THE MAKING OF WESTMOUNT, QUEBEC 1870-1929:
A STUDY OF LANDSCAPE AND COMMUNITY CONSTRUCTION

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ABSTRACT

This thesis analyses the making of the landscape and community of Westmount, Quebec from 1871 to 1929, when it grew from a quiet rural area into Montreal's foremost anglophone elite inner-city residential suburb. A cultural materialist approach to landscapes is adopted, viewing them analytically as a means to organize and assign existential meaning to human action towards the environment at a given time and place. The making of Westmount is placed within the context of Montreal's society in the 19th century, when rapid industrialization created massive wealth for the city's English-speaking business elite, but threatened its political domination. Westmount became the 'suburban solution' to this problem, providing a sanctuary where, by careful and pioneering use of municipal bylaws governing both land use and social conduct, a 'model' elite community and landscape was created and maintained. The degree of control obtained through the maintenance of Westmount's suburban autonomy allowed a strong expression in the landscape of a shared ideology of difference and privilege.

RÉSUMÉ

Le présente thèse analyse la construction du paysage et de la communauté de Westmount, Québec, de 1871 à 1929, période pendant laquelle elle passa d'une paisible zone ruralE à la banlieue bourgeoise anglophone la plus en vue de Montréal. On adopte une approche analytique matério-culturelle dans laquelle le paysage est vu comme un outil pour l'organisation et l'attribution d'une signification existentielle à l'action humaine face à l'environnement, en un temps et un lieu donnés. Le construction de Westmount s'inscrit dans le contexte de l'industrialisation rapide de Montréal pendant le 19e siècle, laquelle fut source d'une richesse extraordinaire pour sa bourgeoisie anglophone, mais aussi une menace pour sa domination politique. Westmount est devenue la 'solution suburbaine', offrant un sanctuaire où, par l'utilisation judicieuse et avant-gardiste de règlements municipaux concernant l'aménagement du territoire et le comportement social, une communauté et un paysage bourgeois modèles ont été créés et maintenus. Le contrôle obtenu par la défense de son autonomie a permis à Westmount d'exprimer, par son paysage, une forte idéologie de différence et de privilèges.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

SO THIS IS WESTMOUNT

A model city, run by men who know
    Their business. Every year we see it grow
More beautiful, with money wisely spent
By those who have in charge its management.
Parks, Playgrounds, Civic Buildings, Streets,
    And lanes,
Prove to the World, here Law and Order reigns.

Critics who come to scoff, remain to praise,
Only too glad to find the means and ways
To buy a house and lot, and settle down
Within the confines of this model town.

No resident was ever known to knock it-
(A vulgar word, I should have said. To mock it.)
But all, with one accord, delight to sing
Its praise in Summer, Winter, Fall and Spring;

While those who travel-wheresoe'r they roam,
Still point with pride to Westmount as their Home!

Charles Benedict, 1933
Westmount in song and story

Thus...the nightmarish, smog-covered life of Saint-Henri stands out menacingly between the dreamed of heights of Westmount (with its fresh air, security, private gardens, and steel fences) and the childhood "Eden" on the banks of the Lachine canal...an unrealized future and past.

Gabrielle Roy, 1942
The Tin Flute, p. 10.

These quotations present the two predominant views of the City of Westmount, Quebec by the end of the first half of the 20th century. To the poor French-Canadian outsider from the neighbouring working-class district of St. Henri, just across the CPR railway tracks but a social world apart, Westmount's landscape was a symbol of English power and domination. To Charles Benedict, the editor of the

city's weekly newspaper, it was a model city where "Law and Order reigns", run and inhabited by businessmen and professionals. Both of these characterizations of Westmount were partly true, and to a considerable extent they remain so today, almost half a century later.

The 'making' of Westmount was "an active process, which owes as much to agency as to conditioning." The landscape of Westmount "did not rise like the sun at an appointed time" (Thompson 1963, 8). The experience of Westmount's development was neither a predetermined outcome mirroring that of other elite suburbs in North America of this period, nor was it a unique process unrelated to broader social processes. It is the interplay of context and human agency that produced the landscape and community of Westmount, and this is the focus of this thesis.

As shown in Figure 1.1, Westmount is today an inner-city suburb located immediately to the west of Montreal's central business district on the southwestern slopes of Mount Royal. According to Statistics Canada, the average household income in the city in 1981 was almost $50 000; in its most exclusive area 'above The Boulevard', the figure was in excess of $86 000. By comparison, across the Montreal metropolitan area incomes averaged less than half of those in Westmount ($24 000); in St. Henri the average household income in 1981 was $15 277.

The focus of this thesis is on the period from 1870, when Westmount was an area of farms, orchards and country estates with less than 200 year-round residents, to 1929, when almost all of its territory had been transformed to residential or commercial landuses. It was in 1929 an incorporated city with almost 25 000 inhabitants, and the preferred residential area of Montreal's anglophone business

LEGEND

- Westmount
- Central Business District
- City of Montreal
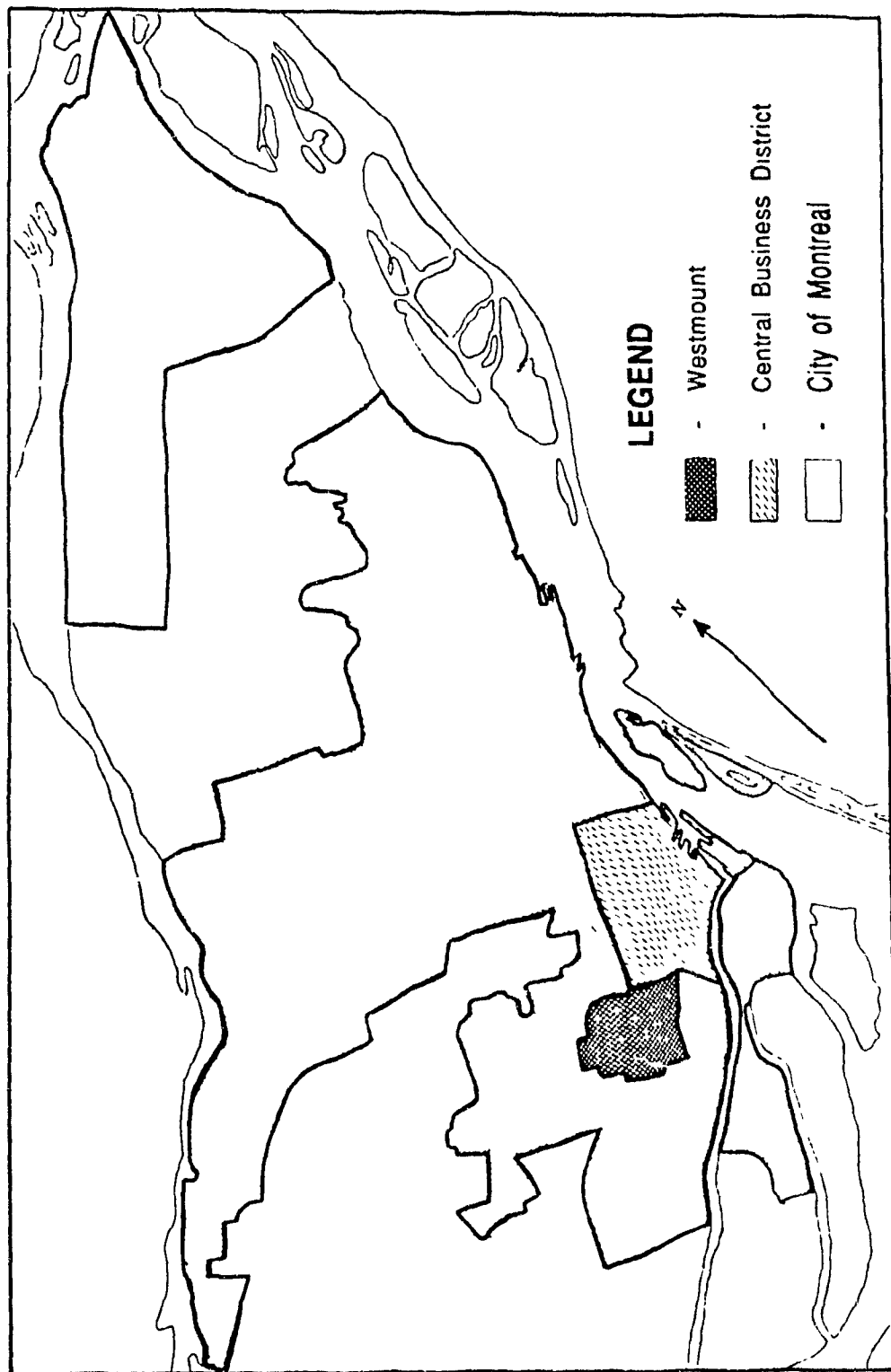
Figure 1.1 - Location of Westmount in Relation to the City of Montreal

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elite. This thesis also attempts to connect the actions and ideology of those who inhabited and shaped Westmount with the broader societal and historical context of Montreal's development in the latter half of the 19th and the first half of the 20th centuries. Specific attention is given to the form of municipal government, to the political institutions that developed, and to the regulations designed to defend the community and its built environment from intrusions by unwanted social groups or landuses. Westmount pioneered in Canada this type of use of municipal regulatory powers, such as its nuisance and zoning bylaws, and was the first to adopt the city manager system of municipal administration that was promoted by urban reformers during this period.

In geography, most of the concern with areas such as Westmount has been in connecting them with the process of 'suburbanization'. The traditional approach, following Warner (1962), has focused on the 'push' factors such as disease, fires, fears of industrialization and immigrants, and the 'pull' factors such as improved technology in urban transportation and the pattern of railway and streetcar line extensions. (For a standard textbook example, see Vance 1977.) Neo-classical economic models have been built on these factors to 'explain' suburbanization as the logical consequence of the decisions of increasingly mobile 'rational economic' consumers of housing willing to sacrifice accessibility for greater space in more peripheral locations (see, for example, the models of Alonso 1962 or Muth 1970).

Beginning in the early 1970s, however, radical geographers began to criticize these conventional explanations for their overemphasis on the role of technology, and for the ahistorical nature of the neo-classical models. They have argued that

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suburbanization is not simply the result of increased mobility or changing tastes, but a 'solution' to a crisis in capitalist production and accumulation brought on by heightened class conflict in the cities of industrial capitalism (Walker 1977, 1978; Gordon 1978). These early historical materialist writings have been criticized for their tendency to reduce the role of human agency to insignificance before the determining power of structural relations (Eyles 1981; Duncan and Ley 1982).

A second alternative to the dehumanized 'rational economic man' of the neo-classical models was the 'humanistic geography' of the 1970s, which sought to incorporate questions of value, meaning, and human experience into geographical research. There was, however, a tendency to overstate the importance of values and human creativity while not paying adequate attention to the contexts in which they are situated. Too often 'thoughts', 'perceptions', or 'meanings' were idealized instead of being treated as material products grounded in specific historical contexts. This has led to attempts to identify some sort of middle ground between humanistic geography and historical materialism. David Ley has noted that:

> If there is to be a geographical synthesis in the 1980's, it will be a synthesis which will incorporate both the symbolic and the structural, both the realm of constraints and the realm of meanings, where values are seen as embedded and grounded in their contexts, and where environments are treated as contingent before emerging forms of human creativity (1980, p. 20).

Many geographers have looked to the 'structuration theory' of Anthony Giddens (1976, 1979, 1981, 1984) as the basis for this middle ground (e.g. Gregory 1981, 1982, 1984; Thrift 1983; Pred 1983, 1984; Duncan 1985a; Walker 1985; Warf 1986). Gregson (1986) has identified the essence of his argument to be that agency and structure are interdependent in time and space. Structures are seen as both the medium and the outcome of intentional human actions, enabling as well as

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constraining. Of particular interest to geographers is his incorporation of some elements of time geography into structuration theory, thus bringing space to the forefront in social theory.

A second important development is the adoption by some geographers (especially historical materialists) of a realist philosophy of science (Gregory 1978; Sayer 1982, 1984, 1986; Chouinard *et al* 1984). For realists, social phenomena are the contingent outcomes of causal mechanisms in operation at a given conjuncture of time and space. Considerable attention is focused on determining whether relations between objects are necessary or contingent, and to the careful scrutiny of the categories employed in both abstract and empirical research. Many realists have explicitly embraced structuration theory as the solution to the problem of structure and human agency (see for example Sayer 1983).

Perhaps the most interesting consequence of the adoption by some of a realist philosophy of science and structuration theory in geography has been the resurrection of regional geography, which had been presumed dead since at least the early 1960s. Local and regional variations in responses to general processes such as economic restructuring in Britain (Massey 1985) or political nationalism in Scotland (Agnew 1984), for example, are being been examined by geographers. This type of local-scale analysis can equally be employed for the study of the development of a suburban landscape and community such as Westmount, linking the actions taken by individuals to the broader historical context in which they were situated.

In the next chapter, the physical and built environment of Westmount is presented. Following this, the concept of landscape as it has been used in human geography is explored and interrogated, for its usage in the discipline has been a prime example of what Derek Gregory (1978) has described as "unexamined discourse". As Denis Cosgrove has argued, what is needed is:

> ...an examination of geography's own purposes in studying landscape, a critical recognition of the contexts in which the landscape idea has evolved and a sensitivity to the range and subtlety of human creativity in making and experiencing the environment (1984, p. 15-16).

It is argued in this thesis, following Kobayashi (1983; 1989), that a cultural materialist approach to the study of landscape should be adopted, where landscapes are viewed analytically as a means to organize and assign existential meaning to the totalization of human action toward the environment at a given time and place.

In the fourth chapter, the case study of Westmount is taken up, placing the development of its landscape in the context of the historical evolution of Montreal society. The fifth chapter examines directly the construction of Westmount, both in terms of the characteristics of each building cycle and of the architects and builders who shaped it. The sixth chapter further examines how the development of Westmount's residential landscape and its laws governing social conduct were shaped and protected by the actions of the city's government in this period. The final chapter describes the image of power and selective exclusion that has been projected both to the inhabitants of Westmount and to other members of the society of Quebec. This thesis will, I hope, provide an improved understanding of the dialectic of individual and social actions in the making of the landscape and community of Westmount.

CHAPTER II

THE LANDSCAPE OF WESTMOUNT

In this chapter, the landscape of Westmount is introduced and described. This is done to familiarize the reader with the area, and also to provide a sense of the appearance of Westmount as if one were walking through it for the first time. First, the location and physical environment are described, situating Westmount in relation to the rest of the Montreal area and its surrounding communities. After this, the built environment of Westmount is described, both in writing and in a series of photographs.

Location and Environmental Context

Casual observers of the physical environment of the island of Montreal will quickly have their attention drawn to the dominant physical feature of the area, Mount Royal. It is an igneous intrusion of the Cretaceous Period which rises up over the surrounding St. Lawrence River valley to a maximum height of 231 metres. If one looks more closely at the mountain, three separate peaks can be identified (see Figure 2.1). The highest stands to the northeast, overlooking the first settled area of Montreal around the harbour and its present-day central business district. The second peak, the farthest away from the river, stands to the northwest in the City of Outremont. The third and the smallest, located southwest of the main peak of the mountain, dominates the landscape of the City of Westmount.
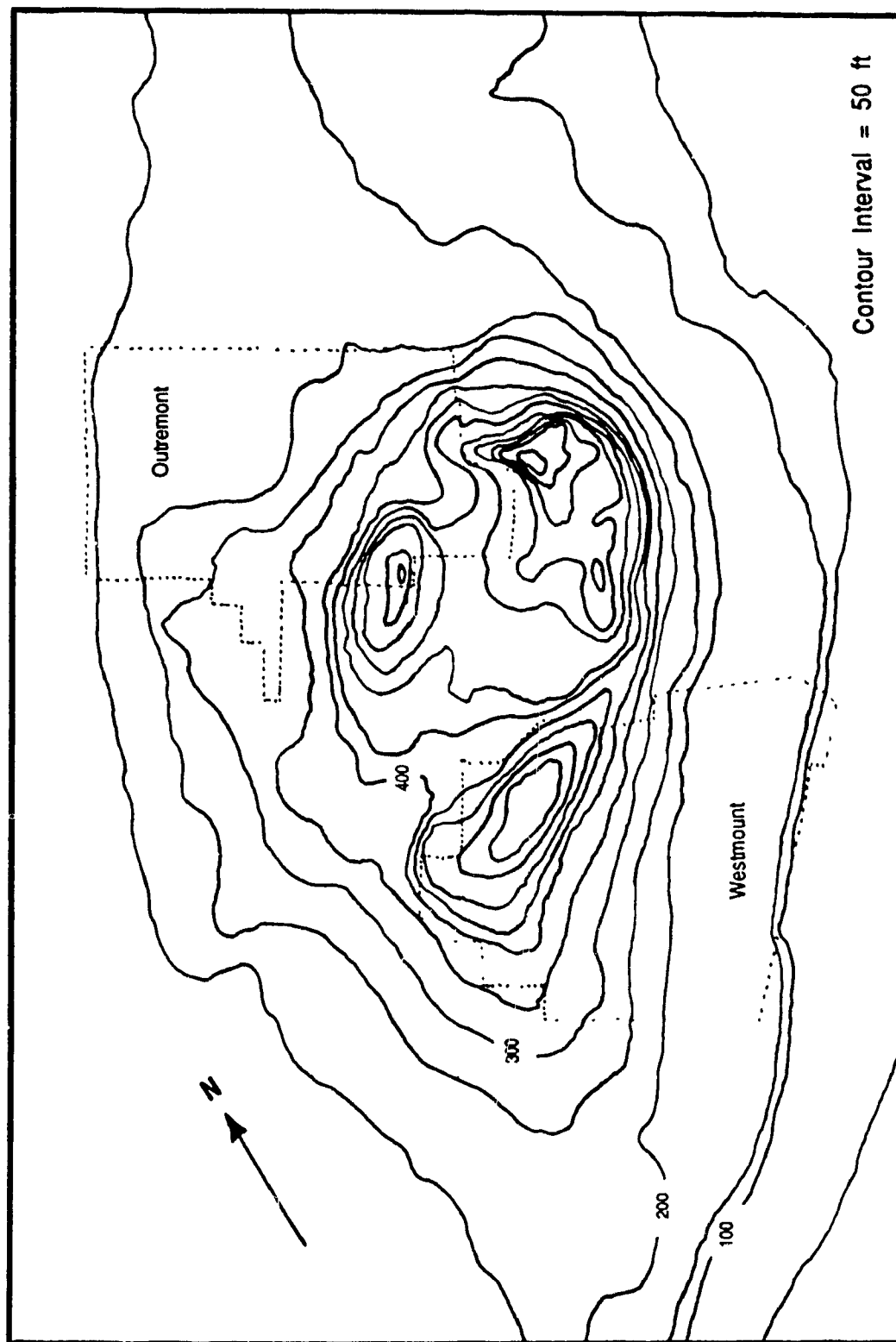
Figure 2.1 - The Topography of the Westmount Area

Westmount has been surrounded on all sides by the City of Montreal since the first decade of the 20th century. Immediately below it to the 'south'[1] lies the poor, francophone working class neighbourhood of St. Henri, built along the north bank of the Lachine Canal. To the west lies the predominantly anglophone middle class residential area of Notre-Dame de Grace, and to the east, Montreal's central business district. On the northern slopes of the summit beyond the Westmount border, St. Joseph's Oratory separates Westmount from the Cote-des-Neiges district, and to the northeast, Parc Mont Royal and the Notre-Dame des Neiges Cemetery come between it and Outremont, its francophone elite equivalent. The city's location 'on the hill', the stereo-typical ideal for elite neighbourhoods, physically separates it and reinforces the sense of difference which separates it socially from these areas that surround it. Its altitude and the prevailing westerly winds of the area also shield it from the air pollution generated by the older industrial areas along the Lachine Canal and railway tracks to its south.

Westmount can be divided topographically into four areas from north to south across the city, a legacy of the retreat of the post-glacial Champlain Sea. The first is the highest and steepest part of the mountain slope and its summit, the area above 120 metres altitude. Its southern boundary corresponds roughly with the location of The Boulevard. The second section is the more gradual slope between 60 and 120 metres, leading up from about Sherbrooke Street to The Boulevard. The third area is a fairly flat plateau between 45 and 60 metres, from Sherbrooke Street to the Cana-

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[1] Following Montreal conventional usage, the St. Lawrence River flows from the west to the east, although in reality near downtown its course is closer to south to north. On Figure 2.1, therefore, "north" is towards the top of the map, and St. Henri is located directly "south" of Westmount.

dian Pacific Railway tracks below St. Catherine Street in the west and Dorchester Street in the east. Finally, below 60 metres there is a sharp escarpment leading down to the city's southern boundary at St. Antoine Street. Below this, beginning in St. Henri, the low-lying flatlands that stretch down to the river begin. As we shall see, these topographical areas correspond closely with a distinct social division of space in Westmount as well.

The Built Environment of Westmount

If one looks up the hill from St. Henri at Westmount, it appears to be a low, heavily-wooded hill, broken only by some scattered large houses and other buildings (see Figure 2.2). In the southwestern corner of Westmount, Montreal's central business district has spilled over into Westmount as far west as Greene Avenue, its old commercial centre. Beyond this, the built environment shifts quickly to what one contemporary observer has described as "probably the finest assemblage of residential architecture in the country" (Galt 1983, p. 12). In the eastern part of the city, there are blocks of elegant, well-proportioned terrace houses on streets such as Elm and Dorchester that date back to the 1890s (see Figures 2.3 and 2.4). Built of cut stone and adorned with the Victorian 'gingerbread' of towers, turrets and pediments, these terraces give way on the major thoroughfares such as de Maisonneuve Boulevard and Sherbrooke Street to three to five-story apartment buildings with solid British names such as 'The Viceroy', or 'Stonehenge', that were built mostly in the 1920s (see Figure 2.5). As one travels farther west and also north across Sherbrooke, the dominant form of buildings shifts again, with remarkably uniform, solid red brick

Figure 2.2 - View of Westmount from St. Henri

Figure 2.3 - Elite Row Houses on Elm Avenue

Figure 2.4 - Terrace Castle at 4026-4030 Dorchester Boulevard

Figure 2.5 - Apartment Buildings on de Maisonneuve Blvd.

semi-detached dwellings taking over. These were mostly constructed during the great building boom of 1905-1915 (see Figure 2.6) and are interspersed with both small and large detached houses built of wood, stone or brick in a wide variety of architectural styles (see Figures 2.7 and 2.8). Finally, moving up the hill north of the Boulevard, one reaches an area of very large detached houses and mansions, mostly conservative interpretations of British styles such as Queen Anne and Tudor revival (see Figures 2.9 and 2.10), that were for the most part built between the two World Wars as Montreal's wealthiest capitalists and corporate leaders moved into the uppermost part of Westmount.

In addition to its residences, Westmount can also boast of possessing an impressive array of institutional buildings and parks which date back to the late 19th and early 20th centuries. These centre mainly around Sherbrooke Street in the middle of the city. From the east, one passes first the somewhat ponderous, castle-like city hall (Figure 2.11) with the city's War Memorial (Figure 2.12) facing it on the triangle of land where Cote St. Antoine, the oldest road in the city, joins Sherbrooke Street. Passing the Westmount Lawn Bowling Club's grounds, one arrives at Westmount Park, almost 30 acres of flowerbeds, sports fields, and a ravine (heavily wooded until a major facelift in the early 1960s), through which sometimes flows a now-piped stream (Figure 2.13). Along the west side of the park is the Westmount Public Library (Figure 2.14), a graceful cottage-style building constructed for Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee in 1897 and attached to it is a public greenhouse. Beside the two stands Victoria Hall (Figure 2.15), a community centre that has been described as "a rather laboured version of English Medieval building" (Gubbay and Hooff 1985, p. 110). The city has two

Figure 2.6 - Red Brick Semi-detached Dwelling at 575-577 Roslyn

Figure 2.7 - 531 Clarke Avenue

Figure 2.8 - 4314-4316 Montrose Road

Figure 2.9 - 58 Belvedere Place

Figure 2.10 - 56 Sunnyside Road
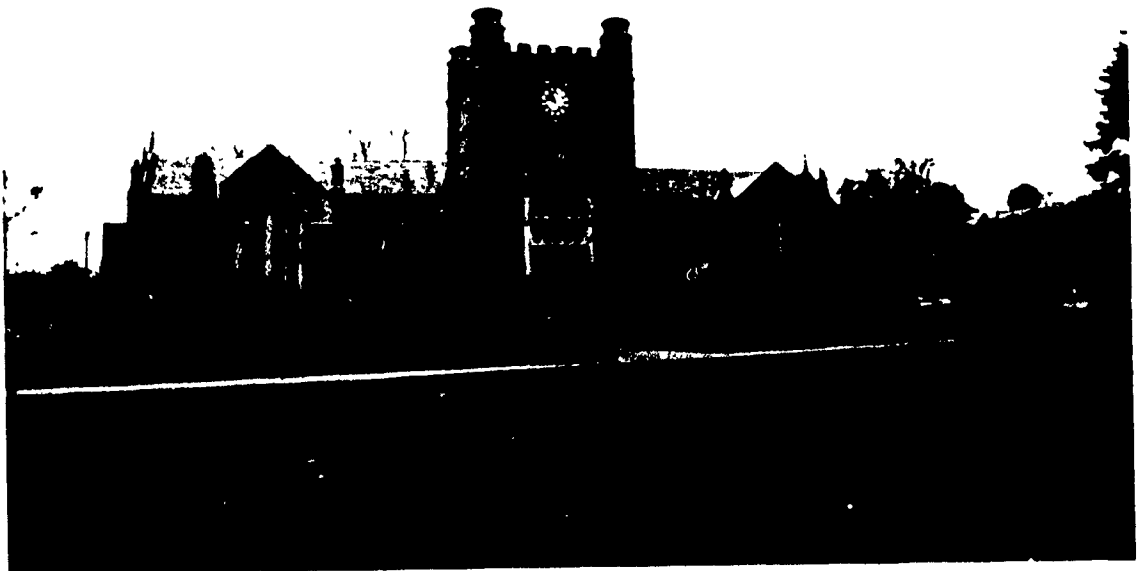
Figure 2-11 - Westmount City Hall

Figure 2-12 - Westmount War Memorial

Figure 2-13 - Westmount Park

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Figure 2-14 - Westmount Public Library

Figure 2-15 - Victoria Hall

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other large parks farther up the hill: Murray Park, located just above Cote St. Antoine; and Summit Park, an undeveloped, wooded area that looks out over Westmount and St. Henri from on top of the hill.

Conclusion

"So this is Westmount", as the poem at the beginning of this thesis puts it. This chapter has briefly introduced the physical and the built environment of Westmount: an elite residential area, stereotypically located 'on the hill' over looking the city of Montreal, an enclave of wealth and privilege. Its built environment reflects its high level of social status. The architect Mark London, at the time president of the architectural preservation group Heritage Montreal (and a resident of Westmount) has stated that:

> Even buildings that are slightly inferior by local standards are still among the best in Canada. If an independent standard of architectural quality existed and someone went across the country painting the roof of every building in the top one percent red, Westmount would be coloured all red as seen from the air (quoted in Galt 1983, p. 12).

Before moving on to the case study of how this 'model suburb' was constructed, the next chapter will critically examine the concept of landscape as it has been employed in human geography.

CHAPTER III

THE STUDY OF LANDSCAPE IN GEOGRAPHY

The study of landscape has had its ups and downs in the hundred years or so of geography's existence as a modern academic discipline. Brought to the forefront of English-language geography by Carl Sauer and the Berkeley Schrol in the 1920s and early 1930s, landscape study was by the late 1960s (along with virtually all traditional regional geography) far removed from the cutting edge of geographical research. In the 1970s and 1980s, however, interest in the study of landscape has reawakened, particularly amongst humanistic geographers and, more recently, as one focus of a new, theoretically-informed cultural geography (Ley 1985).

In this chapter, the history of landscape study in geography is traced from the Berkeley School to the present. The ambiguity of the concept of landscape itself as it has been employed by geographers (is a landscape an objective sector of reality 'out there'; or is it a subjective representation of the physical environment in the 'mind's eye'?) is discussed. An existential definition of landscape following Samuels (1979; 1981) and Kobayashi (1983; 1989) is adopted, where landscape is defined as an analytical device that allows humans to organize (in a necessarily partial way) the 'objective' reality of the material environment for the purpose of communication.

The Concept of Landscape in the Berkeley School

The concept of landscape was first introduced into English-language geography by Carl Sauer (1925) with the publication of his seminal paper 'The morphology of

landscape'. Sauer was seeking an alternative to the environmental determinist ortho-doxy of the earlier generation of American geographers such as William Morris Davis and Ellen Churchill Semple. He found it in the German geographical literature, where for the same reasons (but a quarter of a century earlier), Schluter and Passarge had begun to seek in *landschaft* a field of facts for human geography equivalent to the landforms studied in physical geography (Dickenson 1939, 2). Sauer stated that "the term 'landscape' is proposed to denote the unit concept of geography", and defined landscape as "an area made up of a distinct association of forms, both physical and cultural" (1925, 321). As opposed to the traditional definition of landscape as a view of one particular scene, he argued that for geographers it should be considered as "a generalization derived from the observation of [many] individual scenes", for "a definition of landscape as singular, unorganized, or unrelated has no scientific value". By agreement on a logical, predetermined mode of inquiry, "the personal element" might be minimized (1925, 322-325). Sauer argued that geographers should study the transformation from 'natural' into 'cultural' landscapes and concentrate on the impact of humans on the land. Probably the most complete attempt at carrying through this method-ology was undertaken by his student Jan Broek in a study of California's Santa Clara Valley (1932).

For Sauer himself, this narrow definition of geography and the geographer's work as landscape morphology proved to be only a transitional phase in his career. In the mature stage of his career, he moved on to a much broader view of human geography as culture history that saw the substitution of culture for the landscape

as his central preoccupation (Entriken 1984; Leighley 1976). This led him away from landscapes in and of themselves towards the study of, for example, the origins and diffusion of agricultural crops, the impact of the acquisition of fire on early human culture, and the destructive impact of European contact on the indigenous cultures of the Caribbean basin. For some, landscape continued to provide the central focus for geographical research (see for example Broek 1938; Dickenson 1939; Darby 1951), although not so much as 'regions with distinct forms' as simply 'the appearance of an area'. Others complained that the term was too vague to be useful for rigorous scientific study. In particular, Hartshorne (1939) and Crowe (1939) noted that the term was used in the geographical literature to denote the appearance of an area, the objects producing that appearance, and also the area itself. They argued that terms such as region or area that were less vague were available and preferable. By the 1950s, few geographers remained who would claim that the study of landscape was the essential task of all human geography.

The legacy of the Berkeley School's encounter with the concept of landscape is important, but ambiguous. As a standard to rally around in opposition to environmental determinism, it performed a useful service for Sauer and his students. However, his model of scientific inquiry, modeled after the natural sciences and emphasizing field observation and the integration of empirically defined forms (Entriken 1984), led him and his students to a definition of landscape that severely limited all subjective or artistic connotations as a matter of course (Sauer 1925; Mikesell 1968, 13). For humanistic geographers who have looked in part to Sauer and his followers for their intellectual ancestry, his insistence on anthropocentrism

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was exemplary, but his implicitly neo-Kantian view of science led him to a position that is fundamentally at odds with their more subjective, empathetic, sometimes explicitly anti-scientific goals for research.

Humanistic Geography and Landscape

Lowenthal and Prince (1964; 1965) were the first 'humanistic' geographers to use the concept of landscape in their study of how the English landscape was shaped. They argued that:

> People in any country see their terrain through preferred and accustomed spectacles, and tend to make it over as they see it. The English landscape... mirrors a long succession of such idealized images and visual prejudices (1965, 81).

For them, and many others who have subsequently used the concept in their work, landscape has been a central concern not only as a product of material culture and practices, but as an expression of a culture's values and beliefs.

Humanistic geographers have never produced an adequate definition of landscape, and relatively few have even attempted this task. Meinig has described landscape as "an attractive, important and ambiguous term" (1979, 1), but resists attempting to clear up this ambiguity except to state that is related, but not identical, to the concepts of nature, scenery, environment, region, and place. Similarly, Lowenthal responds to the question "What is a landscape?" with the statement that "...a landscape is neither a work of art, nor a specific object, nor does it remain constant", and then instead of providing an answers, proceeds to raise a whole new set of questions (1978, 394).

This approach follows the lead of one of the most prolific and influential present day writers on landscape, J.B. Jackson, the founding and long-time editor of the

journal *Landscape*. He has been dancing around this question for more than thirty years, admitting on the one hand that everything he has written ultimately has dealt with the question of "how to define (or redefine) the concept of landscape" (J.B. Jackson 1984, 147), while on the other stating that "the concept still eludes me" (1979, 153). He sees landscape as not a natural feature of the environment, but as a "man-made [*sic*] system of spaces superimposed on the face of the land" (1984, 8).

Most also follow him in describing landscape as "a concrete, three-dimensional shared reality" (1984, 5). This fits in comfortably with the Berkeley School's legacy of concern with 'man's [*sic*] role in changing the face of the earth' (Sauer 1956; Thomas 1956). It has led some humanistic geographers, such as Hugill, to view landscape as "an appropriate source of data, as well as an appropriate unit of data collection" (1980, 1). Others have insisted on drawing a distinction between the environment and landscape, seeing landscape as an image of the environment, "a construct of the mind and of feeling...an ordering of reality...[that] takes place only in the mind's eye" (Tuan 1979, 89-90). Landscape thus has been to humanistic geographers both an objective reality and a subjective mental image, and often the two uses are employed by the same author interchangeably. Few have attempted to overcome this problem.

Landscape Evaluation

A third tradition in the geographical study of landscape can be identified in the works of those interested in 'landscape evaluation'. Geographers such as Appleton

(1975), Dearden (1977) and Penning-Rowsell (1981) can be seen as the indirect intellectual descendants of the British geographers Younghusband (1920) and Cornish (1935), who in the interwar period sought to establish aesthetic criteria for the comparison of the beauty of one region to another. A second major influence has been the work of Lowenthal emphasizing the importance of the perception of landscape and exploring why some are highly valued (1962; 1978). Then, as now, this line of research had a strong practical application in the designation of areas as worthy of protection and at the same time special attention from those who inhabit the landscape. Cosgrove has noted that in Britain this activity was largely stimulated in the early 1970s by the restructuring of the powers of local government, giving them the mandate to make such designations.

Various methods of landscape evaluation have been developed in the last twenty years. Although they vary according to the degree of sophistication of the statistical techniques employed and the importance given to measures of personal feelings and attachments (Penning-Rowsell 1981, 26), virtually all of them involve attempts to identify and to measure the importance of various 'attributes' (such as mountains, lakes, and fields) of the landscape. Commonly, photographs or postcards have been used as surrogates for the actual scenes themselves to determine the preferences for the various attributes (Johnson and Pitzl, 1982). The end product, at least in theory, should be a model of how to assess landscape quality.

Lowenthal, who is generally sympathetic to this project, has cautioned that "many readers erroneously conclude that the voluminous technical literature of landscape evaluation connotes scholarly respectability" (1978, 373), and is cautious

about the usefulness of these techniques for planning purposes at least at this stage of their development. Cosgrove is more critical, describing methods such as Appleton's 'habitat theory' (1975) as "overly mechanistic" and sharing little with the concerns of humanistic geographers (1985, 46). Very little reflection on the concept of landscape has been undertaken by these geographers. Landscape is seen primarily as a resource, something that needs to be better understood in order to allow a more effective exploitation of it by human beings, whether for profit or by identifying and protecting it for future generations. This perspective has little to offer those who are interested in exploring the concept of landscape as a means of understanding the social relations, experience, and ideology of the society that inhabits it.

A Cultural Materialist Definition of Landscape

The past usage of the concept of landscape in geography leaves one with rather mixed results. Landscape has either been idealized as a mental image or simplistically objectivized as a three-dimensional data source by geographers throughout the twentieth century. Cosgrove (1984, 1985) has argued that landscape study is a dead end for geographers and that it should be abandoned as a tool of geographical inquiry, except as a historical exercise.

In Cosgrove's own historical studies of landscape art and Venice of the Renaissance, however, he begins to provide a way out of the landscape quandary, deconstructing landscape not as a concrete reality or a subjective mental image, but as a "way of seeing":

> The unifying principle [of landscape] derives from the active engagement of a human subject with the material object. In other words, landscape denotes the external world mediated through subjective human experience.... Landscape is not merely the world we see, it is a construction, a composition of that world (1984, 13).

Furthermore, he sees landscape as an ideological concept:

> It represents a way in which certain classes of people have signified themselves and their world through their imagined relationship with nature, and through which they have underlined and communicated their own social role and that of others with respect to external nature (1984, 15).

For Cosgrove, the landscape idea is a product of the transition from feudalism to capitalism, as an emerging class began to relate to the environment and themselves in a different way than its predecessors. There is therefore for him:

> an inherent conservatism in the landscape idea, in its celebration of property and of an unchanging status quo, in its suppression of tension between groups *in* the landscape (emphasis in original, 1985, 58).

While the breadth and scholarship of his work in tracing the evolution of the idea of landscape is impressive, to identify it with a single class, social group, or historical period is mistaken. As Harvey (1979) has shown in his discussion of the conflict over the Sacre-Coeur basilica in Paris in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, different social groups can read different meanings into the landscape.

In recent years, interest has been rekindling in the study of landscape in geography, focusing on the study of landscape as text. As Ley has noted,

> ...the interpretive turn in cultural geography points to a hermeneutic endeavour where landscape is text, a medium to be read for the ideas, practices, and contexts constituting the culture which created it (Ley 1985, 419).

Ley has himself embarked upon this type analysis in his study of the juxtaposition of modern and post-modern architecture at British Columbia Place and False Creek in Vancouver, where social groups reflecting neo-conservative and liberal reform political ideologies produced starkly different inner-city redevelopment landscapes

(1986). Similarly, Duncan (1985b; 1987) has described how in Kandy, Sri Lanka, religious symbolism and the built environment have been used to legitimate political domination under a succession of regimes. Drawing on a wide variety of inter-disciplinary sources from Raymond Barthes and Jacques Derrida to Clifford Geertz, these studies focus on unmasking or denaturalizing the ideological aspects of landscape (Duncan and Duncan 1987).

One problem with this approach to landscape is that it calls into question the very process of interpretation. In the introduction to a book of essays examining the "iconography" of landscape, Cosgrove and Stephen Daniels write:

> At the same time we recognize these Englands for what they are: images, further glosses upon an already deeply layered text. . From such a post-modern perspective landscape seems less like a palimpsest whose 'real' or 'authentic' meanings can somehow be discovered with the correct techniques, theories or ideologies, than a flickering text displayed on the word-processor screen whose meaning can be created, extended, altered, elaborated and finally obliterated by the merest touch of a button (Cosgrove and Daniels 1988, 8).

The underlying relativism of this position ultimately undermines its utility as a tool of geographical inquiry, and requires a return to basic principles.

A productive starting point for a cultural materialist definition of landscape can be found in the writings of Marwyn Samuels in his advocacy of an existential geography following the philosophical writings of Buber and Sartre. According to Samuels, for the existential geographer, the essential starting point is the minimum definition of human beings as the only life form with a capacity for detachment (1978a, 267). From this, spatiality can be identified as the first principle and a necessary condition of existence. Spatiality is a two-fold process of setting objects at a distance, in order to enter into relations with them (1981, 117). Viewed in this way, spatiality *is* human consciousness, as humans endeavour to overcome distance

through relationship with the environment. "Human history is a geography of distances made to be overcome...all space and distance is existential space" (1978a, 30). By definition, existential space is at the same time *partial*, organized by an individual subject (and reflecting their biases), and *situated* within a context, the historic conditions into which the assignment of meaning takes place.

Landscape, as existential space, is therefore not a 'way of seeing' that is specific to a particular class in a given historical period, but a basic process in the human engagement of the surrounding world. Kobayashi noted that:

> We therefore make analytical statements about a synthetic world. The concept of landscape is a geographical tool used analytically to organize material reality perceptually and conceptually, denoting the total environment but expressing it in a partial way (1989, 166).

All humans construct landscapes, because they must enter into relationship with the environment that surrounds them and of which they are part. Landscapes must also be both partial and situated, neither an objective three-dimensional reality nor simply a subjective mental image. One of the great strengths of the existential definition of landscape is that it recognizes the inherent quality of the landscape as overcoming the limitations of the subjective/objective dualism. The implication that all study of landscape must be historical, in order to understand the context in which it was created, is also very important. Samuels has stressed that all landscapes are 'authored' in the sense that it is through human action that they take on their shape and meaning. He has suggested that landscape biography can be carried out by studying the actions and impact of a dominant historical figure, such as Mao Zedong for post-revolutionary China (1978b) or Robert Moses in the case of twentieth century New York City (1979; Caro 1974).

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In most cases, however, landscapes are not the product of one individual's actions, or even those of a small, easily identifiable group of people. This makes Samuels' 'great man' theory and the archival historical method that he advocates very difficult, if not impossible. How can it be possible to capture the actions, intentions and meanings for the thousands of (mostly anonymous) people responsible for constructing the built environment of a modern city, for example?

Kobayashi (1983; 1989) has proposed that the incorporative social philosophy that Sartre (1968, 1976) developed in his later years can provide the basis for overcoming this problem. In these works, Sartre set out to reconcile existentialist thought with historical materialism. He criticised the former (including his own earlier writings) as being idealist, in that its emphasis on the relationship of a single consciousness to the world of objects surrounding it sets only the initial conditions for what are inevitably *social* relationships. On the other hand, he also rejected the tendency in historical materialism to identify determining structures (such as the 'logic of capital' or 'class struggle') independent of human consciousness. To mediate between these two extreme positions, Sartre adopted a dialectical position moving from individual action to history as a synthesis of all human praxis. The argument is complex, the language extremely dense, but the essential point for this discussion is that human history viewed as the totalization of praxis constitutes a form of language, and is therefore at least potentially intelligible through the process of analysis, the organization of a particular moment of history. Kobayashi states that "The practical result of the principle of dialectical reason is that it allows a contextual interpretation of the world as relationship", mediating "the theoretical and

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the empirical, and the analytic and the synthetic, it also defines the contradictions of individual and society, past and future, regressive and progressive thought" (1989, 171-172). The analysis of structures therefore may be a useful analytical exercise, but only if they are understood as material products, rules by which human actions are guided. These structures may develop power over human actions, but only because they are created by humans and invested with this power by them. As analytical abstractions, structures exist only as long as they are acknowledged (even if only by their being denied or misunderstood).

One important concept in Sartre's dialectical method for the study of landscape is that of 'process':

> A process is an abstraction, an analytical device, by which synthetic, totalized history is organized for the purpose of analysis, and structural conditions are uncovered. It is the assignment of pseudo-organic character to a particular range of moments whose existence cannot, of course, be made absolute linguistically, but can be depicted... In everyday life, we unreflectively engage in process creation continually (Kobayashi 1989, 174).

A process organizes both a whole set of individual actions and a historical context in which meanings are structured. It represents the condition of life as:

> a constant dialectical interplay between the analytic and the synthetic, where, in projecting ourselves between past and future, we also move between the totality that threatens to engulf, and the organization that makes rationality possible....The constitution of process (like structure) is therefore a necessary aspect of engaging the world, the means by which we recognize, give meaning to, our actions (Kobayashi 1989, 175).

Much of the work of social science can also be viewed in this light, for the identification of such processes as 'suburbanization', 'restructuring', or 'gentrification' are abstractions from the totality of history to which we give pseudo-organic status.

Kobayashi has argued that landscape should also the understood as a process, as "the assignment of pseudo-organic status to the ongoing dialectical relationship among a set of material elements", including human beings (1989, 176). As such,

it is an attempt to organize the totalization of all human action on the environment at a particular place and moment of history, an analytical abstraction that interconnects linguistically elements within the totality of history. As an organization of a moment of history, it must by definition immediately be transcended (for life is a continuous process of landscape formation). The relatively durable nature of landscape emerges because of it refers to a physical transformation of nature over long time periods (Kobayashi 1989, 177).

This view of landscape as 'crystallized praxis', which Kobayashi describes as 'cultural materialist', reemphasizes Samuels' argument that all landscapes have a history or biography that is open to investigation, but it shifts the emphasis away from the 'great men' to an historical understanding of its making as shared, organized and potentially intelligible human activity. Central to the 'legibility' of the landscape is then the study of ideology, or the degree to which meanings are shared or imposed on those whose actions shape the environment.

Conclusion and Method

What then are the implications of a cultural materialist approach to landscape for empirical study? Most importantly, the methodology of this thesis will move from the general historical context of the development of Westmount. This means not only within the immediate context of the industrialization of Montreal during the 19th and early 20th centuries, but also more broadly relating its experience to what was going on in other North American cities in the same period. Moving on from this, the actual construction process will be examined, relating the physical development

to its changing population and examining within Westmount the development of both social institutions and differentation between areas of the city. In the last two chapters of this thesis, the focus will move back towards a more contextual analysis, examining the political management and incorporation of the reform ideology into the political infrastructure and administration, and then exploring the ideological consolidation of Westmount as the anglophone elite's choice residential suburb through literature.

CHAPTER IV

THE CONTEXT OF WESTMOUNT'S DEVELOPMENT

This thesis is a case study of Westmount between the years 1870 and 1929, but in order to understand its development, it is necessary to situate the city in its proper context. In this chapter, the historical experience of 'European' settlement before 1870 in the area that was to become Westmount is outlined. In addition, the development of Westmount is set in the context of both the expanding Montreal urban system and within the societal context of the transformation from the semi-feudal seigneurial system through industrialization to a corporate capitalist economy. The making of the landscape and the community of Westmount must be situated in its historical context in order to ascertain the extent to which its development reflects both the general North American social transformation of this period and the unique actions and experiences of its inhabitants.

The Frontier, Feudalism and the Commercial City

The first traces of human settlement in what is today Westmount date back to at least the fifteenth century, according to turn-of-the-century amateur archeologists who discovered the remains of a long-abandoned amerindian settlement high up on the slopes of the mountain. The first permanent European occupation of the island of Montreal came in 1642, when Paul Chomedy de Maisonneuve founded a religious mission on the site, although quite quickly it became the centre of the fur trade in New France. As Jean-Claude Robert has put it, "It was probably a merchant who

held the cross for de Maisonneuve when he landed" (quoted in Clark 1982, 17). The French attempted to recreate in Montreal (as in the rest of new France) the semi-feudal seigneurial land tenure system that was employed in France during this period, and the Seminary of St. Sulpice was granted seigneurial title over the whole island of Montreal in 1663. The Sulpicians were interested not only in promoting agricultural settlement, but also converting to christianity the 'heathen' amerindian tribes that were pulled and pushed to the area by the fur trade and the colonial wars with the English colonies and their amerindian allies to the south. The Sulpicians built the 'Fort des Messieurs' up on the slopes of the mountain in a location that was, at that time, far away from what they perceived to be the evil influences of Montreal, in particular those fur traders who exchanged alcohol for furs. The western extremities of the farm around the fort reached into what is today Westmount, and this was probably the first European modification of the area's landscape.

During the 1660s the first land grants in this area were given to two former soldiers of the Carignan-Salières regiment, Jean Leduc and Marin Hurtubise (Short 1979). They began clearing their land and farming shortly after, but because of the constant threat of attack from the Iroquois Indians, they did not actually move out onto the land, preferring to commute to work (a sign of things to come, albeit in the opposite direction) along the only road passing through the area, the Cote St. Antoine. It was not until almost thirty years later that their sons and the Decarie and St. Germain families built the first houses in the area. The area was nicknamed 'La Haute Folie' by Montrealers who believed its inhabitants to be reckless fools

(Gubbay and Hooff 1985). There was some justification for this belief in the early years, as a member of the St. Germain family was killed by the Iroquois in the 1690s (Clarke 1906, 37). A legacy of the insecurity of the times can be seen today in the raised main floor and the narrow southern windows (capable of serving as gun slits when necessary), of the Hurtubise farmhouse, the only surviving dwelling from this period.

By the end of the French regime in 1763, all of the land in the area had been granted to settlers, and most had been cleared for cultivation. The principal enduring effect of the seigneurial regime on the landscape of Westmount was in the division of land into long, thin lots starting to the south at Lac St. Pierre (filled in during the 1820s) and rising to the summit of the mountain. This set the pattern for the street network that was subsequently established a century and a half later when these lots were subdivided.

In the first century of British rule, the area around Mount Royal remained quiet and rural. It was because of this tranquillity that members of the English merchant elite of Montreal (such as the fur traders Simon Clarke, William Hallowell and Alexander MacGillivray) began to buy land from the French farmers in order to build impressive country estates. The area was a western extension of the construction that was taking place around the mountain closer to Montreal, where the partners of the fur trading North-West Company, men such as Simon MacTavish, Peter McGill and Martin Frobisher, established their country homes.

The merger of the North-West Company with the Hudson Bay Company in 1821 brought about a profound change in Montreal's economy. The fur trade ceased to

play an important role in Montreal's economy as furs moving to their primary markets in Europe were shipped through the ports of Hudson Bay rather than Montreal. The country estates of the fur traders passed into the hands of colonial officials or members of Montreal's affluent merchant class, who prospered by controlling trade in timber, grain and other goods to and from Upper Canada on the St. Lawrence River. By the 1840s, the Westmount area could boast the houses of the military governor and the police magistrate of the city, as well as 'Monklands', the official residence of the Governor-General of Canada straddling Westmount's western boundary (now the Villa Maria Convent), and the Metcalfe Terrace, housing his aides-de-camp. Charles Bowman, a Scottish-born importer, built an impressive estate named 'Forden' north of Cote St. Antoine in 1826, and Asa Goodenough, a Montreal merchant and hotel owner, built 'Rosemount', described in a 1846 advertisement as follows:

> a first class THREE STOREY CUT STONE DWELLING 45 feet by 36, together with two extensive graperies (stacked with the choicest Grapes, Peaches and Apricots) a COACH HOUSE, STABLES, and OFFICES, complete value of $2 500...[and a] highly cultivated GARDEN including two hundred of the choicest plum trees, together with choice pear and dwarf apple trees (quoted in Gubbay and Hooff 1985, 32).

The late 1840s were not happy years for the merchant elite of Montreal, however. The British dealt a stunning blow to their import/export trade with the lifting of tariffs which had provided protected markets in Britain for Canadian grain and timber. In the recession that began after 1846, it was estimated that at least one-half of the trading firms in Montreal went bankrupt (Finlay and Sprague 1984, 149). The burning of the Parliament Buildings in Montreal and the Annexation Manifesto of 1849, both primarily led by the English-speaking merchants of the city, attest to their anger and fears for their future.

The Impact of Industrialization

Nonetheless, the economy of Montreal rebounded strongly in the 1850s. Most historians have stressed the importance of the construction of an improved transportation system, especially the accommodation of the new steamship and railroad technologies. The deepening of the river's shipping channel, improvements to the port of Montreal, and the construction of the Victoria Bridge are seen as landmark events in this process (Tulchinsky 1977). At least as significant, however, were the changes that were taking place in the labour process itself, as the production of goods shifted from artisanal to industrial capitalist in industries such as shoe or clothing-making. Foreign capital also began to be invested in the city. The major attractions were cheap water power and labour (the lowest wages in British North America) for enterprises such as the Victoria Iron Works, which produced nails for a North American market (Finlay and Sprague 1984, 156-7).

This transformation in the labour process triggered profound changes in the spatial order of Montreal. The commercial city had been a small, pedestrian city. The merchant elite lived in the old centre of the city, mostly around fashionable squares or along streets such as St. Jacques or Notre Dame (Bosworth 1839; Clarke 1906). Mixed in close proximity to them were the artisans and labourers of the city. Merchants and artisans alike tended to live over or very near their place of work. Jenkins (1966, 258) notes that in 1817 there were still only two proper horse-drawn coaches in all of Montreal. Few if any of the country estates in outlying

areas such as Westmount were inhabited year round, as daily transportation in and out of the city during the winter months was virtually impossible (Clarke 1906).

Industrialization transformed this commercial city. It triggered rapid population growth (see Figure 4.1), and this in turn created problems associated with overcrowding. Between 1851 and 1861 alone, Montreal's population almost doubled, and it almost quintupled by the turn of the twentieth century (Hanna 1986). The city spilled out of its earlier area and expanded rapidly. The 'push' of frequent and highly destructive fires (in 1852 alone, two fires left one-fifth of the city's population homeless (Jenkins 1966) and the spread of epidemic diseases (especially cholera and typhus), encouraged in the highly unsanitary conditions of the overcrowded city, were undoubtedly major factors in the movement of those who could afford it away from the city centre. The opening of the first horse-drawn streetcar lines (in Montreal in 1861), was also important, as Warner (1962) and Ward (1971) have argued.

In addition, beginning in the mid-nineteenth century, an 'arcadian' ideology developed among elite groups throughout the industrializing world (Schmitt 1969; Williams 1973). A highly idealized conception of 'nature', divested of the evidence of labour and labourers, was sought out not only in literature and recreation, but also in the residence. As Warner has noted for the case of Boston, only the top five percent of the population "got the setting that the ideology of the rural ideal demanded" (1962, p. 58-60), while the vast majority had to settle for its vulgarized imitation, the suburb:

> In the suburbs, the dominant classes could escape the debased social relations and environment of the primary production process as well as the working class (who personified this debasement) and could try to create an enclave of beauty and harmony (Walker 1978, 198).
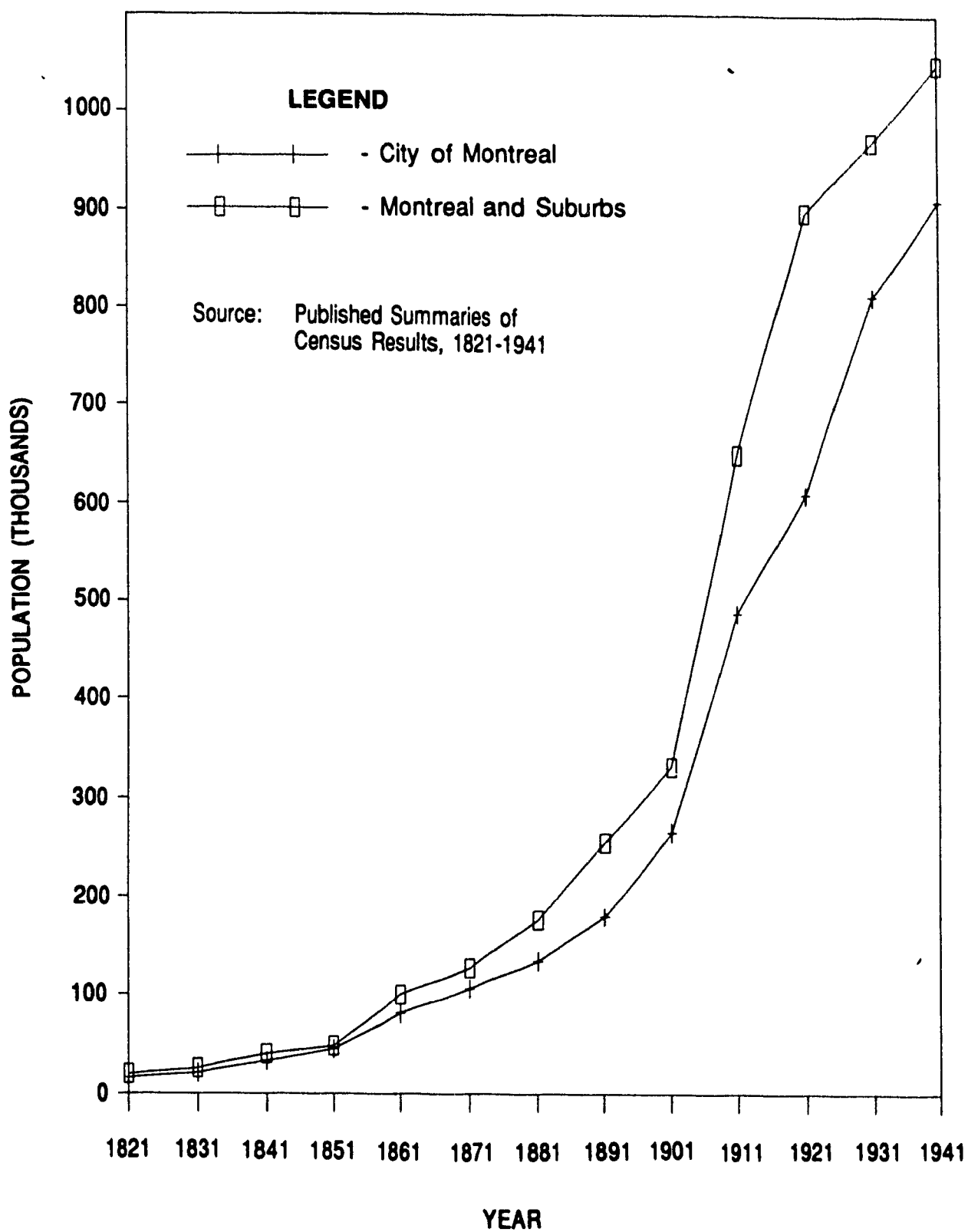
Figure 4.1 - Population Growth in Montreal, 1820-1940

Suburbs represented a new form of 'middle landscape', a reconciliation of town and country, allowing "the more intelligent and more fortunate classes to seek the special charms and substantial advantages of rural life...[without sacrificing any] urban conveniences" (Frederick Law Olmsted, quoted in Walker 1978, 197).

The migration of Montreal's elite out of the old city centre and up into the 'Square Mile' and other parts of St. Antoine Ward began in the 1840s, but did not reach its peak until the next two decades (Hanna 1977). At the same time, other areas of the city such as Pointe St. Charles, St. Marie and Hochelaga were developing as industrial suburbs, including housing for the city's burgeoning working class population. As these areas developed, they were incorporated into the City of Montreal. By the turn of the century, these processes had produced a city strongly segregated by social class (Lewis 1985). Juxtaposed with this was a linguistic division between a predominantly English-speaking west and a French-speaking east end of the city. Thus in the western part of Montreal, the mainly Irish, working class 'city below the hill' described by Herbert Ames looked up the escarpment and across the CPR rail way tracks at the solidly WASP 'Square Mile', where it has been estimated up to 70 percent of Canada's wealth was concentrated (Marsan 1981, 257).

The Emergence of Corporate Capitalism

By the first decade of the twentieth century, Montreal began to enter into a new phase in its development. The economy remained predominantly oriented to industrial production; what changed was its organization and scale. Small,

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family-owned, single location, competitive firms began to be merged into large oligopolistic corporations after 1896, especially during the great merger waves of 1907-1912 and 1921-1929 (Naylor 1975). Protected by tariffs and operating more than one, very large factory, these new creations were more successful than earlier methods (such as cartels) in maintaining profitability. The railway companies were some of the early pioneers in this field, as the necessity of operating spatially dispersed networks forced them to organize large corporate structures. Some of the other companies established at this time were Canada Cement, the Steel Corporation of Canada, Canadian Car and Foundry Co., the Sun Life Assurance Co., and The Bell Telephone Company of Canada, organized by Montreal promoters such as Herbert Holt, Louis Forget and Max Aitken (Naylor 1975). A set of large financial groups, concentrated around the major banks and securities firms, grew to wield tremendous power in the Canadian economy.

Equally important as the emergence of these large corporations themselves was the development of a large specialized class of white-collar workers to perform the tasks of monitoring the performance of production units and coordinating the flow of inputs through them. Alfred Chandler (1977) has argued that the "visible hand" of management largely replaced the functions previously performed by market mechanisms. Marketing, purchasing, accounting, research and development, and other functional divisions as well as geographical divisions were set up in the new large corporations. As time went on, more and more positions in the new management hierarchy were professionalized. Occupational groups such as accountants, mechanical, electrical and chemical engineers, and the more general 'management'

positions organized professional associations around the turn of the twentieth century. Universities, previously the domain of the liberal arts and pure sciences, added faculties of engineering and business administration to the older professional schools of law and medicine. The new corporate ideology of 'scientific management' was legitimized by its introduction into the university curriculum (Larson 1977). At lower levels, thousands of less prestigious and remunerative white collar jobs were created to provide services for this new managerial class: secretaries, bookkeepers, stenographers, telephone operators, typists, and sales representatives to market the wares of the new corporations.

In the age of corporate capitalism, the face of cities across North America began to change. First of all, the population and physical size of the cities such as Montreal increased dramatically, as Figure 4.1 and Table 4.1 show. Its population more than doubled in the first two decades of the twentieth century, while the population of its suburbs more than tripled. Between 1900 and 1910, a vigorous policy of annexation was pursued, and most of the present day area of the City of Montreal was consolidated (see Figure 4.2). Of the inner ring of suburbs, only Westmount and Outremont, the pre-eminent English- and French-speaking elite residential suburbs, avoided the twin perils of bankruptcy and Montreal's enticements by the end of the First World War.

A second major development was that of specialized downtown office and commercial areas, as the new corporations moved their management offices away from their factories. By the turn of the century in Montreal, the elite 'Square Mile' residential district was being invaded by department stores, hotels, luxury apartment

CITY	1871	1881	1891	1901	1911	1921	1931
Montreal	107 225	140 747	216 650	267 730	467 986	618 506	818 577
St. Henri [1]	-	6 415	13 413	21 192	30 335	-	-
Notre-Dame-de-Grace [2]	-	1 524	2 305	2 225	5 217	-	-
Maisonneuve [3]	-	-	833	3 958	18 684	-	-
Montreal (1931 territory)	130 833	177 377	256 723	328 172	490 504	618 506	818 577
Lachine	1 696	2 406	3 761	5 561	10 699	15 404	18 630
Outremont	-	387	795	1 148	4 820	13 249	28 641
Verdun	-	278	296	1 898	11 629	25 001	60 745
Westmount	200	884	3 076	8 856	14 579	17 593	24 235
Island of Montreal	144 044	193 171	277 525	35 43	487 553	38 210	1 003 868

NOTES

[1] Annexed to Montreal in 1905
[2] Annexed to Montreal in 1910
[3] Annexed to Montreal in 1918

Source: Published summaries of census returns, 1871-1931.

Table 4.1 - Population Growth, Montreal and Selected Suburbs, 1871-1931

LEGEND

- City of Montreal, 1880
- Areas Annexed, 1881-1899
- Areas Annexed, 1900-1914

Source: Linteau 1985, p. 109

0 1 2 3 4

MILES
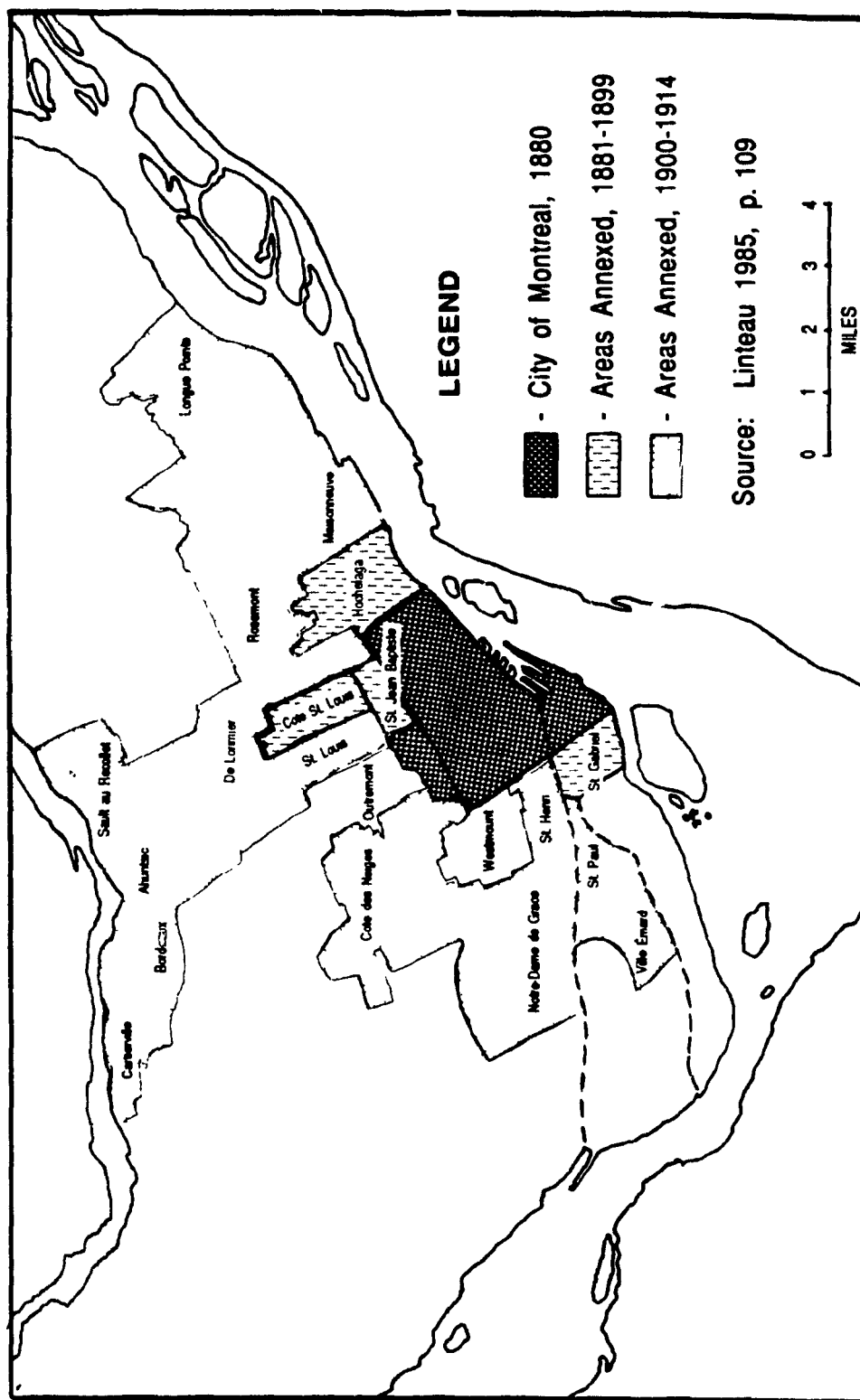
Figure 4.2 - Montreal Annexations, 1883-1918

buildings, and offices. Streets such as St. Catherine and Sherbrooke, and squares such as Dominion and Phillips, were converted away from their predominantly residential character. The houses and churches built for the anglophone elite of Montreal gave way to the stores and offices that were built to replace them.

A third change that the era of corporate capitalism ushered in was in the realm of city government. Most of the large industrial cities of the nineteenth century were controlled by political 'machines', institutions that based their power on the support of working class and ethnic voting constituencies for ward politicians who reciprocated with the dispensation of patronage positions and city contracts to their followers. The urban reformers of this period did not look to the democratization of decision-making as the answer to problems of corruption in municipal governments. Indeed, because it allowed 'demagogues' elected by a supposedly uninformed rabble to control municipal government, democracy was seen as part of the problem. Instead, the corporate form was adopted as the ideal model for the efficiently-run state. The rationalization of municipal administration and the professionalization of its bureaucracy along the same lines as in the new industrial corporations was actively promoted. The ward politicians, not always as responsive to the desires of business leaders as the latter would have liked, were to be eliminated through the establishment of city-wide elections that would benefit primarily high-profile candidates, in other words businessmen and professionals. A municipal administration without 'politics' was the goal, and structures such as the council/city manager system were advocated in order to reduce the power of the politicians in the running of the city.

This model represented a conscious attempt to achieve the maximum separation possible between the legislative...and the executive or administrative function ...The residents, or more accurately, the property-owning taxpayers, were seen as analogous to a company's shareholders...Council [was made to] resemble a corporate board of directors (concerned only with matters of policy), leaving administration in the hands of the employees headed by a general manager (Higgins 1986, 151-2).

By the 1890s in Montreal, the political power at the municipal level of the predominantly English-speaking business elite had been slipping away to what the English newspapers characterized as a French-Canadian political 'machine' (Kaplan 1982). Under the mayoralty of Raymonde Prefontaine from 1898 to 1902, matters came to a head and a vigorous reform movement was founded, made up of a variety of civic organizations but led mainly by English-speaking business leaders such as Herbert Ames. Success was not achieved, however, until 1909-10 when a provincial government inquiry outlined in stark detail the "institutionalized network of bribery and extortion" that permeated City Hall (Kaplan 1982). On the subsequent wave of shock and outrage the Civic Improvement League swept to victory in the next elections. A four-person Board of Control, elected city-wide to reduce the ability of constituency-based 'machine' politicians to dominate it, was established to oversee the city's revenues and expenditures. Taxes and expenditures were reduced, and patronage appointments were eliminated. Within four years, however, the reformers were swept out of office as the old councillors, led by Mederic Martin, were able to characterize the reformers as the party of the English elite, thus polarizing the election along linguistic lines. For the next four decades the city government remained firmly controlled by forces opposed to reform along the lines of the corporate ideal.

As in many North American cities, the battle for urban reform was not won in the inner city, but the 'suburban solution' remained for the business elite. When Brookline, Mass., the self-styled 'richest town in the world' voted against annexation to Boston: "They were not rejecting growth or development, but were expressing a determination to control the physical and social environments in which they lived (K.T. Jackson 1984, p. 149). Similarly, as the suburban Chicago town of Morgan Park's weekly newspaper remarked in 1907:

> The real issue is not taxes, nor water, nor street cars - it is a much greater question than either. It is the moral control of our village.... Under local government we can absolutely control every objectionable thing that may try to enter our limits - but once annexed we are at the mercy of the city hall (quoted in K.T. Jackson 1984, p. 151).

The defeat of urban reform in Montreal reinforced the resolve of the inhabitants of elite suburbs such as Westmount to remain outside its political control. The ideals of urban reform and its means were enthusiastically adopted and put into practice in Westmount. The efficiency and honesty of Westmount's administration in contrast with the corruption and waste of Montreal's government was the main rallying cry of those who most vocally opposed their town's annexation by Montreal. As Hubert Groves, the editor of the *Westmount News*, lashed out in a front page editorial:

> Wake up Westmount! Don't let this opportunity slip away! Don't allow your city to lose such a magnificent heritage as this is soon to be come within the next ten years from now....The reputation of Montreal is rotten - a disgrace to all those who live within her borders. Westmount is to my mind one of the best governed and best managed cities in North America - a model city in every sense of the word....Westmounter's, Montreal is looking with jealous eyes on you. Wake up and do your duty (Groves, *Westmount News*, 07/01/1910).

Conclusion

It has been shown in this chapter that Westmount developed between 1870 and 1929 within the context of a society that was in transition from an industrial capitalist

organization of production to a corporate capitalist model. These changes had far-reaching and dramatic effects on the size and organization of its cities. The creation of a large class of professionals and corporate managers who were increasingly residentially segregated from the burgeoning working class population, and their exclusion from control over municipal government with the defeat of urban reform, led to the development of autonomous, elite suburbs such as Westmount. In the next two chapters, the development of Westmount will be examined first in terms of the actual construction of the landscape and community, and then by looking at the political and ideological struggles over how to control and preserve this 'model town'.

CHAPTER V

THE CONSTRUCTION OF WESTMOUNT

In this chapter, the focus shifts from the broader societal level to an examination of the construction of the landscape and community of Westmount between 1870 and 1929. This period is broken down into four building cycles, the construction activity in each period is examined and the changing social geography of Westmount is examined. In addition, through an examination of the building permits issued, the builders who made Westmount's elite landscape are studied.

Building Cycles and the Pattern of Westmount's Development

The residential construction market is characterized by a recurrent cycle of booms and busts, following in a more exaggerated way the more general economic cycles. It is the highly speculative nature of the housing market and the extreme volatility of the closely related mortgage finance market that makes the housing market so responsive to upward and downward trends in the economy as a whole (Hanna 1986). It is not surprising then that Westmount's development was not a smooth and continuous process, and followed much the same pattern as the larger and more diverse Montreal housing market in the period under study.

Figure 5.1 shows the close relationship in building activity between Westmount and Montreal in the period under study. As Westmount only began issuing the permits in 1894, and 14,4 percent of all dwellings in 1939 had been constructed before permits began to be issued, the earlier figures are estimated from annual

Figure 5.1 - Building Permits Issued in Montreal and Westmount, 1870-1940
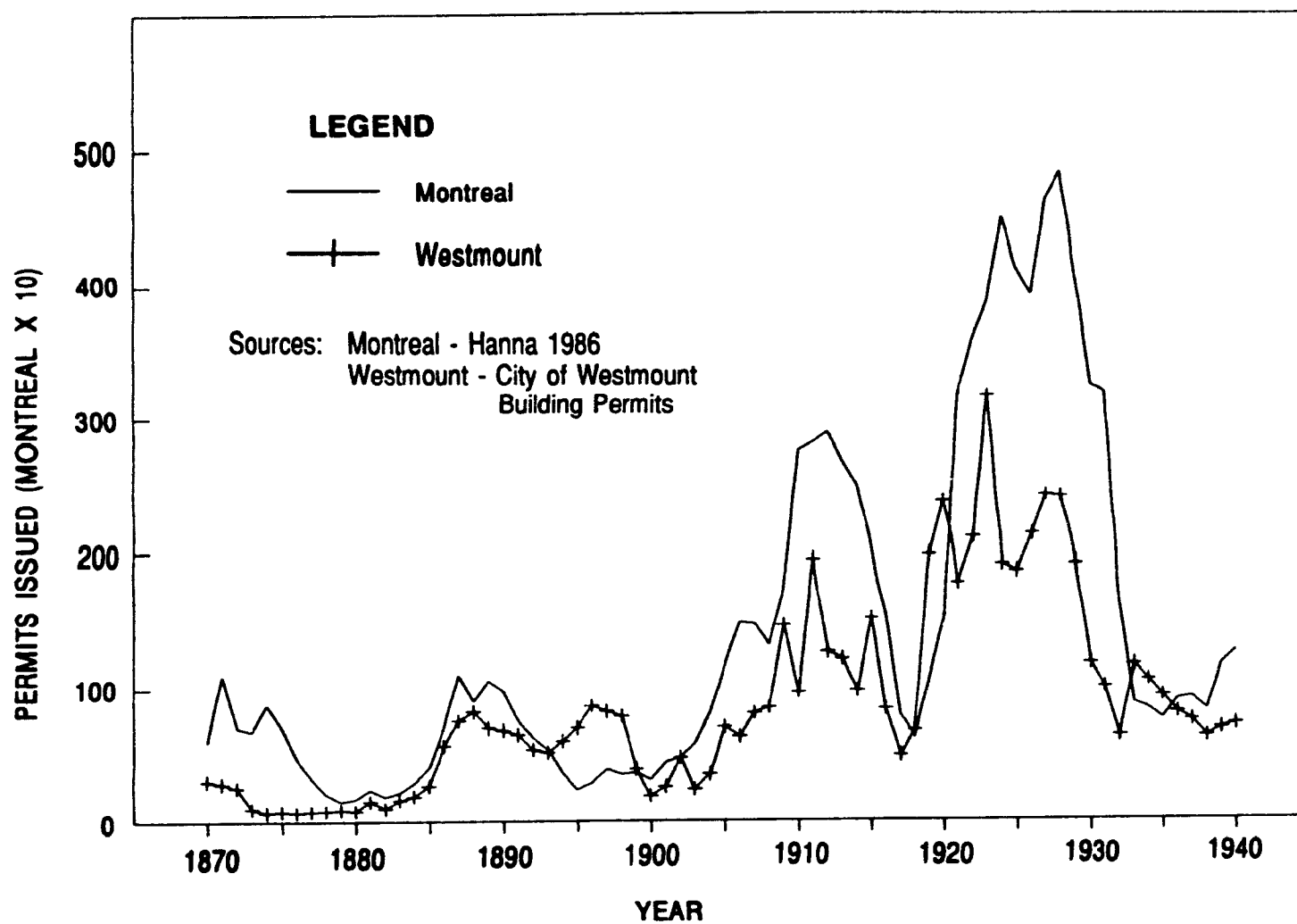
property evaluation records. Four distinct peaks of building activity in Westmount can be identified: from the early 1870s to 1880; from the mid-1880s to the mid-1890s; from 1905 to 1914; and from 1919 to 1929. These cycles are examined in turn below, with particular emphasis on the middle two periods, when Westmount experienced its most explosive growth and when the elite, anglophone character of both its community and its landscape was consolidated.

This section of this thesis is based partly on the historical records of Westmount, newspaper articles and secondary sources, but most importantly on an examination of the building permits and property evaluation records. For a sample of streets chosen to provide a cross-section of Westmount from the CPR tracks at the foot of the hill to the summit (shown in Figure 5.2), a number of computer databases were created. One database is made up of information from all of the building permits issued for new residential dwelling construction on these streets between 1894 and 1937. Copies of the permits are filed in the Westmount municipal archives and coverage is fairly complete; the gaps are covered by permit abstract books with the loss of only a small amount of information. In addition, for the years 1881, 1901, 1914, and 1929, databases were created with information from the municipal evaluation rolls to provide a profile of the inhabitants and buildings of the sample streets.

Early Development, 1870 to 1880

The first building cycle was more important in terms of the territorial consolidation and institutional development than in the actual number of dwellings constructed.
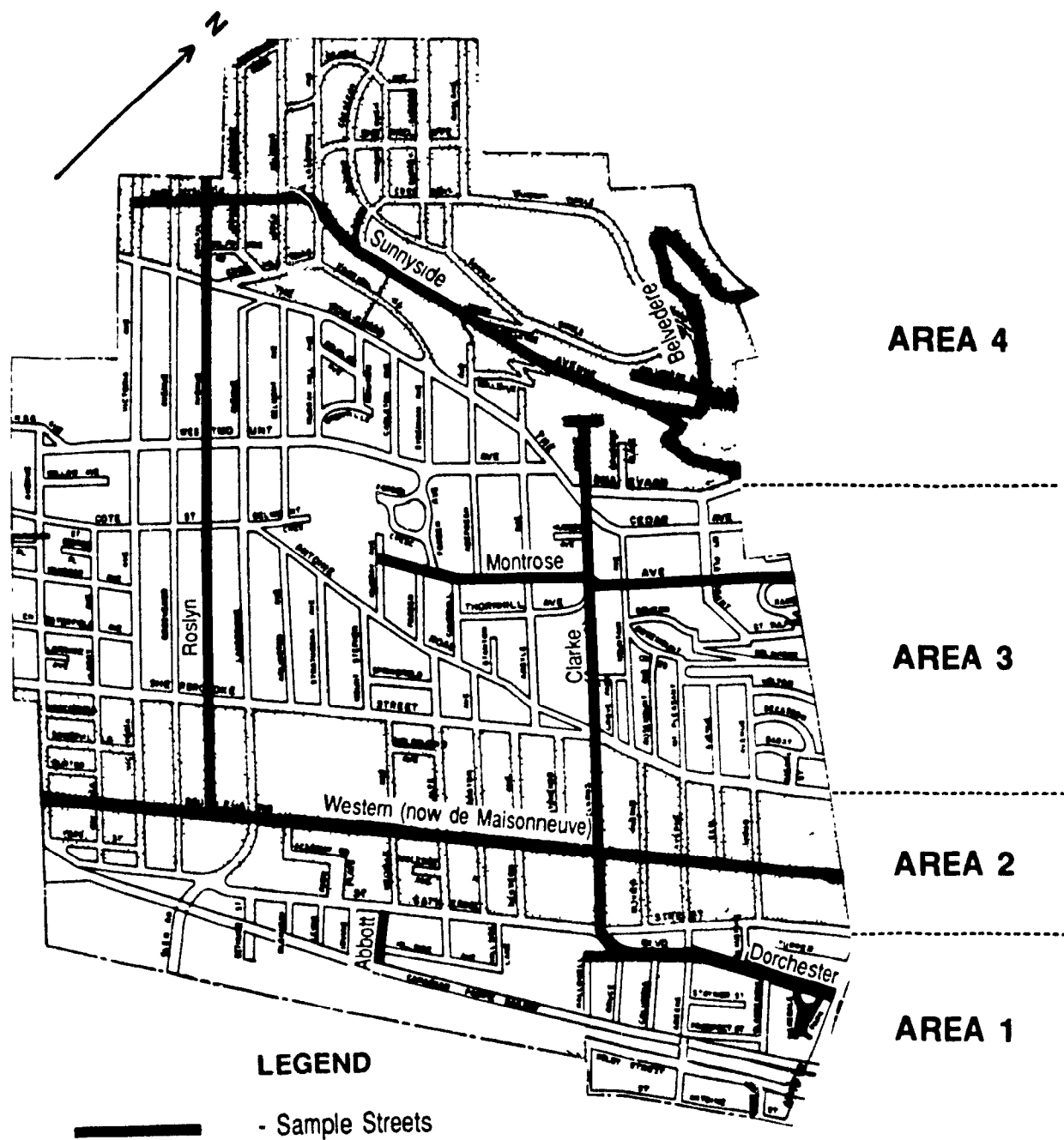
Figure 5.2 - Sample Streets and Geographic Areas

In 1872, there were only about 50 dwellings and 200 people living year-round in the Westmount area, and there were no schools, churches or commercial establishments. Until 1874, the area was part of the Parish of St. Henri. In that year, however, the parish was split in two with the northern and western ends (including what was to become Westmount) becoming the new village of Notre-Dame de Grace. This village itself split in 1879, with the more developed and predominantly anglophone eastern section (present-day Westmount) taking the name Cote St. Antoine after the road that bisected it from east to west. In the next year, police and fire brigades were established, a rudimentary town plan was drawn up, cadastral numbers were allotted, and the first evaluation rolls were completed. Although a strict policy of regulating development was considered from the beginning, it was rejected as too expensive (Short 1979). As a result, in the early years much leeway was left to the developers concerning the size and appearance of dwellings, lot sizes, and street widths.

This first building cycle, beginning in Montreal in the mid-1860s, only extended into Westmount in its last few years as development continued west from the older anglophone elite residential area in St. Antoine Ward, the 'Square Mile'. There was a flurry of speculation and subdivision on land in the southern end of the area around Greene, Victoria and Kensington Avenues after the western terminus of the St. Catherine St. streetcar line was moved into the village in 1872 (see Figure 5.3a). Land prices on these streets jumped from 10 cents or less per square foot to 25 cents (Short 1979). In the southeastern corner of the village, land was subdivided into small and narrow lots, which subsequently led to the construction of the same
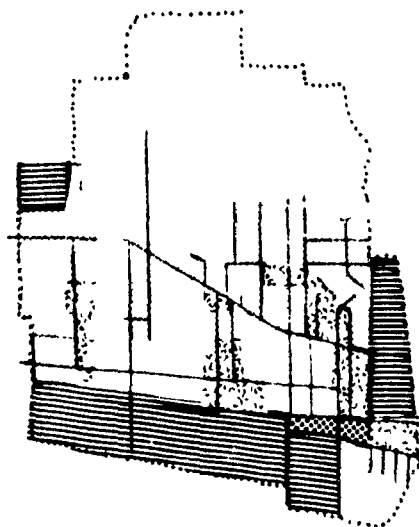
(a) 1879
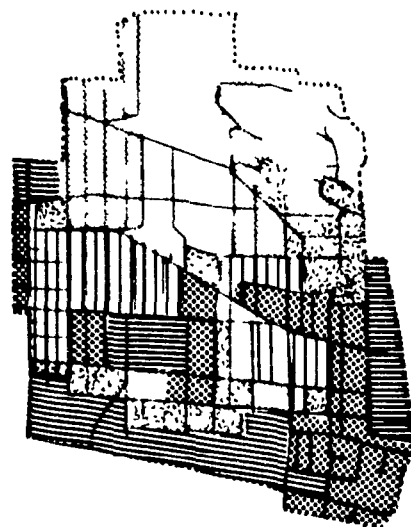
(b) 1910
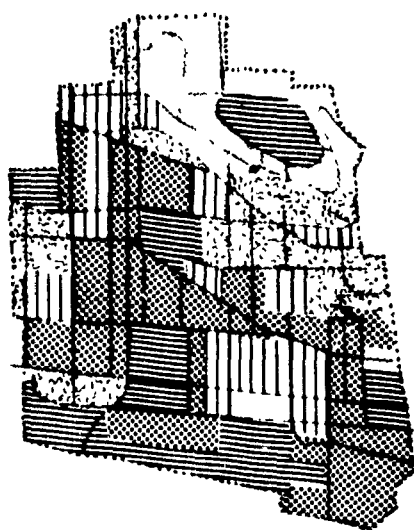
LEGEND

☐ - Not Subdivided

☐ - 0 to 10% Developed

▦ - 11 to 50% Developed

▥ - 51 to 80% Developed

▨ - 81 to 100% Developed

▤ - Non-residential Landuse

(c) 1929

Note: Percentages are of housing constructed as of 1962.

Source: Adapted from Seabrooke 1964.

Figure 5.3 - Development of Westmount in 1879, 1910, and 1929

56

type of elite row houses or terraces that characterized much of the Square Mile (Hanna 1977). The village had a poorly developed road network, so the developers joined together to form the Western Avenue Road Company and proposed to build a new road from east to west through the area (present-day de Maisonneuve Boulevard). Less than half of the road was actually completed, however, before this building cycle came to an end. Lack of demand for the new subdivisions forced most of the developers into receivership, and as a result most of the land reverted to its original owners with relatively few housing units actually having been constructed (Short 1979).

The 1881 census reveals that the population of Cote St. Antoine was only 884 persons living in 139 permanent dwellings. The first columns in Tables 5.1 and 5.2 show how strongly British (87,9 percent) and Protestant (77,8 percent) the area was even at this early date. In terms of the occupational structure of its inhabitants, Table 5.3 shows the area to be in transition, with farmers, gardeners and 'gentlemen' still making up almost one-fifth of the occupations of heads of households. However, even at this early date, these occupations were outnumbered by merchants and accountants. In comparison with the figures presented for Montreal (for 1861 however), it can be seen that Cote St. Antoine was already a predominantly elite residential area, with no working class occupations other than gardener in the top ten.

At the institutional level, one of the first acts of the village council in 1874 was the establishment of a school commission to set up and run English Protestant schools. The first school opened its doors soon after, a rather modest two-room

NATIONAL ORIGIN	1881	1901	1911	1921	1931
Total Population (No.)	884	8 856	14 579	17 593	24 235
British Total (%)	87,9	88,3	82,8	79,7	73,9
English	41,6	45,3	41,0	45,0	38,0
Scots	31,1	27,3	26,2	20,6	14,4
Irish	15,2	15,4	15,1	13,7	14,4
French	10,0	7,9	9,1	11,6	13,2
Other European (%)	0,3	3,0	5,2	8,1	12,3
Dutch	·	0,3	0,3	0,2	0,4
German	0,3	1,5	1,8	1,0	1,5
Jewish	·	0,7	2,6	5,8	7,4
Scandinavian	·	0,3	0,2	0,3	1,6
Asian (%)	·	0,4	0,5	0,4	0,3
Other/Unspecified (%)	1,8	0,6	2,4	0,5	0,4

Source: Published Summaries of Census Returns, 1871-1931

Table 5.1 - Westmount Population by National Origin, 1881-1931

RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION	1881	1891	1901	1911	1921	1931
Total Population (No.)	884	3 076	8 856	14 579	17 593	24 235
Roman Catholic (%)	19,8	14,7	13,1	17,9	22,8	26,0
Protestant (%)	77,8	84,3	83,8	77,8	69,3	65,3
Anglican	25,6	30,3	32,2	29,0	28,9	27,7
Baptist	2,4	3,0	4,4	3,6	2,4	2,1
Congregational	9,5	4,8	3,6	2,2	1,6	-
Lutheran	-	0,2	0,3	0,8	0,3	1,9
Methodist	7,2	14,3	13,7	11,2	8,7	-
Presbyterian	26,1	29,9	29,2	30,4	25,9	14,0
Unitarian	2,5	1,0	-	-	0,7	0,6
United Church [1]	-	-	-	-	-	18,1
Other Protestant	4,5	0,5	0,4	0,6	0,8	0,9
Jewish (%)	-	-	0,7	2,6	5,7	7,3
Others (%)	2,1	0,7	2,2	1,6	2,1	1,3
Unspecified (%)	0,3	0,4	0,2	0,1	0,1	0,1

NOTE

[1] In 1925 the Congregational and the Methodist Churches, along with roughly half of the Presbyterian Church, merged to form the United Church of Canada.

Source: Published Summaries of Census Returns, 1881-1931.

Table 5.2 - Westmount Population by Religious Affiliation, 1881-1931

MONTREAL

(a) 1861

Rank	Occupation	Percent
1	Labourer	16,0
2	Carter	5,9
3	Shoemaker	5,0
4	Merchant	4,2
5	Carpenter	3,7
6	Joiner	3,5
7	Clerk	3,5
8	Tailor	1,5
9	Blacksmith	1,4
10	Painter	1,3

(46,0 percent of total workforce)

(b) 1901

Rank	Occupation	Percent
1	Labourer	17,6
2	Clerk	4,8
3	Carter	3,2
4	Joiner	3,2
5	Agent	3,1
6	Shoemaker	2,4
7	Painter	1,9
8	Merchant	1,8
9	Machinist	1,7
10	Tailor	1,6

(41,3 percent of total workforce)

WESTMOUNT

(c) 1881

Rank	Occupation	Percent
1	Merchant	16,0
2	Manufacturer	5,9
3	Gardener	5,0
4	Agent	4,2
5	Farmer	3,7
6	Accountant	3,5
7	Gentleman	3,5
8	Advocate	1,5
9	Builder	1,4
10	Secretary	1,3

(61,2 percent of total workforce)

(d) 1901

Rank	Occupation	Percent
1	Merchant	17,6
2	Manager	4,8
3	Agent	3,2
4	Manufacturer	3,2
5	Broker	3,1
6	Clerk	2,4
7	Advocate	1,9
8	Engineer	1,8
9	Bookkeeper	1,7
10	Accountant	1,6

(47,1 percent of total workforce)

Sources: Montreal: Lewis 1985, p. 99.
Westmount: Compiled from Evaluation Rolls and Lovell's Directory, 1881 and 1901.

Table 5.3 - Most Common Occupations in Industrial Montreal and Westmount

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schoolhouse. A reflection of the increasingly anglophone makeup of the community is that the first French Catholic school did not open until 1906. Similarly, St. Matthias Anglican Church opened its doors in Westmount in 1873, and eight more Protestant denominations followed before the first Roman Catholic Church opened in 1904.

The Second Cycle, 1881 to 1901

The second building boom, which began during the early 1880s and ended around the turn of the century, was very significant in determining the nature of the community for the future. One important change at the symbolic level was the adoption in 1892 of the name of 'Westmount'. This was the name of the old Murray family mansion, and over the years it was gradually adopted to describe the area as a whole. The village council gave two reasons for the change: first, that it reflected the increasing numerical dominance of the English-speaking majority of its population; and second, that the French name was an obstacle in floating municipal bonds, particularly in international markets (Council Minutes, 01/06/1892). Despite these arguments, the change was controversial, as many residents agreed with one councillor who argued that the new name was "stuffy, starchy, [and] self-righteous" (Montreal *Gazette*, 01/07/1892). Put to a referendum, the change was narrowly passed. One year later, the corporate status of Westmount was upgraded from a village to a town in recognition of its growth.

At a more mundane level, the council took a number of measures that contributed to spurring residential development in Westmount. All streets were paved

and maintained year-round, and serviced with water and lighting by 1893. In the same year through negotiations with the Montreal Street Railway, the streetcar terminus was moved west to St. Catherine St. and Victoria Avenue with a return route along Sherbrooke Street.

Development was still mainly concentrated in the southeast corner of the town and, following the opening of the Canadian Pacific Railway station in 1886, around the southern end of Victoria Avenue. The 1891 census reported the population of Cote St. Antoine had risen to 3 074 persons living in 572 dwellings. As had been the case in the earlier building cycle, the new inhabitants of the area were mostly middle class merchants and professionals (see Table 5.3). By 1901, after a decade of fairly active building, the population of Westmount almost tripled to 8 856 persons living in 1 728 dwellings. As can be seen in Tables 5.1 and 5.2, the proportion of the population that was British and Protestant remained overwhelming at 88,3 and 83,8 percent respectively.

While terrace dwellings remained popular in the southeastern part of the city, most of the dwellings completed outside this area were detached or semi-detached houses of six to ten rooms. As shown in Table 5.4, social segregation within Westmount was already occurring by the end of this period, even before the Summit (Area 4) was developed. The median assessed value of dwellings in Area 1 was $100 less than that of the other two areas, and the ranges of values were beginning to shift towards the higher elevations in the town.

AREA	ASSESSMENT LEVEL	NUMBER	AREA PERCENT	TOTAL PERCENT
1	100 - 199	7	38,89	2,83
	200 - 299	10	55,50	4,06
	300 - 399	1	5,56	0,40
Subtotal	Area 1	18	100,00	7,29
2	0 - 99	5	2,81	2,02
	100 - 199	11	6,18	4,45
	200 - 299	30	16,85	12,15
	300 - 399	58	32,58	23,48
	400 - 499	53	32,58	23,48
	500 - 599	16	8,99	6,48
	600 & Over	5	2,81	2,02
Subtotal	Area 2	178	100,00	72,06
3	0 - 99	2	3,92	0,81
	100 - 199	4	6,18	1,62
	200 - 299	15	16,85	6,08
	300 - 399	18	32,58	7,29
	400 - 499	9	32,58	3,64
	500 - 599	1	8,99	0,40
	600 & Over	2	2,81	0,81
Subtotal	Area 3	51	100,00	20,65

Sample Size = 247 Households.

Source: City of Westmount Evaluation Rolls and Lovell's Directory, 1901.

Table 5.4 - Westmount Areas by Assessed Value of Dwelling In 1901

The Boom, 1901-1914

The next building boom, from approximately 1905 to the beginning of the First World War in 1914, was the most important period in terms of both the numbers of buildings completed and their role in defining the nature of Westmount as a community. As Figure 5.4 shows, although more permits were issued in the fourth building boom from 1919 to 1929, they were proportionately more for renovations, for the construction of garages, and for plumbing repairs than for the construction of new dwellings. The value of building permits rose even more dramatically than the number, rising from $282 700 in 1902 to $1 839 441 in 1913. In 1911, the *Westmount News* reported that the town had issued as many building permits as any city in Canada (Gubbay and Hooff 1985, 98). This wave of development not only filled in undeveloped lots in the southern part of the city in this third cycle, but spread north of Cote St. Antoine and up towards the summit of the mountain (see Figure 5.3b). This shift was aided by the establishment of a second streetcar line in the city running along The Boulevard and Sherbrooke Street as far west as Lansdowne Avenue. By the end of this period, most of the large estates and the Westmount Golf Club had been sold to speculators or developers. The 1911 census reported that Westmount, by then an incorporated city, had attained a population of 14 579, and municipal sources estimated 18 500 residents by 1914.

Much of the residential construction was a series of comfortable but not ostentatious semi-detached red brick dwellings that were very similar to each other in appearance to each other. At an average cost of between six and eight thousand dollars (City of Westmount, *Annual Report* 1913-14), these houses were affordable

Figure 5.4 - Purposes of Building Permits in Westmount, 1894-1935

LEGEND
- New Residences
- Renovations
- Garages
- Commercial/Institutional
- Plumbing

NO. OF PERMITS

YEAR
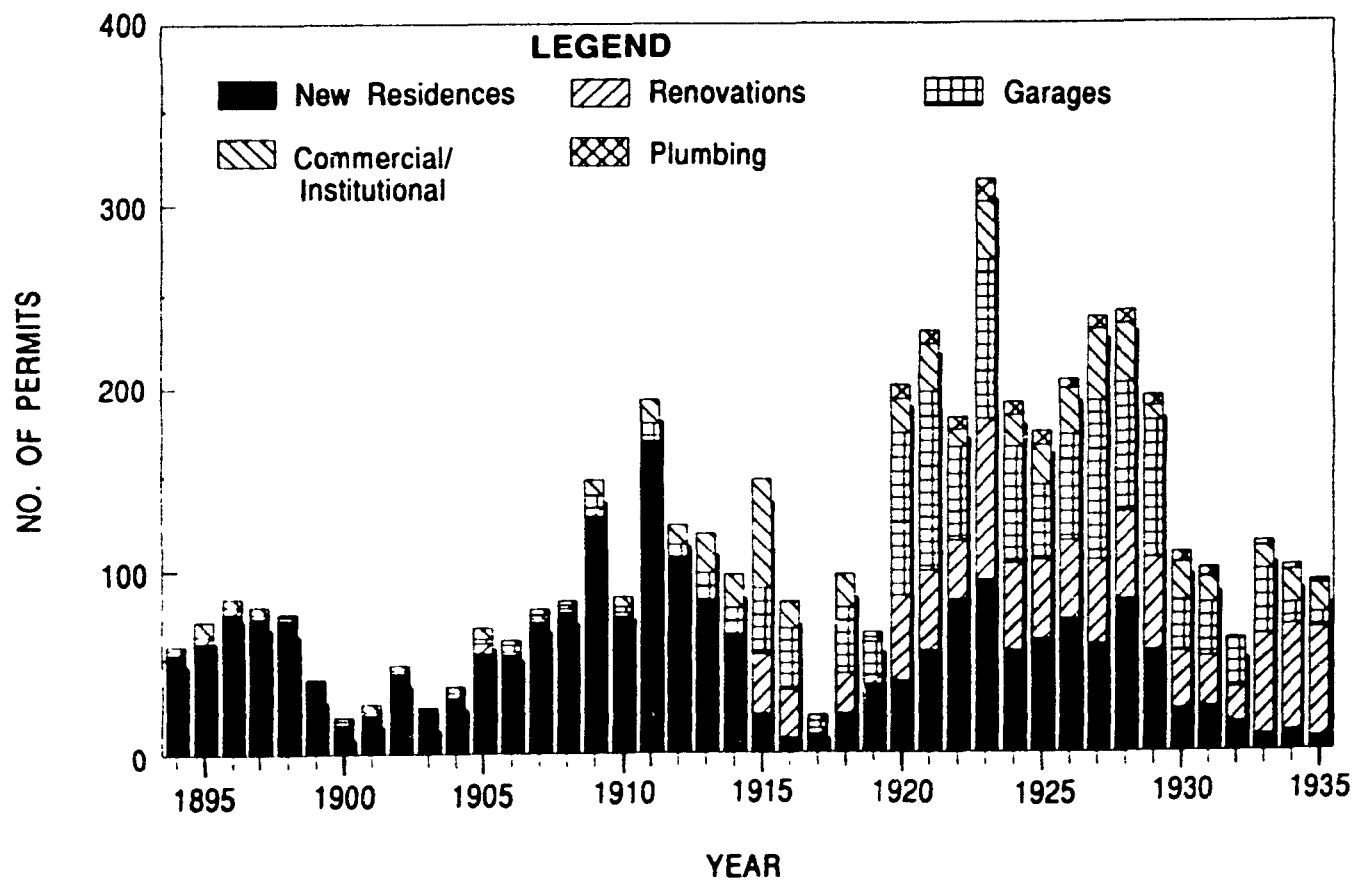
Source: City of Westmount Building Permits, 1894-1935.

to the rising class of corporate managers and professionals that was emerging as corporate capitalism developed as the dominant form of economic organization. These groups made up an increasingly large portion of the city's population by the end of this period, and sharply differentiated it from other suburbs of Montreal (see Table 5.5).

Table 5.6 shows the assessed values of dwellings by area in Westmount in 1914. Whereas at the end of the second building cycle in 1901 there were no completed dwellings on the sample streets in Area 4 (above the Boulevard), by 1914 this area accounted for almost 10 percent of the dwellings in the sample. Over one third of these dwellings were evaluated at over $900, clearly distinguishing it from the other areas. Areas 2 and 3 show a more even distribution of dwellings by value, with the median value of Area 2 between $450 and $600, and Area 3 between $600 and $750. By this time, Area 1 is clearly socially differentiated from the rest of Westmount; a sort of buffer zone between the 'real' Westmount and St. Henri.

The Twenties

The First World War disrupted building activity considerably in Westmount as it did in the rest of Montreal, as armed forces enlistments and later conscription reduced the available labour force and consequently drove up the cost of labour (City of Westmount, *Annual Reports* 1916-18). After the war ended, new residential construction rebounded, but did not regain pre-war levels. In fact, more building permits were issued for adding garages for the proliferating supply of automobiles to already existing homes than for the construction of new ones. Between the 1911

MONTREAL

(a) St. Antoine West - 1901

Rank	Occupation	Percent
1	Agent	10,0
2	Clerk	8,9
3	Merchant	8,2
4	Physician	2,8
5	Salesman	2,8
6	Manufacturer	2,5
7	Advocate	2,4
8	Bookkeeper	1,1
9	Engineer	0,9
10	Machinist	0,8

(40,3 percent of total workforce)

(b) Maisonneuve - 1901

Rank	Occupation	Percent
1	Labourer	17,6
2	Carpenter	4,8
3	Shoemaker	3,2
4	Machinist	3,2
5	Foreman	3,1
6	Clerk	2,4
7	Carter	1,9
8	Engineer	1,8
9	Painter	1,7
10	Grocer	1,6

(48,3 percent of total workforce)

WESTMOUNT

(c) 1914

Rank	Occupation	Percent
1	Merchant	12,5
2	Manager	8,2
3	Agent	6,2
4	Manufacturer	4,5
5	Broker	3,9
6	Advocate	3,6
7	Accountant	2,6
8	Clerk	2,4
9	Builder	2,0
10	Engineer	1,8

(47,7 percent of total workforce)

(d) 1929

Rank	Occupation	Percent
1	Manager	11,1
2	Merchant	9,2
3	Gentleman	7,3
4	Manufacturer	5,0
5	Agent	4,8
6	Physician	3,6
7	Broker	3,3
8	Engineer	3,1
9	Advocate	2,9
10	Accountant	2,5

(52,8 percent of total workforce)

Sources: St. Antoine: Lewis 1985, p. 105; Maisonneuve: Linteau 1985, p. 125.
Westmount: Compiled from Evaluation Rolls and Lovell's Directory, 1914 and 1929.

Table 5.5 - Most Common Occupations In Corporate Montreal and Westmount

AREA	ASSESSMENT LEVEL	NUMBER	AREA PERCENT	TOTAL PERCENT
1	150 - 299	15	71,43	3,59
	300 - 449	6	28,57	1,44
Subtotal	Area 1	21	100,00	5,03
2	0 - 149	4	1,62	0,96
	150 - 299	5	2,02	1,20
	300 - 449	74	29,96	17,70
	450 - 599	68	27,53	16,27
	600 - 749	74	29,96	17,70
	750 - 899	10	4,05	2,39
	900 & Over	12	4,86	2,87
Subtotal	Area 2	247	100,00	59,09
3	300 - 449	15	13,64	3,59
	450 - 599	21	19,08	5,02
	600 - 749	26	23,64	6,22
	750 - 899	24	21,82	5,74
	900 & Over	24	21,82	5,74
Subtotal	Area 3	110	100,00	26,31
4	300 - 449	2	5,00	0,48
	450 - 599	9	22,50	2,15
	600 - 749	12	30,00	2,87
	750 - 899	3	7,50	0,72
	900 & Over	14	35,00	3,35
Subtotal	Area 4	40	100,00	9,57

Sample Size = 418 Households.

Source: Compiled from City of Westmount Evaluation Rolls and Lovell's Directory, 1914.

Table 5.6 - Westmount Areas by Assessed Value of Dwelling in 1914

and 1921 censuses, Westmount's population grew by 20,6 percent (mostly before 1914), relatively low in comparison with the growth in the decade before (64,6 percent) and during the 1920s (37,7 percent). The 1931 census counted 24 235 residents of Westmount, and after this the population stabilized around this figure

While some of this construction was filling in the gaps left in Lower Westmount and on the mountain slope, the majority of the new houses were built around the summit of the mountain above The Boulevard (see Figure 5.3c). The earlier cycles had resulted in a city that was, in Stephen Leacock's words, "too rich for the poor, but too poor for the superrich" (1942, 233), who remained in the older elite area to the east, the 'Square Mile'. As one anecdotal account puts it, one prominent lady in the 1920s reacted in horror and sadness upon hearing that her son-in-law intended to move beyond Atwater: "To think that a daughter of mine would live in Westmount!" (recounted in Graham 1981, 40).

As commercial and office construction in Montreal continued to encroach on the Square Mile, however, the Westmount summit replaced it as the preferred location for the construction of new mansions, providing the same commanding view of the St. Lawrence plain but safely removed from these intruding activities both by distance and zoning bylaws. It was this area that attracted the new bourgeois families such as the Bronfmans, who made their first millions selling whisky during the Prohibition, and it was the area 'above the Boulevard' that was to give Westmount its enduring reputation as where the St. James Street business barons slept at night.
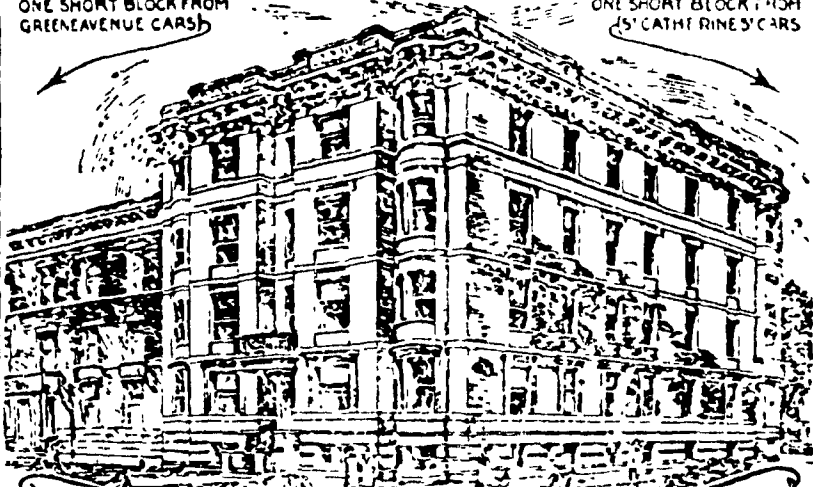
As automobile traffic increased, the areas around the major thoroughfares in the southern part of the city (especially Sherbrooke Street and the eastern half of Western Boulevard) were redeveloped from detached and semi-detached dwellings to small- and medium-sized apartment buildings. These apartments were built for an affluent consumer, as the average monthly rent in these buildings was over $55, more than double the Montreal average of $22 reported in the 1921 census. In the 1913 advertisement for the Western Apartments, reproduced in Figure 5.5, features such as "maid's room", separate bathrooms and WCs are listed, and specifically targeted are those presumably affluent families who would be spending the summer out of town.

This period also saw the construction of a set of institutional buildings, most notably a new City Hall on Sherbrooke St. (looking more like a small castle than a typical public building) and a rebuilt Victoria Hall in Westmount Park to replace the old building that had been destroyed by fire. The remaining land owned by the Murray family between Cote St. Antoine and Westmount Avenue was purchased and turned into a second large park; the land owned by McGill University and William Macdonald on the summit was also obtained and preserved from residential development. Across from the new City Hall, a memorial was erected to commemorate Westmount's enthusiastic participation in a war that most of the rest of the province had opposed.

Table 5.7 shows the distribution of dwellings in the sample by area and assessed value at the end of the period under study in this thesis. A clear hierarchy of dwellings had emerged by this time, with Area 1 on the bottom of the heap

Source: Groves 1913.

Figure 5.5 - Apartment Building Advertisement, 1913

AREA	ASSESSMENT LEVEL	NUMBER	AREA PERCENT	TOTAL PERCENT
1	0 - 299	11	57,89	1,56
	300 - 499	8	42,11	1,13
Subtotal	Area 1	19	100,00	2,69
2	0 - 299	14	3,05	1,98
	300 - 499	51	11,11	7,21
	500 - 749	242	52,72	34,23
	750 - 999	101	22,00	14,29
	1 000 - 1 249	48	10,46	6,79
	1 250 - 1 499	2	0,44	0,28
	1 500 - 1 999	1	0,22	0,14
Subtotal	Area 2	459	100,00	64,92
3	0 - 299	1	0,64	0,14
	300 - 499	0	0,00	0,00
	500 - 749	31	20,00	4,37
	750 - 999	46	29,68	6,51
	1 000 - 1 249	49	31,61	6,93
	1 250 - 1 499	11	7,10	1,56
	1 500 - 1 999	13	8,39	1,84
	2 000 & Over	4	2,58	0,57
Subtotal	Area 3	155	100,00	21,92
4	500 - 749	2	2,70	0,28
	750 - 999	16	21,62	2,26
	1 000 - 1 249	18	24,32	2,55
	1 250 - 1 499	12	16,23	1,70
	1 500 - 1 999	15	20,27	2,12
	2 000 & Over	11	14,86	1,56
Subtotal	Area 4	74	100,00	10,47

Sample Size = 707 Households.

Source: Compliled from City of Westmount Evaluation Rolls and Lovell's Directory, 1929.

Table 5.7 - Westmount Areas by Assessed Value of Dwelling in 1929

(median assessment less than $300), Areas 2 and 3 (median values $500 to 750 and $750 to 1000 respectively) in the middle, and Area 4, the summit, clearly on top socially as well as topographically. Over three-quarters of the dwellings in Area 4 were evaluated at over $1000; none in Area 1 reached half of that value. As shown in Table 5.8, between 1901 and 1929, the average value of dwellings in Westmount more than tripled, and the differentiation between the areas became far more pronounced. By 1929, the average dwelling in Area 4 was valued at over six times that of Area 1.

The Builders of Westmount

Westmount's landscape was shaped by the regulatory environment and broad societal shifts described above, but the true biography of its making must be brought down to the speculators, builders, architects, and homebuyers whose decisions and tastes determined its ultimate form. Hanna (1986) has described how in Montreal during the building cycle that lasted from 1866 to 1880, the housing built was constructed predominantly by small, French-Canadian builders who built one or two duplexes in an artisanal manner for poor working class families. There were some English-Canadian builders who built mainly for the upper end of the market.

In the construction of Westmount from 1894 to 1937, there was a trend away from these small builders, buying one or two lots and building a semi-detached residence or two on them. A number of much larger builders each built a substantial number of residences in the city. Table 5.9 shows the 14 builders who obtained five permits or more on the sample streets during this period. Together, these builders

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AREA	1901		1914		1929	
	Value	Index	Value	Index	Value	Index
1	1 858	55,5	2 514	32,5	3 253	30,5
2	3 513	104,9	7 159	92,6	8 405	78,9
3	3 302	98,6	8 382	108,4	12 503	117,4
4	-	-	11 654	150,7	19 496	183,1
City Total	3 349	100,0	7 734	100,0	10 650	100,0

Source: City of Westmount Evaluation Rolls, 1901, 1914, and 1929.

Table 5.8 - Westmount Building Assessment Values by Area in 1901, 1914, and 1929

CONTRACTOR NAME	PERMITS		BUILDINGS	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Blackwell, George	8	2,30	13	2,63
Bonnell Brothers	5	1,44	5	1,31
Brown, C.J.	27	7,76	45	8,63
Charette, A.	5	1,44	12	2,44
Creed, W.H.	9	2,59	10	2,25
Hand, J.H.	8	2,30	15	3,00
Hyde & Miller	13	3,74	13	2,63
Maher, James H.	14	4,02	42	8,26
McLennan, D.M.	5	1,44	10	2,06
Ogilvie, L.	10	2,87	14	2,81
Reid Brothers	6	1,72	8	1,69
Stewart, John	17	4,89	27	5,25
Wand, Thomas	6	1,72	12	2,44
Young, James	5	1,44	8	1,50
Major Builder Total	146	41,95	245	45,97

Note: Major builders include all those obtaining 5 or more permits (9,2 percent of all builders).

Source: City of Westmount Building Permits.

Table 5.9 - Major Builders of Dwellings in Westmount, 1894-1937

(less than 10 percent) of the total) obtained over 40 percent of all of the permits issued, while the largest five accounted for almost one quarter. While some of these builders were active from the beginning of this period, most of the large builders were concentrated in the last two of the four building cycles discussed above.

In contrast to the earlier cycle in Montreal described by Hanna, during this period in Westmount most of the builders were English Canadians. They accounted for 71,7 percent of all of the builders, 81,3 percent of all of the permits issued, and 13 of the 14 large builders. Furthermore, on those permits where the builder's address is given, 45 percent listed Westmount, including the two largest builders, Charles J. Smith and James Stewart. These two provide an interesting insight into how the building process changed in Westmount in this period. Smith started out as a real estate agent with his office in Westmount on St. Catherine near Greene Avenue in the 1890s. Around the turn of the century, he went into partnership with a builder, Edward Riel, and began obtaining permits to build houses. After the partnership broke up several years later, he continued to build houses on his own until the beginning of the Depression in 1930. Smith built a wide variety of types of dwellings, mostly the solid detached or semi-detached structures that predominate in Westmount, but some on the Summit as well (see Figures 5.6 and 5.7). John Stewart, on the other hand, was a Scottish immigrant who came to Montreal in the 1890s trained as a stone cutter. After working in this industry for several years, he set up shop in lower Westmount, working initially as a subcontractor on large construction projects. His activity in housing construction grew out of this larger activity. All but one of the houses constructed by Stewart (see Figures 5.8 and 5.9 for

Figure 5-6 - 4459 de Maisonneuve Boulevard (C.J. Brown)

Figure 5-7 - 63 Sunnyside (C.J. Brown)

Figure 5-8 - 562-564 Roslyn Avenue (John Stewart)

Figure 5-9 - 572-574 Roslyn Avenue (John Stewart)

examples) in the sample were built on the same block of Roslyn Avenue between 1899 and 1909. His houses tend to have been more consistently upscale, brick or stone buildings. The two *Westmount News* housing features shown in Figure 5-10 provide details of the types of dwellings commonly being constructed in Westmount during this period, with features such as an ivory-finished dining room, separate bed and bathrooms for the maid, four to six bedrooms and "tiled bathrooms equipped with every modern convenience".

Conclusion

As has been shown, between 1870 and 1929 the landscape and community of Westmount were transformed from a quiet, rural area into a solidly English-speaking elite residential suburb. The process was not smooth, with construction levels rising and falling in cycles roughly corresponding with those of the larger Montreal housing market. By 1929, one-quarter of the city's workforce was employed in professional or managerial occupations; almost another quarter were otherwise involved in commerce or manufacturing. The elite, anglophone character of Westmount distinguished it from its surrounding municipalities and neighbourhoods; it was also being segregated socially within its own territory as altitude and social status became closely associated. In the next chapter, the defence of Westmount through political actions and administrative structures will be examined.

RAPID GROWTH OF UPPER GROSVENOR AVE.

CONTRACTORS T B HUDSON & CO   FOR SALE BY JAS. BAILLIE   Photo by Houghton

We illustrate this week the re blocks of semi detached dwellings gr ed this summer by the contracting firm of T B Hudson & Co numbers 612 614 616 618 Grosvenor avenue which are now complete and are offered for sale by Mr James Baillie.

The growth of Grosvenor avenue during the last couple of years has been something phenomenal and now ly every vacant lot from Sherbrooke street to the Mountain is the scene of building operations.

The above block represent four of the finest semi detached dwellings in Westmount and is a credit to the designer and builders. They face on Grosvenor with plenty of lawn space in front and are of a most attractive design.

The largest houses Nos 614 and 616 are finished entirely in selected quartered oak and with birch floors. No 616 contains parlor library dining room kitchen maid's room and maid's bathroom. The upstairs of their suite is most conveniently laid out and contains six large bedrooms and two tiled bathrooms equipped with every modern convenience.

Special mention may be made of the large balconies at the front and rear of each house which add greatly to their appearance and comfort.

1910-11-11

GROWTH OF THE UPPER LEVEL
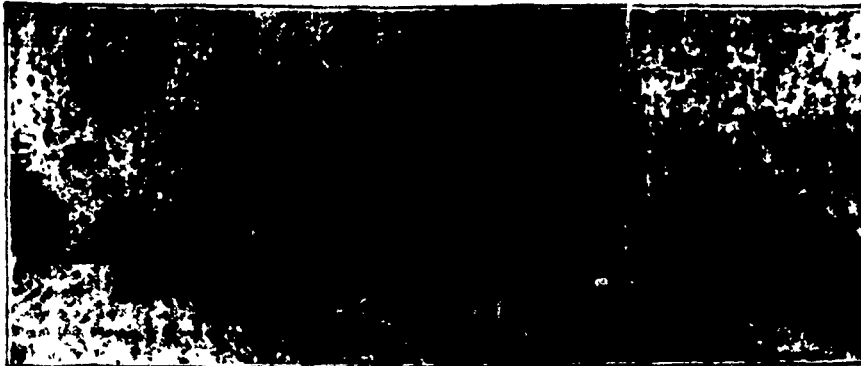
GEORGE E BLACKWELL'S NEW HOUSES CORNER COTE ROAD AND STRATHCONA AVENUE

The block of houses illustrated above which has just been completed at the corner of Cote St Antoine Road and Strathcona avenue by Mr George E Blackwell, well known in Westmount in his capacity as a builder are such as Westmount may well be proud of.

The frontage is on Cote Road and is thirty feet to each house. The approaches allow of about 30 feet lawn space as shown in illustration.

The entrance to each is through a medium sized vestibule, hard wood finish, and with tile mosaic flooring. A large square hall extends inwards from the entrance to the dining room.

with a fire place at the extreme end, large art glass windows at the left wall and cloak room to the right of the entrance.

The dining room which occupies practically the whole front of the house is finished in old ivory. A large fire place stands out prominently in this room, and a large bay window faces Cote Road. The dining room is finished in chestnut old English with beamed ceilings and panelled walls. A butler's pantry leads from the dining room to the kitchen.

The kitchen proper is possessed of every modern convenience. The maid's room is directly adjacent to the kitchen and a rear gallery extends to the back of the house.

The upstairs is laid out to splendid advantage, with a large double bedroom to the front, and broad hallway extending through to the back. The bathroom and toilet and one bedroom are to the right of the hall, and two bedrooms and living room on the left.

The basement also lends emphasis to the many conveniences in these houses. It is built with an eight foot ceiling and lined with cement. Laundry and stationary bathtubs are provided and large storage room for provisions.

1910-07-22

Figure 5-10 - Housing Features in the *Westmount News*, 1910

CHAPTER VI

CONDUCT, POLITICS AND URBAN PLANNING

In this thesis, the concern is with the 'making' of Westmount not only in the sense of the putting together of bricks and mortar to produce dwellings, schools and churches, but also in the establishment of a set of rules and regulations by the anglophone business elite group responsible for Westmount's creation. This is particularly important with respect to questions of the regulation of the types and form of development and the protection of a certain definition of proper social conduct and "quality of life" (Collin 1984). This chapter will focus on how the community acted to protect its definition of what an elite residential area should be by examining the municipal bylaws enacted by the city council, the political debates both inside and outside of the city council chambers, and the political and administrative structures that were created as a result of these actions.

'Nuisance', Zoning and the Landscape of Westmount

As Collin (1984) has noted, "bourgeois" suburbs such as Westmount developed increasingly stringent definitions of 'nuisance' and public health in the period between 1880 and 1914. From an initial concern with controlling infectious diseases such as smallpox (which claimed over 3000 victims in Montreal in an 1885-1886 epidemic), the concept of 'nuisance' was extended: (1) to assure the tranquillity of residents from unwanted intrusions; (2) to guarantee 'public order'; and (3) to impose on residents and visitors alike a 'proper' standard of conduct

(Collin 1984, 26). If poverty itself could not be banned, then at least contact with the poor might be restricted by limiting the opportunities of meeting them and those activities associated with them.

One such attempt to restrict contact with 'the poor' was over the control of access to Westmount's recreational facilities, beginning in 1892. In that year, all nonresidents were prohibited from using any of these facilities, a measure explicitly aimed at the working class residents of St. Henri, according to the newspapers of the day. It appears to have been a persistent problem, for 16 years later the editor of the local newspaper was still complaining about:

> ...unruly gangs of tramps from the low-down St. Henri district...impudent gangs of St. Henri hooligans... inhabiting the Park on Sundays and evenings... These interlopers have no respect for the Protestant ideals of the Lord's Day (*Westmount News*, 07/04/1908).

Certain types of activities were banned outright in Westmount, while others were discouraged by prohibitive license fees. For example, pool hall and bowling alley licenses were set at $600 per table or lane compared with $10-30 in neighbouring St. Henri. In contrast, the elite Westmount Lawn Bowling Club was given a plot of land and a long-term lease for the construction of a playing field on Sherbrooke St. near the City Hall at this time. Amusement taxes in general were set at two to four times the rates in neighbouring municipalities (Collin 1984). Peddling, "crying or hawking", and rag-picking were also banned. In addition, activities of what were seen as being of dubious moral character, such as gambling and horse racing, were restricted or banned, and the observation of Sunday as a day of rest was enforced strictly, including a ban on the sales of ice cream, candy and other refreshments in Westmount Park. Westmount also became a 'dry' area long before

the sale of alcohol was prohibited during the First World War, although it was not seen to be necessary to formally enact the practice in a bylaw until 1921:

[There is no saloon in Westmount] "for the simple reason," said Mayor Redfern, "that we don't want saloons and won't have them. Whenever an application for a license comes in we just throw it under the table" (Westmount Weekly News, 11/15/1895).

Before the turn of the century, the first attempts to shape the landscape were enacted. First, a building permit and inspection system were set up in Westmount to ensure all new construction conformed with the town's building code. Building lines of 20 feet (compared to 12 feet in Montreal) and minimum lot sizes (50 feet frontage for detached dwellings, 60 feet for semi-detached pairs (compared to the 25 foot standard in Montreal) were established to "influence advantageously...the future appearance of the town, and increase the value of its property" (Lighthall 1907, 30). Fences and hedges were regulated, and the exterior staircases characteristic of the rest of Montreal were banned. Westmount was also the first Canadian city to enact primitive zoning regulations, passing a bylaw in 1897 that restricted terrace dwellings and row houses to the area south of Montrose Avenue. Rumuilly (1975) has argued that in Westmount's francophone counterpart, Outremont, the first such measures were taken because of the preoccupation of rich property-owners with protection from fires. But in Westmount, the goal of these measures was very clear: to exclude from Westmount all development (and with it all people) that did not conform to the community's conception of what constituted a model elite residential suburb. By the turn of the century, the groundwork had been laid, and the editor of the local newspaper wrote that:

As the beautiful location and the perfect system of sanitation become more generally known and appreciated, its exceptional merits as a residential suburb of the city cannot fail to attract hundreds of business

men as well as men of wealth and leisure, to make for themselves a
home here (*Westmount Weekly News*, 11/15/1895).

More and more restrictive rules concerning the keeping of farm animals and non-residential stables were adopted as the area was transformed from rural to suburban. Virtually all types of manufacturing and warehousing were also defined as 'nuisances' in the bylaws, "having a tendency to endanger property or to effect or endanger public safety" (Consolidation Bylaw, 1890). Only in the area around the Canadian Pacific Railway tracks that was not suited to elite housing was some industry permitted, and even there only those of a relatively non-polluting nature (for example the Harrison Brothers Bakery and the John Stewart & Co. stone cutting and construction yard).

The contrast between this policy of discouraging industrial development and that of working class suburbs is striking. The city council of Maisonneuve, for example, was vigorously promoting itself as the "Pittsburgh of Canada" in order to attract industrial investment (Linteau 1985). As shown in Table 6.1, these two cities adopted distinctly different legislative strategies as a whole, with Westmount devoting much more attention to city planning measures and the political and administrative apparatus, while completely ignoring questions of economic development. Westmount also differed strongly from its predominantly francophone elite counterpart, Outremont, passing more than twice the total number of bylaws and more than four times as many relating specifically to planning.

It was not only industry that was believed to be incompatible with the conception of Westmount as an elite residential suburb. Throughout this period, the city council was forced to deal with what were perceived as threats by the town's

CATEGORY OF BYLAW	WESTMOUNT		MAISONNEUVE		OUTREMONT	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Political and Administrative Apparatus	25	7,0	4	2,1	8	5,0
Finances	51	14,3	26	13,9	20	12,5
Servicing Land	83	12,3	39	20,9	55	35,0
Utilities, Parks and Public Services	37	10,4	24	12,8	20	12,5
City Planning	97	27,2	24	12,8	22	14,0
Industrial and Economic Development Promotion	0	0,0	29	15,5	0	0,0
Public Security	63	17,7	41	21,9	33	21,0
Total Bylaws	356	100,0	187	100,0	158	100,0
Average Number of Bylaws per Year	33		5,5		3,5	

Source: Collin 1984, p. 22.

Table 6.1 - Purposes of Bylaws in Westmount, Maisonneuve and Outremont, 1875-1920

citizens. First, non-residential stables were banned from the city after plans for a riding academy on St. Catherine St. were objected to by local residents in 1907. The next battle was over allowing apartment buildings to be constructed in the town. The first requests for building permits to build apartment buildings were turned down in 1905 after the town council debated the issue. After repeated requests, however, apartments were permitted on designated streets south of Sherbrooke in 1913 as long as they were no higher than four stories and had an adequate amount of space around them. The change was explained as "necessary to retain the young people" (Gubbay and Hooff 1985, 106), who increasingly found housing in Westmount to be very expensive. Automobile service stations were also banned in 1908 after neighbouring residents and businesses complained that the 'automobile menace' was responsible for the depreciation of their property values, offensive odours, and danger to children. Eventually during the First World War these restrictions were eased somewhat, and a number of stations were built to service the rapidly growing numbers of cars owned by the city's residents. Finally, certain institutions were prevented from locating in Westmount at this time, most notably the Protestant Children's Hospital of Montreal which sought to build at The Boulevard and Clarke Avenue in 1908. After residents complained by petition that the new hospital was unsuitable for the type of neighbourhood that was being built in the area, the town council voted to block its construction. Similarly, two years later the Salvation Army was prevented from using a vacant house as a waiting house for immigrants (*Westmount News* 01/08/1908, 09/02/1910).

One of the most important actions taken by the town council affecting the shape of Westmount's landscape during this period was the adoption of a revised building code and zoning plan in 1908. All but detached dwellings were banned north of the Boulevard "[f]or the purpose of preserving the natural beauty of the mountain known as Westmount Mountain", and semi-detached dwelling pairs below this level were required to have 100 feet of frontage. The Westmount News approvingly noted that the new building code "has put a stop to the commonization of our street architecture" (07/04/08). The quality of housing in the town was effectively regulated by banning the construction of wood frame buildings, even if encased in brick or stone. This was justified as protecting the town from 'fire hazards', although it seems clear that it was an attempt to keep out certain types of housing (and the people who might inhabit them) that were seen as less desirable. Although not actually put in place until 1916, the creation of an Architecture Advisory Committee (composed of four resident architects, the City Clerk, the Building Inspector and the Mayor) to examine and approve all applications for building permits was also proposed before the outset of World War I.

Urban Reform and Municipal Government 'Without Politics'

In addition to residential construction, other important changes were taking place. The Cote St. Antoine (later Westmount) Improvements Committee, established by a group of 'prominent citizens' in 1890, planned and pushed through the village council the plans for Westmount Park. After the Coates Gas Company defaulted on a contract with the city in 1895, the $13 000 penalty was used to

establish the first municipal library in the province of Quebec, and only the second in all of Canada.

In keeping with its character as an elite businessmen's suburb, Westmount participated actively in the urban reform movements that were sweeping the continent at this time. In 1902 the town's mayor, William Lighthall, and the mayor of Toronto co-founded a national umbrella group for urban reform, the Canadian Union of Municipalities in 1902 and served actively as its secretary for two decades. He noted that:

> It has...been much easier to secure good government here than in places where the forces making for advance have had to contend with masses with less education and less business experience (Lighthall 1907, 28).

One of the major preoccupations of the reform movement in Canada at this time was the struggle against the monopoly control of utilities such as electricity. In an address to the Canadian Club in Toronto in 1904, Lighthall went so far as to state that "Public ownership, in fact - national and municipal - is the only refuge to which we can look from the evils of monopoly" (quoted in Berger 1970, p. 196). In Ontario, the reform movement succeeded in the establishment of a series of municipally-owned electrical companies culminating in the creation of the provincially-controlled Ontario Hydro-Electric Power Commission in 1910. Westmount was the only municipality in Quebec that followed suit, opening in 1906 a publicly-owned electricity generating station fuelled by a garbage incinerator that at the time supplied sufficient power for the town. The city actively promoted the domestic consumption of electricity, and for more than twenty years sold and installed electrical appliances such as ovens and refrigerators out of the basement of the city hall (City of Westmount, *Annual Report*, 1931).

Electric power was not the only municipally provided service that Westmount championed. While its neighbours contracted out snowclearing and garbage collection (a time-honoured method of dispensing political patronage), Westmount pioneered many technical innovations in these areas through its Public Works department, and noisily celebrated the superiority of its results. Getting rid of these contracts was seen as one sure way of getting rid of the possibility of patronage and corruption as well as improving service. Without the rewards of kickbacks, 'politics' was believed to be eliminated and orderly administration made possible by the sterling group of businessmen who acted as mayor and councillors of the city. It was through such efficiency, Westmount's booster's such as William Lighthall proclaimed, that property taxes were kept at one half the level of Montreal, and because the rate of valuation was two-thirds that of the larger city, the true level was closer to one third of Montreal's (Lighthall 1907, 32).

The 'nonpolitical' nature of government was further strengthened by the establishment in 1906 of the Westmount Municipal Association (WMA). Growing out of the old Westmount Improvements Association, which had limited its activities to lobbying for and planning public facilities, its purpose was:

> ...to ensure sound civic administration by the development of informed opinion among the residents of the city, and by the communication of their wishes and views to the city council...This association has proved a most valuable body and in the discussion of such vital questions as apartment houses...have very largely smoothed the path of the council and the people (Groves 1913).

Made up of the city councillors and 'concerned citizens', it attempted to prevent controversy by establishing a consensus amongst the town's residents on the various questions facing the town council. Initially it was not too successful, as questions such as whether to annex Notre-Dame de Grace were too controversial

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to be easily controlled. In 1908, the local newspaper noted that "For a year past, not a few of the men of light and leading in our town have been disquieted by what they conceive to be a growing coarseness in our municipal politics" (*Westmount News*, 02/01/1908). Four years later, an open split on the council was produced as a 'scandal' broke out concerning cost overruns on a new fire station for the upper level of the town. The creation of an alternate organization was considered by some who were opposed to the WMA, a development worrisome to the editor of the *Westmount News* who feared that "It would practically mean the introduction of the party spirit into municipal politics, a most undesirable development" (11/01/1912).

These events led to a serious consideration of changing the system of municipal government itself in Westmount. A proposal to adopt the commission system of government (where each commissioner would be elected to supervise a given area of municipal government), favoured by some American reform groups, was championed by the former mayor, Lighthall. Instead, however, the political 'crisis' was avoided early in 1913 with the adoption of another promoted by American urban reformers, the city manager system of government. Westmount was the first city in Canada to adopt this new system, and only the 15th in all of North America. This system transformed the mayor and the city council from the managers of the city government into a more passive role; in effect a Chairman and Board of Directors. The one concession to those who preferred the commission form was to assign a watchdog responsibility for one area of municipal affairs to each councillor to report on at each council meeting, but without removing the real power from the hands of the professional city manager. At the meeting of the WMA where the plan

was endorsed, one resident summed up the present situation in terms readily understandable to the city's business elite population:

> One speaker asked if anyone present would take stock in a company doing a turnover of $300 000 a year [the city's budget at that time] but managed by a committee of men simply giving part of their leisure to it (*Westmount News*, 11/15/12).

Even the title of the position, the 'general manager' rather than the more common 'city manager', implied the businesslike nature of the new operation. After a 'worldwide search' for just the right man to fill this position, the city council settled on the man who had been superintendent of the Westmount Electric Light and Power Commission, George W. Thompson, and he held the position for almost 20 years before his retirement in 1930. The editor of the *Westmount News* described his tasks in verse as follows:

> He has to keep his finger on
> The pulse of Westmount's life,
> And watch its temperature all day
> For any signs of strife,
> While if his strict attention slips,
> Or judgement goes astray,
> He can be sure that soon or late
> There'll be Old Nick to pay!
> So Westmount's G.-M. we salute-
> From troubles we are rid,
> As long as, at the City Hall,
> He's sitting on the lid
> (Benedict 1933, 22).

The new government apparatus was extremely successful in depoliticizing Westmount's government once again. One measure of this is that until the 1970s, all but one of the WMA's approved candidates for mayor after 1913 were acclaimed to office, and the sole exception (perhaps not coincidentally the only French-Canadian nominee) was elected by a wide margin. As one observer of the Westmount political scene noted in the early 1960s:

> Perhaps the essential difference between the Westmount civic politician and his counterpart outside is that in Westmount one does not seek office.... Politics in Westmount is in the hands of the Westmount Municipal Association.... None of the positions offers a salary, and most of them are filled by businessmen who have the time and the experience to handle them, and are *asked* to run by the officers of the WMA (emphasis in the original, (Gzowski 1962).

With the depoliticization of municipal politics, the role of the mayor became to act as "a ceremonial public figure, called on to preside over the monthly council meeting, turn a few sods, greet visiting royalty, sip a glass of sherry, and go home" (Graham 1981, 44).

Conclusion

By the end of this period, the City of Westmount had adopted a set of bylaws that set direct limits on the form of residential development and social conduct in keeping with the community's view of what was appropriate for an elite community. In the form of its municipal government as well, it adopted a system designed to promote the businesslike administration of public business. 'Good' government was equated with the model of the modern corporation, managed by an efficient, professionalized bureaucracy. If democratic elections led to debate and the unseemly introduction of 'politics' into municipal government, then they were to be avoided through the intervention of an unelected group purporting to represent the interests of all the residents of Westmount.

CHAPTER VII

INSIDERS, OUTSIDERS, AND THE SENSE OF PLACE OF WESTMOUNT

In the previous chapters, the context in which Westmount's landscape was shaped has been outlined, and both the residential development process and the political measures taken to protect it have been presented. In this chapter, the analysis will be taken one step further through an examination of the 'sense of place' of Westmount, both as viewed from the 'inside' of the anglophone, elite community that dominated it as well as from the 'outside' groups who were excluded from being 'true' Westmounters; the francophone majority of Montreal as well as those from different ethnic backgrounds. Most of the examples selected to illustrate these views are taken from the writings of Montreal writers, 'insiders' and 'outsiders' alike. They are taken from the period from the early 1940s to the 1960s when the earlier efforts of the builders and politicians came to fruition, and Westmount 'came of age' as the premiere residential area for the Montreal anglophone business elite.

The Insider's View

In a 1962 McGill Urban Planning master's thesis, Thomas Seabrooke wrote:

To the vast majority of Westmounters, their city is one of the most beautiful in Canada, and some venture to include North America. It is a garden-like city, well-bred and landscaped, with a high quality of building standards to which the Westmounter is proud to refer. He realizes that the houses in the lower section, below Sherbrooke Street, if he lives above Sherbrooke, or below Ste. Catherine Street, if he lives just above Ste. Catherine, are not as well kept up as the image of Westmount says they should be. But after all, this is really a relatively small area and anyone will tell you that it is largely a city of gracious homes and manicured grounds that rise majestically on the slopes from which the city bears its name (Seabrooke 1963, 25-26).

As well as the strong differentiation of space by elevation, what is notable about this characterization, is the degree to which the built environment is central to the resident's image of the city, and especially the attention to the gardens and landscaping. This 'garden-like' image of Westmount was carefully cultivated from the turn of the century onwards by the developers and boosters of the city. The suburban home with its 'manicured grounds' appealed to the romanticized memory of the country estates of the landed gentry, whittled down by reality for the businessman or professional to fifty feet of frontage on a suburban street.

The true Westmount 'insiders' were defined by more than just their economic affluence, of course. Peter Gzowski noted that one became more and more a true Westmounter partly with the altitude of one's house, but also with a whole set of associated activities: attendance at the right private schools (such as Selwyn House for boys, Miss Edgar's and Miss Cramp's for girls); the Coming Out ceremony at the St. Andrew's Ball; a university education at McGill; spending a year abroad; 'quietly doing well' in bu. ss; the summer cottage at Murray Bay on the Lower St. Lawrence or on Lake Memphramagog in the Eastern Townships; membership in the right clubs (especially the Mount Royal Club); working for the right hospital charities, with the Royal Victoria and the Montreal Children's Hospital (once it was safely located outside Westmount's city limits) being favoured; supporting the Montreal Symphony and the Fine Arts Museum; and the highest distinction of all, a seat on the McGill University Board of Governors (Gzowski 1962, 54).

As activities such as the St. Andrew's Ball indicate, the important institutions and customs of the Westmount insiders were solidly 'British' in nature. From the early

days of its founding, Westmounters identified themselves as a "self-governing community of Anglo-Saxon businessmen" with a "fine opportunity of developing a model city on the lines of the best traditions of Protestant and cultured Christendom" (*Westmount News*, 02/22/1908) The city even developed a distinctive Westmount accent: "a true mid-Atlantic voice, sharper and less twangy than Canadian, flatter and less stilted than British, often spoken loudly" (Graham 1981, 46). From the turn of the century on, when Canadian intellectuals were debating the future of their country in terms of continentalism, nationalism and British imperial unity, the Westmount elite stood solidly on the side of the empire. Stephen Leacock spoke for the vast majority his Westmount neighbours when he wrote in 1907:

> Nor is it ever possible or desirable that we in Canada can form an independent country.... Not thus our path. Let us compose our feud and still the strife of races, not in the artificial partnership of an Independant Canada, but in the joint greatness of a common destiny...an Empire Permanent and Indivisible (quoted in Berger 1969, 50-51).

One measure of Westmount's support for this position is that it consistently supported the candidates of the Conservative Party of Robert Borden over the Liberal government of Sir Wilfred Laurier in the period up to 1914. Laurier's government was seeking to loosen Canada's ties to the British Empire, first by its reluctance to commit Canadian troops to fight in the Boer War at Britain's side, by establishing in 1908 an autonomous Canadian navy rather than contributing to the building of British 'dreadnaught' battleships, and, before its defeat in the pivotal election of 1911, by espousing the cause of reciprocity or free trade with the United States. In Westmount, even the Liberal candidate opposed his own party's anti-imperialist positions and supported imperial unity. It didn't help him very much, however, as the Conservative

incumbent, the former Montreal urban reform leader Herbert Ames, carried the seat easily in that election and held it until he retired from politics in 1921.

When the First World War broke out in 1914, the young men of Westmount answered the call to arms with enthusiasm, in sharp contrast with the decidedly cool reaction of the French-Canadian majority in Quebec to participation in what they saw as an imperial war in Europe. In the first two weeks of the war, over $3000 was collected to initiate and outfit the Westmount Rifle Brigade, later to grow into the Royal Montreal Regiment. The municipal government donated the land and paid for the construction of an armory for the regiment in the southern part of the city, the only city in Canada do so (Short 1979). Westmount stood solidly behind the war effort through to the end, and was one of the very few ridings the Conservatives held in Quebec during the Conscription election of 1917. After the War, the city commissioned a striking war memorial to stand in front of the city hall on Sherbrooke Street.

The "Britishness", as well as the advanced economic and social status of Westmount, manifested itself as well in terms of appropriate community behaviour. As a residential refuge of the privileged anglophone elite, the celebration of privacy and the sanctity of property. This attitude is perhaps best illustrated by the poet F.R. Scott, a long-time resident of Westmount, in his poem "Calamity", which describes his neighbourhood's exceptional reaction to an incident when a laundry truck rolled down the hill and crashed into his maple tree:

> It was a truly North American calamity.
> Three cans of beer fell out
> (Which in itself was revealing)
> And a jumble of skirts and shirts
> Spilled on to the ploughed grass.
> Dogs barked, and the children
> Sprouted like dandelions on my lawn.

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Normally we do not speak to one another on
 this avenue,
But the excitement made us almost neighbours.
People exchanged remarks
Who had never been introduced
And for a while we were quite human.

Then the policeman came -
Sedately, for this was Westmount -
And carefuh.y took down all names and numbers.
The towing truck soon followed,
Order was restored.
The starch came raining down.

(Scott 1981, 203)

The Outsider's View

Of course, not all of the residents of Westmount were WASP businessmen and
their families, despite its reputation as a bastion of English wealth and power. As
early as 1933, the editor of the *Westmount News* published the following poem,
"Cosmopolitan Westmount", in recognition of the changing makeup of the city:

Westmount is cosmopolitan,-
 a world metropolis,-
Containing Russians, Germans, Danes,
 Rumanians, Belgians, Swiss,
French, Hebrews, Greeks, and one or two
 from other foreign regions.
Poles, Finns, Czechoslovakians,
 Armenians and Norwegians.
We rub our eyes, in mild surprise,
 and wonder what they do.
We did not know we harboured such
 A Pentecostal Crew.
We always thought of Westmount as
 The home of Sleep and Rest,
And not a place for foreigners
 To come and build their nest.
But, here they are, and, as it seems,
 They have - to buy and sell - come.
We've got to make the best of it
 And try to make them welcome.
We only hope they will forget
 Their age old national fights,
Because we do not want to have
 Our sleep disturbed o'nights...

So, foreigners, be pleased to note,
What ever comes and goes,
You're welcome, only please respect
Our dignified repose.

By this time the proportion of Westmount's population that was of British origin had dropped from almost 90 percent around the turn of the century to less than 75 percent, although the francophone proportion remained fairly constant around 10 percent of the total. As Benedict's poem shows, however, the 'welcome' that these new residents received was not a warm one celebrating the cultural diversity that they brought to the community. The message is one of dismay, resigned to the presence of these 'foreigners', but clearly warning them to behave according to the rules of social conduct associated with Westmount's anglophone elite residential community The newcomers are clearly associated with noise, loud arguments over "age-old national fights" and the disreputable hawking of goods, an association unbecoming of Westmount's own image of itself. Protecting Westmount from these 'foreigners' went beyond merely admonishing them to keep quiet. Although the evidence of it is mainly anecdotal, the signing of 'covenants' not to sell houses to Jews or French-Canadians was practised in Westmount from at least the mid-twenties into the 1950s For the great majority of non-WASP Montrealers, Westmount remained an alien, forbidding place, separated by its wealth and isolated on its mountain. As the lead character in Mordecai Richler's *The Apprenticeship of Duddy Kravitz*, a young, poor, Jewish hustler observed:

Westmount was where the truly rich lived in stone mansions driven like stakes into the shoulder of the mountain The higher you climbed up splendid tree-lined streets the thicker the ivy, the more massive the mansion, and the more important the men inside Mr. Calder's place was almost at the top. 'Jeez,' Duddy said aloud, getting out of his car. He had been in Westmount before in the taxi, but usually at night and never this high up. Below, the city and the river hummed obligingly under a still cloud of factory fumes. 'What a site for a restaurant', Duddy thought (Richler 1959, 170)

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If Westmount was remote and inaccessible to the rest of the non-anglophone communities of Montreal, it became a particularly strong symbol of the power and arrogance of the English business elite from the 1940s on. Perhaps the most influential expression of this was articulated in Gabrielle Roy's 1942 novel *Bonheur d'Occasion* (translated into English as *The Tin Flute*). The poverty and despair of life in the St. Henri district 'below the tracks' to the south presents a stark contrast with wealth and power of Westmount up on the hill:

> .. beyond it a broad opening in the buildings frames the town of Westmount in all its stuffy English comfort, spread out over the mountain... Here wealth and poverty stare each other in the face, Westmount from above, Saint-Henri at its feet... He liked to stop at this point during the day and look at the cold gateways, the red and grey stone mansions so sharply delineated up there. At night he could see their lights twinkling in the distance, like signs on his road In moments like these his ambitions and the wrongs he had suffered awoke and beset him; his heart ached with the old anguish Before the mountain that dominated him he swelled with hatred and a sense of power (Roy 1942, 20).

The image of Westmount as a symbol of English economic power and domination in Quebec that was so strongly established in *The Tin Flute* reached its peak during the 1960s and 1970s as the nationalist movement in Quebec regained its momentum. When the Front de Liberation de Quebec (FLQ) began their violent actions for the independence of Quebec in May of 1963, it was no coincidence that the mailboxes they blew up were located in Westmount, which to them epitomized the colonial oppression of Quebec. While the FLQ never gained widespread support for their tactics, their identification of Westmount as a symbol of the domination of Quebec by English Canada struck a chord with the feelings of frustration and resentment of the francophone majority of Quebec society for their exclusion from the inner circles of economic power in the province. Rene Levesque, the leader of the more moderate independentisie Parti Quebecois, branded anglophone Quebeckers as "Westmount

Rhodesians" in 1970, and the label has come into fairly frequent use in political discourse by politicians of many party affiliations.

Despite the economic and political gains made by the francophone majority of Quebec since the 1960s, to most Westmount remains a powerful symbol of anglophone privilege and power. As a result, elite francophones remain wary to this day of Westmount as a place to live, preferring the more traditional francophone elite suburb, Outremont, thus perpetuating Westmount's image as an English bastion up on the hill.

CHAPTER VIII

CONCLUSION

Between the middle of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the area that is now Westmount was transformed from a quiet, rural farming area into an elite anglophone residential suburb that fiercely guarded its independence from the city around it. This reshaping of Westmount's landscape was one aspect of a much larger societal transformation, and to examine its making is to abstract from the totalization of all human praxis. The transition from a semi-feudal/mercantilist economy to corporate industrial capitalism provided Montreal's anglophone business and professional elite with both an opportunity and a threat. An opportunity was provided to grow and to benefit from a more than equal share of the tremendous wealth that was created by the development of large-scale industrial production; while at the same time its control over the city, its institutions and its built and moral environment was threatened by the massive influx of rural French-Canadians coming to work in Montreal's factories.

What the development of the community and the landscape of Westmount represents is a strategic retreat; the creation of an autonomous enclave of privilege, a drawing in the wagons around a more easily defended turf. A consciousness of difference from both the francophone majority of Montreal and other minority ethnic groups was expressed quite openly as a strong belief that innate to their 'Britishness' was an inherent moral superiority that justified their elevated economic and social status. The municipal politicians of Westmount enacted laws to protect

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their community from unwanted intrusions, such as industry, low-income housing and other institutions (such as children's hospitals) that served other less priviledged groups, or incorporation into Montreal. Public safety or nuisance laws were often extended to accomplish this; where stronger measures were needed, pioneering zoning bylaws were enacted to control these perceived threats to both the ideal of the elite suburban community and to its landscape.

The built environment of Westmount was constructed as a reflection of this sense of difference. Builders and architects fed the need for housing of this elite group with a solid, conservative British residential landscape that is quite distinct from the row houses and duplexes of the rest of Montreal. The landscape is an aesthetic manifestation of the commitment of those who constructed it to a sense of tradition and privilege that in many ways contradicted the ideology of free market capitalism and liberal democracy that enabled its creation. It is an expression of the strength of a shared ideology, of the degree of control obtained over the development process by the community.

In *The City in History*, Lewis Mumford described the ideology of suburban life as follows:

> In short, to withdraw like a monk and live like a prince - this was the purpose of the original creators of the suburb. They proposed in effect to create an asylum, in which they could, as individuals, overcome the chronic defects of civilization while still commanding at will the privileges and benefits of urban society.... Thus the suburb served as an asylum for the preservation of illusion...this was not merely a child-centered environment, it was based on a childish view of the world (Murrford 1961, p. 494).

For the anglophone business and professional elite that shaped the community and landscape of Westmount in the years between 1870 and 1930, Westmount was

indeed a sort of asylum of privilege that was denied for the great majority of Montreal's population.

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