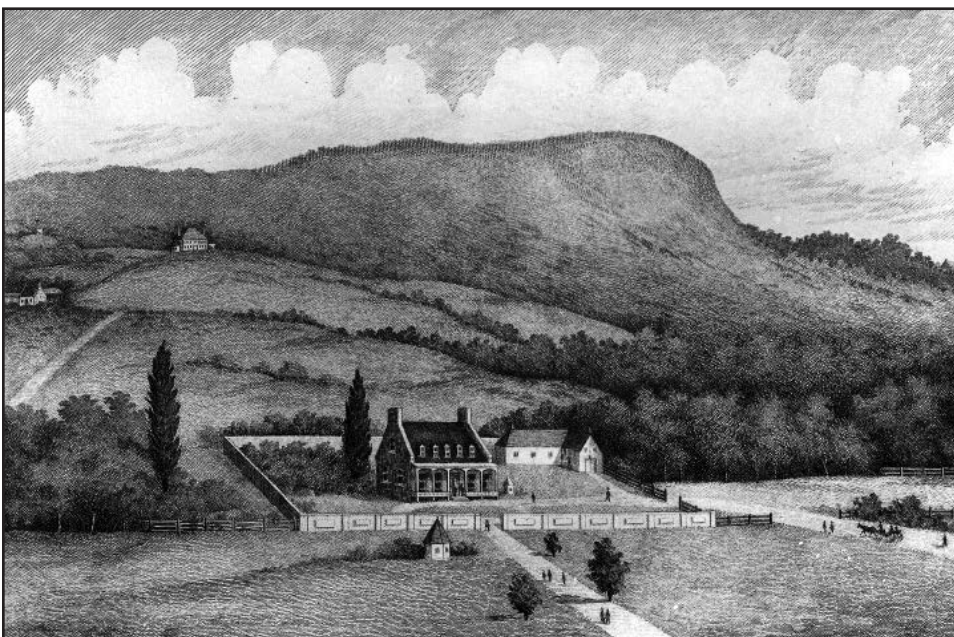
The Burnside engraving also shows a curious structure higher up the mountain, as well as another farmhouse at the extreme left. Both belonged to Simon McTavish: the original house, with which he was apparently unsatisfied, and the huge mansion he undertook to build on the higher ground which was often referred to as the McTavish castle. He died of a fever before it was finished and work stopped at once, the castle ruins remaining for over half a century until they were used to build other mansions. In keeping with the Romantic flavour of so much of his life, McTavish was buried amid the trees above these ruins, and his ghost naturally haunted the area for generations.

The departure of McTavish and Mackenzie left a great deal of unoccupied land on the mountainside and only one significant landowner: François Desrivières. McGill's step-son allowed his mother to enjoy Burnside until her death in 1816, whereupon he began le-

gal proceedings to challenge the Royal Institution's claim to the estate. They had ten years in which to establish a college, and they did—in theory, on paper, by drafting a charter for McGill College in 1821 (McGill died 1813). This wasn't good enough for Desrivières, however, and he continued to fight for another decade or more, bankrupting himself and his extended family in the process before dying, bitter and defeated by the colonial establishment and its British institutions. By the 1830s a new generation of entrepreneurs began to occupy the mountainside, the most important being the building contractor (not yet sugar manufacturer) John Redpath, who purchased the Desrivières estate. He was joined by Thomas Phillips, John Easton Mills, Thomas McKay, and James Reid, all of whom bought portions of the old estates. Far above them, off Côte des Neiges Road, John Samuel McCord built a summer home, Temple Grove, a classical villa set among the summit wilderness. The mountain had become almost entirely Anglophone.

The summit remained an all-but-impenetrable forest, visited by woodcutters in the pay of landowners and by trespassers out to gather or poach. A number of early nineteenth-century visitors to Montreal made a journey to the summit as part of the tourist rounds, and recorded their experiences. Most commented on how difficult it was to reach the top, and on its wild state; one American traveller had a challenging encounter with a snake. All were struck by the views down over the farmlands, the streets, the church towers, the river, and the distant Montegian hills. Even in the late 1830s, this view would have been much the same as that of over a century earlier save in small architectural details and of course the absence of the city wall. Within a few short years, however, the world would turn and the town would begin in earnest its relentless march up the side of the mountain.

*Rod MacLeod is the author of the forthcoming A Very Conspicuous Object: Mount Royal and the Making of Anglo-Protestant Montreal, 1836-189.*



John H McNaughton, "Burnside", residence of the Late James McGill, Montreal, 1842, engraving, McCord Museum, V-23486

# MONTEREGIAN HOTSPOTS

*Those storied lumps of the St. Lawrence plain: Part 1*

by Sandra Stock



It is impossible to separate man-made and natural landscape in the highly developed St Lawrence Lowlands of Quebec. There has been over four hundred years of European settlement, with intense agriculture and industry, preceded by probably eight thousand years of aboriginal effects on the land, the last thousand years of which was partially sedentary and agricultural as well.

However, the great flatness of this area is most remarkably alleviated by the Monteregian Hills. Counting the most famous, Montreal Island's Mount Royal, (233 metres or 764 feet in height) there are probably nine official hills and also several other hilly features that should be included in any description of this re-

gion.

The name, Monteregian, comes from the Latin Mons Regius (Royal Mountain) that Jacques Cartier gave to Mount Royal. The town of Ville Marie, at its foot, and originally quite far from it on the shore of the river, later expanded and grew into our present Montreal, conveniently the same name in both languages. The other hills on the plain, in satellite fashion, are known by the same general name, now applied to nearly the whole region southeast of Montreal (the Monteregie).

These great lumps – that loom large mainly because of the surrounding flatness – were never, never real volcanos. Mount Royal will never erupt like Vesuvius and drown

us like Pompeii. Neither will its sisters – Mont Saint-Bruno, Mont Saint-Hilaire, Rougemont, Mont Saint-Grégoire, Mont Yamaska, Mont Shefford, Mont Brome nor Mont Megantic. This last named is now included by geologists in the group even though it is at some distance from the others. These hills are scientifically classified as igneous intrusions – masses of originally active magma that crystallized slowly over vast eons. The surrounding softer sedimentary rock of the plain eroded away through the action of water and ice, exposing these intrusions.

Although they have a similar surface appearance, the small mountains at Oka, Rigaud and St Andrew's

East were formed from much earlier rocks, previous to the Montereigians. There is also at least one known unexposed igneous intrusion near Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu that is not (yet) visible near the surface. Perhaps in several million years...

Where did they come from? Meet the Great Meteor Hotspot Track, also known as the New England Hotspot. Hotspots are fairly common on Earth. The most famous is most likely the Hawaiian Island Hotspot, a comparatively young and frisky hotspot that is creating new land as the Pacific plate moves over it. The oldest islands are volcanically inactive now and suffering from natural erosion. The newer ones (like the Big Island with Mauna Loa volcano) are still creating land surface from lava spews and the very newest are still under the sea, but volcanically active and growing. The same process, but under a continent, happened here to form the Montereigian Hills. The hotspot is now somewhere out in the Atlantic Ocean after it left Quebec and "moved" through New Hampshire and Maine. (It is the tectonic plates that move, not the hotspots.)

The hills were created in the Cretaceous Period (125 million years ago, plus or minus) although the Hotspot itself had already had effects in what is now the area of James Bay and Nunavut, 196 million years ago in the early Jurassic. The igneous activity laid down huge reserves of minerals, some of which have been mined. There aren't any known signs of the Hotspot as the area of the present Laurentian Shield passed over it. It is probably that these very old rocks were too hard for igneous activity to come close to the surface. The first breakthrough was, as we know, Mount Royal.

The first person to closely study the formation of the Hills was Sir William Logan, the founder of the Geological Survey of Canada in 1842, and its director for 27 years. Logan was born in Montreal and associated with McGill University. He attended the University of Edinburgh

and started his career in geology in Wales. He was selected to do the Geological Survey of Canada and returned to Montreal. The office of the Survey was located on the present site of the Palais de Justice from 1852 to 1881.

Logan traveled through what is now Ontario and Quebec and was the first person to scientifically examine



the terrain, especially the Laurentian Mountains, the Ottawa Valley and the Gaspé Peninsula. He also studied the Adirondack Mountains of New York. He came close, but not quite, to formulating our recent knowledge of tectonic plates and continental drift. This was not discovered until a century after Logan's death.

Logan wrote and published his journals of the Survey, illustrated with his own (very good) drawings and maps. He had the first geologic map of Canada printed in time for the Great Paris Exhibition of 1855 and so impressed the learned world of Europe that he received both the Legion of Honor from French Em-

peror Napoleon III and a knighthood from Queen Victoria. After retirement, Logan settled in Wales where his geologic work had begun and he died in 1875.

Logan's vast collection of journals, field notes, maps and drawings called *Written in Stone*, are available on line from the Archives of Canada site.

A rare gem-like carbonate mineral, called weloganite (W.E. Logan) was named after him. He found it first in the Francon Quarry, now closed, in Montreal and also at Mont Saint-Hilaire. The tallest mountain in Canada is also named after him. Mount Logan in the Yukon rises to 5,959 metres (19,551 feet) and of course is still rising as these are new growing mountains, not the modest igneous intrusions of the St Lawrence Plain. It is interesting to note that following the death of former Prime Minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau, the then prime minister, Jean Chrétien, wanted to rename Mount Logan after Trudeau. There was such an outcry from Yukoners, geologists, mountain climbers and others that this plan had to be dropped and another mountain in British Columbia was chosen instead.

## Mont Saint-Bruno

The closest Montereigian hill to the island of Montreal is Mont Saint-Bruno, 23 kilometres (14 miles) east on the South Shore. It is lower than Mount Royal, at 213 metres (700 feet) but covers a much larger surface area, much of which is natural woodland, and some of which is recreational land and apple orchards that are part of a Quebec agricultural research station.

Mont Saint-Bruno was part of the old seigneurie of Montarville, established in 1710, with the first seigneur being Pierre Boucher de



Boucherville. It later passed to the Bruneau family and, after the seigneurs left in 1815, was operated by the municipality of Boucherville. Eventually, Saint-Bruno de Montarville became its own municipality and, in the twentieth century, moved from mainly agriculture to a suburban residential area. Much of the land on the mountain had been purchased by wealthy Montrealers. This was quite beneficial as land was preserved and the heritage of the mountain respected. In the 1927 account of remaining historic buildings in Quebec, *Old Manors, Old Houses*, published by the Historic Monuments Commission of the Province of Quebec, we read in regard to the old stone mill on Mont Saint Bruno:

*The Montarville Seigniorial Mill, Mount Saint Bruno:*

*The first building on this site was a wooden mill, built in 1710 by Pierre Boucher, first seigneur of Montarville. In 1741 reconstruction in stone was carried out by René Boucher de la Bruère, seigneur at that time. The entire seigneurie of Montarville was acquired in 1897 by Messrs. Pease, Drummond and Birks, of Montreal, and the old mill was then restored and transformed into a chapel, on the walls of which Mr. Birks has placed seven bronze tablets recounting the history of the old manor.*

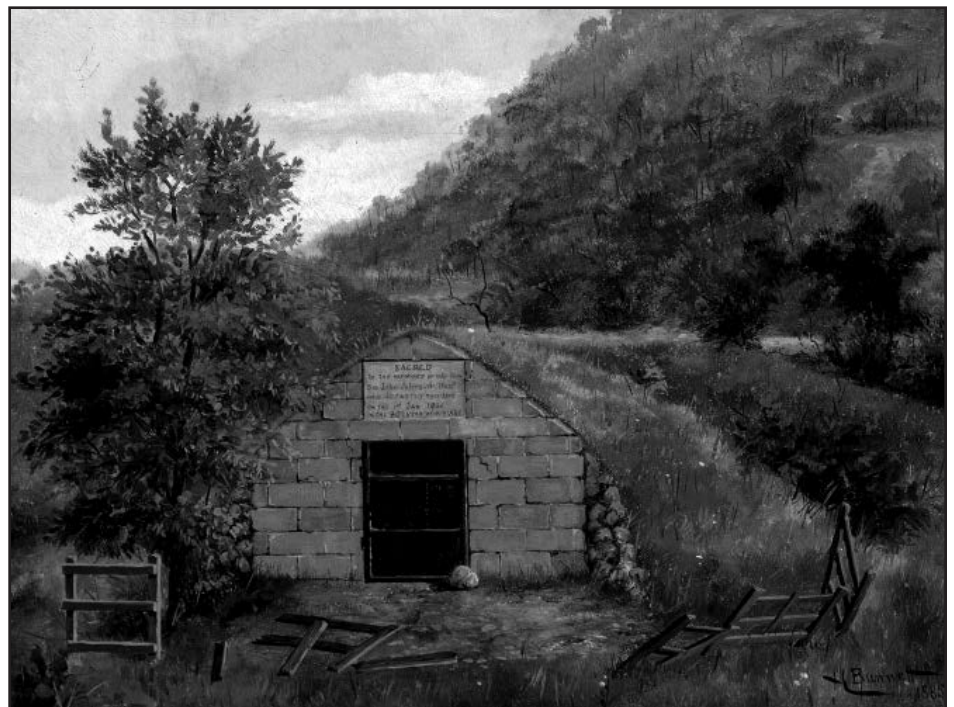
This mill is now the Visitors

Centre of the park (SEPAQ – Société des établissements de plein air du Québec), and also where apples and regional produce are for sale in season. There is a ski school, a downhill ski tow and extensive crosscountry ski trails. There is a snow walking trail around Lac Seigneurial, one of five small lakes on the mountain. The natural flora and fauna is protected and even though Mont Saint-Bruno is in a suburban setting, its natural heritage has been preserved.

**Mont Saint-Grégoire (aka Mount Johnson)**

Mont Saint-Grégoire, near the town of the same name, ten kilometres (six miles) east of Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu, is 251 metres high (823 feet) and an almost symmetrical pyramidal shape. This hill is nearly all privately owned with a recreational climbing business, a sugar bush enterprise and some small wine producing farms at its foot. Even so, it does appear to be environmentally protected and still maintains a fair amount of forest cover. As it's in a heavily developed agricultural district with few trees, it looms higher and larger than it really is. The recreational site refers to it as “a short mountain, but it offers a quick hike to a splendid view.”

Mont Saint-Grégoire was named for Pope Gregory the Great (the local parish name) but has also had other



Alexander Henderson, *Montarville manor house, Mount St. Bruno, c.1870, McCord Museum, MP-0000.1828.57. Henry Richard Bunnett, *Sir John Johnson Vault, Mount Johnson, 1885, McCord Museum, M381**



names in its history. It was originally part of the vast domains of Sir John Johnson (1741 to 1830) from 1795 and the mountain was called Mount Johnson until 1923. Previous to that there doesn't appear to be any official name although Mont Saint Grégoire and also Mont Monnoir are mentioned.

The story of Sir John Johnson, his family, his support of the Loyalist side in the American Revolution, his acquisition of the Seigneuries of Argenteuil and of Monnoir (containing Mount Johnson), his several manor houses, and the final inglorious fate of the Johnson family burial vault on the Mount, certainly could provide material for a blockbuster historical novel or film. This is very much a tale of great achievement and prominence and then a total decline into the cliché – the dustbin of history. This is in spite of recent efforts to resuscitate both the story and the remaining artifacts of the vault.

Johnson was, in his time, a very famous Loyalist leader. He was the son of Sir William Johnson, first baronet of New York, who had had an extensive domain in the British settlement of the Mohawk River Valley. Johnson Père was the Inspector General for Indian Affairs and responsible for the British alliance with the Iroquois, many of whom came with him to Canada as Loyalists in the American Revolution.

Johnson built his manor house, before 1830, at Saint-Mathias de Rouville (now Saint-Mathias-sur-Richelieu in the MRC of Rouville). His extensive land holdings reached to this area, then an economically important location on the Chambly Basin of the Richelieu River. Agricultural goods, lumber and so on were shipped out by boat along the river. However, the coming of the railway passed Saint-Mathias by and took away its lucrative trade. The house still survives as a private residence after passing through several owners.

The burial vault functioned from 1812 to 1841 and faced south: probably as a recollection of the old Johnson lands in New York State. As none of the direct descendants of

John remained in Canada and the land was sold, the site became neglected and was looted sometime during World War I. From 1950, it was completely destroyed by bulldozer and passed from sight – at least on the surface.

However, there is hope for a restored future for the Johnson family vault site. In recent years there has been a renewed interest in local history, started by the Société d'histoire du Haut-Richelieu, the Société de restauration du patrimoine Johnson (based in Saint-Grégoire) and the Sir John Johnson branch of the United Empire Loyalist Association of Canada. In 1999 an extensive professional archeological survey and exploratory dig was done at the site under the aegis of the Ministère de la culture et communications du Québec and it was reported that “part of the vault foundation was in place and in a good state of preservation.” Bones were discovered of seven individuals, three of whom were young children and one very old adult – Johnson himself, we can assume. There were few artifacts beyond items like nails. Everything was in chaos – because of the looting and subsequent destruction – and all the skulls were missing. Skulls are the main target of looters.

At present, the site is controlled by the CIME (Centre d'interprétation du milieu écologique, a not-for-profit local ecological group) and before further development as a restored historical site, there has to be clearance of the deed and also a right of passage (servitude) from the municipality of Saint-Grégoire to allow access. At least it looks as if there will be preservation, even though the actual plans have not been fully formed.

Part Two of this article will cover the rest of the Hills.

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Ls-A. Proulx, Vieux manoirs, vieilles maisons, Québec, Imprimeur du Roi, 1927 (English translation,

## AN INNER GRACE

*THE LIFE STORY OF DR.  
MAUDE ABBOTT AND THE  
ADVENT OF HEART  
SURGERY*

by Elizabeth L. Abbott



### Another way to find heritage online

Those of you who are already into electronic reading will be pleased to note that Elizabeth Abbott's new biography of her ancestor Maude Abbott is now available on Amazon. The book can be downloaded to a Kindle or other electronic device for \$14 by going to

[www.amazon.com/An-Inner-Grace-ebook/dp/B003DA4G9K](http://www.amazon.com/An-Inner-Grace-ebook/dp/B003DA4G9K)

The author also has a limited number of audio versions of her book at the same price, which can be purchased by contacting her directly at [abbott@yahoo.ca](mailto:abbott@yahoo.ca)

# QUEBEC FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY

## Quebec's Anglophone Genealogy Society

### Part Four: On-Line Databases

by Robert Dunn

QFHS has made available all of its databases on its website for its members. Our indexes include church registers for Non-Catholic Births / Baptisms, Marriages, and Deaths, as well as Quebec Land Grants by the Crown, Seigneurie owners and tenants, 1851 and 1881 censuses and Cemetery Headstone Inscriptions.

Our coverage is quite extensive and we are working diligently to cover almost all areas of Quebec adding data as fast as our transcribers provide us with it. Our indexes were created by QFHS volunteers and transcribers and we believe they are the best available anywhere.

The following table shows the extent of our coverage as of May 1, 2009. (Note that Montreal and Quebec City include surrounding areas.)

	Births	Marriages	Deaths
Montreal	1766-1899	1766-1925	1776-1925
Quebec	1766-1875	1766-1875	1766-1875
St Francois	1818-1875	1818-1875	1818-1875
Bedford	-	1818-1875	-
Milles Isles	1825-1920	1825-1920	1825-1920
Beauharnois	-	1820-1899	-

We still have considerable work ahead and our goal is to form alliances and partnerships with other organizations to complete our BMD coverage. We encourage anyone or any organization to work with us to provide high quality indexes of Quebec Registers.

Volunteers for transcribing are always needed. Please contact us for more information. As well, organizations that would like to work with us are encouraged to contact us.

Quebec Land Grants by the Crown are complete 1790 to 1890. There are 35,000 names in the database

Seigneurie owners and tenants are a work in progress. Seigneurie owners, the Crown lands and Trois Rivières are complete, while the districts of Quebec and Montreal are in the process of being transcribed.

To date we have about 56,000 names in our database and we are approximately half way through the transcription of the register.

Our Census databases cover only a select number of areas including the Lachute area and several villages and Townships in the Huntingdon area..

Our Cemetery Headstone databases are the fastest growing of all our databases. Our coverage of the Eastern Townships is quite extensive. We will have extensive coverage of many areas of Quebec complete in the near future.

QFHS provides all day seminars for helping our members use the QFHS website effectively. As well, we hold seminars on how to get the most out of researching using the internet.

QFHS has also put its library catalogue on its website. It includes key word search capability providing an easy way to find the type of books available in our over 8,000 book library. Note that borrowing books is restricted to members. QFHS databases are an important source of information for genealogy research in Quebec. Our goal is to link BMD information with Census data and with Cemetery indexes. Our plans for the future will be the subject of another article.

*Come and see us or visit our website. Guests are always welcome.*

*Quebec Family History Society*

*173 Cartier Avenue,*

*Pointe Claire, Québec*

*www.qfhs.ca*

*514-695-1502*

*email: admin@qfhs.ca*

	Births	Marriages	Deaths
Montreal	100%	100%	90%
Quebec	100%	100%	100%
St Francois	100%	100%	40%
Bedford	-	100%	-
Milles Isles	100%	100%	100%
Beauharnois	-	100%	-

# IF YOU WANT TO KNOW WHO WE ARE...

## MWOS' multicultural Mikado

by Rod MacLeod

**H**ow Montreal is this? A Greek-inspired Indian setting of a Japanese-themed play with some Trinidadian music presented by Scottish, Irish, French, Jewish, Chilean, Chinese, Sri Lankan, German, Polish, Portuguese and Black performers arrayed in Italian-designed costumes against a Basque-built backdrop.

If you are thinking Gilbert & Sullivan's *Mikado*, you must have second sight. The play doesn't often involve this much intrinsic diversity—although such diversity is of course part and parcel of today's multicultural society where people are comfortable enough with their own identities to cross the cultural floor and take part in a delightful pastiche whose ultimate aim is to poke fun at British, or in this case Canadian, foibles.

The foibles part is typical Gilbert & Sullivan, although because it is the *Mikado* it works on an especially elevated plain: the play is a masterpiece of comedy, a tightly-wound farce in which characters assume disguises, fake their own deaths, and invent improbable stories to escape unwanted expressions of affection as well as imminent and painful execution. Along the way there are countless jabs at social ambition, marriage conventions, and political corruption. The play's exotic (Japanese) setting serves all the more effectively to highlight the preposterousness of Western institutions. And it is set to gorgeous music.

Mind you, *Mikado* is often not presented with the traditional Japanese sets and costumes conceived by WS Gilbert in the 1880s; while the original idea had been to attract audiences with exoticism, many directors have opted for modern dress or another period setting and let the humour flow from the juxtaposition of

non-exotic characters with quaint names. There has also been a *Hot Mikado* and a *Swing Mikado*, which have deviated considerably from the spirit of the original, but with much success. And of course there is the "tradition" of updating topical references so that contemporary politicians and media stars are lampooned rather than Victorian ones—especially in

the famous "List" song where people that society can clearly do without typically include annoying pop singers and those who make thoughtless use of electronic devices. The play's adaptability is its great strength.

Setting *Mikado* in India, however, is a major departure, but one that director Stephanie Pitsiladis was eager to pursue in the interests of bringing it an extra layer of freshness. Pitsiladis, who trained in Montreal and has performed in Toronto and New York, teaches Theatre Concentration at Laval Liberty High School, where her teenage cast perform on-stage miracles—recently in the Canadian premiere of the musical *Curtains* and the harrowing Laramie Project about the evils of homophobia.

Clearly not afraid of a challenge, Pitsiladis carefully considered the proposal by the Montreal West Operatic Society to direct its 2010 production of *Mikado*, which meant getting a couple of dozen players of varying experience ranging in age from 12 to mid-60s to convey the brilliance of Gilbert's comedy without seeming like every other version. From the beginning she knew it would not be a stilted production where the chorus stands in unmoving rows; if she could get stiff teens to strut and spin on stage she could surely get semi-professionals, theatre students and passionate hams to do so. But the vision needed something startling to give it an edge.



Watching Mike Leigh’s film *Topsy-Turvey*, which traces the inspiration for *Mikado* to the late nineteenth-century fascination for all things Japanese, Pitsiladis wondered if there was a way to reproduce this sort of fascination in today’s terms. She thought of another film, *Slumdog Millionaire*, which confirmed how far modern Western audiences have been drawn to the idioms of India, especially Bollywood. The notion of Bollywood was the clincher: already a stylization of Indian culture, it was something that could be emulated without seeming to be making fun of India itself and running the risk of seeming offensive or even simply lame. It would allow the costume and set designers to get their teeth into a real challenge, and for some intriguing choreography with a sub-continental flair. And so, Bollywood *Mikado* was born.

Elena Cerrolaza got down to work creating a set featuring decorative arches and columns modelled on those at the Anup palace in Junagarh Fort in Bikaner, Rajasthan. Rachel Germinario designed a variety of colourful saris for the women and kurtas for the men, plus an elaborate costume for the eponymous emperor inspired by traditional Indian Kathakali drama. Choreographer Mara Lazaris guided the women through a sinuous dance number involving multicoloured scarves, while James Soares-Correia drilled the men in a military routine with theatrical swords. For two brief segments some additional music was required and musical director Kerry Roebuck rose to this potentially heretical occasion by composing melodies that included both Indian harmonies and Arthur Sullivan’s themes. If the overall result is a bit hodge-podge, it is consistent with Bollywood, where traditions are often blurred and the chief goal is to be visually and orally striking.

There remained the problem of the play’s pseudo-Japanese names and numerous Japanese references. It was decided that the specific setting would be “Bombay”—not the commercial metropolis Mumbai but rather a mythical kingdom ruled by an emperor. Gilbert’s somewhat silly “Japanese” names were retained—it seemed ridiculous as well as difficult to change them—but the *Mikado* himself (an actual Japanese title) became the Emperor *Mikado*, “*Mikado*” being simply the monarch’s name (*Mikado* IV perhaps?). Occasional mention of Japan became references to either Bombay or India: “If you want to know who we are,” the opening chorus now goes, “we are gentlemen of Bombay.” One passage that was originally written in Japanese was translated by one member’s Bengali friend into Bengali—with some care, so it would scan—and another into Tamil. Again, a bit of a hodge-podge, but with a little imagination it all works.

Although two cast members actually hail from the Indian subcontinent, the rest took to the material, the movements and the gestures with relish. It doesn’t matter if you are a redhead with freckles or if your name is Wojnowski. It doesn’t matter either if your

first language isn’t English (which is the case for several members of the company), although getting Gilbert’s fast-paced lines and extravagant prose out in time to Sullivan’s rhythms requires considerable ease in the English language—as does following the play from the audience, although as with all else in today’s cultural scene audiences are linguistically diverse.

Bollywood *Mikado* is a bold experiment that will reward theatre-goers willing to sample something a little different. The variety of shapes, sizes, sounds and complexions that appear on stage (to say nothing of the creative forces behind it) is what marks Bollywood *Mikado* as a product of modern, multicultural Montreal.

*The Montreal West Operatic Society’s Bollywood Mikado will be performed on 29 & 30 April, 1 May, and 7 & 8 May at 7:30pm and on 2 & 9 May at 1:30pm at the Parkhaven Theatre in Côte St-Luc (5785 Parkhaven, off Kildare) as well as on 15 May at 7:30pm at the Haskell Opera House (1 Church Street, Stanstead, QC / Derby Line, VT). Tickets: 514-990-8813. [www.mwos.org](http://www.mwos.org)*



Image: Rachel Germinario

## HINDSIGHT

## MUSIC, RELATIONSHIPS AND COMMUNITY

*A childhood with the Montreal West Operatic Society*

by Janet Allingham

Recent references to the MWOS by Rod MacLeod have rekindled childhood memories for me as the daughter of a long-time member of the male chorus, Hector Chandler.

I think that one of my earliest childhood memories is of April 1953 when I was told that I would be seeing my father in his costume for *Iolanthe*. I think that MWOS must have been using make-up at the Dress Rehearsal in those days, because my father's face was not recognizable to me. I was quite frightened by someone who, while he sounded like my father, did not look or dress as he did. However, I took his hand for a "back stage" tour at the West Hill Auditorium.

A few years later I was deemed old enough to sit alone in the auditorium for the dress rehearsal or, at least, until my mother arrived with my younger brother for the supper break. (My father had warned that Harry Norris would not tolerate children of members running up and down the aisles – a great temptation!) The first G&S (Gilbert and Sullivan) music I remember hearing was, therefore, "Twenty love-sick maidens we..." from *Patience*. The year must have been 1956. From my very first performances I attended I announced that Fred Sheward (who played the patter roles) was "my favourite."

G&S was even a part of bath time for us! My father had the habit of practicing the music by singing to us during bath time—the only time I ever recall him singing to us.

I remember being especially taken with the opening bars of the Overture to *The Mikado*, and to working them out for myself on our Willis piano with great satisfaction. Our piano was tuned to "concert pitch" and I was especially thrilled to find out that I could play those few bars along with a broadcast on CBC on one occasion. I pictured myself in the role of Richard Hunt, the long-time, very accomplished accompanist for the MWOS!

At the age of eight I began to take weekly piano lessons with Doris Norris at the Norrisses' home on Madison Avenue. Harry had been my father's violin teacher, my father having also been a member of the Montreal Orchestra. (Another violinist from that orchestra, Joe Greenstone, served for many years as Concert Master in the orchestra that accompanied the MWOS performances.) Mrs Norris was a strict, "no nonsense" sort of teacher, who stuck religiously to the Royal Conservatory curriculum – except for when

Canon John Willis of St Philip's advocated my learning to play hymns for the church Sunday School as well. I don't think that I ever missed a lesson, even because of illness, because Mrs Norris came to the house when I was home from school!



At the house on Madison it was often the case that while Harry taught violin students downstairs, Doris taught piano students upstairs in the music room. In those days before voice mail, the lessons

were often interrupted by calls from Malabars about costumes or, during the week the show started, by conversations with members of the Society (Kay Lockheed was a frequent caller) about how things were going. Another tradition (dreaded by me, if not by others) was that the evening before the Royal Conservatory exam (held at Victoria Hall) Doris' students played for Harry. After these sessions, Harry would discuss my performance with my father. Talk about pressure! I remember that on one Monday night at the Montreal West High School the Home and School Association, meeting in another room, sent someone up to ask the MWOS if anyone could come down and play *O Canada* for them, their regular pianist being away. My father reported that Harry returned to the practice, mumbling something like "Every Canadian should be able to sit down and play the national anthem!" after which this piece became part of my piano repertoire.

Growing up in an MWOS household meant that

we were very aware of a recurrent pattern of annual events. Practices began in September on Monday evenings at the Montreal West High School, and continued until the Dress Rehearsal in the spring. Ticket sales began in January-February, and in March there were occasional weekend practices, if necessary. April was the show, and in latter years my father was thrilled to travel to the Haskell Opera House, in Stanstead, QC, to perform. In June there was the Annual Meeting, at which time my father found out the name of the operetta for the following season.

The Dress Rehearsal was a highlight of our year, for which my mother prepared an elaborate picnic supper. We were always joined at the rehearsal by my Godmother, Jeanne Cleghorn who, I was surprised to learn, by way of having been a soprano soloist in many Montreal churches, knew both the Norrises and many members of the Society.

At a certain point I was deemed old enough to attend a “real performance” during the week. I was especially thrilled to attend the Saturday night show when my father encouraged me to watch for more “encores” and when the female soloists received huge bouquets of red roses. (My father was very proud of the fact that the MWOS supported cardio-vascular surgery at the Montreal Children’s Hospital, so when he died we asked that donations in his memory be made to the Hospital.)

I have never performed in a G&S production but, while I don’t know all the lines by memory, I do know most of the music. What I now realize, with the benefit of the years, is that apart from being exposed to some of the world’s “catchiest” music and to live theatre, I was through the MWOS, connected to a network of

Anglophone organizations and institutions. Members of the MWOS were often members of other G&S groups, including the Savoy Society at McGill. Members of those groups were also often to be found in church choirs all over the Montreal area. The CBC’s John Trethewey was a member of our St Philip’s choir, and he could be counted upon to play G&S music on Concert Time to promote the MWOS productions at the appropriate time. When our elderly Trafalgar music teacher, Dr. D.M. Herbert, was feted by former members of his Baron Byng Choir – many of whom were now MWOS members – I recognized Sidney Cohen, Evelyn Maxwell, and others. We also travelled out to St Helen’s School, in Dunham, to see Harry’s production in that all-girls’ school, and parents of those students were then added to the list of MWOS patrons. The morning after Opening Night, I found myself walking over to the closest Gazette box so make sure we had access to the critic’s commentary of the show the night before.

In hindsight I can see that the musical network of which we were a part connected us directly and indirectly to many of the English institutions of Montreal: schools, churches, and the media. To this day, hearing G&S music not only delights my ear, but envelops me with a feeling of belonging and connectedness.

*Janet Chandler Allingham grew up in Montreal, summered in the Eastern Townships, and now lives in Eastern Ontario, where she works as a public health nurse. She enjoys reminiscing about growing up in English Quebec in the latter half of the twentieth century, and has found a comfortable cultural 'home away from home' in the QAHN.*



# EVENTS LISTINGS

## Eastern Townships

Quebec Anglophone Heritage Network  
400-257 Queen St (Lennoxville)  
Info: 819-564-9595 or toll free in Quebec: 1-877-964-0409  
Email: home@qahn.org

June 5

Annual General Meeting and Luncheon  
Bishop's University  
More information to follow

Uplands Cultural & Heritage Center  
9 Speid St. (Lennoxville)  
Info: 819-564-0409

Lennoxville-Ascot Historical and Museum Society  
9 Speid, Sherbrooke (Lennoxville), Uplands building  
Info: Tel: (819) 564-0409 Fax: (819)564-8915  
lrider@uplands.ca / lahms@uplands.ca

Before June 24-Wednesday –Sunday from 1 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.  
After June 24-Tuesday-Sunday from 10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.  
Exhibition: Frank Libbey and the Art of Woodworking  
This collection of woodenware, photos and literature will be displayed on the second floor of Uplands in Lennoxville.

## Laurentians

Morin Heights Historical Association  
Email: mhha98@hotmail.com  
www.morinheightshistory.org

June 6, 1:30 p.m.

A.G.M. which will include elections of board members for 2010-11. You are a member; you can volunteer and vote! Maybe we'll have a surprise too!

June 12; July 10; Aug. 7; Sept. 11.

Legion Flea Markets - We plan to be present, so come and say "Hi" (even renew your membership or buy Porcupines).

## Montreal

Parkhaven Theatre  
5785 Parkhaven Ave in Cote St Luc, just

west of the Cavendish Mall  
April 29-30 & May 1 @ 7:30, May 2 @ 1:30, May 7-8 @ 7:30 and May 9 @ 1:30.  
Production of Mikado  
Tickets: 514 990-8813 or  
www.mwos.org

Quebec Family History Society  
QFHS Library, 173 Cartier, Pointe Claire  
Info: 514-695-1502  
Website: www.qfhs.ca

June 19, 10 am to 3 pm  
Seminar, A Genealogical Day in Ireland, by lecturer Gary Schroder  
This seminar will examine the major Irish genealogical resources used in family history research in both Ireland and Northern Ireland.  
Cost: \$30 for members, \$40 for non-members  
Call for reservations

Irish Protestant Benevolent Society  
The University Club, 2047 Mansfield Street, Montreal

May 25,  
154th AGM and dinner  
AGM Starts at 5:30 p.m., cocktail, 6 p.m. to 7 p.m., dinner at 7 p.m.  
Our guest speaker this year will be Professor Maurice Bric.

McCord Museum  
Info: 514-398-7100  
Email: info@mccord.mcgill.ca

Permanent Exhibition  
Simply Montreal Glimpses of a Unique City  
Over 800 objects from McCord's famous collection

Till: October 11  
Being Irish O'Quebec

Exporail, Canadian Railway Museum  
110, rue Saint-Pierre, Saint-Constant  
General Information: 450-632-2410

Permanent Collection

160 Unique railway vehicles on display

May 28, at 12:30 pm

James Martin gives a talk on humanitarian Tony Walsh (1898-1994), a founder of Montreal's Benedict Labre House, on the anniversary of his death. The Atwater Library has the biography by John Buell entitled Travelling Light: The Way and Life of Tony Walsh.

June 3, at 12:30 pm

Author Elizabeth Waterston gives an illustrated talk on L.M. Montgomery entitled "Anne of Green Gables -- and Afterwards". The Writers' Union of Canada is providing financial assistance through the National Public Readings Program of the Canada Council for the Arts.

## Outaouais

Gatineau Valley Historical Society  
80 ch Summer, Cantley  
Info: 819-459-2004  
Email: info@gvhs.ca

June 5, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Plant Sale  
Old Methodist Chapel grounds  
This highly successful and popular annual fundraising event is now in its 10th year. To offer plants from your garden, or to volunteer please leave a message at the office (819-684-6809) or email at JSimmsDalmotas@aol.com  
To donate empty pots please drop them off at the back door of the Association's office in the Old Methodist Chapel at 495 Aylmer Road, entrance on Golf St

June 13

Guided Walking Tours of Old Aylmer  
These popular tours provide a wealth of interesting information about a variety of heritage buildings and the people who helped to establish and develop our community.

Space is limited, please reserve ahead  
In French at 1 p.m., 2 p.m. and 3 p.m.  
and in English at 1:15 p.m., 2:15 p.m. and 3:15 p.m.

Starting at the Memorial Park (rue Principale and Eardley Road)

The Quebec Anglophone Heritage Network invites you to its

# ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

JUNE 5TH, 2010, BISHOP'S UNIVERSITY

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FEATURING A PRESENTATION BY LOUISE ABBOTT:  
“Giving Shelter: Historic Barns of the Eastern  
Townships”



Louise Abbott is a longtime writer, photographer, and filmmaker who has worked in Canada and abroad, documenting the history and contemporary life of rural communities and investigating environmental issues that affect these communities. Her feature stories and photo essays have been published in *The Gazette*, *Harrowsmith Country Life*, *Heritage*, and other newspapers and magazines. Her photos have also appeared in many photo books, including *Hivers*, *Regards du Québec*, *Montréal au XXe siècle*, *Treasures of the National Archives of Canada*, and *Children in Photography –150 Years*. Abbott's books include *The Coast Way*, *The French Shore*, and *A Country So Wild and Grand*. She lives in the Eastern Townships of Quebec.

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Location: Bishop's University in the Marjorie Donald House  
(across from the bookstore). Registration begins at 9 a.m.  
Cost: \$15 for QAHN members; \$20 for non-members. Register in  
advance by email: [home@qahn.org](mailto:home@qahn.org) or call: 1-877-964-0409

QUEBEC ANGLOPHONE  
HERITAGE NETWORK  
QAHN



RÉSEAU DU PATRIMOINE  
ANGLOPHONE DU QUÉBEC  
QAHN