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The Role of the Parish in Fostering Irish-Catholic Identity in Nineteenth-Century Montreal

by

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A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research
in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts
August 1997

Abstract

This work focuses on the efforts of Montreal's Irish Catholics to maintain a cohesive ethnic community throughout the nineteenth century, and on the vital role that the national parish played in this process. The early community directed its attention towards institution building centred around Saint Patrick's church, which had been built for the use of Irish Catholics in the 1840s. Following the dismemberment of the extensive parish of Notre-Dame and the erection of smaller Irish national parishes in the early 1870s, greater emphasis was placed on the creation of a wide variety of parish societies. By discouraging participation in Irish national societies that refused to submit to clerical authority, and by effectively fusing religious and national identification, the clergy ensured the success of parish-based organisation. Broader associations embracing the various Irish-Catholic parish societies were established, and participation in the Saint Patrick's day procession inscribed these affiliations in space. It will be demonstrated that the territorial and social evolution of parishes were intimately connected.

Ce mémoire traite des démarches entreprises par les catholiques irlandais de Montréal au cours du dix-neuvième siècle en vue d'assurer une cohésion de leur communauté ethnique, et du rôle important de la paroisse 'nationale' dans ce cheminement. La communauté catholique irlandaise primitive prêtait une attention toute particulière à la construction des institutions concentrées autour de l'église Saint Patrice. Suite au démembrement de la paroisse étendue de Notre-Dame et l'érection des paroisses nationales plus rapprochées de l'individu, l'activité des catholiques irlandais s'est progressivement centrée autour des sociétés paroissiales. En décourageant la participation aux sociétés nationales irlandaises qui refusaient de se soumettre à l'autorité ecclésiastique, et en unissant les identifications religieuse et nationale, le clergé assura le succès de l'organisation basée sur la paroisse. Des associations plus larges des sociétés paroissiales furent encouragées, et la participation au défilé de Saint Patrice donna une dimension spatiale à ces affiliations. Je démontrerai que les évolutions territoriale et sociale des paroisses étaient intimement liées.

Acknowledgements

I would like to acknowledge assistance received from several individuals and institutions during the course of my research, and extend my gratitude to them. Monique Montbriand of the *Archives de la Chancellerie de l'Archevêché de Montréal* and Mary McGovern of the Archives of St. Patrick's Basilica were particularly kind to me and provided invaluable help as navigators of their archives. I would also like to thank Fathers Jacques Leduc and Rolland Litalien of the *Archives du Séminaire Saint-Sulpice de Montréal,* their assistant Clarence Epstein, and Nancy Marrelli of the Concordia University Archives. I must also thank Michael Kenneally, for providing me with contacts in St. Gabriel's parish, and Jean-François Parent, for his crash-course in the use of the Adobe Illustrator. I am also grateful for the services provided by the *Bibliothèque Nationale du Québec,* the *Archives Nationales du Québec,* and the McLennan and Vanier Libraries. The members of my family who 'volunteered' as proof-readers also deserve recognition for their assistance, as do Mathieu Doucet and Isabel Trigger for helping to translate the abstract. I take full responsibility for any errors that remain in the manuscript. I would also like to acknowledge guidance provided by Professor Brian Ray, particularly during the initial stages of my project. While conducting this research I have benefited from a grant awarded by the *Fonds pour la formation de chercheurs et l'aide à la recherche (FCAR).* I am very grateful for this support.

I would like to extend a special thanks to Professor John Zucchi for his encouragement and inspiration, without which my interest in Montreal's nineteenth-century Irish-Catholic community might never have been sparked. To Professor Sherry Olson, under whose supervision this thesis was written, I owe a profound debt of gratitude for her constant guidance, her incisive criticism of my work, and her willingness to devote time to sharing her own extensive knowledge of Montreal's historical geography with her students.

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'When men cease to espouse systems blindly, when they come to examine, to analyze pretensions and imposing schemes, whether political or ecclesiastical, and form judgements based on logical and scientific data, the discords and hatreds that afflict the world will pass away and the race will find at last that heaven which the millions of beings of abortive centuries have been vainly looking for among the clouds'.[1]

- 'A Freethinker' and ex-Orangeman -

'In this mixed country both systems - separation and amalgamation - have been well tried. The latter has always failed; the former has generally succeeded. Man must be governed not by theories that suppose him to have neither feelings nor weaknesses; but by practical wisdom that will allow and provide for his infirmities. A theory that would do well in heaven, would work very badly on earth, amongst men who have still to carry about them the frailties of human nature'.[2]

- Father Dowd, Pastor of St. Patrick's, 1859-1891 -

[1] *Montreal Daily Witness*, July 12, 1877.
[2] ACAM, 355.121, 1866-8, Nov. 8, Fr. Dowd and his assistants to A.F. Truteau, Vicar General.

Chapter 1: Introduction

Argument and Objectives

By examining three of Montreal's nineteenth-century Irish-Catholic parishes, St. Patrick's, St. Ann's, and St. Gabriel's, I hope to contribute to ongoing geographical debates over the way in which spatial structures are implicated in the production and reproduction of social relations.[3] In the context of research on nineteenth-century Irish-Catholic communities, the parish is a socio-territorial structure which deserves more detailed investigation. I shall argue that Montreal's Irish-Catholic parishes became important sites through which the Irish formed an image of themselves as an ethnic group, and that the parishes and the social life they generated became key building blocks of the larger Irish-Catholic community in Montreal.[4] While many sociological 'community-studies' have downplayed the importance of territorial forms in determining the character of urban life, there has been a recent revival of interest in the concept of 'place' and in the connections between place and identity amongst human geographers.[5] Much of the debate within geography has been of a theoretical nature, dealing with a wide range of different definitions of 'place' and based on a limited amount of empirical research. It is hoped that the empirical exploration of Montreal's Irish-Catholic parishes, in addition to shedding light on the Irish experience in Montreal, may also offer insights into these debates.

In the context of this research, a 'place' is defined as a bounded territory, such as a parish, which is invested with social meaning. It is believed, however, that an

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[3] P. Jackson, ed., *Race and Racism - Essays in Social Geography* (London, 1987), p. 4.

[4] While the parishes on which this research are based were officially designated as 'English-speaking Catholic parishes', the vast majority of parishioners were of Irish origin. According to their own testimony, 'the English-speaking Catholics of Montreal [were] for the most part composed of persons of Irish birth or descent' (ACAM, 355.121, 1866-4, Nov. 22, Resolutions taken at the assembly of Irishmen). In the text, these parishes will usually be referred to as 'Irish parishes' since this was what they were commonly called by the clergy and parishioners of the nineteenth century in petitions and correspondence. The clergy often made an attempt to use the more inclusive designation of English-speaking Catholic in their letters, but then slipped into referring to their parishioners as the Irish.

[5] An example of this type of sociological study would be B. Wellman and B. Leighton, "Networks, Neighbourhoods, and Communities: Approaches to the Study of the Community Question," *Urban Affairs Quarterly,* 14:3 (1979), pp. 363-390. More recently this approach has had an impact on historical studies, e.g. C. Wetherell et al., "Social Networks, Kinship, and Community in Eastern Europe," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History,* 24:4 (1994), pp. 639-663.

understanding of any locality must draw on the links beyond its boundaries.[6] It would be inconceivable to consider Irish parishes as isolated units, and it is only through an understanding of the interaction between the different parishes and between the parishes and more 'global' nineteenth-century phenomena such as the reawakening of Irish nationalism and the renewal of Catholicism that the connection between territorial parish structures and Irish ethnic identity can be explained. Within the academic literature there has been a tendency for radical geographers to avoid locality studies (in much the same way that they have sidelined debates about ethnicity), identifying 'places' as being sites of nostalgia with little potential for producing progressive forms of social identity. This is a strange reason, however, for failing to conduct studies of the interrelationship between 'place' and ethnicity given the potential role that this relation plays in helping to explain how ethnic identities become dominant in certain situations. In the context of my research, the development of Irish-Catholic ethnic identity is understood primarily (but not exclusively) as a means of promoting the material and spiritual interests of the Irish community in the context of a society in which the elite is simultaneously seeking to protect its own material interest and is willing to promote ethnic divisions to achieve this. This is an attempt to move away from traditional Marxist accounts in which ethnic identities are often portrayed as *inevitably* regressive forces which distract people from pursuing their material interests.[7]

Linteau and Robert argue that after the Rebellion of 1837 Montreal's elite decided to promote institutional division along ethnic lines as a means of lessening the potential for renewed conflict in the city and creating suitable conditions for economic growth.[8] One also suspects that to a certain extent hostilities were fomented between ethnic groups as a means of hindering the formation of class identities. This reinforced segregation in a city already tending towards the creation of separate religious, institutional, and charitable institutions for each ethnic community. Given the linguistic and religious divisions, it seems likely that institutional division along ethno-religious lines was also favoured by

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[6] D. Massey, *Space, Place, and Gender* (Minneapolis, 1994).
[7] R.J. Johnston, *The Dictionary of Human Geography* (Oxford, 1994), p. 172.
[8] P-A. Linteau and J-C. Robert, "Montréal au 19e siècle: bilan de recherche," *Revue d'histoire urbaine*, XIII:3 (1985).

the populace at large. As I will discuss later, the English-speaking Catholics, the vast majority of whom were Irish, wished to retain a distinct identity in the face of potential assimilation into the English-Protestant and French-Catholic communities. In the context of securing parishes for their exclusive use, English-speaking Catholics argued as follows:

> It is important to consider the relative position of the English-speaking Catholics to the other divisions of the population of Montreal. This position is singular and exceptional. There are at present three great divisions of the citizens. First come the French-Canadian Catholics...; next are the English-speaking Protestants...a wealthy and energetic class...large employers of labour and naturally using their influence to draw adherents to the creeds which they profess; between these two divisions stand the English-speaking, or in other words, the Irish Catholics,...attracted towards one party by their common religion towards the other by their common language.[9]

The presence of an Irish Protestant group also appears to have favoured interactions between Irish Catholics and English Protestants. Institutional segregation was not, however, matched by a corresponding residential segregation. The Irish do not appear to have been excluded from any part of nineteenth-century Montreal, and those of Irish origin constituted at least one tenth of the population in every ward of the city, with the exception of St. James' ward, at the times of the 1871 and 1881 censuses.[10] This does not imply that they were randomly or uniformly distributed throughout the city. Cooper describes three 'Irish colonies': the first in the area near St. Patrick's church, focusing on Beaver Hall Hill and probably having jobs connected with central Montreal's retail trade; the second in the Griffintown area of St. Ann's parish, where unskilled labourers could find work in the shipyards or ropewalks alongside the canal; the third at the east end, in the Quebec Suburb.[11] Influenced by the ecological ideas of the 'Chicago school' of urban sociology associated with Park and Burgess, social geographers and 'spatial sociologists' have argued (particularly during geography's quantitative era) that patterns of residential segregation can be taken as an index of the process of assimilation.[12] In the case of an institutionally segregated city like nineteenth-century Montreal, indices of residential

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[9] ACAM, 901.136, 1867-61, April 5, T. Ryan and D. McGee's petition to the Pope.
[10] D.S. Cross, *The Irish in Montreal, 1867-1896*, M.A. thesis, McGill University (1969). The figures include both Irish Catholics and Irish Protestants.
[11] J.I. Cooper, *Montreal: The Story of Three Hundred Years* (Montreal, 1942), pp. 67-71.
[12] Jackson, *op. cit.*, pp. 5-6; Johnston, *op. cit.*, p. 547.

segregation would provide an inaccurate reflection of social interactions among ethnic groups. This does not mean that the relationship between residential geography and ethnic solidarity is unimportant. The absence of high levels of ethnic residential segregation in Montreal made it more difficult to provide all parts of the Irish community with equal access to churches and their associated charitable and social institutions. The relatively dispersed residential pattern of the Irish community is certainly more likely to have detracted from, rather than contributed to, the cohesiveness of the Irish-Catholic community as a whole.

As a result of pressure from the Irish community, and in keeping with a philosophy of institutional segregation along ethnic lines, St. Patrick's church was built for the Irish in the 1840s, soon to be followed by St. Ann's in Griffintown in the 1850s. These churches were located in the parish of Notre-Dame, which at that time covered a large area of the Island of Montreal. In 1866-67 Bishop Bourget divided Notre-Dame into a number of smaller parishes and designated St. Patrick's and St. Ann's as the parish churches of two of the newly created bilingual parishes.[13] This decision provoked outrage on the part of Irish-Catholic citizens and their clergy, who felt that the loss of these churches as essentially Irish-Catholic institutions would be detrimental to the spiritual and material welfare of the community. Rome was convinced by the Irish argument and approved the creation of a system of distinct Irish-Catholic national parishes in 1872-73. Over time, St. Patrick's position as the focus of Irish-Catholic ethno-religious life was challenged by the erection of new parishes created to accommodate the expanding population. St. Gabriel's parish was canonically erected in 1875 to serve the Irish of St. Gabriel's village, followed by St. Mary's parish in the Quebec Suburb in 1879, and then St. Anthony's, for the Irish of the 'west end', in 1884. The creation of smaller, more human-scale, parishes encouraged the development of parish associational life, and each parish had its own combination of charitable, devotional, temperance, and literary societies. City-wide Irish national associations appear to have declined in importance during this period, and the clergy used their increased influence to discourage

[13] The term bilingual is used here (and elsewhere in the text) to refer to institutions which operated in two languages. It is unfortunate that a term could not be found which also emphasizes the cultural dimension of ethnically and linguistically 'mixed' institutions.

participation in Irish national societies which failed to defer to the Church. Although there was tension within the community between those who wished to emphasize their Irish national identity and those who saw their national identity as inseparable from Irish Catholicism, the parish, because it was able to respond to the material and spiritual needs of the people, provided the basis for broader organisation of the Irish community and enhanced the appeal of clerical leadership.

While the fragmentation of the community into a number of distinct parishes led to disputes between parishes and a reinforcement of local identities, these parishes could also serve as the building blocks of a city-wide Irish community. The clergy made a concerted effort to discourage the establishment of radical nationalist alliances outside clerical control, but nevertheless recognised the desire of the Irish Catholics to improve the position of their community through cooperation. Broader alliances of parish societies and associations were encouraged, and participation in events like the St. Patrick's day procession allowed these affiliations to be inscribed in space. St. Patrick's church retained its symbolic significance as a focal point for the community. Without the formation of Irish national parishes on a scale that promoted participation in parish associational life, and without the territorial struggles that helped to solidify attachment to particular parishes as places of importance to the people living in them, the Irish Catholics of Montreal would have had to seek other means of achieving coherence as a community. Different socio-territorial structures would have offered different choices to Montreal's Irish Catholics, which no doubt would have resulted in the moulding of an alternative form of ethnic identity.

Previous studies of the Montreal Irish community, such as those conducted by Dorothy Cross or George Keep, have tended to focus on the demographic characteristics or economic activities of the Irish.[14] These works have been invaluable in terms of providing an overview of the Irish in the city, although lack of access to the manuscript censuses made it difficult for authors writing in the 1960s or earlier to distinguish between Irish Catholics and Irish Protestants. These authors did not make use of

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[14] Cross, *op. cit.*; G.R.C. Keep, *The Irish Immigration to Montreal 1847-1867*, M.A. thesis, McGill University (1948).

Montreal's religious archives and placed little emphasis on religious or ethnic identity, nor did they attempt to embed the history of the Irish community in the context of its local geographies. Cross's thesis does include a descriptive account of Griffintown, the neighbourhood with the highest concentration of Irish inhabitants, but fails to examine more typical areas of Montreal, such as St. Gabriel's parish, where the Irish lived in close contact with French Canadians and English and Scottish Protestants. My study seeks to take advantage of these new sources to make a contribution in these domains.

After reviewing the relevant literature in Chapter 2, in Chapter 3 I will describe the early phase of Irish-Catholic institution building that took place in the period preceding the creation of Irish 'national' parishes. I will then discuss the territorial evolution of the parish system in Chapter 4 and, through an analysis of the contemporary debates relating to the dismemberment of Notre-Dame, attempt to demonstrate the interconnected nature of 'place' and ethnicity. In Chapter 5, I will investigate this relationship further by examining the development of parish associational life which took place as a result of the creation of smaller, territorially-defined, Irish parishes, and I will explore the implications that this had for the organisation of the Irish-Catholic community in Montreal as a whole.

Methodology and Sources

It is intended that an examination of St. Patrick's, St. Ann's, and St. Gabriel's parishes will provide a representative picture of Montreal's nineteenth-century Irish-Catholic parishes. A study of only one parish, for example St. Patrick's, would have been misleading since its significance to the Irish community as a whole made its position unique. It would also have made it impossible to explore the dynamic relationship which existed between the several parishes and which helped the Irish to build a more cohesive community city-wide. In order not to lose a sense of the parishes as 'places', I thought it best to focus on the city's three earliest Irish-Catholic parishes, although at times I will draw on examples from other parishes. The time period chosen for the study, from c.1840 to the turn of the century, allows the relationship between territorial and social evolution to be examined in the context of the development of Montreal's nineteenth-century Irish-Catholic community - through its integration of the famine immigrants of 1847, and the

shifting social, political, and economic circumstances experienced by second and third generations of Irish Canadians.

My approach is essentially qualitative, although demographic information and data on the ethnic composition of each parish will be provided. The richest source has been the correspondence between the parishes and the Bishop of Montreal, preserved in the *Archives de la chancellerie de l'archevêché de Montréal (ACAM).* This collection includes documentation of all debates relating to the territorial definition of parishes, correspondence between the Irish clergy and the archevêché, as well as petitions in which parishioners express their concerns, either collectively or on an individual basis. The Archive of St. Patrick's Basilica (ASPB) has preserved the minute books of various Irish-Catholic societies and committees, as well as those of institutions such as St. Patrick's Orphan Asylum and St. Bridget's Refuge. St. Patrick's has also retained a limited range of correspondence, which sheds light on topics such as the building of the church and the transformation of the St. Patrick's Society into an exclusively Catholic institution. The minute books of the St. Patrick's Total Abstinence and Benefit Society and of the Irish Catholic Temperance Union are available in the Concordia University Archives, for selected years. It is unfortunate that the parish archives of St. Ann's and St. Gabriel's could not be used for this study. St. Ann's church was demolished in 1970 and the parish was eventually dissolved. While St. Patrick's inherited St. Ann's parish registers, further parish records have not yet been located. The pastor of St. Gabriel's parish, as well as other knowledgeable clergy at the Archdiocese, informed me that they were unaware of the location of the parish's nineteenth century records (some of which had been referred to in St. Gabriel's centenary publication[15]). Contemporary newspapers, especially papers with a specific interest in Irish affairs such as the *Post* and the *True Witness and Catholic Chronicle,* together with anniversary pamphlets of parishes or parish societies, provided useful information about parish life. Other Montreal newspapers were used to obtain descriptions of the St. Patrick's day procession over the course of the century, and to gain a non-Irish perspective on particular events. The Archives of the Seminary of St. Sulpice

[15] *One Hundred Years of Masses, One Hundred Years of People, St. Gabriel's, Montreal, 1870-1970* (Montreal, 1970).

(ASSM) were also consulted. Civil registers in the *Archives Nationales du Québec à Montréal (ANQM)* allowed a demographic picture of each parish to be built up. A more complete summary of the sources used in this study is available as part of the bibliography.

Chapter 2: Review of the Literature

Overview

My research draws on work by both geographers and ethnic historians as well as on more general theoretical writings on place and ethnicity. I will begin with a discussion and critique of the concept of place and the way in which it has been used by human geographers, and will consider its potential utility for the writing of ethnic history from a geographical perspective. I will then survey relevant research on the Irish experience in Canada, and demonstrate the need for a local parish-based study which examines the way in which the broader influences on Irish identity, exerted by the Catholic Church and Irish nationalism, functioned in the unique circumstances encountered by the Irish in Montreal and in individual Montreal parishes. I will conclude with a brief examination of some of the research that has been carried out on Quebec's nineteenth-century religious renewal and the role played by the parish in this transformation.

Geographical History and the Concept of 'Place': A Framework for Analysis

Before embarking on a critical discussion of the diverse uses geographers have made of the concept of 'place', and attempting to demonstrate the way in which this concept can best be applied to studies in ethnic 'geographical history', I will provide a broad outline of the changes which have, in recent years, taken place within historical geography. The concept of place is especially relevant in the context of an emerging historical geography which sees its central project as being 'to bring to studies of historical happenings a sensitivity to place, space, distance, location, and region'.[16]

In recent years, many historical geographers have found themselves struggling with research topics that refuse to fit neatly into the niche that historical geography has occupied in the intellectual division of labour since the 1950s.[17] Mid-century geographers such as Darby, through their attempts to establish the boundaries between geography and history, came to believe that the principal task of the historical geographer was 'to explain

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[16] D. Gregory et al., *Human Geography: Society, Space, and Social Science* (London, 1994), p. 16.
[17] C. Philo, "History, Geography and the 'Still Greater Mystery' of Historical Geography," in *Human Geography, Space, and Social Science*, ed. by D. Gregory et al. (London, 1994), pp. 252-281.

the landscape'.[18] It was generally agreed that '...so long as researchers anchored their studies in the material objects of past landscapes (and thereby investigated where these objects were located and how they were combined) the result was proper historical geography; but if they diverted their attention to the more immaterial events, entities and structures of history, and if they perhaps sought to say something about the geography behind this history, then the result was a geographical history that belonged to history and not to geography'.[19] At the present time, however, it is the latter approach which is engaging the interest of many historical geographers. Philo argues that 'the importance of historical geography [now] lies in bringing a geographical sensitivity to bear upon the study of all those past phenomena - economic, social, political or whatever - that are the very 'stuff' of history'.[20] He wisely cautions that this approach should not lead us back to the crass environmental determinism of Huntingdon, Semple, and others, but should instead lead towards '...a cautious account of how the realities of space and place [for example, local geographies of ethnic, gender, occupational, and class groupings]...have all entered centrally into the shaping of such fundamental historical happenings as the rise of capitalism, the agricultural and industrial revolutions, the upsurge of urbanism in the Western world, the making of nations and states, the formation of modern senses of human self-identity, and the production of racial, sexual, and class-based conflicts'.[21]

Historical geography's increasing interest in 'geographical history' should not be seen in isolation from broader intellectual trends. In recent years, geographers have been encouraged by the *rapprochement* heralded by the move towards 'a more flexible and balanced critical theory that re-entwines the making of history with the social production of space, with the construction and reconfiguration of human geographies'.[22] The revival of interest in place and its role in social organisation has been linked to the crisis which has taken place in nationally-oriented history and social science over the last twenty years, as modernization theories have undergone criticism for their functionalism, positivism,

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[18] *Ibid.*, p. 258.
[19] *Ibid.*, p. 259.
[20] *Ibid.*, p. 253.
[21] *Ibid.*, pp. 260-261.
[22] E. Soja, *Postmodern Geographies: The Reassertion of Space in Critical Social Theory* (London, 1989), p. 12.

and evolutionism, as well as their tendency to focus heavily on the national scale at the expense of other scales of analysis.[23] Soja, in a critique of the entrenched historicism of the social sciences and humanities over the past century, suggests that the illusions that have come to dominate Western ways of seeing space have obscured from view 'the power-filled and problematic making of geographies, the enveloping and instrumental spatialization of society' and 'have blocked from critical interrogation a[n]...interpretative geography...that recognises spatiality as simultaneously a social product (or outcome) and a shaping force (or medium) in social life'.[24] It is not therefore surprising that in recent years geographers have begun, for example, to integrate into their work the ideas of French Marxist philosopher Henri Lefebvre and of Michel Foucault, leaders in the assault on historicism and in the reassertion of space in critical social theory.[25]

As historical geographers have begun to explore the research possibilities offered by 'geographical history', it has become necessary for them to seek out concepts, such as 'place', which facilitate such explorations. At its most basic, place can be defined as 'a portion of geographical space'.[26] However, the concept immediately becomes more complex when distinctions begin to be made between place as a concrete setting for human lives and place as a socially constructed entity which is 'necessarily invested with human meaning'.[27] Place, and in particular sense of place, was one of the key concepts used by humanistic geography in the 1970s as it 'turned away from the scientific-positivistic *reduction of geography to geometry...* - and instead insisted on thinking more philosophically about how in an existential sense the very 'humanness' of human subjects is bound up with the worldly spaces, places, and environments they cannot help but occupy'.[28] Throughout the 1980s, interest in the concept of place increased outside humanistic geography. For example, economic geographer Doreen Massey developed the

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[23] J. Agnew and J. Duncan, eds., *The Power of Place: Bringing Together Geographical and Sociological Imaginations* (Boston, 1989), p. 2.
[24] Soja, *op. cit.*, p. 7.
[25] *Ibid.*, p. 41.
[26] Johnston, *op. cit.*, p. 442.
[27] B. Yeoh and L. Kong, eds., *Portraits of Places: History, Community, and Identity in Singapore,* (Singapore, 1995), p. 13.
[28] P. Cloke et al., *Approaching Contemporary Human Geography: An Introduction to Contemporary Theoretical Debates* (London, 1991), p. 79.

notion of 'spatial division of labour' - which focused on 'the particularity of place and its significance to the process of capitalist restructuring' - in response to the problem of uneven development.[29] Her work was strongly criticized by more traditional Marxists like David Harvey for detracting from the metanarrative of Marxism through its insistence on investigating the local.[30] While humanistic geographers such as Tuan were primarily concerned with the emotional investments that people make in different places, and the identification with spatial location that comes from living in and associating with a place, subsequent work by geographers such as Pred, Entrikin, and Agnew combines within a concept of place 'both spatial referents (such as location and locale) and the subjective sense of place'.[31] Agnew and Duncan argue that although location, locale, and sense of place have often been seen as competing *definitions* of place, they should, in fact, be regarded as complementary *dimensions* of place.[32] They suggest, for example, that local social worlds (locales) are best understood when the location in which they are set and the sense of place associated with them are taken into account.[33] Similarly, Entrikin believes that...

> to seek to understand place in a manner that captures its sense of totality and contextuality is to occupy a position that is between the objective pole of scientific theorizing and the subjective pole of empathetic understanding. Questions about the rationality of place have in the past tended to push geographers toward the objective end of the continuum. Movement too far in this direction...diverts the geographer away from an understanding of the way in which the experience of place plays an important role in the construction of individual and group identity.[34]

It has been noted that despite a growing theoretical literature, few attempts have been made to open up questions of place to sustained empirical analysis.[35] In culture-historical geography there are Muir and Weissman's analysis of social and symbolic

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[29] *Ibid.*, p. 51.
[30] N. Thrift, "Taking Aim at the Heart of the Region," in *Human Geography, Space, and Social Science*, ed. by D. Gregory et al. (London, 1994), p. 218.
[31] J. Agnew et al., *Human Geography: An Essential Anthology* (Oxford, 1996), p. 444.
[32] Agnew and Duncan, eds., *op. cit.*, p. 2.
[33] *Ibid.*
[34] J.N. Entrikin, *The Betweenness of Place: Towards a Geography of Modernity* (Baltimore, 1991), pp. 133-134.
[35] J. May, "Globalisation and the Politics of Place: Place and Identity in an Inner City London Neighbourhood," *IBG Transactions*, 21:1 (1996), p. 194.

places in Renaissance Florence and Venice, and Duncan's study of the changing meanings of place in Kandy, Sri Lanka and its role in establishing hegemony.[36] Also of relevance are empirical studies examining the links between shared social identities and place, including Cohen's study of the production of place through music and the implications that this has for the struggle for identity and belonging in Liverpool, and May's analysis of the gentrification of an inner-city London neighbourhood in which he demonstrates that conceptualisations of place are tied to debates concerning the processes of globalisation and the politics of identity.[37] In historical geography, Anderson's work on Vancouver's Chinatown illustrates the linkages between place, identity, and ethnicity by demonstrating the way in which the distinctive landscape of Vancouver's Chinatown, produced through the historical exercise of white European cultural domination, came to be an important site through which white society's concepts about the Chinese were constituted.[38] Not only did Chinatown reflect the process of race-definition, but eventually it came to inform and institutionalise it, thereby providing 'a context and justification for its reproduction'.[39]

While Tuan insists that place does not have any particular geographical scale associated with it and that definitions of place are quite arbitrary, most geographical studies making use of the concept of place have focused on a local scale of analysis.[40] Given the postmodernist critique of grand theory and metanarratives, it is hardly surprising that some geographers have demonstrated increased interest in 'the local' in recent years. Interest in locality studies does not necessarily imply a postmodern philosophical perspective, however. Massey points out that while concern for spatial differentiation could be seen as geography's 'particular slant' on the emerging interest in 'difference' which is often associated with postmodernism, a focus on 'the local' is also part of many neo-marxist attempts to deal with the complexity of causal processes at work

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[36] Agnew and Duncan, eds., *op. cit.*, pp. 81-103, 185-201.
[37] S. Cohen, "Sounding Out the City: Music and the Sensuous Production of Place," *IBG Transactions*, 20:4 (1995), pp. 434-446; May, *loc. cit.*, pp. 194-215.
[38] K. Anderson, *Vancouver's Chinatown: Racial Discourse in Canada, 1875-1980* (Montreal, 1991), p. 4.
[39] K. Anderson, "The Idea of Chinatown: The Power of Place and Institutional Practice in the Making of a Racial Category," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 77:4 (1987), p. 594.
[40] Y. Tuan, "Space and Place: Humanistic Perspective," in *Human Geography: An Essential Anthology*, ed. by J. Agnew et al. (Oxford, 1996), p. 455.

in modern societies.[41] Doctrinaire Marxists often dismiss identities other than those of class as mere manifestations of false consciousness, and therefore perceive research on localities (as well as ethnicity and gender) as reactionary. Alternatively, a focus on 'the local' might improve our understanding of the production of diversity and difference which would, in turn, allow us to gain a more complex and realistic understanding of social relations than that offered by traditional Marxist approaches. The question remains of whether studies of place *should* focus exclusively on 'the local'. Howell and Southall, in their respective articles on the nineteenth-century Chartist movement, warn of the dangers of persistent localism.[42] Southall argues that the history of political life 'beyond the parish pump' has been neglected by geographers and that this parochial emphasis 'reflects a more general turning away by human geographers from the spatial in favour of the local, on the grounds that the lives of real people take place within, and derive meaning from particular localities and that 'the spatial' means the dehumanised geometries of locational analysis'.[43] Highly critical of geographical writing which embodies a simplistic opposition between place and space - on the one hand, the realm of daily life and ordinary people, on the other, the realm of flows of capital and hegemonic forces - Southall suggests that we should instead embrace studies which seek to understand the way in which interaction occurs between various spatial scales.[44] This echoes Massey's call for a 'progressive sense of place', which sees the 'the particularity of any place' as being 'constructed not by placing boundaries around it and defining its identity through counterposition to the other which lies beyond, but precisely (in part) through the specificity of the mix of links and interconnections *to* that "beyond"'.[45] Anderson voices a similar concern when she states that 'studies of the social meaning of place in human geography have too rarely taken measure of the role of powerful agents,

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[41] Massey, *op. cit.*, p. 118.
[42] P. Howell, "The Local Background of Chartism Revisited: A Note on the Geography of Popular Politics in Early Victorian England," *Area*, 28:2 (1996), pp. 150-159; H. Southall, "Agitate! Agitate! Organise! Political Travellers and the Construction of a National Politics, 1839-1880," *IBG Transactions*, 21:1 (1996), pp. 177-193.
[43] Southall, *loc. cit.*, p. 177.
[44] *Ibid.*, p. 190.
[45] Massey, *op. cit.*, p. 5.

such as the state, in defining place'.[46] In her empirical work, Anderson effectively demonstrates how institutions at the national, provincial, and local level influenced the definition and development of Vancouver's Chinatown.[47] As we shall see, the British government's policies vis-à-vis Ireland, as well as the laws of the Canadian government, played a role in defining the Irish community in nineteenth-century Montreal. The interactions between the Seminary of St. Sulpice and the Bishop of Montreal (which will be discussed in detail in Chapter 4) also had a significant impact in terms of creating the 'national' parishes within which an Irish-Catholic identity centred around national as well as religious affiliation could flourish.

In certain discussions of place, there also appears to be confusion (or a desire to avoid discussion) about the extent to which place should be seen as an *active* agent in the shaping of society.[48] Harvey maintains, I think correctly, that...

> [t]o write of "the power of place," as if places (localities, regions, neighbourhoods, states, etc.) possess causal powers is to engage in the grossest of fetishisms; unless, that is, we confine ourselves rigorously to the definition of place as a social process. In the latter case, the questions to be posed can be rendered more explicit: why, by what means, and in what sense do social beings individually, and, more importantly, collectively invest places...with sufficient permanence to become a locus of institutionalized social power and how and for what purposes is that power then used?[49]

This is one of the central questions of my own research, as I seek to assess the extent to which the Irish parishes under investigation managed to become loci of institutionalized social power, with the ability to influence the way in which the Irish-Catholic community defined itself as a whole in Montreal.

Notwithstanding the criticisms outlined above, the concept of place promises to enrich studies of ethnic historical geography. In the course of their everyday lives, individuals and communities develop deep attachments to places through experience and memory, and often communities give physical expression to their collective attachments to place through the construction of symbolic structures such as churches. This is relevant

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[46] Anderson, "The Idea of Chinatown," p. 594.
[47] Anderson, *Vancouver's Chinatown.*
[48] *Ibid.*, p. 28.
[49] D. Harvey, *Justice, Nature, and the Geography of Difference* (Oxford: 1996), p. 320.

to ethnic history in the sense that 'in both the past and the present, place serves as a constantly reenergized repository of socially and politically relevant traditions and identity'.[50] It has also been argued that territorial forms not only reflect social processes, but also play a role in producing them.[51] If this is indeed the case, then, by achieving an understanding of the places in which ethnic groups lived and the meanings these places had for the groups living in them, it should be possible to achieve a deeper understanding of ethnic identity and of the way in which ethnic communities evolve. This belief is reflected in the work of ethnic historians, such as Harney and Zucchi, who have emphasized the importance of ethnic neighbourhoods as places where women and men have negotiated their ethnicity.[52]

Defining Ethnicity

My argument that locale and sense of place play a role in the creation and maintenance of ethnic identity falls in agreement with a broader social science literature challenging cultural relativism in North American ethnic studies. Instead of viewing ethnic groups as naturally occurring and unproblematic entities, researchers today are more likely to regard ethnic identity as a socially constituted phenomenon, 'formed relationally through processes of exclusion and inclusion around symbols of actual or perceived common descent such as language, behavioural practices, and religion'.[53] Initially inspired by Norwegian anthropologist Fredrik Barth, the new anti-essentialist, anti-primordialist approach to ethnic studies has shifted attention away from the 'cultural stuff' the boundaries were once assumed to 'seal hermetically', to examining the process of boundary negotiation between groups.[54] Because of this focus, it has been suggested

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[50] Agnew and Duncan, eds., *op. cit.*, p. 7.
[51] Jackson, ed., *op. cit.*, p. 4.
[52] R. F. Harney, ed., *Gathering Places: People and Neighbourhoods of Toronto, 1834-1945* (Toronto, 1985); J. Zucchi, *The Italian Immigrants of the St. John's Ward, 1875-1915: Patterns of Settlement and Neighbourhood Formation* (Toronto, 1980); S. Olson and A. Kobayashi, "The Emerging Ethnocultural Mosaic," in *The Changing Social Geography of Canadian Cities*, ed. by L. Bourne and D. Ley (Montreal, 1993), p. 143.
[53] Anderson, *Vancouver's Chinatown*, p. 16.
[54] *Ibid.;* F. Barth, ed., *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries* (Boston, 1969). Barth's boundaries are not, it should be emphasized, mental boundaries, but 'boundaries of social relations in a context of social, economic, and political opposition' between groups (often between minority groups and the ethnic majority of the state) (see McDonald (1986), p. 343). Barth acknowledges that these social boundaries may have territorial

that Barth's definition of ethnicity is particularly amenable to the study of ethnic groups that are undergoing change.[55] There are also interesting parallels between Barth's emphasis on the negotiation of [social] boundaries between ethnic groups and Massey's argument that place 'identities' can only be understood by drawing on the links beyond the [territorial] boundaries of the locality.[56] The creation of place and ethnic identities are woven together, and it is possible to examine the intermeshed nature of place and ethnicity in real life. For example, the Irish national parish was not only a territorially defined entity, which when given meaning by its inhabitants and through interaction with the outside world became a 'place'. It was also a product of the definition of ethnic boundaries between Irish and French-Canadian Catholics, as well as being a place in which ethnic boundaries were further defined through the creation of ethnically-based parish institutions and associations.

Also relevant to my research is work dealing more specifically with the immigrant experience. Abandoning the traditional debate in American sociology between assimilationist and pluralist perspectives, Yancey et al. have argued that ethnicity is 'an emergent phenomenon' whose development and persistence is dependent on the structural conditions encountered by each immigrant group and their descendants in American cities.[57] Instead of regarding transplanted cultural heritage as the defining characteristic of ethnic groups, ethnicity is viewed as the result of a process which continues to unfold and which offers potential for the generation of new forms of ethnic culture in the new setting. As such, ethnicity is in a perpetual state of flux, as '[c]ulture, including custom and tradition, is mobilized to achieve specific goals in response to a particular social situation and is itself redefined in the process of ethnic formation'.[58] Ethnic identification is promoted by conditions which reinforce the maintenance of kinship and friendship

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counterparts, but emphasizes that ethnic groups are not merely or necessarily based on the occupation of exclusive territories.

[55] W. Isajiw, "Definitions of Ethnicity," *Occasional Papers in Ethnic and Immigration Studies, Multicultural History Society of Canada,* 6 (1979), p. 9.

[56] Massey, *op. cit.*, p.120.

[57] W. Yancey et al., "Emergent Ethnicity: A Review and Reformulation," *American Sociological Review,* 41:3 (1976), p. 392.

[58] B.P. Clarke, *Piety and Nationalism: Lay Voluntary Associations and the Creation of an Irish-Catholic Community in Toronto, 1850-1895* (Montreal, 1993), p. 7.

networks amongst people sharing common origins.[59] Common occupational positions, residential stability and concentration, and dependence on common institutions and services are believed to play an especially important role in the emergence of ethnic solidarity and identification.[60] Breton has demonstrated that the ability of an ethnic group to attract immigrants to its social sphere is highly dependent on the degree of institutional completeness of the ethnic community in question, and has noted that ethnic communities vary greatly in the forms of social organisation they adopt.[61] Of particular relevance to my own work is Breton's finding that churches, as the centre of a wide range of activities and service provision, play an extremely important role in keeping immigrants' personal interactions within the boundaries of the ethnic community.[62] Yancey's argument in favour of seeing ethnicity as an emergent phenomenon has led me to focus on the conditions in nineteenth-century Montreal, particularly the evolution of the parish system, that promoted the development of a distinct Irish-Catholic identity and helped to preserve it throughout the second and third generations. Breton's work, in turn, provides a strong theoretical basis for my hypothesis that the parish played a major role in maintaining the cohesiveness of Montreal's Irish-Catholic community.

The Historiography of the Irish in Canada

To demonstrate the need for greater emphasis on the role of Irish parishes as sites through which the urban Irish constructed concepts of themselves as an ethnic group, it is imperative to discuss the relevant literature. In 1990, Houston and Smyth noted that twenty years ago it would have been impossible for them to write their national study of the Irish in Canada because so little was known about the role played by the Irish in Canadian history.[63] They suggest that for over a century Canadian Irish studies featured little in the way of accurate depiction and analysis, and instead featured stereotypes of the Irish, generally borrowed from US studies.[64] This vacuum only began to be filled in the

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[59] Yancey, *loc. cit.*, p. 392.
[60] *Ibid.*
[61] R. Breton, "Institutional Completeness of Ethnic Communities and the Personal Relations of Immigrants," *American Journal of Sociology*, 70:2 (1964), pp. 193-205.
[62] *Ibid.*, p. 200-201.
[63] C.J. Houston and W.J. Smyth, *Irish Emigration and Canadian Settlement: Patterns, Links, and Letters* (Toronto, 1990), p. 6.
[64] *Ibid.*, p. 7.

1960s and 1970s with the appearance of works such as John Mannion's geographical study of the retention and adaptation of material culture in Irish settlements in eastern Canada.[65]

Houston and Smyth note a general reluctance to think of the British peoples of Canada in ethnic terms: the Scottish, Welsh, English, and Irish are often lumped together under the 'non-ethnic' label 'British'.[66] Their study attempts to redress the imbalance by examining the creation and development of the Irish presence in Canada. They argue:

> The study of Irish immigration and settlement still lacks a national perspective and is frequently hampered by generalizations proposed for the whole country on the basis of patterns distinctive only in some regions. No single study has yet tackled the issue of the geographical distribution of the Irish throughout Canada, and it is impossible therefore to weight properly the many regional studies that have appeared'.[67]

They then attempt to provide such a study. Their approach is useful in terms of the argument I hope to make, simply because by taking a pan-Canadian perspective they draw attention to the significance of place in creating Irish identity in Canada. They suggest that 'the Irish in Canada, like the nation itself, were spread across a vast territory broken up into a disjointed series of settled places. A single identity would be impossible to create; a stereotype might represent a purely localized mythical circumstance'.[68]

Akenson, too, is interested in challenging the stereotypes of an older historiography which portrays the Irish as indolent, Catholic, slum-dwellers: 'Given that only one in three Irish Catholics in Ontario settled in areas that can even remotely be considered urban, and given the fact that only one in seven settled in cities, it is impossible to apply the "American model" to the Canadian situation, as it involves either Catholics or Protestants'.[69] While his contribution to the study of the Irish in Ontario is significant, he has been criticized for assuming that what is true of the Irish in Ontario

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[65] J. Mannion, *Irish Settlement in Eastern Canada: A Study of Cultural Transfer and Adaptation* (Toronto, 1974).
[66] Houston and Smyth, *op. cit.*, p. 6. For further discussion of this topic see P. Greenhill, *Ethnicity in the Mainstream: Three Studies of English Canadian Culture in Ontario* (Montreal, 1994).
[67] Houston and Smyth, *op. cit.*, p. 8.
[68] *Ibid.*, p. 187.
[69] D.H. Akenson, *The Irish in Ontario: A Study in Rural History* (Kingston, 1984), p. 39.

must also be more or less true of the Irish in the rest of Canada.[70] Also problematic is his suggestion that the differences between the Catholic and Protestant components of nineteenth-century Irish culture have been overestimated by historians.[71] I recognise that his use of this line of argument is motivated by a justified desire to demonstrate that innate cultural differences cannot be used as an explanation for why Irish Catholics were less successful economically than their Protestant counterparts in the US and major Canadian cities, since they achieved social and economic parity in rural Ontario.[72] I do not, however, believe that the significance of Catholicism can be denied as having an important influence on the creation of a distinct Irish-Catholic identity.

Similarly, Nicolson argues that the Canadian tradition of studying the Catholic and Protestant groups together as an Irish unit has restricted exploration of religion as an element in ethnic formation.[73] He suggests that urban Irish culture was 'ethno-religious in nature, a syncretic vehicle, urban-born and restricted to the Catholic segment of the national group in the world diaspora'.[74] According to Nicolson, a viable vehicle was created to sustain the Irish in the ghettos of Toronto and other Canadian cities by reinterpreting peasant cultural elements in terms of the Catholicism of the age to produce a common Irish culture that was transmitted through the Church's metropolitan system, and eventually integrated urban and rural parishes into a common network.[75] While I appreciate Nicolson's emphasis on a specifically Irish-Catholic identity, and also his notion that Irish urban enclaves did have a role to play in the construction of Irish ethnicity in Canada, I am skeptical of his idea that '[t]he Irish participated in the same culture, whether they lived in Cabbagetown, the Albion Hills, or Kingston'.[76]

Clarke makes less sweeping generalizations with his argument that the 'basic structure of Irish associational life was shaped by two movements that arose in Ireland and Irish-Catholic enclaves overseas during the middle decades of the nineteenth century:

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[70] R. J. Grace, *The Irish in Quebec: An Introduction to the Historiography* (Quebec, 1993), p. 44.
[71] Akenson, *op. cit.*, p. 352.
[72] *Ibid.*, pp. 339-353.
[73] M. Nicolson, "The Irish Experience in Ontario: Rural or Urban?," *Urban History Review,* XIV, pp. 36-45.
[74] *Ibid.*, p. 38.
[75] *Ibid.*, p. 39, 43.
[76] *Ibid.*, p. 39.

the renewal of the Catholic Church, which was ultramontane in inspiration, and the Irish nationalist awakening'.[77] While Nicolson fails to consider the role played by place in the construction of Irish ethnicity, Clarke (whose ideas will form an important part of my discussion of Irish-Catholic associations and institutions) provides a more considered account, acknowledging that while the Irish may have participated in a common culture through their associational life, his history of the Irish-Catholic community of Toronto cannot be taken for granted as a microcosm of Irish Catholics' experience throughout Canada. On the whole, he seems more willing to acknowledge the impact that local factors might have had on the development of ethnic identity. Clarke is also more attuned to lay participation at a local level, arguing that 'voluntary associations were a primary outlet for lay leadership and a principal means by which popular sentiment was both shaped and mobilised. As organisations which operate in *specific localities*, voluntary associations offer a vantage point from which to observe the external forces acting on an ethnic community as well as its internal social dynamics'.[78] Clarke makes a strong argument that associational life, particularly that organised by the Catholic Church and under the close supervision of the clergy, played an important role in the maintenance of Irish-Catholic identity. He states, for example, that '[t]hose historians who emphasize the protean nature of ethnicity have pointed to the critical role played by voluntary associations in the forging of ethnic communities in the New World' and that 'the social services offered by the church provided an institutional framework that resulted in a form of ethnicity in which religion was central'.[79] He does not, however, deny that other more local factors also played a role in ethnic identity formation, admitting that communities 'are not built on ideology alone'.[80] Clarke nevertheless insists that the traditional Irish allegiance to community and locality, which defined the social identity of most Irish Catholics in mid-nineteenth century Ireland, was shattered by the emigration experience and replaced by a radical nationalist ideology that transcended Irish localism and provided in its place a national identity.[81] Disappointingly, he does not consider the possibility that

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[77] Clarke, *op. cit.*, p. 5.
[78] *Ibid.*, p. 7. Emphasis added.
[79] *Ibid.*, p. 7, 42.
[80] *Ibid.*, p. 178.
[81] *Ibid.*

Irish allegiance to community and locality might also have been reconstituted in New World settings, thereby contributing to the way in which Irish Catholics redefined their social identity.

Montreal's Irish-Catholic Community

A sizeable Irish community existed in Montreal prior to the wave of Irish immigrants that swept across the Atlantic in 1847-1849, dwarfing the earlier peak of 1831-1832. Given that Belfast was the port from which the largest number emigrated in the pre-famine years, it has traditionally been assumed that Protestants formed the bulk of migrants during this period.[82] Nevertheless, Akenson warns that there was no simplistic dichotomy, with Protestants arriving prior to the Famine and Catholics during and afterwards.[83] The completion of the commodious St. Patrick's church on the eve of the famine suggests that a substantial portion of Montreal's Irish population belonged to the Catholic faith. While the famine migration had a dramatic impact on Montreal as thousands of Irish men and women perished in the immigrants sheds and spread typhus throughout the city, only a small portion of the famine migrants made Montreal their home - the rest moving on to Upper Canada and the United States. The census of 1844 lists 9595 Irish-born individuals (of a total population of 44 591), while that of 1851 shows an increase of only 2000, to 11 736 (of a total of 57 715).[84] After this period Irish immigration continued at a reduced pace, as is evident from the fact that the population of Irish birth declined after 1861. Having confused the 1861 census figure for those of Irish birth with those of Irish origin, Cross mistakenly notes a near doubling in the number of individuals of Irish origin living in Montreal between 1861 and 1871, which did not in fact occur.[85] By 1858, the number of Irish Catholics alone had reached approximately 20 000.[86] There were 25 376 people of Irish origin in Montreal in 1871, increasing to only 31 965 by the turn of the century. While the population of Irish origin continued to

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[82] Akenson, *op. cit.*, p. 22.
[83] *Ibid.*, pp. 22-28.
[84] W.M. Nolte, *The Irish in Canada, 1815-1867,* Ph.D. thesis, University of Maryland (1975), p. 98.
[85] Cross, *op. cit.*, p. 13-43.
[86] ACAM, 901.137, 1858-16, Sept. 1. A subtraction of 'natives of Canada of French origin' (43 509) from the total number of Roman Catholics (65 896) in 1861 provides a rough, albeit somewhat exaggerated, estimate of the number of Irish Catholics in Montreal. This gives a value of 22 387, which is in keeping with the above estimate.

increase throughout the century, as the first generation of migrants was replaced by a second and third native-born generation, the major influx of immigration occurred in the first half of the century. The demographic curve which I have built up from parish marriage registers illustrates the Irish-Catholic community's growth over the course of the nineteenth century (see Appendix 1).

In order to recognise the unique nature of Montreal's Irish community, it is necessary to make comparisons between Quebec and Ontario. The Irish immigrants who decided to make Montreal their home were a population very different from that described in the literature on the Irish of Ontario. There were 123 478 people of Irish origin in Quebec in 1871, making up one-tenth of the population of the province. One-fifth lived in Montreal, one-tenth in Quebec City.[87] This suggests that while the Irish in Quebec were not as urbanised in 1871 as their American counterparts (who settled overwhelmingly in the highly urbanised northeastern region of the United States), they were somewhat more urbanised than their counterparts in Ontario, where only about one in five lived in an urban setting.[88] In terms of their religious composition, Quebec's Irish population appears to have been the mirror image of Ontario's, although they were drawing people from the same pool of immigrants who landed at Quebec City. In 1871, two-thirds of Ontario's Irish population were Protestant, while in Quebec two-thirds were Catholic (and over eight-tenths in urban areas).[89] A survey of St. Gabriel's ward in Montreal in 1881 indicates that 88 percent of the Irish population was Catholic, a figure in keeping with Houston and Smyth's estimate. Figures from St. Gabriel's ward also suggest that the vast majority of English-speaking Catholics were of Irish origin (91 percent).[90] It may be that '...the prominence of Catholicism in Quebec may...have worked against more of the Protestant Irish staying in Quebec, while providing encouragement for Irish Catholics. A cultural filtering process may have operated *in combination with* timing and economic factors'.[91] It is also possible that the contrast could be explained as a result of the timing of the arrival of the immigrants affecting the relative availability of

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[87] Grace, *op. cit.*, p. 56.
[88] *Ibid.*
[89] Houston and Smyth, *op. cit.*, p. 227.
[90] Manuscript Census of Canada, Reel C-13221.
[91] Grace, *op. cit.*, p. 97.

land and jobs in the two provinces. However, the proportion of Irish Catholics in Upper Canada stayed virtually constant between 1842 and 1871, which implies that even after the Famine the bulk of emigrants continued to be Protestant.[92] This strengthens the argument in favour of the importance of a cultural filter.

Whereas the concept of a cultural filter implies that the relationship between Irish Catholics and the rest of the community was of vital importance, one of the weaknesses that Cross identifies in her own research on the Montreal Irish is a failure (attributed to a lack of available sources) to deal satisfactorily with this interface. She surmises that 'either the Irish had tolerably good relationships with only occasional friction with other groups, or they lived existences so separate from them that the matter simply did not arise'.[93] Yet events such as the Gavazzi riot of 1853 and July 12 disturbances (particularly in 1876, 1877, and 1878) suggest that friction between Protestants and Catholics should not be underestimated. Connor's thesis provides a detailed exploration of the way in which the Irish-Catholic population was perceived by the mid-Victorian press of Montreal and Toronto.[94] He suggests that the prolonged existence of hostile feelings in Canada towards the immigrant community was based on aversion to Catholicism and on stereotypes of the Irish character in general, and argues that these unfavourable images were believed by the Irish community to be a major factor contributing to the community's perceived lack of economic, social, and political progress. As a defence against this hostility and as part of an attempt to gain social respect and political influence, Connor argues that the Irish press promoted Irish national group identity. The French Canadian papers, he notes, often looked to the Irish-Catholic community as a potential ally during the mid-Victorian period, but the endemic hostility between the two groups - on the streets, in the city council, and even on the steps of their churches - reflected an underlying tension between the two groups.[95] While Connor provides a useful overview of the relationship between Irish Catholics and the wider 'Canadian' community and recognises the distinct - and often more sympathetic - attitude

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[92] Akenson, *op. cit.*, p. 27-28.
[93] Cross, *op. cit.*, p. 10.
[94] D.C. Connor, *The Irish-Canadian Image and Self Image, 1847-1870,* M.A. thesis, University of British Columbia (1976).
[95] *Ibid.*, p. 65.

of the French-Canadian press, he fails to consider the different situations encountered by Irish Catholics in Montreal and Toronto.

Nolte examines a range of aspects of the Irish experience in Canada during the period between 1815 and 1867, but his most important contribution is a discussion of relations between Irish and French Canadians in Lower Canada, particularly during the Rebellion of 1837-38.[96] French-Canadian reformers identified strongly with Ireland and attempts were made during the early nineteenth century to build an alliance between French and Irish Catholics based not only on the shared ties of religion, but also on the feeling that both peoples had suffered at the hands of a common oppressor. Nolte suggests that this alliance foundered in 1837 as a result of the Irish having come to appreciate the differences between the situation in Canada and in Ireland. This resulted in the Irish community's desire to be seen as loyal subjects in British North America, but at the same time to continue to oppose Britain's Irish policy.[97] Conflict between French and Irish intensified during the 1830s as English and Irish immigration to Lower Canada increased and began to threaten French-Catholic political dominance, while at the same time increasing competition for jobs and spreading the fear of disease. The Catholic Church, which supposedly provided an important bond between French and Irish Catholics, also became a focal point of conflict: 'At issue was the church's role as a bulwark of two divergent cultures - The Irish viewed it as an essential tie to home. For the French, is was a symbol of their survival on an otherwise English continent'.[98]

As previously mentioned, Linteau argues that each of Montreal's ethnic groups was allowed a great degree of cultural autonomy and that the elite encouraged the segmentation of Montreal's institutional life along ethnic lines:

> Une véritable stratégie de cloisonnement ethnique - l'antithèse du *melting pot* américain - a donc été mise sur pied. Ainsi, les dirigeants de chaque ethnie ont créé un ensemble de sociétés nationales et d'organisations charitables dont la tâche est d'encadrer les membres de leur groupe et de minimiser les frictions.[99]

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[96] Nolte, *op. cit.*
[97] *Ibid.*, pp. 216-217.
[98] *Ibid.*, p. 191.
[99] P-A. Linteau, *Histoire de Montréal depuis la confédération* (Montréal, 1992), p. 48.

Olson's investigation of night illuminations (which were often a part of important civic celebrations) in the latter part of the nineteenth century illustrates the way in which this system affected civic life in Montreal. These celebrations did not turn into contestations of urban space, but were instead 'superb manifestations of unanimity'. Olson nevertheless concludes that these festivals were part of a system of institutionalized boundary maintenance between Montreal's cultural communities and were used, not only to provide diversion and entertainment, but also to confirm identities and allegiances.[100] As will be demonstrated later, the creation and maintenance of social boundaries between Irish Catholics and other groups often took place at the scale of the parish, and therefore an examination of the role of the parish in late nineteenth-century Montreal will allow further exploration of the interface between Montreal's different ethno-religious communities, particularly the relationship between Irish and French Catholics.

Religious Revival and the Transformation of the Parish

Jan Noel presents Father Chiniquy's Temperance Crusade of the late 1840s as being part of 'a much broader process in which a whole people took a turn to the right, rejecting radical politics and turning instead to ecclesiastical leadership in times of change'.[101] The Treaty of Paris (1763) and subsequent documents had assured French Canadians of their freedom of religion and left intact the traditional organisational structure of the Catholic Church in Canada, yet the majority of the parishioners in the parish of Notre-Dame and elsewhere neglected their religious duties during the early part of the nineteenth century.[102] The situation was very different by the 1860s, when the performance of religious duties had become nearly universal.[103] Although there is debate over the speed at which this religious 'revival' took place, it is the outcome which is of interest here.[104] In the wake of post-Rebellion social restructuring, the influence of the

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[100] S. Olson, "A Profusion of Light in Nineteenth-Century Montreal," in *Espace et Culture/Space and Culture,* ed. by S. Courville and N. Seguin (Sainte-Foy, 1995).
[101] J. Noel, "Dry Patriotism: the Chiniquy Crusade," in *Drink in Canada: Historical Essays,* ed. by C. Warsh (Montreal, 1993), p. 27.
[102] L. Rousseau, "La conduite pascale dans la région montréalaise, 1831-1865: une indice des mouvements de la ferveur religieuse," in *L'Eglise de Montréal, 1836-1986: aperçus d'hier et d'aujourd'hui* (Montréal, 1986), p. 279.
[103] *Ibid.*, p. 283.
[104] This debate is explored in R. Hardy, "A propos du réveil religieux dans le Québec du XIXe siècle: le recours aux tribunaux dans les rapports entre le clergé et les fidèles," *RHAF*, 48:2 (1994), 187-212 and

Catholic church and its clergy increased, resulting in a major transformation of religious attitudes and practices. According to Rousseau, 'l'implantation généralisée du mouvement associatif dans toutes les paroisses catholiques constitue une marque typique du renouveau catholique du XIXe siècle, en France comme au Canada'.[105]

The appointment of Ignace Bourget as Bishop of Montreal in 1840, played an decisive role in the development of the nineteenth-century church in Montreal. In order to facilitate the administration of his diocese, promote a return to faith and traditionalism, and create closer ties between parishioners and their pastors, Bishop Bourget embarked upon his controversial plan to subdivide the immense parish of Notre-Dame in 1866 (which will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 4). The dismemberment of Notre-Dame played a key role in solidifying the renewal that was already underway in the Catholic church of Montreal. Linteau, based on the research of Lucia Ferretti, writes:

> Les nouvelles paroisses, qui sont beaucoup plus à l'échelle humaine que ne l'était Notre-Dame, permettent un encadrement beaucoup plus serré. Jusque-là les Montréalais s'identifiaient à leur quartier ou à leur côte. Désormais, la paroisse deviendra l'unité territoriale et sociale de base pour les catholiques. Les pasteurs sont en measure d'y organiser un ensemble d'institutions pieuses qui rassemblent les fidèles et facilitent le contrôle social et moral de la population par l'Eglise.[106]

Ferretti stresses that the parish was a dynamic institution, able to adapt to the urban-industrial setting, and able to play a vital role in shaping the urban identity of French Canadians in the latter part of the nineteenth century.[107] The Irish-Catholic parishes in Montreal were equally responsive and played an important role in preserving Irish national awareness and maintaining a separate Irish-Catholic identity.[108] The absence of state-provided social services and the vastly unequal distribution of wealth in industrialising Montreal also increased the sphere within which the Church could participate in and influence the lives of its parishioners. Bourget was responsible for

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Rousseau, "A propos du 'réveil religieux' dans le Québec du XIXe siècle: où se loge le vrai débat?," *RHAF*, 49:2 (1995), pp. 223-245.

[105] Rousseau, "A propos du 'réveil religieux' dans le Québec du XIXe siècle: où se loge le vrai débat?," p. 243.

[106] Linteau, *op. cit.*, p. 71.

[107] L. Ferretti, *Entre voisins: la société paroissiale en milieu urbain, Saint-Pierre-Apôtre de Montréal 1848-1930* (Montréal, 1992).

[108] Cross, *op. cit.*, p. 111; Grace, *op. cit.*, p. 100.

bringing numerous religious orders such as the Oblates and the Redemptorists to Montreal, thereby increasing clerical supervision of the population of the Montreal diocese. Both male and female religious orders played an increasingly important role in education, as well as carrying out the administration of hospitals and charitable organisations. Clarke asserts that '...in addition to schools, charitable organisations were essential if the church was to become the central social institution for Irish Catholics'.[109] The parish served as an effective structure around which the laity could establish temperance, mutual benefit, and literary societies, all of which provided sociability as well as promoting respectability and self-improvement. It has been argued that...

> ...because Irish-Catholic immigrants came from a country divided by a highly regionalized culture and intense local loyalties, the Catholic Church was one of the few things they had in common. For this reason the clergy regularly appealed to the patriotic sentiments of the laity when seeking their mite for the church's religious and social institutions.... Not only did the church foster the emergence of ethnic consciousness, but it gave this ethnicity a particular cast. The social services offered by the church provided an institutional framework that resulted in a form of ethnicity in which religion was central.[110]

The adaptability of the parish should not be underestimated. In nineteenth-century cities like Manchester and London, in which the Irish encountered rather different conditions from those in Montreal and where the Catholic Church was not an integral part of society's power structure, the parish nevertheless helped migrants adapt to urban society and enabled the Catholic Church to become 'a recognisable landmark of cultural identity, and a source of leadership and facilities, even for the significant numbers who were only nominal in their observance or had lapsed entirely'.[111] Research on nineteenth-century urban parishes has tended to reinforce the critique of work done by the Chicago School of sociology, which often depicted migrants as people overwhelmed by transplantation from 'organised' traditional societies into 'disorganised and alienating' urban life.[112]

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[109] Clarke, *op. cit.*, p. 41.
[110] *Ibid.*, p. 42.
[111] M.A. Busteed and R. I. Hodgson, "Irish Migrant Responses to Urban Life in Early Nineteenth-Century Manchester," *The Geographical Journal,* 162:2 (1996), p. 148; L.H. Lees, *Exiles of Erin: Irish Migrants in Victorian London* (Ithaca, 1979).
[112] Ferretti, *op. cit.*; Lees, *op. cit.*

Conclusion

It is believed that an understanding of the geographical features underlying the evolution of Montreal's Irish-Catholic community will contribute to an explanation of the way in which that community developed its sense of collective identity. Of particular interest is the role played by the parish in this process. Drawing on geographical literature, the Irish 'national' parish will be seen as both a territorial and a social structure - a place - which is defined not only through interactions taking place at the local level, but also by actors at various spatial scales. These include powerful agents such as the Catholic Church, individual religious orders such as the Sulpicians, government, and Irish nationalist movements. The creation of place and ethnic identities are seen as inseparable, hence the difficulties involved in generalising about the Irish experience in Canada. Irish identity is viewed as an emergent phenomenon, which in Montreal evolved in the context of the territorial and social evolution of the parish system, resulting in a form of ethnic affiliation in which religion was central. This development needs to be put in the larger context of the adaptation of Montreal's Catholic Church to the rapid industrialisation of the city, which required a rapid response in order to keep up with the increasing spiritual and material requirements of its parishioners.

Chapter 3: Institution Building in the Early Irish Community

Introduction

Before embarking on a discussion of the role of the parish in fostering Irish-Catholic identity, it is necessary to build up a picture of the community in the period prior to the creation of distinct Irish-Catholic parishes. In particular, it is important to examine the position that the Church held in the early Irish community. Only by doing this will it be possible to assess the impact that the creation of Irish-Catholic parishes had on the organisation of the community as a whole. As noted in the previous chapter, there was a sizeable pre-Famine Irish community in Montreal. This contained a relatively prosperous group of well-established Irish Catholics and Irish Protestants, many of whom had arrived in Montreal during the early nineteenth century and were now in a position to provide community leadership.[113] Relations between Irish Protestants and Irish Catholics appear to have been good: the St. Patrick's Society admitted both Protestant and Catholic members during this period and examples can be found of business partnerships being established between Protestant and Catholic Irishmen. The influx of less prosperous Irish immigrants, particularly the arrivals of 1831-32 and the Famine migration of 1847-49, posed a serious challenge to members of the pre-existing community as they struggled (not without assistance from other parts of Montreal society) to provide for the needs of their countrymen and women. During the first half of the nineteenth century, the efforts of the community focused on building the institutions necessary to provide for the spiritual and material needs of its members.

A Suitable Place of Worship

Church building was an activity holding great significance in nineteenth-century Montreal, since the construction of an impressive church could only serve to add to the prestige of the denomination under whose auspices the church was built. While active competition existed between Protestants and Catholics (the building of the original Christ Church cathedral [1805-21] can be seen as an attempt to rival the old Notre-Dame church), other groups also attempted to achieve recognition within both the Protestant and

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[113] Nolte, *op. cit.*, p. 80.

Catholic spheres. From a very early stage, Irish Catholics sought recognition as a separate entity within the established Catholic structure, and evidence suggests that both linguistic and cultural differences promoted this separation.

In 1815, 'the Irish were first assembled by themselves, as a people, in the little church of the Bonsecours, by...Father Richards'.[114] It is estimated that the Irish-Catholic congregation numbered only thirty to fifty adults at this time. According to one nineteenth-century observer, 'it was but natural that they should have flocked there, their lively faith was intensified by their isolation in a strange land'.[115] To provide more space in which to worship, the old Recollet church on St. Helen Street was enlarged and reopened in 1830 for the use of Irish Catholics living in the central and western portion of the city, while those of the eastern section remained attached to Notre-Dame de Bonsecours, which they shared with French Canadians.[116] With the rapid expansion of the community in the 1830s, the Recollet became overcrowded and 'in consequence of the great crowds that could not get admission into the Recollet, the poor ever faithful Irish during mass filled Notre-Dame Street outside the church and back into Dollard Lane'.[117] A resolution of Irish Catholics in 1841, requesting the erection of a larger church, confirms the veracity of these memories through its statement that '...on several occasions...the poorer classes attended to their religious duties, even in the most rigorous season, outside the doors of the churches'.[118] This proclamation seems to have been the outcome of a number of informal meetings held by Irish Catholics in various hotels in Montreal, and of more general public outcry 'among individual groups of Irish Catholics

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[114] *The Case of St. Patrick's Congregation as to the erection of a new canonical parish of St. Patrick's, Montreal, published by order of the committee of the congregation* (Montreal, 1866), Reprint of letter from the congregation of St. Patrick's to Mgr. Bourget in response to his pastoral letter of Nov. 21, Dec. 11, 1866. Curran (1887) gives 1817 as the date of Father Richard Jackson's 'discovery' of the Irish Catholics of the Bonsecours.

[115] J.J. Curran, ed., *Golden Jubilee of the Reverend Fathers Dowd and Toupin, With Historical Sketch of the Irish Community of Montreal* (Montreal, 1887), p. 9.

[116] *Ibid.*; M. Montbriand, "L'église des Recollets à Montréal (c.1703-1867)," *Cahiers de la société historique de Montréal*, 2:2-3 (1983), pp. 132-134.

[117] ASPB, Collection of letters (1880s) referring to the building of St. Patrick's, Questions submitted to J. Kelly by E. Murphy, March, 1884.

[118] ASPB, St. Patrick's Church, Committee minute book, Feb. 8, 1841.

as to the necessity of increased church accommodation, long before the St. Patrick's church was commenced'.[119]

The building of St. Patrick's was delayed because of opposition from the Fabrique of Notre-Dame. The Fabrique, which was composed of Montreal's Catholic elite and was financially dependent on the Seminary of St. Sulpice, had already indebted itself with the building of Notre-Dame.[120] Initial requests to erect St. Patrick's were therefore refused, despite the desire of Sulpician Superior Father Quiblier, to help the Irish erect a larger church.[121] Montreal's Irish Catholics contemplated following the example set by the Irish of Quebec City who had completed their own church independently in 1833 after being refused aid by the Fabrique; but the Sulpicians made it clear that it was 'out of the question for the laity to entertain the idea of building and controlling the church themselves, as the Bishop had stated that he would not supply such an establishment with pastors'.[122] Continued pressure on the part of Irish Catholics eventually brought matters to a crisis, and Sulpician influence resulted in a compromise wherein a church would be built by the Fabrique as soon as the Irish congregation was able to contribute £3000.[123] Almost immediately, the unofficial building committee appointed collectors to raise funds in all parts of the city and suburbs.[124] While some money was raised from wealthy individuals and large institutions, such as the Bank of Montreal which contributed £125, the committee eventually resorted to a penny subscription, so that 'even the poorest man may have the privilege to say that he had contributed his mite'.[125] Although the amount eventually collected was £300-£400 short, the raising of such amounts through voluntary contributions from all segments of the Irish population suggests a widespread desire to

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[119] ASPB, St. Patrick's Church, Committee minute book, Feb. 12, 1841; Collection of letters (1880s) referring to the building of St. Patrick's, J. Kelly to E. Murphy, March, 1884.
[120] The Seminary of St. Sulpice had been responsible for the administration of the parish of Notre-Dame since its erection in 1678. The Fabrique of Notre-Dame, whose meetings were presided over by the Superior of the Seminary, was the civilly incorporated body responsible for the parish's financial affairs.
[121] ASPB, Collection of letters (1880s) referring to the building of St. Patrick's, Memorandum from E. Murphy to Fr. Dowd, Feb. 15, 1884.
[122] ASPB, St. Patrick's Church, Committee minute book, Feb. 12, 1841. For a discussion of the building of the church for English-speaking Catholics in Quebec City see Nolte, *op. cit.*, pp. 110-112.
[123] ASPB, St. Patrick's Church, Committee minute book, Feb. 12, 1841; Collection of letters (1880s) referring to the building of St. Patrick's, J. Kelly to E. Murphy, March, 1884.
[124] ASPB, St. Patrick's Church, Committee minute book, Feb. 22, 1841.
[125] *Ibid.*, June 4, 1843.

build an Irish church. In 1843, land was purchased on which to build St. Patrick's up the hill from the old town. Subsequently, the Irish were disillusioned by their lack of participation in both the planning and the building of the church, despite recommendations from the Fabrique's building committee that labourers, mechanics, and foremen representing 'that part of the population for whose use the church is intended' be employed when possible.[126]

Notwithstanding their dependence on the Sulpicians, the Fabrique of Notre-Dame, and the Bishop of Montreal, the Irish-Catholic community perceived the erection of a church of their own as being so important that they considered attempting to build it without the assistance of the Fabrique. Completed in 1847, St. Patrick's church was designed to serve the city's Irish-Catholic community as a whole. Its prominence, its elegance, and its size reflected the stature that this group had achieved in Montreal society.

The Famine Migration and the Creation of Charitable Institutions

The completion of St. Patrick's church on the eve of the Famine migration in 1847 represented the end of the first major stage of institution building by Montreal's Irish-Catholic community. The arrival of the Famine migrants heralded the beginning of a second phase in which St. Ann's church and charitable institutions, in particular St. Patrick's Orphan Asylum and St. Bridget's Refuge, were built to accommodate the new arrivals and provide them with material assistance.

While societies like the St. Patrick's Society, individuals, and government all contributed to the efforts to cope with the disease and poverty of the Famine immigrants and the impact they were having on the city, the Catholic Church played a heroic role in providing immediate assistance to the sick and dying and in establishing institutions to care for the orphans left behind by the Famine migration. There is no doubt that

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[126] ASPB, St. Patrick's Church, Committee minute book, Minutes of the meeting of the St. Patrick's building committee at the office of the Fabrique of Notre-Dame, June 8, 1843; ASPB, St. Patrick's Church, Committee minute book, Feb. 12, 1841; Collection of letters (1880s) referring to the building of St. Patrick's, J. Kelly to E. Murphy, March, 1884. Opinions expressed in ASPB, Collection of letters (1880s) referring to the building of St. Patrick's, generally agree that the building of St. Patrick's was much more costly that it should have been because friends of the Fabrique were allowed to supply raw materials at uncompetitive prices and hire workers by the day instead of by contract.

Montrealers contributed generously to the joint Scotch and Irish Relief Fund, the Irish portion of which was to be sent to the General Central Relief Committee for Ireland.[127] In addition to these sums, considerable amounts were being privately transmitted to Ireland and Scotland. Reports suggest that sums varying from £5 to £15 were being drawn constantly from the British North American Bank of Montreal and the City and District Savings' Bank 'by persons having the appearance of labouring men and mechanics, who are thus devoting the hard earned savings, perhaps of many years, to the relief of their destitute friends and fellow countrymen'.[128] Nevertheless, some Irish Catholics would have liked to have been in a position to do more to help the immigrants, a sentiment strongly expressed by the president of the Young Men's St. Patrick's Society in the early 1850s:

> During the summer you have, doubtlessly, been pained at witnessing the misery and destitution which our unfortunate countrymen and countrywomen presented to our view, upon their daily arrival amongst us. Think you, if we had been properly united, and in a position to speak with one voice...that many of these hapless victims of tyrannical laws would not have been rescued from an untimely death, or that any of them would have been permitted to perish before our eyes, and upon the public wharves of the city, and in the presence of wealth and pomp, without any other hand being raised to mitigate the bitterness of death, save that of the ever-watchful Catholic priest and devoted nun, who have been left alone and unaided to cheer their last sad moments with words of hope and a promise of a brighter and happier future....[W]e who have the benefit of experience, and are raised above want, should acknowledge our gratitude to God, and our devotion to our country, by protecting our less fortunate countrymen.[129]

This statement suggests that at this stage the established Irish-Catholic community lacked the political unity and wherewithal to provide (or induce the government to provide) the active assistance some would have liked for the relief of immigrants.

The Sulpicians, backed by extensive financial resources and assisted by female religious orders such as the Soeurs Grises and the Soeurs de la Providence, were in a better position to mobilise an immediate response to the crisis. Swift and urgent action

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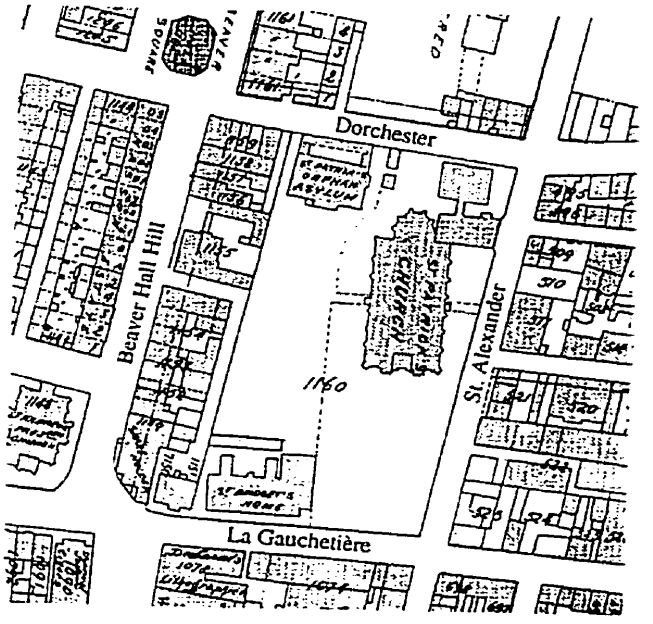
[127] *Montreal Transcript*, Feb. 23, 1847.
[128] *Ibid.*, Feb. 25, 1847.
[129] *Address of the Young Men's St. Patrick's Association of Montreal delivered by B. Devlin, Esq. (President) at their annual meeting, held on 5 September, 1854* (Montreal, 1854).

was needed to provide care for the children orphaned as a result of the 'ship fever'. The Soeurs Grises, the Soeurs de la Providence, and the Soeurs du Bon Pasteur all played a role in caring for the children, in various houses scattered throughout the city which were loaned by charitable citizens in the wake of the crisis. The desirability of acquiring a more permanent asylum was recognised by the recently appointed Chaplain of the Irish poor, Father Patrick Dowd, a Sulpician who was attached to St. Patrick's from the time of his arrival in Montreal in 1848 until his death in 1891. In 1851, the children moved into the St. Patrick's Orphan Asylum, which was built on a piece of land adjacent to St. Patrick's church (see Figure 3.1).

Figure 3.1: St. Patrick's Church and Surrounding Institutions



The Asylum was financed by Bartholomew O'Brien's generous bequest of $4000 as well as the contributions of members of the St. Patrick's congregation, door-to-door collections, and an annual bazaar organised by the Ladies of Charity of St. Patrick's.[130] Likewise, the St. Bridget's Refuge was established by the Grey Nuns to care for widows and young girls in need of protection. The institution had a rather precarious existence until a permanent home was found for it in 1865 on land adjacent to St. Patrick's church (see Figure 3.1).[131] The mission of this institution was to care for old men and women, to

[130] Cross, *op. cit.*, p. 181.
[131] *The Story of Seventy-Five Years, St. Patrick's Church, Montreal, 1847-1922* (Montreal, 1922).

provide refuge for young girls and find places for them in suitable homes, and to provide night lodging for homeless individuals and families. As there were parallel institutions for the Protestant and French Canadian communities, the vast majority of individuals admitted to the Refuge were of Irish descent. Figure 3.2 illustrates the ethnic composition of those using the night lodging available at St. Bridget's (the rise in use of the Refuge during the 1870s can be attributed to the depression which started c.1873). After 1880, the institution catered almost exclusively to Catholics (see Figure 3.3).[132] For a brief period between 1852 and 1860, the English-speaking Catholics of Montreal had their own hospital, St. Patrick's, located on the corner of Dorchester and Guy streets, which had apparently received at least part of its funding from the money and possessions found among victims of the ship fever in Montreal (half of which had been given to the Protestant Bishop of Montreal, the other half to the Catholic Bishop).[133] After the hospital building was sold by the Corporation Episcopale Catholique Romaine de Montréal and the Hospitalières in 1860, St. Patrick's was amalgamated with the Hôtel-Dieu hospital (which had itself relocated to a new building in 1860) where English-speaking Catholics were cared for in the St. Patrick's and St. Bridget's wards.[134]

The construction of many of these institutions took place in and around St. Patrick's in the central part of the city. Meanwhile, with the influx of Famine migrants, the settlement of working-class Irish Catholics in Griffintown was expanding. A mission was soon required since St. Patrick's, 'the church on the hill', was not easily accessible.[135] Griffintown was located in St. Ann's ward and included an area bounded by the Lachine Canal, the St. Lawrence River, McGill Street, and William Street. The widening and deepening of the Lachine Canal between 1843 and 1848 attracted many Irish labourers to

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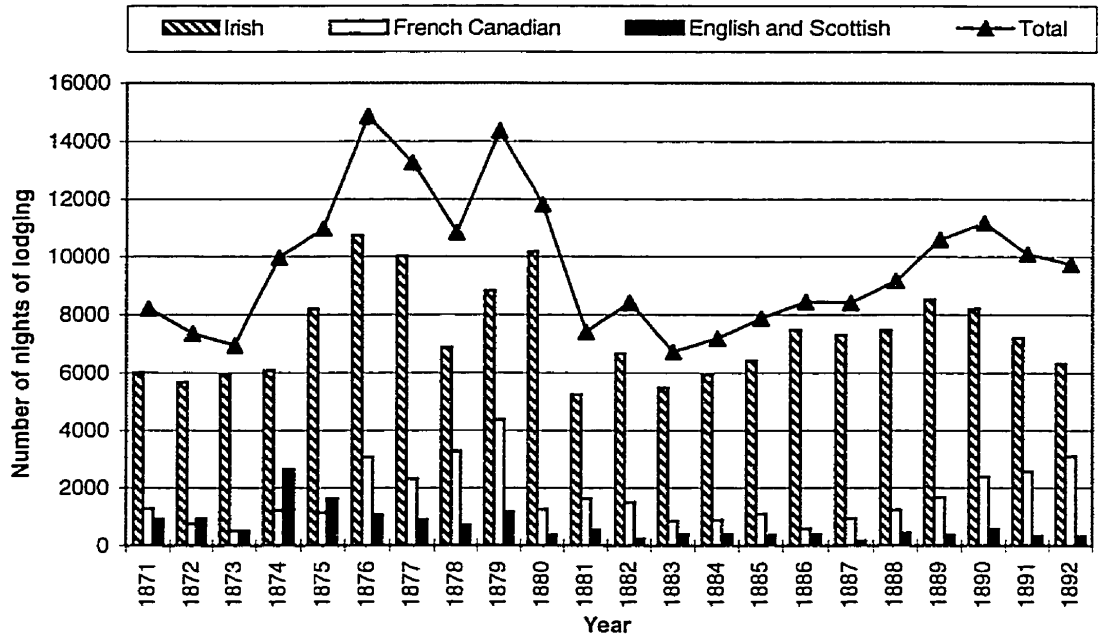
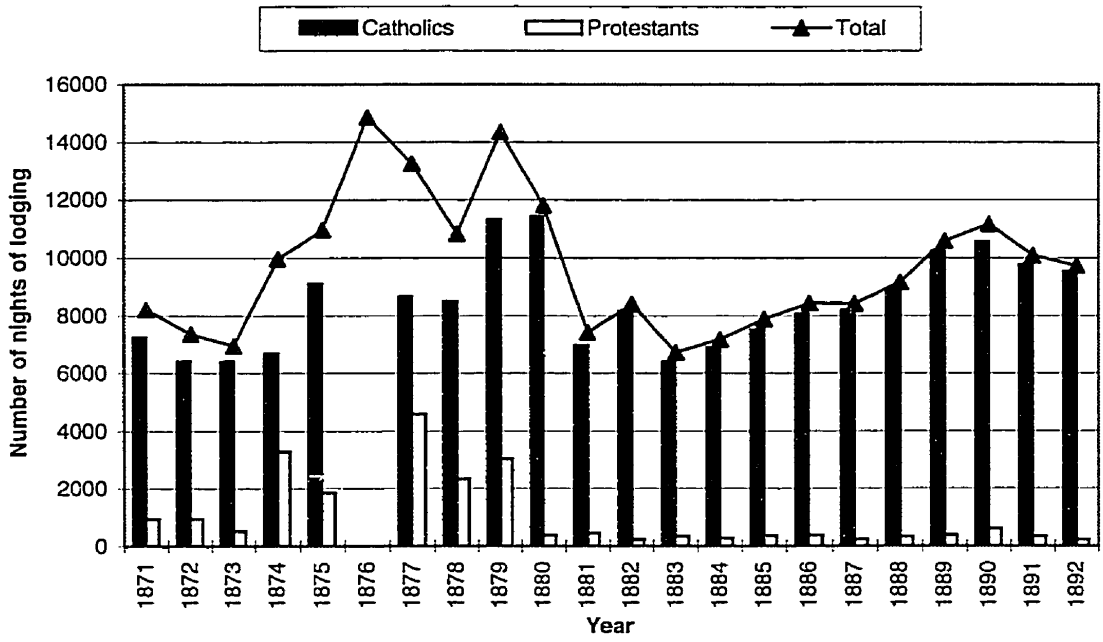
[132] ASPB, St. Bridget's Refuge, Annual statement of accounts, 1865-1900.
[133] ASPB, Box 4, Written version of a speech given by Emmett Mullaly in 1953 on Donald Alexander Hingston. Also see Cross, *op. cit.*, p. 182.
[134] ASPB, Box 2, Record of the sale of St. Patrick's Hospital, March 31, 1860; Cross, *op. cit.*, pp. 182-183.
[135] *The Story of One Hundred Years: Centenary St. Ann's Church, Montreal* (Montreal, 1954).

Figure 3.2: St. Bridget's Refuge - Number of Nights of Lodging by Nationality



Source: ASPB, St. Bridget's Refuge, Annual Statement of Accounts, 1865-1900.

Figure 3.3: St. Bridget's Refuge - Number of Nights of Lodging by Religion



Source: ASPB, St. Bridget's Refuge, Annual Statement of Accounts, 1865-1900.

Griffintown, as did the construction of the Victoria Bridge in the 1850s. Subsequent industrial development along both banks of the canal was secured by the proximity of hydraulic power, easy access to transportation, and cheap labour, which in turn ensured the future growth of the area. The Wellington bridge served as the 'principal thoroughfare' for the people of Point St. Charles to reach the city's mercantile centres, while it allowed those residing on the north side of the canal to reach 'some of the most extensive manufacturing establishments in the city'.[136] St. Ann's mission was established in 1848, under the direction of the Jesuit fathers.[137] The Seminary donated a property on McCord Street for the building of St. Ann's church in 1852 and undertook to pay for its erection.[138] Father O'Brien, a Sulpician, became St. Ann's pastor when the church held its first service in 1854. At some point between the establishment of the mission and the division of Notre-Dame in 1866, the Seminary attempted to hold services for both the Irish and French Canadians in St. Ann's church, but the experiment was abandoned 'after much bad feeling had been created, acts of violence committed at the very doors of the church, and even open scandal given within its sacred walls'.[139] While diplomacy and determination ensured the erection of a church for the exclusive use of Montreal's 'old' and well-established Irish-Catholic community, it appears that slightly more forceful techniques were used to obtain the same result in Griffintown.

Conclusion

While the erection of St. Patrick's church represented a major achievement for the early Irish-Catholic community, confirming its relative prosperity and established position in Montreal society, the arrival of the Famine migrants presented this group with a formidable challenge. New institutions were required to cope with the orphans, indigents, servant girls, and other individuals needing assistance who were brought to Montreal as a result of the Famine in Ireland. While Irish-Protestant and Irish-Catholic individuals and lay-run charitable societies were able to contribute to the relief effort, the most effective

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[136] ACAM, 355.132, 1884-7, Jan. 26, Fr. Hogan's protest against the dismemberment of a portion of St. Ann's parish.
[137] *Golden Jubilee Number: Redemptorist Fathers at St. Ann's, Montreal 1854-1934* (Montreal, 1934).
[138] *Ibid.*
[139] ACAM, 901.145, 1866-1, Sept. 20, Fr. Dowd to A.F. Truteau, Vicar General, opposing the dismemberment of Notre-Dame.

means of mobilising aid was through the ecclesiastical structures pre-existing in Montreal. The funds available within the Irish-Catholic community were supplemented by the Sulpicians in order to build and maintain institutions like the Orphan Asylum and the Refuge, which were staffed by the city's female religious communities. As Lapointe-Roy has noted, 'le clergé de Montréal joua un rôle essentiel dans l'organisation et la coordination d'un réseau d'assistance aux pauvres de la ville. Il participait au financement des institutions de charité, laissant cependant aux communautés religieuses féminines le soin de travailler directement auprès des pauvres assistés en institution et à domicile'.[140]

The importance of the Church to Irish Catholics was derived in part from the connection between religious identity and Irish national identity that had been established prior to the migration period. This association became particularly prominent in Ireland in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries and was consolidated by Daniel O'Connell's campaign for Catholic Emancipation from civil disabilities in the 1820s.[141] In the Montreal context, it was possible to retain this connection through the creation of churches devoted exclusively to English-speaking Catholics, the vast majority of whom were Irish. The temporal and spiritual assistance provided by the Church no doubt enhanced the importance of its role in the lives of the city's Irish Catholics, not only of those in need of charity but also of those interested in creating charitable institutions to aid their less fortunate countrymen and improve the image of their community. The great powers of administration of Father Dowd in particular are acknowledged as having played a vital role in obtaining a high level of 'institutional completeness' for Montreal's Irish-Catholic community.[142]

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[140] H. Lapointe-Roy, *Charité Bien Ordonnée* (Montreal, 1987), p. 19.
[141] Clarke, *op. cit.*, p. 155.
[142] Curran, *Golden Jubilee of the Reverend Fathers Dowd and Toupin*, p. 13; Breton, *loc. cit.*, pp. 193-205.

Chapter 4: Territorial Evolution of the Parishes

Introduction

As has been demonstrated in the previous chapter, the building of St. Patrick's church for the exclusive use of Montreal's English-speaking Catholics in 1847 reflected this group's desire for a church that would emphasize their growing importance in the city and serve as a node around which institutions could be built up to serve their needs. This precedent having been set, and the Irish having grown accustomed to attending churches they could call their own, it was inevitable that the congregations of St. Patrick's and St. Ann's would contest Bishop Bourget's 1866 decision to transform their churches into bilingual institutions. The ensuing controversy did not prevent Bourget from carrying out his plans for the dismemberment of Notre-Dame, but it did result in major concessions being made to the Irish-Catholic community.

The eight year debate over the division of Notre-Dame and the ensuing creation of Irish 'national' parishes, which will be the principal focus of this chapter, are important for a number of reasons. First, the dispute over territorial boundaries served as an event around which ethnicity was articulated. It is inherently interesting because it sheds light on the significance that the church and its associated institutions held for Irish Catholics of the day and allows us to explore the way in which 'social boundaries' between groups became entrenched in the landscape. Secondly, an explanation of how the system of 'national' parishes arose in Montreal is necessary in order to demonstrate the interconnectedness of territorial and social evolution. The absence of any boundaries dividing the Irish community was initially seen as a source of strength, and it was feared that by attaching Irish Catholics to a number of different parishes, the community's sense of unity and its ability to support its own institutions would be weakened. A discussion of the dismemberment of Notre-Dame also illustrates the way in which particular historical circumstances can influence the development of an ethnic community.

The Dismemberment of the Parish of Notre-Dame

In 1866, Bishop Bourget announced his plan to divide the parish of Notre-Dame (then comprising a large territory embracing the entire city of Montreal and surrounding rural areas) into a number of smaller canonically-erected parishes with clearly defined territorial boundaries. St. Patrick's would become the church of one of these new bilingual parishes. Prior to this, the Sulpicians had established a system of building 'annexes' to accommodate Montreal's growing population. Some, like St. Patrick's, had been given the legal right to keep their own registers of baptisms and marriages, but the annexes had no fixed territory and people were free to attend either Notre-Dame or their local church to receive the sacraments.[143] The Sulpicians were criticised by Bishop Bourget and his supporters for building two large and expensive churches, Notre-Dame and St. Patrick's, in the centre of the city, leaving little money for the building of annexes in the rapidly growing suburbs.[144] Bourget believed that this centralised system was unable to provide adequate spiritual care, and felt that smaller parishes with fixed boundaries, where pastors could get to know their parishioners, were the solution to a problem that could only worsen as the city continued its outward expansion.[145] Concern over the spiritual dangers of urban living also motivated Bishop Bourget: '[A]s must be clear to every one of you, in large towns there are more disorders to correct, more false principles to root out, more scandals to remove, more enemies visible and invisible to overcome'.[146]

An understanding of the evolution of the parish system in Montreal can only be achieved, however, against the backdrop of the ongoing power struggle between Bishop Bourget and the Seminary of St. Sulpice. The Sulpicians had become Seigneurs of Montreal in 1663, when they bought the Island from its previous owners and acquired the title. In 1678, Notre-Dame became a parish church under Sulpician direction as a result of a decree by the Bishop of Quebec, and after 1694 the office of curé of Notre-Dame

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[143] R. Perin, *Bourget and the Dream of a Free Church in Quebec 1862-1878,* Ph.D. thesis, University of Ottawa (1975), p. 9.
[144] *Ibid.*
[145] *Ibid.*
[146] ACAM, 355.121, 1866-16, Nov. 21, Mgr. Bourget's pastoral letter announcing the canonical erection of St. Patrick's parish.

became linked to that of Superior of Saint-Sulpice.[147] The British Conquest of New France did little to weaken the autonomy of the Sulpicians, since their property rights and some seigneurial privileges were partly renewed in 1781, before being renewed in full in 1841. With the appointment of Mgr. Lartigue as auxiliary Bishop of Montreal in 1821, subject to the Bishop of Quebec, Sulpician autonomy began to be eroded.[148] Lartigue's successor, Bishop Bourget, was determined to undermine the Seminary's established position and exercise his right to exert control over Sulpician affairs in the spiritual interest of his flock. The plan to dismember Notre-Dame could therefore be seen as a major challenge to Sulpician authority.

The Sulpicians strongly opposed the dismemberment of Notre-Dame, primarily for financial reasons, but also because they objected to Bourget's interference with their administration of the parish. The principal arguments that the Sulpicians used to oppose the dismemberment of Notre-Dame can be divided into three main categories. First, Bishop Bourget had decided to erect the new parishes as canonical parishes, leaving them with respect to civil status as annexes of Notre-Dame. This meant that the Fabrique of Notre-Dame would remain legally responsible for the debts incurred in the construction of both Notre-Dame and St. Patrick's, but would have its revenues reduced as a result of the dismemberment.[149] Civil erection of the new parishes was out of the question because the civil law required that the old parish be free of debt before new parishes could be dismembered from the original territory. Secondly, the Sulpicians argued that the erection of canonical parishes, without civil status, would play into the hands of those who wished to see greater separation between Church and State.[150] Canonically erected parishes would be a great inconvenience because they would not legally be allowed to hold parish registers once they were no longer annexes of Notre-Dame. Finally, they argued that the

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[147] F. Toker, *The Church of Notre-Dame in Montreal* (2nd ed.; Montreal, 1991), pp. 7-9.
[148] *Ibid.*, pp. 9-11.
[149] ACAM, 355.121, 1866-6, Nov. 8, Fabrique of Notre-Dame to A.F. Truteau, Vicar General, stating reasons for the Fabrique's opposition to the dismemberment of Notre-Dame. The Fabrique of Notre-Dame's position was virtually indistinguishable from that of the Sulpicians, although the Fabrique's main concern was with the question of the debt. This is not the appropriate place to attempt to do justice to the complexity of the debate engendered by the dismemberment of Notre-Dame. Robert Perin's (1975) thesis provides excellent coverage.
[150] *Ibid.*

proposed dismemberment, by forcing French and Irish Catholics to share churches, would lead to misunderstanding and confrontation.

The debate took on strong ideological overtones, pitching the ultramontane Bourget against his supposedly 'gallican' opponents. A central tenet of ultramontanism (which initially took root in Quebec in the 1820s) was adherence to 'a hierarchical and centralized model of the church in which the papacy in Rome was the true foundation for right belief and practice'.[151] Ultramontanism is often contrasted with Gallicanism, which maintained that 'papal primacy was limited by the canons and customs of particular churches, which the Pope was bound to take into account when he exercised his authority'.[152] A parliamentary form of Gallicanism also existed which augmented the rights of the state at the expense of the church in certain spheres, and was more accommodating to secular civil authority.[153] Gallicanism was on the wane in the nineteenth century, and was eventually treated as a heresy as a result of the Vatican Council's promulgation of the dogma of Papal Infallibility in 1870.[154] In his correspondence with Rome soon after the end of the dismemberment debate, J.A. Baile, Superior of the Seminary of St. Sulpice, depicted Bishop Bourget as follows: 'on a dit de lui qu'il ne voulait rien laisser subsister de ce qui avait été fait par ses prédécesseurs, et rien à faire à ses successeurs. Il est plus romain que tous les romains ensemble. Il voudrait transporter ici tout ce qu'il a vu ou seulement cru voir dans la ville sainte'.[155] Of the Sulpicians, it was written: '[q]ui ne voit...que ces Messieurs sont vraiment imbus des principes qui ont presidé à la rédaction de la constitution civile du clergé de France, lesquels mettent le civil avant l'ecclésiastique et tendent par là à asservir l'Eglise au pouvoir séculier?'.[156] These sketches encapsulate the two ideological stereotypes which came to dominate the debate. Perin argues that Gallicanism in its strictest sense never existed in Canada, but that 'a tradition did evolve in the Canadian church, and especially

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[151] Clarke, *op. cit.*, p. 3.
[152] G. Berry, "A Critical Period in the History of St. Patrick's Parish, Montreal: 1866-1874," *Canadian Catholic Historical Association Report 1943-44,* (1944), p. 126.
[153] *Ibid.*, p. 126.
[154] *Ibid.*, p. 126; M. Wade, *The French Canadians, 1760-1945* (Toronto, 1856), p. 352.
[155] ASSM, Tiroir 103, #62, section 27, armoire 7, 1875, J.A. Baile, p.s.s., to M. de Grandjean in Rome.
[156] ACAM, 901.136, 1867-76, Sept. 24, Remarks of A.F. Truteau, Vicar General, on the *réplique* of Baile et Larue.

within the hierarchy, to collaborate closely with ruling parties which were identified with established authority'.[157] While the Sulpicians were very much a part of this tradition, in which personal links between politicians and prelates were responsible for maintaining a mutually satisfactory relationship between Church and State, Bishop Bourget and his followers wished to regain the Church's independence and guarantee ecclesiastical rights through independent, non-partisan institutions.[158]

Both the Irish-Catholic community and the Seminary felt threatened by the proposed changes to the parish structure, and it was therefore in the interest of both to join forces. In recent as well as contemporary accounts of the dismemberment, the Irish Catholics are often presented simply as pawns of the Sulpicians in their struggle with Bishop Bourget.[159] Having enabled St. Patrick's church to be built and arranged for Irish Sulpicians to be transferred to Montreal, it was hardly surprising that the Sulpicians retained a strong bond with the Irish-Catholic community.[160] There is also little question that the pastors of St. Patrick's and St. Ann's, as both Sulpicians and Irishmen, were particularly concerned with the outcome of the dismemberment debate and played an important role in mobilising the Irish community. The Irish-Catholic laity (in particular pew holders and members of St. Patrick's congregation) did, however, have genuine grievances of their own and participated in a number of meetings through which they established a united position in opposition to the proposed dismemberment.[161] A door-to-door petition opposing the proposed erection of St. Patrick's as a bilingual canonical parish bore 6000 names (out of a total of approximately 30 000 English-speaking Catholics in Montreal). While the Bishop's supporters attempted to downplay the significance of this petition by arguing that the vast majority of names belonged only to

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[157] Perin, *op. cit.*, p. 253.
[158] Perin, *op. cit.*
[159] ACAM, 901.136, 1867-68, April 5, Reply on behalf of Mgr. Bourget to T. Ryan and D. McGee's statement of the case of St. Patrick's congregation against the canonical erection of St. Patrick's parish; 355.101, 1867-2, Aug. 9, Mgr. Bourget to J. Desautels.
[160] Nolte, *op. cit.*, p. 92,
[161] ACAM, 355.121, 1866-5, Nov. 8, St. Patrick's congregation to A.F. Truteau, Vicar General, opposing the erection of St. Patrick's parish; 1866-19a, Nov. 25, Resolutions opposing the erection of St. Patrick's parish made by the congregation of St. Patrick's at a general meeting; *The Case of St. Patrick's Congregation as to the erection of a new canonical parish of St. Patrick's, Montreal, published by order of the committee of the congregation* (Montreal, 1866).

poor people, women, and children, it nevertheless represented quite an impressive proportion of the community (especially given that only a few days were spent collecting names) and is therefore probably indicative of widespread opposition to the dismemberment project.[162]

I will now attempt to present the case against dismemberment from the perspective of Montreal's Irish Catholics. The territory assigned to St. Patrick's in 1866, bounded by Sherbrooke Street, Bleury, Craig, St. Antoine, and Mountain, excluded the vast majority of Irish Catholics in the city. The area itself was dominated by Protestants, with only a small French-Canadian population to compensate St. Patrick's for its Irish losses. It seemed likely that French Canadians in the parish would continue to attend the nearby Gésu church, leaving St. Patrick's with greatly reduced pew rental revenues.[163] While loss of revenue was of obvious concern, it was the fear of losing St. Patrick's as an exclusively Irish-Catholic institution that galvanised the community into action. Most parishioners were content to have their case argued on their behalf by eminent members of the congregation, such as the Hon. Thomas D'Arcy McGee and the Hon. Thomas Ryan. Michael Bergin, however, decided to write to the Bishop himself, thereby providing us with a layman's personal opinion of the dismemberment. Bergin's protest, which was sent along with the others to Rome, summarises many of the arguments and concerns that were brought forward more formally in the other petitions, and is therefore worth quoting in part:

> The proposed changes will result in '...the mixing of two peoples speaking two distinct languages leaving the English speaking portion in a small minority consequently depriving them of instruction in their own tongue obliging the great bulk of our people to seek the consolations of religion far away from the old edifice they love so well...how many reminiscences are there to cause them to cling with adamantine grasp to walls of our own loved St. Patrick's / here our children were baptised and admitted members of the mystical body...here we have our many confraternities and societies which work such wonders and are productive of much good...the Temperance

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[162] ACAM, 901.136, 1867-68, April 5, Reply on behalf of Mgr. Bourget to T. Ryan and D. McGee's statement of the case of St. Patrick's congregation against the canonical erection of St. Patrick's parish; 1867-75, Sept. 13, J.A. Baile and Larue to the Pope, refutation of certain comments made by Mgr. Bourget's deputies regarding Ryan and McGee's statement of the case of St. Patrick's congregation.
[163] ACAM, 355.121, 1866-6, Nov. 8, Fabrique of Notre-Dame to A.F. Truteau, Vicar General, stating reasons for the Fabrique's opposition to the dismemberment of Notre-Dame.

> Society have raised an altar from the very foundation to its completion...here we have also the missionary cross planted around which we cling and pray to gain the indulgences attached thereto / Your Lordship would be delighted and consoled to see with what ardent devotion the ever faithful Irish female clamber up its base to impress a pure and parting kiss on the sacred sign / so we beg and pray Your Lordship will compassionate us and not remove us from all those holy associations. We are at present a united people under the guidance of our good priests - and if the proposed change takes place we will be scattered like the leaves of autumn not only over the whole city but over the continent / greater and graver objections may be raised by others who have more knowledge and time to devote to the matter than me.[164]

As is clear from Bergin's statement, at this stage St. Patrick's church played a vital role in providing a focus for Irish societies as well as uniting Montreal's Irish Catholics. Although St. Ann's church was already in existence at this point, and was itself erected as a bilingual parish in 1867, St. Patrick's was perceived as the centre of Irish-Catholic life in the city, perhaps because this was the only English-speaking church in which baptisms and marriages could take place and because all the Irish-Catholic charitable institutions were associated with it. Without the territorial boundaries that later separated St. Patrick's and St. Ann's into distinct Irish-Catholic parishes, it seems likely that the divisions between the two congregations were less well defined. A more analytical review of the arguments used by Father Dowd and his parishioners against the erection of St. Patrick's as a bilingual parish will allow us to examine the importance that St. Patrick's held as an Irish 'place', and demonstrate the dramatic impact that the Irish community believed the division would have on its institutions and sense of community.

The most persuasive arguments used by concerned Irish-Catholic citizens and their clergy to oppose the dismemberment focused on the threat that the division of Irish Catholics into separate parishes posed to their ethno-religious identity and community solidarity. Underlying many of these arguments was a recognition that by fragmenting the charity and efforts of the community, the division threatened its material welfare and ability to act as a provider of assistance to the Irish-Catholic poor. There were also

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[164] ACAM, 355.121, 1866-12, Nov. 8, M. Bergin (193 McGill Street) to A.F. Truteau, Vicar General. It is likely that this is the same man as the Michael Bergin who was 1st Vice President of the St. Patrick's Benevolent Society (a society for working-class men) c.1869. A Michael Bergin with an address at 191 McGill Street is listed in the Lovell's directory of 1866 as a merchant tailor and clothier.

concerns over the practicality of having French and English services within the same church. Father Dowd argued that the English services at the bilingual Jesuit (Gésu) church were 'at an hour so late that it is neither safe nor becoming for unprotected females to pass thro the streets home, when the service is over...', and stated that this exhibited the disadvantages of the mixed system even under the most favourable circumstances.[165] Financially, the Irish maintained that they were entitled to St. Patrick's church since their community had subscribed a large amount towards building the church and had since contributed $35-40 000 towards the decoration of the church's interior - all on the understanding that the church was to be exclusively for their use.[166]

An important argument used against the proposed erection of St. Patrick's as a bilingual parish was that amalgamation would destroy the relatively peaceful relationship which existed between French and Irish Catholics. Baile wrote of the Irish Catholics: '...c'est un spectacle qui a de quoi nous surprendre, que de voir une congrégation de 30 000 irlandais, suivant avec une religieuse docilité, la direction qui lui est imprimée par un petit nombre de prêtres, et vivant ainsi, dans la concorde et la paix, sans collision et sans tumulte, soit avec la population protestante, soit avec la population canadienne, deux fois aussi nombreuse qu'elle'.[167] Previous experiments with sharing churches, such as the Seminary's attempt to introduce services for the two populations in St. Ann's, had resulted in bad feeling and violence, while the ongoing effort to serve French and Irish congregations at St. Bridget's had created 'angry feelings and excited passions'. Dowd argued that the forced amalgamation of two populations 'differing in their feelings and habits even more that in their language' would result in open scandal at St. Patrick's and wondered 'when angry feeling is once engendered...and the prejudices of nationality excited, where will they stop?'.[168] Ironically, he concluded that there was 'no...practical means of promoting that union and good will, which should bind together all the members of the Church of God', other than by having separate churches for the two groups.[169] Similarly, the assembly of Irish Catholics which took place on November 22, 1866,

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[165] ACAM, 355.121, 1866-8, Nov. 8, Fr. Dowd and his assistants to A.F. Truteau, Vicar General.
[166] ACAM, 355.121, 1866-5, Nov. 8, St. Patrick's congregation to A.F. Truteau, Vicar General.
[167] ACAM, 355.121, 1866-10, Nov. 8, Protest of J.A. Baile. p.s.s..
[168] ACAM, 901.145, 1866-1, Sept. 20, Fr. Dowd to A.F. Truteau, Vicar General.
[169] *Ibid.*

collectively urged the Bishop 'not to disturb the happy arrangements which now exist and which have produced unanimity amongst themselves and good feeling and Christian charity between themselves and their coreligionists of other origins'.[170] This is a very clear example of the way in which social boundaries were negotiated between different ethnic groups and also of the sorts of tensions that institutional division along ethnic lines was designed to mediate.

The dismemberment debate also brought out an acute awareness of the minority status of Irish Catholics within Montreal's Catholic Church. This situation is illustrated in Figure 4.1, which shows the ethno-religious composition of the parishes erected by Bourget in 1866-67. Rousselot, curé of Notre-Dame, suggested that '[p]lusieurs voient dans ce plan un projet de destruction de leur nationalité qui est pour eux un lien qui les tient si étroitment attachés à l'Eglise. En effet, arrachés de S. Patrice, ils seront partagés entre les differentes Eglises ou paroisses de Notre-Dame, S. Jacques, S. Joseph etc etc. où ils ne seront partout qu'en minorité, où ils se trouveront par conséquent comme noyés dans l'élément canadien français'.[171] Similarly, McGee and Ryan warned that 'should dismemberment of the parish be confirmed, an intermingling of races at St. Patrick's can scarcely be avoided, which the English-speaking Catholics are sure to regard as a step towards forced amalgamation, and as an attempt to do away with their separate nationality'.[172] Father Dowd argued that in the United States relatively small numbers of German, Canadian, and Irish Catholics were allowed to have separate churches 'where they may meet in peace to worship God; without being reminded, each time, that they are a minority, and that, by right, the second place is theirs' and asked Bishop Bourget

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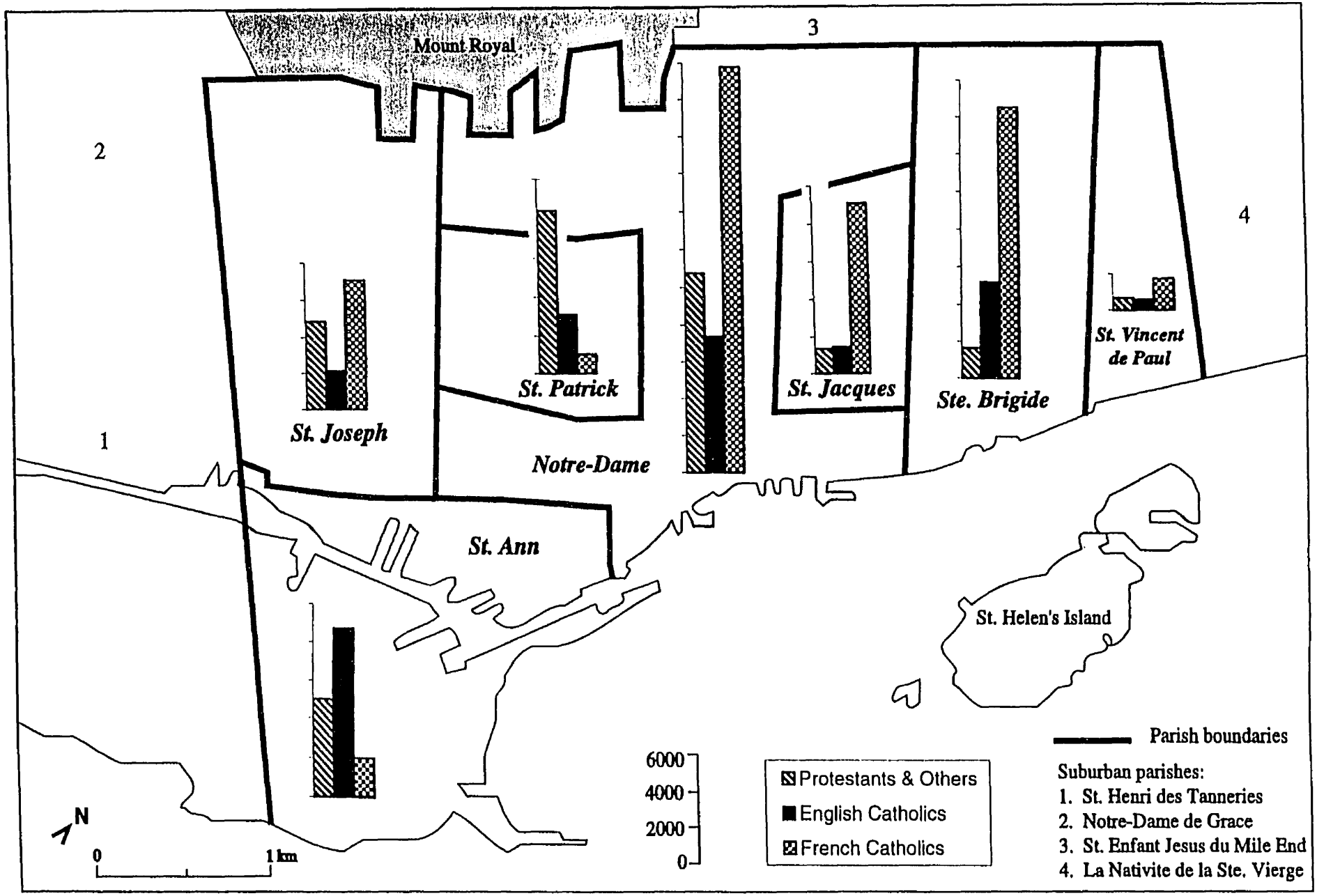
[170] ACAM, 355.121, 1866-4, Nov. 22, Resolutions taken at the assembly of Irishmen.
[171] ACAM, 355.121, 1866-7, Nov. 8, V. Rousselot, p.s.s., curé of Notre-Dame, to A.F. Truteau, Vicar General, opposing the dismemberment of Notre-Dame.
[172] ACAM, 901.136, 1867-61, April 5, T. Ryan and D. McGee's petition to the Pope.

FIGURE 4.1: Post-Dismemberment Parishes of the City of Montreal, Showing Religio-Linguistic Composition (1872)



Source: Pagnuelo (1872); ACAM, Decrets d'erection canonique des paroisses; Hopkins' *Atlas of the City of Montreal* (1879).
Note: Parish boundaries existed as shown above between 1866-67 and 1873.

whether he thought it right 'to force...this humiliation' upon Montreal's Irish Catholics.[173] Given the territorial dispersal of the Irish community in Montreal, the proposed dismemberment of Notre-Dame threatened to leave them in a minority position in nearly every parish.[174] Without separate Irish churches, that in turn posed a threat to their 'national' or ethnic identity, without which, Rousselot warned, their attachment to the Catholic church would be weakened.

Also of particular concern was the threat that dismemberment posed to St. Patrick's institutions and to Irish-Catholic unity in the city. The parishioners argued that the division of English-speaking Catholics in the city would...

> ...injure most materially the several institutions which, in the process of time, have sprung up around St. Patrick's church as their source and center, such as the Male and Female Orphan Asylum, the Servants' Home, and the St. Bridget's Refuge...To sustain these institutions, on a scale at all commensurate with the wants of the English-speaking Catholic poor, it is essential to concentrate the efforts and alms of all those who contribute to their maintenance, and any permanent separation or exclusion from the Church of St Patrick's of a large number of these benefactors would be an irreparable blow to each and all of these institutions.[175]

This could be viewed simply as a financial argument, but at the same time it is clear that these institutions were of key importance as one of the bonds that tied Irish Catholics together and allowed them to ameliorate their collective public image by demonstrating that they could look after their own. St. Patrick's served as a centre around which such unity could be mobilised. Father Dowd wrote that he could not without speaking out...

> look at the labor of years about to be destroyed - the monuments of charity, raised and sustained by the union of our whole people, about to lose their support - and the people themselves, so long happily collected together, under the shadow of their St. Patrick's, about to be driven from his sanctuary, as if it were not their place; thus bringing back to their memory, that they were, once before, driven from their native land, as if it were not their home.[176]

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[173] ACAM, 355.121, 1866-8, Nov. 8, Fr. Dowd and his assistants to A.F. Truteau, Vicar General.
[174] In her brief discussion of the dismemberment of Notre-Dame, Dorothy Cross states that within the boundaries of the canonical parish of St. Patrick's (as erected by Bishop Bourget in 1866) there would have been a larger French-Catholic than English-speaking Catholic congregation (Cross, *op. cit.*, p. 97). This is incorrect, as can be seen in Figure 4.1.
[175] ACAM, 355.121, 1866-6, Nov. 8, St. Patrick's congregation to A.F. Truteau, Vicar General.
[176] ACAM, 355.121, 1866-8, Nov. 8, Fr. Dowd and his assistants to A.F. Truteau, Vicar General.

In Montreal, Father Dowd suggests, St. Patrick's acted as a surrogate 'home', an Irish 'place', for immigrants who had been forced to leave their native land. As a community whose unity was also threatened by the division of the parish of Notre-Dame, the Sulpicians were able to empathise with the Irish position, and it is therefore not surprising that J.A. Baile, Superior of the Seminary, wrote the following of St. Patrick's:

> [C]ette église était le centre, qui unissait toute cette population de la langue anglaise, où elle recevait une direction commune, où elle avait ses principales associations religieuses, ce qui la mettait en état de lutter avec avantage contre l'influence des protestants anglais, qui parlent la même langue et forme une classe nombreuse et influente dans la ville de Montréal. Cette union religieuse servait aussi à conserver leur nationalité dont la religion est le lien le plus fort et le plus sacré et que par la dispersion de ces mêmes catholiques on les exposait à la division et à l'affaiblissement social et religieux.[177]

Changes to the territorial structure of the parish of Notre-Dame, which would divide the community into separate parishes and transform St. Patrick's into a bilingual church, not only threatened the viability of Irish institutions and community, but also threatened to sever the connection which had been built up between religious and ethnic identity.

In the debate over the dismemberment of Notre-Dame, it would be unfair to portray Bishop Bourget as someone intentionally aiming to eradicate Irish identity, institutions, and community in Montreal. It seems more likely that in his enthusiasm to reform the parish of Notre-Dame, he failed to appreciate the full impact that the division of Notre-Dame into a number of smaller territorial parishes would have on the geographically-dispersed Irish-Catholic community. In a pastoral letter, Bourget made it clear, for example, that the Irish would be free to frequent St. Patrick's as in the past, regardless of where they lived, and that instruction would continue to be given in English.[178] Later, he also maintained that he had 'always intended the St. Patrick's church for the exclusive use of the English-speaking Catholics and offered to the Seminary to provide another church for the French-speaking members of that congregation', but that the Seminary had refused this offer 'saying that they could attend to both the French and

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[177] ACAM, 901.136, 1867-75, Sept. 13, J.A. Baile and Larue to the Pope, refutation of certain comments made by Mgr. Bourget's deputies regarding Ryan and McGee's statement of the case of St. Patrick's congregation.

[178] ACAM, 355.121, 1866-16, Nov. 21, Mgr. Bourget's pastoral letter announcing the canonical erection of St. Patrick's parish.

English in St. Patrick's church'.[179] Father Dowd, while believing that it was 'true and probable' that Irish Catholics would continue to come to St. Patrick's church, argued that it would be their *duty* to attend their own parish churches and could therefore only be received at St. Patrick's as strangers.[180] The Irish themselves questioned the permanence of Bourget's concessions, arguing that they were necessarily temporary in their nature since, once the parishes which were coterminous with St. Patrick's were erected, the concessions could no longer be reconciled with Bourget's intention of bringing the whole administration of the city under the operation of strict Canon Law.[181]

Bishop Bourget's pastoral letter to the congregation of St. Patrick's announcing its proposed erection as a canonical parish, and the response it received from the committee of English-speaking Catholics who had been appointed to represent the views of the congregation, provide insights into the misunderstandings that existed between Bourget and the Irish community. In his pastoral letter, Bourget attempted to pacify the congregation by reminding them of his past deeds for the community and assuring them that his decision was not biased by 'considerations of race'. He also suggested that his predecessor, Bishop Lartigue, had been responsible for assembling the Irish ('who not then forming as they now do an entire congregation, attended with the rest of the faithful the church of Notre-Dame') in the church of St. Jacques in 1825, where he provided for them to have instruction in English.[182] Bourget went on to describe his own personal involvement in helping the victims of the Irish Famine of 1847:

> When in 1847 this unfortunate people were dying of hunger in their native land We raised our voice in the City of Rome where We then were, appealing in their behalf to the charity of the Roman people and to that of the thousands of strangers who from all countries assemble there. Wishing to behold with our own eyes the affecting spectacle of a whole people become prey to the

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[179] ACAM, 901.145, 1871-1, May 7, Minutes of an interview held with Mgr. Bourget at the Bishop's Palace concerning the building of a church for the English-speaking Catholics of the Quebec Suburb. It is possible that the Sulpicians refused this offer in the hope of mobilising Irish support against Bourget's decision to dismember the parish of Notre-Dame.

[180] ACAM, 355.121, 1866-8, Nov. 8, Fr. Dowd and his assistants to A.F. Truteau, Vicar General.

[181] *The Case of St. Patrick's Congregation as to the erection of a new canonical parish of St. Patrick's, Montreal, published by order of the committee of the congregation* (Montreal, 1866), Reprint of letter from the congregation of St. Patrick's to Mgr. Bourget in response to his pastoral letter of Nov. 21, Dec. 11, 1866.

[182] ACAM, 355.121, 1866-16, Nov. 21, Mgr. Bourget's pastoral letter announcing the canonical erection of St. Patrick's parish.

> horrors of famine We on our way home visited Ireland. Hardly had we returned to our Episcopal City when Point St. Charles was covered with the multitude of sick who seemed only to seek our shores that they might receive the last consolations which the Holy Church lavishes on her children during the last moments of life...Count if you are able all the works undertaken for the Irish people alone of which We have been the life and promoter.[183]

The pastoral did not achieve its desired effect and elicited an outraged response from the Irish-Catholic community. While grateful for the assistance given to them over the years, they questioned Bourget's claim to have played an instrumental role in establishing churches and institutions for Irish Catholics. They also presented him with their alternative version of history in which Father Richards, a Sulpician, was given credit for 'discovering' Montreal's Irish Catholics almost ten years before Bishop Lartigue and for assembling them together for English services in the Bonsecours church. The congregation was most upset, however, by Bourget's perceived manipulation of the Famine story:

> Your Lordship, referring to the sad events of 1847, is pleased to call us an 'unfortunate' people; we admit it, we were 'unfortunate' - in 1847 through the inscrutable ways of God, who, however, often chastises in love. In 1866 we are still 'unfortunate', - for your Lordship will not allow us to forget our sad destinies. The memory of all past afflictions must be kept fresh; and all the charities of which we have been the sad recipients, must be turned into an argument to force us to surrender, in silence, all the advantages of our present altered condition, and which we owe to our own efforts, under the blessing of God, and the generous sympathy of our immediate Pastors. Certainly we are a peculiar 'unfortunate' people.
>
> Thousands of our fellow countrymen left their native land in 1847 in order to seek a home in Canada. They did not come here to live on charity. They were for the most part in the prime of life. Their intention was to repay the hospitality promised them in their new country by the riches of their labor, of their enterprise and of their virtue. God willed it otherwise....Our gratitude has not been confined to mere passing words.

The reply to Bishop Bourget, which he refused to receive, concluded with a sombre warning: '...we know our neighbours. We assure Your Lordship, in the presence of God, that an attempt to introduce a double service into St Patrick's church would likely lead to

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[183] *Ibid.*

bloodshed, and consequently, to a domestic war between Irish and Canadian Catholics throughout the city....We know pretty well how far the influence of our priests may go. In this matter it would be powerless'.[184] This exchange is an example of the way in which ethnic groups construct their own image of the world by establishing an agreed version of the past.[185] By mobilising the collective memories of Irish Montrealers and refusing to accept Bishop Bourget's version of their history, which downplays their own contributions, Irish Catholics asserted their right to protest the immediate threat that the dismemberment of Notre-Dame posed to their collective existence.

At the time of the dismemberment, many Irish Catholics attended St. Ann's church in the 'west' end and St. Bridget's in the 'east', as well as other churches around the city. Bourget pointed this out in his second pastoral to the congregation of St. Patrick's and argued that since it was impossible to prevent people who speak different languages from living in the same parish, he could only do what he thought was best for the people spiritually. He maintained that ecclesiastical law authorised him to attach to St. Patrick's (on a permanent basis) English-speaking Catholics living outside its territorial boundaries, but also pointed out that it was impractical to expect St. Patrick's to serve all 31 000 English-speaking Catholics forever. To expect those living at the extremities of the city to travel to St. Patrick's would endanger their souls and also waste an enormous amount of the clergy's time since they would have to travel all over the city to attend to people.[186] One must therefore consider the possibility that those living in the suburbs felt rather differently about the dismemberment than did their 'downtown' counterparts. According to Bourget, individuals living in the Coteau St. Louis, Notre-Dame-de-Grâce, and Notre-Dame des Neiges strongly approved of the dismemberment.[187] The representatives of those wishing to build a church for the English-speaking Catholics of the Quebec Suburb had an interview with Bishop Bourget in 1871 which is most

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[184] *The Case of St. Patrick's Congregation as to the erection of a new canonical parish of St. Patrick's, Montreal, published by order of the committee of the congregation* (Montreal, 1866), Reprint of letter from the congregation of St. Patrick's to Mgr. Bourget in response to his pastoral letter of Nov. 21, Dec. 11, 1866; Berry, *loc. cit.*, p. 123.

[185] J. Fentress and C. Wickham, *Social Memory* (Oxford, 1992).

[186] ACAM, 355.121, 1866-36, Dec. 25, Mgr. Bourget's second pastoral letter to the parishioners of St. Patrick's.

[187] ACAM, 355.101, 1867-2, Aug. 9, Mgr. Bourget to J. Desautels.

revealing. They were given permission to build a parish church, but were told that only a limited territory would be assigned to it. Bourget was, however, willing to give them the same privileges that he had already offered to St. Patrick's. In other words, the French-speaking people of the parish would be instructed to attend another church, while the English-speaking people of other parishes would be allowed to attend St. Mary's. After seeking reassurance that Bourget did not intend to take away St. Patrick's and its institutions from the English-speaking Catholics of Montreal, the representatives were convinced 'that the English-speaking Catholics of the suburbs are now much better under the division than as previously arranged'.[188] While not wishing to see St. Patrick's and its associated institutions endangered, the suburban Irish Catholics (even those in Sulpician run churches like St. Bridget's) recognised that dismemberment offered them certain potential benefits and therefore viewed the division of Notre-Dame in a more favourable light.[189] While those in the centre were concerned that the community would lose its united revenues and its united sense of purpose through division into separate parishes, many in the future St. Mary's and St. Gabriel's parishes hoped that the dismemberment of Notre-Dame would lead to greater autonomy and more convenient parish churches in which they could take the sacraments, including baptism and marriage.

The debate over the dismemberment of Notre-Dame was eventually settled through intervention from Rome, which, on the whole, favoured Bishop Bourget's position. A decree issued in July 1872 ordered the Sulpicians to recognise the parishes erected by the Bishop as 'succursales' so that they would have the right to hold registers until proper recognition for canonical parishes could be gained from the civil authority.[190] It also decreed that the churches of St. Patrick's and St. Ann's were to be used exclusively for the parochial services of the 'Angli' or 'Hibernienses'. Archbishop Taschereau of Quebec City, appointed by the Holy See in 1871 to help resolve the situation in Montreal, was instrumental in arriving at this compromise, although the decree did not implement his suggestion that St. Patrick's should be designated as the main Irish church, with the

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[188] ACAM, 901.145, 1871-1, May 7, Minutes of an interview held with Mgr. Bourget at the Bishop's Palace concerning the building of a church for the English-speaking Catholics of the Quebec Suburb.
[189] The Seminary handed over the direction of St. Bridget's to the secular clergy in 1873 (Cross, *op. cit.*, p. 103).
[190] Berry, *loc. cit.*, pp. 126-127.

pastors of St. Ann's and St. Bridget's dependent upon St. Patrick's pastor, in order to preserve the bond of unity between Montreal's Irish Catholics.[191] Another decree, issued in March 1873, dictated that the entities then known as 'succursales' would henceforth be considered proper canonical parishes and ordered the Bishop to issue new decrees of erection. A letter accompanying this decree also explained that in order to comply with Rome's decision the parishes of Notre-Dame and St. Patrick's were to be made coterminous, and that French Canadians within the boundaries were to be subject to the pastor of Notre-Dame, while 'Angli' or 'Hibernienses' were to belong to the pastor of St. Patrick's.[192] The pastor of St. Patrick's was also given jurisdiction over English-speaking Catholics living in St. Jacques parish.[193] Similarly, the boundaries of St. Ann's and St. Joseph were made coterminous, so that English-speaking Catholics would have St. Ann's as their parish church while French-Canadians would attend St. Joseph (see Figure 4.2). The decision to extend the limited territory of St. Patrick's parish to include the much larger territory of Notre-Dame and to implement a system of superimposed French and English parishes was the only major point on which the Roman Congregation deviated from Bishop Bourget's proposal.[194] This set a precedent that was of great importance to Irish Catholics, since it ensured the future erection of Irish-Catholic parishes with boundaries which would be able to embrace (and collect revenues from) the community's dispersed population, and also maintained a framework supporting institutional division along ethnic lines.

Urban Expansion and the Erection of New English-Speaking Catholic Parishes

As the population of Montreal continued its territorial expansion in response to the tempo of industrial growth, the erection of new English-speaking Catholic parishes was required to meet the needs of the growing suburban population that found itself outside the boundaries of St. Patrick's and St. Ann's. In the 'west' end of the city, further development of industry along the Lachine Canal spurred on the settlement of the

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[191] Perin, *op. cit.*, p. 177.
[192] Berry, *loc. cit.*, p. 127. To be a parishioner of St. Patrick's, the male head of the household had to be 'Angli' or 'Hibernienses' (ACAM, 355.121, 1866-18).
[193] ACAM, 355.121, 1874-2, July 6, Decree erecting the parish of St. Patrick.
[194] Berry, *loc. cit.*, p. 128.

surrounding area. From 1856 on, employment opportunities in the Grand Trunk workshops in Point St. Charles induced many to live in the area to the south of the canal. Canal-side industries also sprang up in St. Gabriel's, such as the Canadian Cordage Factory and Ramsey, Drake, and Dodd's Varnish Factory. An 1857 map showing the subdivision of the southeastern portion of the Sulpician-owned St. Gabriel's farm property, which later became part of St. Gabriel's parish, indicates that many of the 120 by 45 foot lots were purchased by Irish buyers.[195] Father Salmon, the first pastor of St. Gabriel's, left the following personal account of the area's early development as a 'mission land':

> In November 1868 I was called from Laprairie to St. Henri (Tanneries), to attend to the English-speaking families under the direction of Rev. Father Lapierre, pastor of that parish. St. Gabriel (village) being then part of the St. Henri parish, I visited it from time to time making sick calls. The people of this district attended mass either at St. Ann's church or at the Tanneries, whilst there were instances of many not attending mass at all....By making loans, however, from English-speaking families in the city and surrounding parishes, to carry on the work of constructing the church of St. Henri, I acquired a certain amount of right with Rev. Father Lapierre, which allowed me to appeal frequently for a building at St. Gabriel. Finally he consented to my proposals...on condition that I was to assume all responsibility in the matter, in case my efforts were a failure. The chapel was finished towards the end of April 1870; and was duly opened for mass on Sunday May 1st, 1870, by the Vicar General.[196]

In 1875 a petition, signed by both the French and English members of the congregation, was sent to Bishop Bourget requesting that St. Gabriel's be erected as a canonical parish.[197] Father Salmon, pastor of St. Gabriel's between 1875 and 1886, also wrote to Bishop Bourget, but suggested that a specifically English-speaking parish was what was required in order to prevent squabbles and ill-feeling between the two groups.[198] St. Gabriel's was erected as a bilingual parish in 1875 (see Figure 4.2). Letters written by

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[195] ASSM, Voute 1, armoire 1, 1857, 'St. Gabriel (ferme) plan de la partie sud-est de la ferme St. Gabriel 1857 subdivision into building lots'.

[196] *One Hundred Years of Masses, One Hundred Years of People, St. Gabriel's, Montreal, 1870-1970* (Montreal, 1970). The above quotation is taken from an 'original record written by Father Salmon' reproduced in the centenary publication. It was hoped that the current parish priest of St. Gabriel's would know of the whereabouts of the original document and others like it. Unfortunately this was not the case.

[197] ACAM, 355.132, 1875-2, Nov. 23, Petition by the congregation of St. Gabriel's church to erect a new parish. Approximately 30 percent of the signatures on the petition belonged to French Canadians.

the Irish and French parishioners of St. Gabriel's on the occasion of a pastoral visit by Bishop Fabre in 1882 provide interesting insights into inter-ethnic relations in a 'mixed' parish. Although the parishioners indicate that they are getting along better than Father Salmon's previous letter would have led one to expect, they do appear to see themselves as being two fundamentally different congregations within the same church. In their letter, the Irish parishioners explain that they 'cherish the faith preached by St. Patrick to our ancestors, whose descendants found in every clime carry as a sacred trust the religious spirit of their forefathers, which ages of persecution and intolerance have been unable to crush - a spirit which has infused into our people an instinctive knowledge of the truth, and inspires us to prove ourselves worthy of the cradle of our race - the Island of Saints'.[199] They then go on to refer to the 'glorious' record of the early French missionaries and settlers in Canada and 'heartily join...with our French Canadian friends - the descendants of those noble and saintly personages whose names grace the Christian annals of Canadian History - in saluting Your Lordship with greetings of welcome, and trust that Your Lordship will see in our union on this auspicious occasion another proof that the sons of Erin and La Belle France are ever ready to vie with each other in their efforts to do honour to the Church and its dignitaries'.[200] Rather more succinctly, the French-Canadian parishioners state that they are presently living in harmony with their Irish neighbours.[201] This scene suggests that some of the fears expressed by the Irish Catholics in the debate over the dismemberment of Notre-Dame were exaggerated and that a 'mixed' parish system could have been implemented without fear of violence or assimilation.

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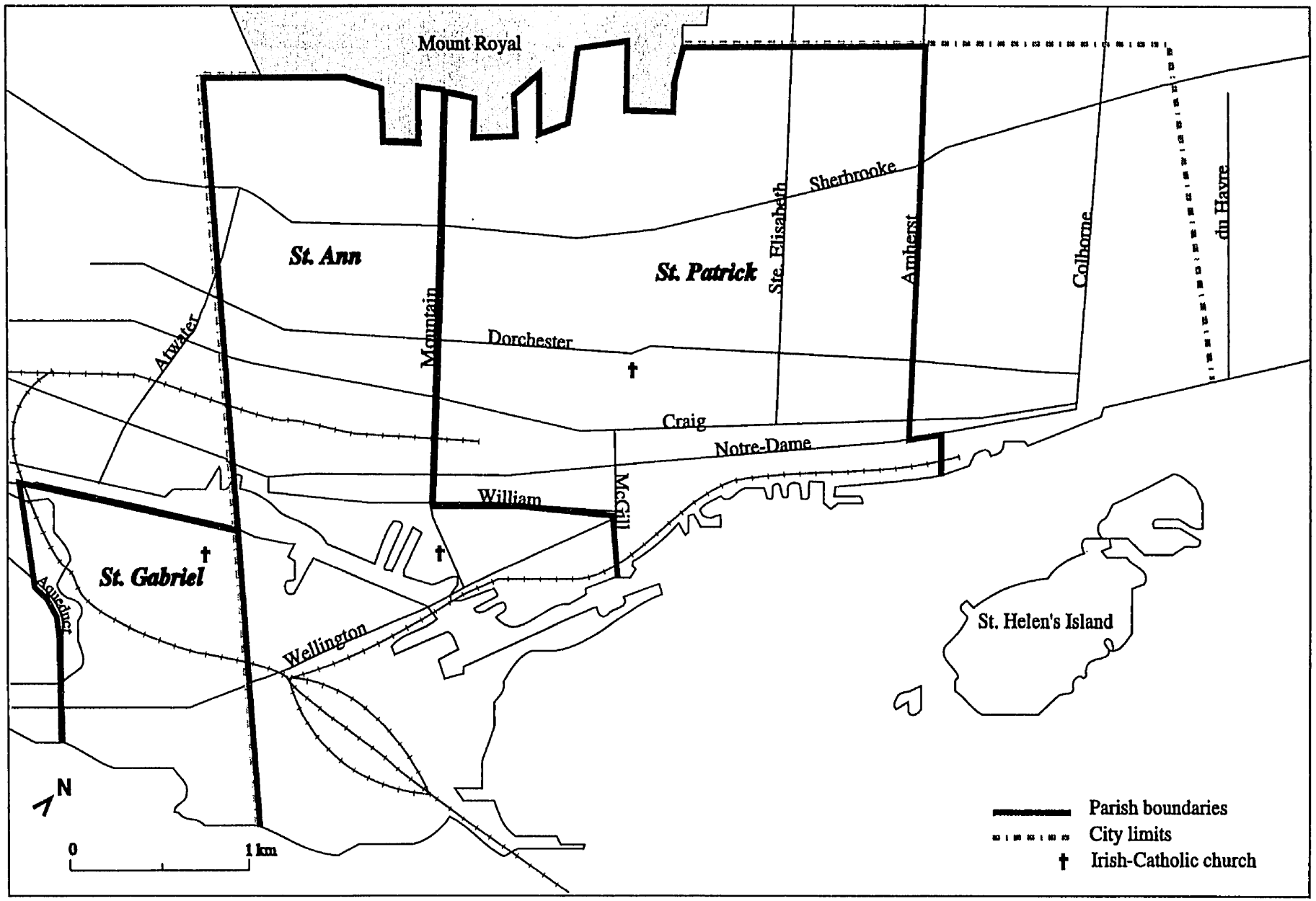
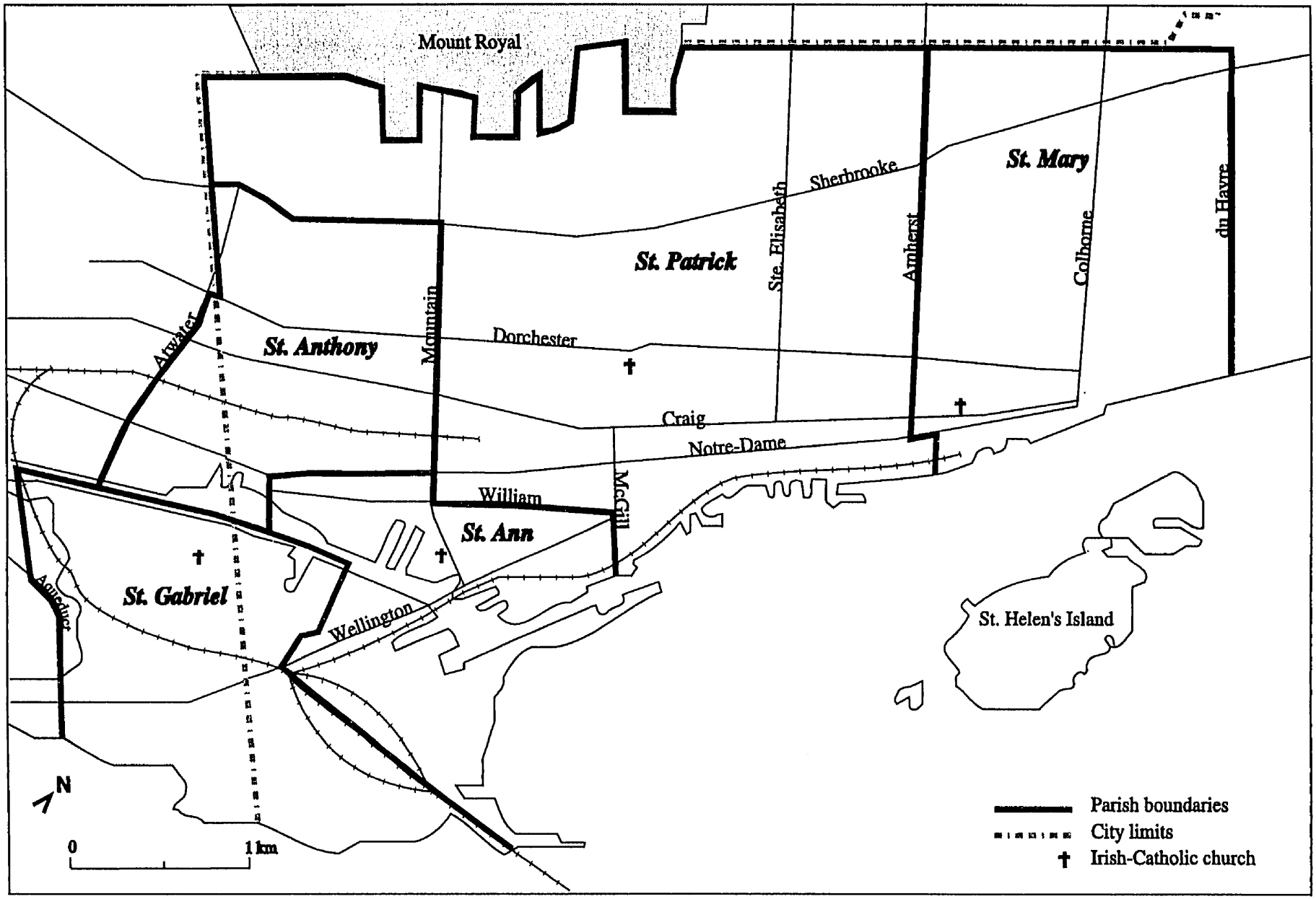
[198] ACAM, 355.132, 1875-3, Nov. 23, Fr. J Salmon's petition for a new anglophone parish.
[199] ACAM, 355.132, 1882-1, Jan. 29, Address on behalf of the English-speaking Catholics of St. Gabriel's parish on the occasion of Mgr. Fabre's pastoral visit.
[200] *Ibid.*
[201] ACAM, 355.132, 1882-2, Jan. 29, Address on behalf of the French-speaking Catholics of St. Gabriel's parish on the occasion of Mgr. Fabre's pastoral visit.

FIGURE 4.2: BOUNDARIES OF IRISH-CATHOLIC PARISHES, CITY OF MONTREAL, AND OF ST. GABRIEL'S BILINGUAL PARISH, 1875



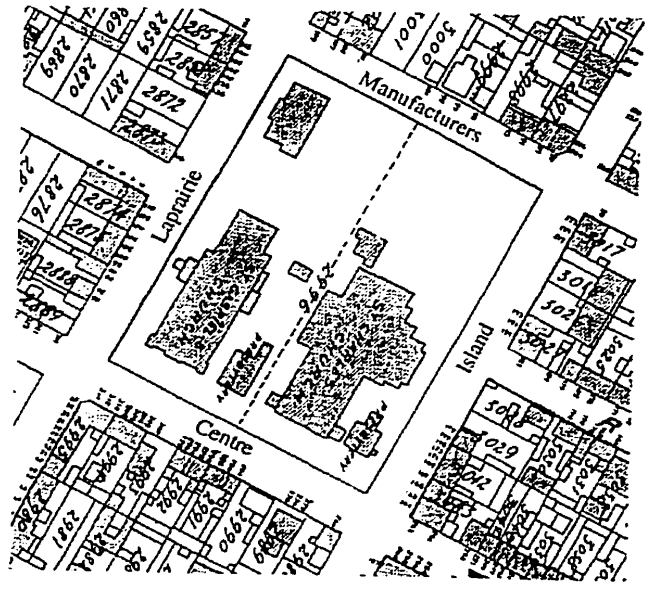
Source: ACAM, Decrets d'erection canonique des paroisses; Hopkins' *Atlas of the City of Montreal* (1879).

FIGURE 4.3: BOUNDARIES OF IRISH-CATHOLIC PARISHES, MONTREAL AND SUBURBS, 1885



Source: ACAM, Decrets d'erection canonique des paroisses; Hopkins' *Atlas of the City of Montreal* (1879).

Figure 4.4: St. Gabriel's and St. Charles - Built Side-by-Side on Centre Street in the 1890s

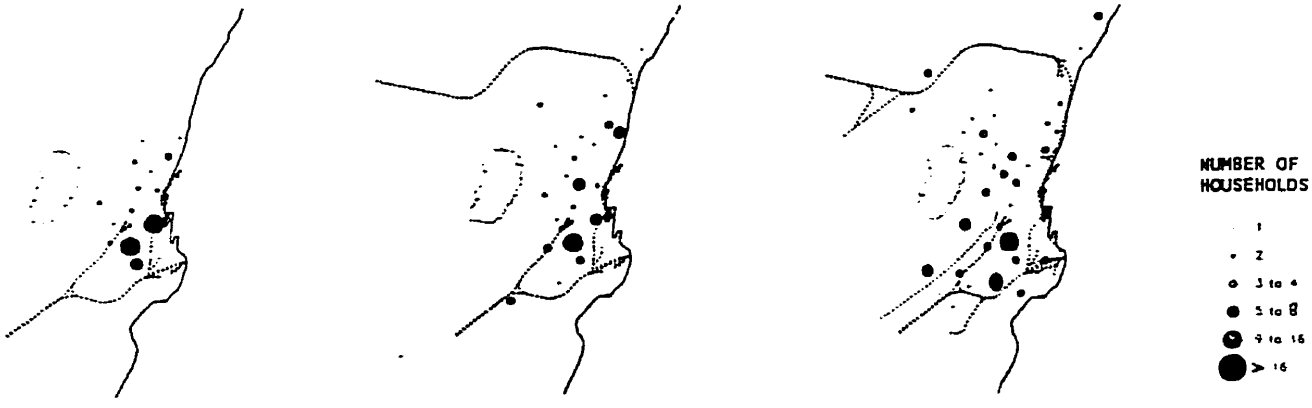


Relations between the French Canadians and Irish Catholics of the parish appear, however, to have deteriorated somewhat by the following year, when the French Canadians of St. Gabriel's began to petition for the creation of a separate French-Canadian parish, stating that they wished to join with their 'compatriotes' in the portion of St. Joseph's parish to the south of the Lachine Canal. In a petition to Bishop Fabre, the French Canadians of St. Gabriel's argue that 'il est impossible sinon très difficile à tout prêtre desservant une paroisse de complaire à une population composée de différentes nationalités ne parlant pas la même langue et ayant des aspirations diverses'.[202] They also suggest that because they are nearly all employed in the Grand Trunk workshops or in factories owned by Protestants, their faith is in the gravest danger, and that the creation of an exclusively French-Canadian parish is the only way to rectify the situation. The 150 parishioners signing the petition express a willingness to undergo 'les plus grands sacrifices' in order to create their own parish.[203] Only twenty-four petitioners, consisting entirely of property owners in St. Joseph who did not wish to have to pay for the erection of another church, signed a counter-petition requesting that Fabre not accede to the demands of the former petition, and on April 30 Bishop Fabre agreed to create the French-

[202] ACAM, 355.137, 1882-2, July, Petition by the French-speaking Catholics of St. Gabriel's to form their own parish.
[203] *Ibid.*

Canadian parish of St. Charles.[204] In the 1890s, the Irish and French Canadian parishioners of the Point built (the present) St. Gabriel's and St. Charles churches side by side on Centre Street (see Figure 4.4). St. Anthony's, canonically erected in 1884 for the English-speaking Catholics of Ste. Cunegonde parish, was the final 'national' parish to be erected in Montreal's west end in the nineteenth century (see Figure 4.3).

Figure 4.5: Territorial Expansion of Irish-Catholic Households in Montreal, 1861-1901[205]



1861 1881 1901

As can be seen in Figure 4.5, the expansion of the Irish-Catholic community in Montreal's 'west' end was paralleled by similar, though not so marked, growth in the city's 'east' end. The construction of parallel religious institutions was, however, delayed in the Quebec Suburb as a result of Bishop Bourget's promise to the Oblates in 1850 that he would not allow another church to be built in the area until the debt on St. Pierre-Apôtre church had been liquidated.[206] As early as 1858, the Sulpicians wrote to Bishop Bourget suggesting that a separate church was needed for the Irish, a census having been taken the year before showing that there were approximately 2771 Irish Catholics living in

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[204] ACAM, 355.137, 1883-4, April 23, Counter-petition of the proprietors of the Pt. St. Charles section of St. Joseph requesting that they not be annexed to St. Charles; 1883-5, April 30, Mgr. Fabre's edict announcing the erection of the parish of St. Charles for the French-speaking Catholics of St. Gabriel's.
[205] J. Gilliland, "Modelling Residential Mobility in Montreal, 1861-1901," *Historical Methods* (forthcoming, 1998). Based on a sample.
[206] ACAM, 901.145, 1871-1, May 7, Minutes of an interview held with Mgr. Bourget at the Bishop's Palace concerning the building of a church for the English-speaking Catholics of the Quebec Suburb; Ferretti, *op. cit.*, p. 70.

the Quebec Suburb.[207] In expectation of being allowed to build their own church, the Irish-Catholic residents of the east end had collected eight hundred pounds.[208] Disagreements between the Bishop of Montreal and the Sulpicians continued to hinder progress. From 1867 until 1879, most Irish Catholics living in the Quebec Suburb belonged to the predominantly French Canadian St. Bridget's parish, but continued to agitate for a parish of their own, which they achieved with the canonical erection of St. Mary's (also called Our Lady of Good Counsel) in 1879.[209] The cornerstone of the parish church was laid on June 12, 1879 and by 1883, with the annexation of English-speaking Catholics in the bordering parishes of St. Vincent-de-Paul and Sacré-Coeur-de-Jésus, St. Mary's had acquired the borders shown in Figure 4.3.

It was only after 1884 that all Irish Catholics living in the City of Montreal (as constituted prior to the suburban annexations of the 1870s) belonged to exclusively English parishes. Local factors, particularly the ethnic composition of the area in question, as well as the ongoing competition between the Sulpicians and the Bishop of Montreal, affected the time at which Irish 'national' parishes were erected in different parts of the city. While in Irish-dominated St. Gabriel's, the expanding French-Canadian group was the one to separate, in Ste. Brigide and Ste. Cunegonde the situation was reversed and it was the Irish who wished to secede.[210] These episodes demonstrate that the decision of 1873 to create separate English and French-speaking parishes with superimposed territories had significant continuing implications for the way in which social boundaries between Irish and French Catholics evolved as the century progressed.

St. Patrick's, St. Ann's, and St. Gabriel's: Parishes Divided?

It was feared that the unity of the Irish-Catholic community of Montreal would be shattered as a result of the dismemberment of Notre-Dame, and that Irish Catholics would

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[207] ACAM, 901.137, 1858-4a, March 21, M. Granet, p.s.s. to Mgr. Bourget; 1857-8, Sept., Census of the Irish-Catholic population of the Quebec Suburb.
[208] Cross, *op. cit.*, p. 102.
[209] ACAM, 901.145, 1871-1, May 7, Minutes of an interview held with Mgr. Bourget at the Bishop's Palace concerning the building of a church for the English-speaking Catholics of the Quebec Suburb; 901.136, 1874-158, Aug. 18, J. Lonergan, ptre. of Ste. Brigide, to M. Harel; ASSM, Tiroir 103, #55, armoire 7, Dec. 10, 1874, Irish parishioners of Ste. Brigide to Mgr. Taschereau.
[210] ACAM, 355.138, 1884-1, n.d., Petition of English-speaking Catholics of Ste. Cunegonde to belong to St. Patrick's and St. Ann's; *Post*, Nov. 12, 1883; Cross, *op. cit.*, pp. 102-107, 108-109.

be 'scattered like the leaves of autumn' over the city, bereft of any sense of united purpose.[211] In Chapter 5, I will examine whether this came to pass, but first it is necessary to provide a brief comparison of the three parishes, St. Patrick's, St. Ann's, and St. Gabriel's, which will form the basis for this discussion. Comparisons will be made between the parishes in terms of size, class structure, and religious administration. The three parishes were by no means homogeneous in these respects and it is suggested that differences between parishes, particularly in terms of class structure and religious administration, detracted from, rather than assisted, the formation of community bonds which transcended parish boundaries.

Table 4.1: Average Number of Baptisms and Marriages, Irish-Catholic Parishes, 1873-1899[212]

	Parish	Avg. no. of baptisms per yr.	Avg. no. of marriages per yr.	Ratio of baptisms to marriages
1873-1883	St. Patrick's	424.1	79.7	5.3
	St. Ann's	386.7	63.0	6.1
	St. Gabriel[213]	53.0	10.5	5.1
1884-1899	St. Patrick's	401.2	92.5	4.3
	St. Ann's	298.3	71.3	4.2
	St. Gabriel's	137.3	23.4	5.9
	St. Mary's	126.9	20.3	6.3
	St. Anthony's	118.4	25.8	4.6

It is possible to estimate the relative sizes of the several Irish-Catholic congregations from the civil registers, using the numbers of baptisms and marriages as indicators. I calculated the average number of baptisms and marriages for two different time periods, as shown in Table 4.1. Following the settlement of the dismemberment debate, parish registers were awarded to St. Patrick's (which had formerly been allowed to keep its own registers between 1859 and 1866), St. Ann's, and St. Gabriel's. The ten year period following the subdivision of Notre-Dame witnessed a number of boundary changes, in which St. Ann's parish lost territory to St. Gabriel's, St. Patrick's, and St. Anthony's. This was also a time when a number of bilingual parishes, such as St.

[211] ACAM, 355.121, 1866-12, Nov. 8, M. Bergin to A.F. Truteau, Vicar General.
[212] ANQM, Civil Registers: St. Patrick's 1873-1899; St. Ann's 1873-1899; St. Gabriel's 1873-1899; St. Mary's 1881-1899; St. Anthony's 1884-1899.
[213] I have only included the English-speaking Catholic portion of the congregation of St. Gabriel's in this calculation.

Bridget's and St. Gabriel's, were in operation. I have therefore handled this unstable period separately. After 1884, all five Irish-Catholic parishes had their own registers, and the vast majority of Irish Catholics in Montreal seem to have married and had their children baptised in these churches. Data for St. Mary's and St. Anthony's will therefore be included for additional comparison and to provide a more complete picture of the community. Table 4.1 reveals that St. Patrick's remained the largest parish in numerical terms throughout the period, which is not surprising given the territorial extent of the parish. St. Ann's almost equalled St. Patrick's in congregation size during the 1873 to 1883 period, after which it declined as a result of territorial losses to other parishes. St. Ann's ward was also noted for having a large 'drifting' population as a result of its proximity to the Lachine Canal.[214] The residential population of St. Ann's ward as a whole was growing very slowly, since rising land values favoured industrial uses and limited opportunities for further residential housing construction.[215] The three newer parishes, located in areas with less densely concentrated Irish-Catholic populations, were comparable in size in the 1884-1899 period, with congregations substantially smaller than those of St. Ann's and St. Patrick's. Contemporary estimates suggest that St. Patrick's parish served 1450 families in the mid-1890s, while St. Ann's and St. Gabriel's embraced 1300-1600 and 450-750 families respectively in 1884, after the annexation of most of the Point St. Charles portion of St. Ann's to St. Gabriel's parish.[216]

As well as differences in size, there were also class differences among the parishes. St. Patrick's was considered a wealthier parish than either St. Ann's or St. Gabriel's, both of which had distinctly working-class characters. In 1883, when the Fabrique of Notre-Dame attempted to persuade St. Patrick's to take responsibility for its own large debt, St. Patrick's was chided for not following the example set by the

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[214] 350.102, 1868-5, St. Ann's parish report for 1868.

[215] B. Bradbury, *Working Families: Age, Gender, and Daily Survival in Industrializing Montreal* (Toronto, 1993), p. 41.

[216] The figure for St. Patrick's comes from ASPB, 'Church' book containing St. Patrick's accounts, 1892-1902, and other miscellaneous information. Prior to the annexation of the Pt. St. Charles section of St. Ann's to St. Gabriel's, St. Ann's had 1800 families while St. Gabriel's had about 250 (from ACAM, 355.132, 1884-10, Jan. 31, Fr. Salmon to Chan. Racicot). Laverdure's figures suggest that about 500 families were transferred to St. Gabriel's from St. Ann's (Laverdure, *op. cit.*, p. 53). Other figures (in ACAM, 355.132, 1883-2) give a lower figure of approximately 200 families.

congregations of St. Ann's and St. Gabriel's parishes which, 'tho' poorer than St. Patrick's' still managed to administer their own financial affairs and to live off their own means.[217] The Fabrique noted that the parishioners of St. Gabriel's had built their own church and presbytery, and also paid for the upkeep of their clergy, and wondered why the parishioners of St. Patrick's, 'réputés plus riches' were unwilling to take over the debt of St. Patrick's church.[218] It is interesting to note how the Irish-Catholic parishioners described themselves in petitions to the Bishop. For example, a petition against annexation to St. Gabriel's parish from the Point St. Charles portion of St. Ann's stated: 'we...respectfully think it our duty to state that we are not in a position to undertake the enormous expense of building a new church in this locality as we are all of the working class, who toil late and early to support our families'.[219] A petition in favour of the annexation was also received from property owners in the area, arguing that 'the Irish Catholic population of Point St. Charles which is composed chiefly of the labouring and mechanical classes...consider that for their greater convenience they have the right to express their desire of becoming parishioners of St. Gabriel's parish'.[220] In his 1897 sociological study Ames remarked that as a rule, rental value per room steadily declined as one drew away from the employing centres towards the outskirts of the city, with the result that wage-earners with large families were forced to withdraw to the suburbs in order to be able to afford sufficient space.[221] This, and the younger age structure of a growing area like St. Gabriel's, could explain the higher ratio of baptisms to marriages in St. Gabriel's parish than in either St. Ann's or St. Patrick's in the 1884-1899 section of Table 4.1. As a whole, Montreal's Irish Catholics improved their economic position as the nineteenth century progressed. In 1860, more than half the Irish Catholic household heads in the city worked as labourers, whereas by the 1880s they had caught up with the

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[217] ACAM, 355.121, 1883-2, n.d., Reply of the Fabrique of Notre-Dame to the protest against its demand that St. Patrick's assume its share of the Fabrique's debt.
[218] ACAM, 355.101, 1883-1, Dec. 21, Fabrique of Notre-Dame's petition to have St. Patrick's parish pay a larger share of the Fabrique's debt.
[219] ACAM, 355.128, 1883-1, April 22, Fabrique of St. Ann's parish to Mgr. Fabre petitioning against the detachment of Pt. St. Charles.
[220] ACAM, 355.132, 1884-5, Jan. 26, Petition by tenants and property holders of Pt. St. Charles in favour of annexation to St. Gabriel's parish.
[221] H.B. Ames, *The City Below the Hill: A Sociological Study of a Portion of the City of Montreal* (Toronto, 1972), pp. 54-56.

French-Canadian population, with the majority of households heads working in semi-specialized occupations. By 1901, Irish Catholics as a group had overtaken the French-Canadian population in economic terms. These generalizations mask the fact that the lower economic status of the French-Canadian group reflected the continued in-migration of unskilled workers from the countryside, whereas distinct improvements were noted from generation to generation within the Irish community (which was not experiencing high levels of continued immigration) as a result of sons obtaining higher status jobs than their city-dwelling fathers had done before them.[222]

Perhaps the most important factor differentiating the three parishes from one another was their management. The Seminary of St. Sulpice was initially responsible for the pastorate of both St. Patrick's and St. Ann's. The Irish benefited greatly from their connection with the Seminary which (as we have seen in Chapter 3) funded much of their early institution-building and provided them with strong and devoted leadership in the form of pastors such as Father Patrick Dowd, who was curé of St. Patrick's between 1859 and 1891. St. Ann's had Sulpician pastors until 1884, when the parish was handed over to the Belgian Redemptorist fathers, who were stout Ultramontanists and keen to effect a devotional revolution amongst the populations they ministered to, and therefore favoured by Bishop Bourget.[223] General dissatisfaction greeted Bishop Bourget's appointment of the Redemptorists. The Irish secular clergy resented being given the care of debt-ridden parishes like St. Mary's and St. Gabriel's, while 'les étrangers...auront la belle, la riche paroisse de Ste. Anne sans un sou de dettes'.[224] The Irish themselves were distressed by the idea of not having Irish clergymen. In his first sermon, however, Father Catulle announced '...that nationality would be forgotten and that what they were by birth, we will be by heart', a sentiment very much in keeping with the spirit of the Redemptorist order which forbade discussions of nationality.[225] The Redemptorists were so successful in

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[222] S. Olson, "Le peuplement de Montréal," in *Atlas historique du Québec: population et territoire*, ed. by S. Courville (Sainte-Foy, 1996), p. 88.
[223] P. Laverdure, *Redemption and Renewal: The Redemptorists of English Canada 1834-1994* (Toronto, 1996), p. 25.
[224] ACAM, 355.128, 1884-6, June 13, Fr. S.P. Lonergan to Mgr. Fabre; 1884-7, June 17, Petition by Montreal's Irish-Catholic clergy against giving St. Ann's parish to the Redemptorists.
[225] *The Story of One Hundred Years: Centenary St. Ann's Church, Montreal* (Montreal, 1954); Laverdure, *op. cit.*, p. 68.

gaining the respect and affection of their parishioners that when Father Strubbe was recalled to Belgium in 1902 there was great resistance to his departure. Through a petition, the various parish societies of St. Ann's appealed to the General of the Redemptorist Order in Belgium, writing: '[w]e are Irish, and "Irish priests for Irish people" was once our motto, but Father Strubbe (the Belgian Irishman, as he was generally called) was so cosmopolitan in his character, that he caused us temporarily to forget our right in common with all other races, who have priests of their own nationality'.[226] Both the Sulpicians and the Redemptorists were reputed to be excellent managers and financiers. Finally, St. Gabriel's parish was in the care of Irish secular clergy. Tension existed among all three groups of priests. The Sulpicians resented the threat that other religious communities posed to their control in Montreal, while the secular clergy felt alienated by the favour that the Bishop showed towards 'imported' religious orders and disliked being caught up in the power struggles between the Sulpicians and the Bishop.[227]

Conclusion

The dismemberment of Notre-Dame elicited a powerful response from Montreal's Irish Catholics because of the threat it posed to the bond between Irish national and religious identity. St. Patrick's was a focus for Irish-Catholic life, and therefore the thought of sharing it with French Canadians was seen as undesirable. The majority of Irish Catholics were to be excluded from the territory of the newly erected St. Patrick's or St. Ann's parishes, and therefore feared finding themselves in a minority position in their parishes of residence. This, they argued, would facilitate their assimilation (despite Bishop Bourget's assurances that they could continue to attend English-speaking churches). By dividing the geographically-dispersed Irish-Catholic congregation into a number of separate parishes, the dismemberment of Notre-Dame threatened to weaken the Irish community's ability to collect revenues with which to support key institutions.

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[226] ACAM, 355.128, 1902-1, Sept., Request made by Irish parishioners of St. Ann's parish to the General of the Redemptorist Order asking to have Fr. Strubbe returned to Montreal.

[227] ACAM, 355.121, 1885-1, Nov. 16, Fr. Dowd's response to the accusations made against him by the Redemptorists of St. Ann's parish regarding the running of the Orphan Asylum; 901.136, 1874-158, August 18, Fr. J. Lonergan of Ste. Brigide to M. Harel.

The Roman Congregation eventually decided to superimpose Irish-Catholic parishes on French-Canadian ones, thereby creating a system which would bolster the religious component of Irish-Catholic ethnic identity and which would also reinforce ethnic division along institutional lines. The territorial evolution of Montreal's parish structure was an ongoing process, involving the constant negotiation of social boundaries between Irish and French Catholics and never far removed from the continuing power struggle between Bishop Bourget and the Sulpicians. Many Irish Catholics continued to endeavour to obtain their own parishes for many years and remained parishioners of 'mixed' parishes as late as 1884. In the unique case of St. Gabriel's, French Canadians demanded the right to erect their own parish, for very similar reasons to those used by their Irish counterparts in other parishes. The division still threatened the unity of the Irish-Catholic community by placing boundaries between the different congregations and dividing up their revenues. Lack of homogeneity in terms of administration and class composition also posed potential barriers to cooperation. Yet, at the same time, the creation of smaller-scale Irish parishes provided a foundation upon which Irish Catholics could rebuild the organisational structures that they needed to maintain a coherent community identity in Montreal as a whole (as will be demonstrated in Chapter 5). It is unlikely that the system of separate 'national' parishes would have arisen in Montreal, had Bishop Bourget's influence not been countered by that of the Sulpicians, who were willing to use Irish ethnicity as an argument against the division. Had dismemberment not taken place, we might question how much longer St. Patrick's would have been able to maintain its uniting role in the Irish-Catholic community, given the pressure from the suburban areas to create more local and accessible ethno-religious institutions.

Chapter 5: Social Evolution of the Parishes

Introduction

Following the dismemberment of Notre-Dame, the new 'human-scale' parishes became important sites for the (re)construction of an Irish-Catholic ethnic identity in which religious affiliation played a central role. Once the principle of multiple unilingual parishes had been confirmed and parish boundaries established, energies shifted from institution building at the city-wide level (with St. Patrick's church as the focal point) to the development of more localised parish-based societies and associations, as will be discussed in Part I. The parish milieu provided the context for the encadrement of second and third generation Irish Catholics and many of the parish societies that emerged during this period reflected the aspirations of an upwardly mobile group. Women played a vital role in building up the parish by helping to involve their families in parish life. The creation of smaller parishes made it easier for the clergy and religious orders to play a more significant role in the lives of parishioners, which also meant that they could contest the laity's power more effectively and thus prevent the formation of strong national (or nationalist) associations that were detached from the Church's influence.[228] To accommodate national aspirations, and make the Church more attractive to Irish Catholics, clergymen were willing to incorporate certain Irish national elements into the life of the parish.

While offering numerous benefits, the focus on the parish as a unit of organisation threatened to disrupt Montreal's Irish-Catholic community in terms of its ability to use religious institutions as a means by which to achieve unity on a city-wide scale in order to protect its collective interests and organise associational and charitable life. As will be discussed in Part II, alternative means of organisation did exist in the form of Irish national (and nationalist) associations, which in theory offered considerable flexibility in terms of the different scales at which they could operate - from parish-level, to city-wide,

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[228] A national association is defined here as any secular society (for instance the St. Patrick's Society) whose membership was established on the basis of birth or ancestry. Unless otherwise specified, the term 'national association' is used in the context of this discussion to refer to societies which based their allegiance on Irish birth or origin. A 'nationalist' organisation would be one that explicitly advocated Irish independence or Home Rule.

to nation-wide. By this stage, however, the Catholic Church - which was inclined to see such organisations as a potential threat to clerical authority - already exerted considerable influence over Irish national organisations in Montreal. Prior to the division of Notre-Dame, the Church had established its primacy over the St. Patrick's Society and other aspiring national associations in Montreal, although its authority was not uncontested. While willing to endorse Catholic lay-run national associations that submitted their constitutions and activities to clerical scrutiny, the clergy made a concerted effort to limit participation in national societies that did not meet with their approval. Of particular concern were societies that wished to participate in 'inter-city' Irish leagues, since this type of organisation threatened to outrun clerical surveillance. Broader national associations which used the parish as the basis for organisation, such as the Ancient Order of Hibernians, seem to have been more successful, perhaps because their mode of organisation was compatible with clerical supervision. As I will demonstrate in Part II, by limiting the power of national associations the Church encouraged a focus on the parish as a means of achieving broader community organisation. In its turn, the division of the Irish-Catholic community into a number of separate parishes made it more difficult for national (and nationalist) organisations to gain influence over the Irish populace.

The Irish clergy, recognising the need and desire of Irish Catholics to organise at a higher level than the parish to protect collective interests, approved of the formation of city-wide leagues or conventions which brought Montreal's parish societies together. As the century progressed, the parish was used increasingly as a building block of wider Irish-Catholic solidarity, as will be illustrated in Part III. We shall see how annual events such as the St. Patrick's day procession brought parish societies and congregations together in highly visible spatial demonstrations of ethno-religious solidarity and that St. Patrick's church continued to serve as their symbolic point of unity. While initially seen as posing a threat to the Irish-Catholic community of Montreal, the division of the city into a number of smaller English-speaking Catholic parishes did, in fact, provide Irish Catholics with a new basis for a renewal of their group solidarity, able to take into account the needs of both urban and suburban dwellers.

Part I: The Parish as a Site For the Transformation of Irish-Catholic Identity

Parish-Based Irish-Catholic Societies in the Post-Dismemberment Period

The period following the dismemberment of Notre-Dame saw a shift in focus away from institution building at the city-wide level towards the creation of a wide variety of parish-based societies and associations. Many of these societies provided opportunities for spiritual renewal and self improvement while simultaneously promoting the material welfare of members. They also served to promote Irish national identity, as well as strengthen parishioners' identification with their parishes. Father Kiernan exhorted the St. Patrick's Total Abstinence and Benefit Society to foster and spread a deep parochial, social, and religious spirit: 'the more we love our parish, the more we identify ourselves with our parish, the more we look on our parish as our home, on our parish church as our own, in which all its priests must ever be at our service, the more we will be excited, and desire to forward its undertakings'.[229] Each parish provided a range of associations suited to the interests and requirements of its parishioners. Temperance societies, literary and young men's associations, mutual benefit societies, and devotional societies formed the backbone of parish associational life. Many of these organisations provided opportunities for sociability in the form of picnics and other outings. Some combined functions more systematically. Temperance societies, for example, usually offered their members the option of joining a mutual benefit branch which would assist their families in case of sickness or death. The Irish-Catholic parish societies were far too numerous to provide an exhaustive survey even for the three parishes which are the primary focus of this study.[230] I therefore propose to use temperance societies as a case study to illustrate the impact that the division of Notre-Dame had on the parochialisation of Irish-Catholic associational life.

Before doing so, it should be emphasized that while attention may have shifted towards the creation of parish societies and associations, the institution building process continued, albeit at a more local scale than in the previous period. In particular, mention

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[229] *Post*, Feb. 21, 1881.

[230] For those who want more detailed accounts of individual societies, Dorothy Cross has already provided a moderately comprehensive description of Irish-Catholic associational life during this period. Later in this chapter I will discuss the St. Patrick's day processions, which will involve a more comprehensive listing of parish-based societies.

should be made of the role played by the parish in the provision of education, which was vitally important in terms of transmitting culture and religion and creating opportunities for upward mobility. A detailed account of the development of Irish-Catholic schools during the nineteenth century is available in Cross's thesis, and I will therefore confine myself to a few more general observations in the context of my overall argument.[231] Education had been a concern of the Irish-Catholic community from an early period, as demonstrated by the existence of a 'schools committee' organised by those attending the Recollet church in the 1840s.[232] The earliest school that was opened expressly to serve the needs of Irish Catholics was the Recollet school for Irish girls, which was established by the Sulpicians in 1833 and was administered by the Congregation Notre-Dame.[233] The Brothers of the Christian Schools (many of whom were Irish) were recruited to Montreal in 1837, and from 1841 provided classes for English-speaking boys in the St. Lawrence School on Vitré street. The girls' school acquired a building in close proximity to St. Patrick's church and became the St. Patrick's Academy in 1870, while the classes for the boys constituted the parish school of St. Patrick's after 1867 but did not acquire their own building until a later date.[234] This example illustrates the way in which the schools took on more distinct identities as parish schools in the wake of the subdivision of Notre-Dame. Institutions with particularly good reputations such as the St. Gabriel's Academy (founded in 1879 and known as Father Salmon's school) appear, however, to have attracted pupils from beyond their parish boundaries.[235] Schools frequently housed both French and English pupils, but the desire to acquire distinct ethnic institutions seems to have existed and it was common for an increase in pupils to precipitate the building of a separate school for either the Irish or French Canadian pupils (a process very similar to the splits that occurred between French and Irish congregations sharing bilingual parishes). For example, the St. Ann's Academy for girls was founded in 1857 under the direction of the Congregation Notre-Dame. The school initially had four classes in English, but within a year or two a French class was added. With the construction of a

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[231] Cross, *op. cit.*, pp. 129-144.
[232] ASPB, Recollet book of weekly activities and marriages etc., 1839-1844.
[233] *The Story of Seventy-Five Years: St. Patrick's Church, Montreal, 1847-1922* (Montreal, 1922).
[234] Cross, *op. cit.*, pp. 131-132.
[235] *Post*, Oct. 22, 1881.

new school for French-Canadian children in 1864, St. Ann's reverted to being an English language school.[236] It is difficult to gauge the extent to which the schools served to transmit Irish national as well as religious identity, although no doubt the attitudes and origins of individual teaching brothers and sisters would have had a significant impact.[237] Of the St. Ann's School it was written that 'one cannot fail to notice that in this school at least a spirit of religion and nationality are inculcated in the minds of the young of Griffintown'.[238] The schools run by the Christian Brothers participated in St. Patrick's day processions throughout the second half of the nineteenth century, suggesting that their schools probably bolstered both Irish national and religious affiliations.

The St. Patrick's Total Abstinence and Benefit Society provides a particularly interesting case study of the impact that the subdivision of Notre-Dame had on associational life because it was formed as a city-wide organisation prior to the division of Notre-Dame and can be traced over the years as it responded to the changing territorial organisation of the parishes. The Irish Catholic Temperance Society, established in 1840 by Father Phelan at the Recollet church, was reputed to be the first of its kind in North America.[239] There is little doubt that the formation of this society was influenced by Father Mathew's establishment of Ireland's first Roman Catholic temperance society in Cork two years previously. The French Catholics in Montreal soon followed the Irish lead, creating *La Société de Temperance du Diocèse de Montréal* in 1841, and in the same year the Irish temperance society changed its name to the Irish Roman Catholic Total Abstinence Society.[240] The society moved up the hill and became the St. Patrick's Total Abstinence Society in 1847, before finally becoming the St. Patrick's Total Abstinence and Benefit Society in 1875. Although women also took the temperance pledge, 'the importance of alcohol to male sociability' made it a 'natural target for a clergy determined to reform the cultural life of Irish-Catholic men'.[241] At the same time, Clarke argues, the aspirations to self-improvement and self-respect implicit in the temperance movement had

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[236] Cross, *op. cit.*, p. 132.
[237] The Congregation Notre-Dame and the Christian Brothers staffed most of the city's English-Catholic schools, although occasionally lay teachers were employed.
[238] *Post*, Nov. 5, 1883.
[239] *Souvenir of the Golden Jubilee of St. Patrick's TA&B Society, 1840-1890* (Montreal, 1890).
[240] *Ibid.*
[241] Clarke, *op. cit.*, p. 127.

deep roots in the culture of Irish-Catholic men.[242] In promoting the St. Patrick's TA&B Society from the pulpit in 1882, Father Kiernan remarked that intemperance was the forerunner of disease, poverty, and unhappiness and suggested that those who succumbed had 'forfeited all manliness - all spirit of respect for their dignity as men made in the image of God'.[243] Only in 1918 were women given the right to join the benefit branch and take up office in the St. Patrick's TA&B society.[244]

When the society was created in the 1840s, its membership included people living in all parts of the city. A committee of vigilance was set up whose members were obliged to attend to the section marked out for them 'in order to give a correct account of the progress of temperance' in their quarter or section of the city.[245] With the dismemberment of Notre-Dame, the temperance cause received a 'fresh impulse from the new and flourishing societies which were organised'.[246] The St. Ann's Total Abstinence and Benefit Society was founded in 1868, although the appearance of the St. Ann's Temperance Society in the 1864 St. Patrick's day procession suggests an earlier organisation of that society.[247] The St. Bridget's TA&B Society was established in 1869, followed by the creation of St. Gabriel's TA&B Society in 1873.[248] While, in 1869, the St. Patrick's TA Society's vigilance committee continued to roam the various wards of the city, including St. Ann's, in later years it acknowledged the new parish organisation of the city by restricting its activities to St. Patrick's parish. Although the society decided to disband its vigilance committee in the early 1880s because of its questionable usefulness and the great expense involved in keeping members' regalia in repair, it was almost instantly resurrected 'to practically advance the cause of temperance by regulating the sale of intoxicating liquors'.[249] It was also decided at this stage that sub-committees would be appointed to carry out this object in the different divisions of St. Patrick's parish and

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[242] *Ibid.*
[243] ACU, P-109, Minutes of the St. Patrick's TA&B, Vol. 2, April 9, 1882.
[244] ASPB, St. Patrick's TA&B Society, Minute book, 1916-1919.
[245] ACAM, 790.021, 1842-3, Abridged rules of the R.C. Temperance Association at the Recollet church.
[246] *Souvenir of the Golden Jubilee of St. Patrick's TA&B Society, 1840-1890* (Montreal, 1890).
[247] ACAM, 355.128, 1881-3, Dec. 31, Fr. J. Hogan's financial report on St. Ann's parish; *Montreal Daily Witness*, March 17, 1866.
[248] *One Hundred Years of Masses, One Hundred Years of People, St. Gabriel's, Montreal, 1870-1970* (Montreal, 1970); Lovell's Montreal Directory, 1881.
[249] ACU, P-109, Minutes of the St. Patrick's TA&B, Vol. 2, Jan 23, 1881; Feb. 27, 1881; Dec. 18, 1881.

Father Kiernan suggested that St. Patrick's parish be carved into five divisions, with a priest assigned to each one.[250] This provides a particularly graphic demonstration of the evolution of the St. Patrick's TA&B from a society which brought people together from the Irish community city-wide into a distinctly parish-based organisation, and also of the implications that this had for the closer clerical supervision of members' activities.

Montreal's temperance societies appear to have achieved greater longevity than those in Toronto, which declined through the 1870s and early 1880s. Clarke argues that, while temperance societies largely succeeded in their task of offering recreational pursuits that fostered 'fraternalism, sobriety, and self-improvement, they were too short-lived to achieve their desired goal of integrating Irish men into the parochial life of the Catholic Church'.[251] The situation appears to have been different in Montreal, where the St. Patrick's TA&B society, for example, existed from the 1840s until well into the twentieth century. Participation in the temperance societies could take place at a number of different levels, making it difficult to measure the importance of their impact. For example, the society recorded in 1872 that 12 520 people had taken the pledge to date.[252] Assuming that this tally went back to the origins of the society in 1840, this represents almost 400 pledges a year - a figure not entirely out of keeping with the figures available (see Table 5.1). Between 1868 and 1880 an average of 280 people took the pledge each year in St. Ann's.[253] While many took the pledge, fewer actually joined temperance societies, and fewer still took up membership in their benefit branches. There is a need, however, to look beyond membership figures on their own. In the 1880s, the St. Patrick's TA&B Society was noted for its high membership and for the energy of these members, the *Post* going so far as to suggest that it was destined to become one of the leading

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[250] *Ibid.*, Feb. 27, 1881.
[251] Clarke, *op. cit.*, pp. 147-150.
[252] ACU, P-109, Minutes of the St. Patrick's TA&B, Vol. 1, Jan. 28, 1871.
[253] Average calculated from Cross, *op. cit.*, p. 300.

Table 5.1: Participation in the St. Patrick's & St. Ann's Total Abstinence & Benefit Societies[254]

Year	No. who took pledge in past year	New members in past year	Members in good standing	No. who joined benefit branch in past year	No. of benefit branch members in good standing	Total no. of benefit branch members	Amount in benefit branch funds
1845	356[255]						
1846	400						
1847	299						
1848	207						
1849	186						
1850	91						
1851	26						
1852	38						
1853	25						
...							
1869	641						
1870	424						
1871	565						
1872	450						
...							
1876 (St. Ann)	**494**	**82**	**150**				
...							
1879						= 47	
1880	250			52	27		$157
1880 (St. Ann)		**33**	**200**				
1881	215				39	68	
1881 (St. Ann)			**226**				
1882	194			49	78		$690
1883	176			52			$1369
1884	113			37			$1515
1884 (St. Ann)			**411**				
1885	148			36	65	107	$1690
1886	172			29	50	102	$1928
1887	145			30			$2086
1888	195			43			$2085
1889	200			43			$2218
...							
1897	300	55		26			
1897 (Mar-Dec)	200			16			$2435
1898	200			12			
1899		15	= 150				
1900 (St. Ann)			**150**				

societies in Montreal.[256] Members of the society shared this belief and declared that the society was 'now assuming colossal proportions in point of representation, financial prosperity and social influence. Its usefulness cannot be overrated...' and it was noted that 'the names of merchants, lawyers, bankers, bank presidents, and members of parliament' were included upon the society's roll of membership.[257] One of the most devoted

[254] ASPB, St. Patrick's Total Abstinence Society, Register no. 2, 1845-1853; ACU, P-109, Minutes of the St. Patrick's TA&B, Vols. I-IV (1868-1871; 1879-1889; 1896-1903); Cross, *op. cit.*, p. 300; ACAM, 355.128, 1881-3. All figures refer to St. Patrick's TA&B unless otherwise indicated.

[255] 45 percent of those taking the pledge were women in 1845.

[256] *Post*, April 2, 1883.

[257] ACU, P-109, Minutes of the St. Patrick's TA&B, Vol. 2, Dec. 24, 1882

members of the society was Senator Edward Murphy, a prominent businessman in Montreal, who in 1884 was feted for his forty-four years of association with the society. In other words, it seems probable that the society exerted greater influence within the community than membership rolls can indicate because of the support it received from the upper echelons of Irish-Catholic society.

At the same time it should be emphasized that temperance societies drew their membership from all classes of society. Benefit branches were an attempt to provide added incentive for members of the labouring classes to participate, although not all could afford the monthly payments required to remain in good standing (see Table 5.1).[258] This does not mean that the membership was representative of the Irish-Catholic population as a whole, or that the labouring classes were fairly represented among the officers and executive committee members of the temperance societies. The St. Patrick's TA&B seems to have relegated labourers to the vigilance committee, whereas in predominantly working-class parishes like St. Gabriel's labourers played a more prominent role in the administration of the society (see Table 5.2). A large part of the significance of this type of parish-based society for the Irish-Catholic as well as the wider community of Montreal lay in its ability to unite men along ethno-religious as opposed to class lines.

Many who did not belong to the temperance societies participated in the picnics, entertainments, concerts, lectures, and pilgrimages organised by the societies over the years and it seems likely that the broader appeal of temperance societies lay in their ability to combine a commitment to church, sobriety, and community with an Irish national outlook. The clergy were clearly the leaders of the temperance societies, and they were consulted on virtually all matters. Temperance men were, however, allowed to elect their own officers and were also given considerable latitude to express the national side of their

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[258] *Ibid.*, Jan. 26, 1879.

Table 5.2: Occupational Profile of Officers, Executive, and Vigilance Committee Members of the St. Patrick's, St. Ann's, and St. Gabriel's TA&B Societies, 1881-1882[259]

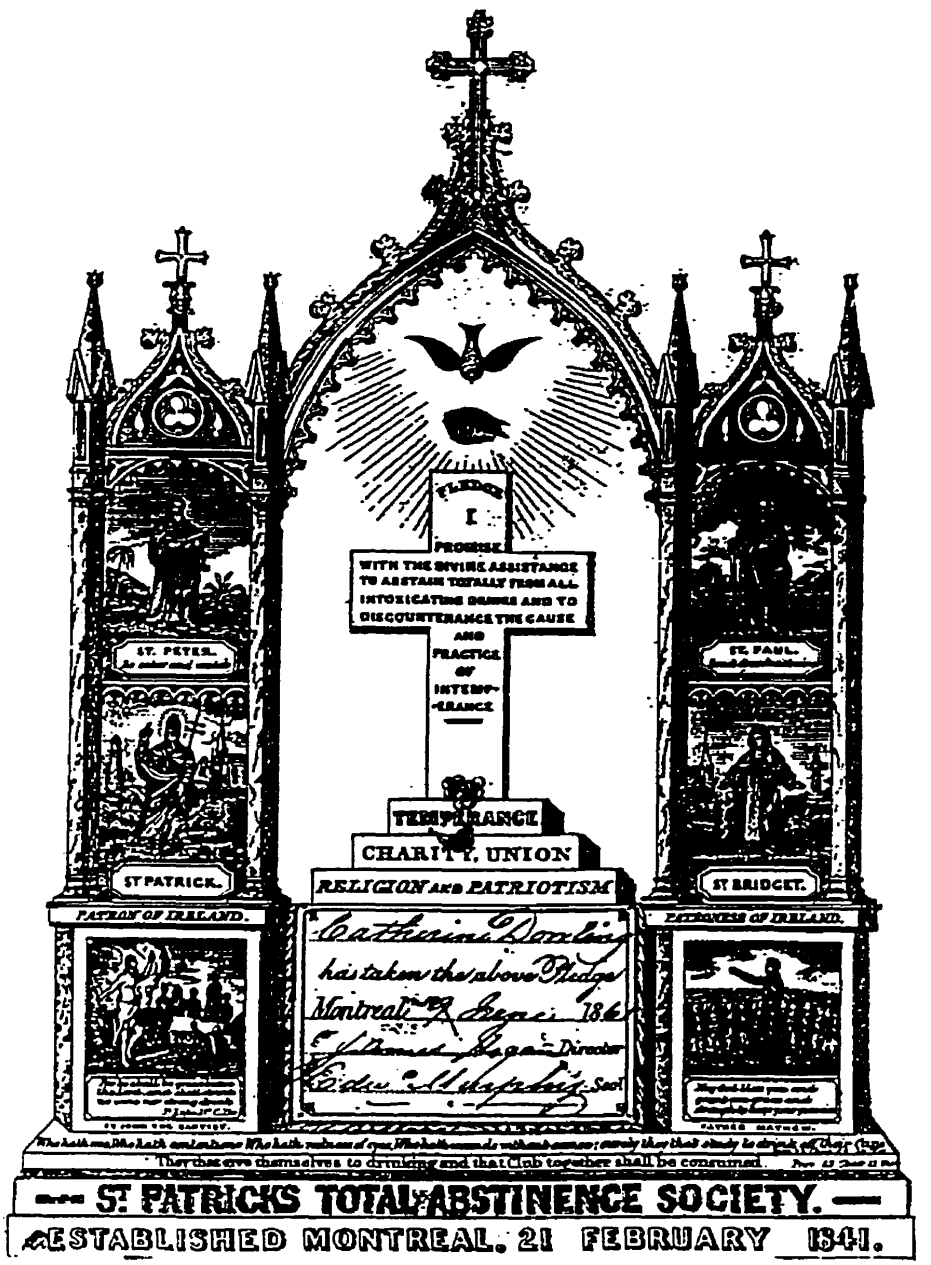
TITLE	ST. PATRICK'S	ST. ANN'S	ST. GABRIEL'S
president	priest	priest	priest
1st V.P.	carpenter & joiner	n/a	labourer
2nd V.P.	n/a	engineer	cabinetmaker
secretary	businessman	printer	wood & coal dealer
treasurer	builder	n/a	labourer/grocer?
grand marshal	carter/labourer?	clerk	machinist
assistant marshal	n/a	n/a	fireman, GTR
assistant secretary	n/a	n/a	-
assistant treasurer	businessman	n/a	-
collecting treasurer	-	engineer/GTR clerk?	-
librarian	-	-	n/a
executive committee chairman	businessman	black & white smith, bellhanger	boilermaker/ labourer?
executive committee:	businessman	businessman	clerk
	clerk	carpenter	commercial traveller
	coachman	carter	grocer
	commercial traveller/custom house?	foreman	labourer
	fruit seller/clerk?	foreman	labourer
	fruit seller/milkman?	grocer	packer
	gardener	labourer	policeman
	notary	labourer	teller, City & District Savings Bank, Point St Charles branch
	pipemaker	leathercutter	watchman, GTR
	n/a	n/a	n/a
	n/a	-	-
vigilance committee:	carpenter labourer labourer labourer saddler trader n/a n/a n/a		

identity. Members of the St. Patrick's TA&B society, for example, wished to 'reflect credit upon the Church which has given us birth', but also hoped that by their virtues and undertakings they would 'always do honour to the Emerald Land whose interests will never fail to be inseparable with the interests of our religion'.[260] The inseparable nature of temperance, Catholicism, and nationality in this context is well illustrated in the pledge

[259] Lovell's Montreal Directory, 1880, 1881, 1882.
[260] ACU, P-109, Minutes of the St. Patrick's TA&B, Vol. 2, Dec. 24, 1882.

card of the St. Patrick's TA&B society which advocated 'temperance, charity, union, religion, and patriotism' and combined both religious and national images:

Figure 5.1: Pledge Card for St. Patrick's Total Abstinence Society



It is therefore not surprising that the society participated in more explicitly nationalist activities such as the organisation of a reception and torch light procession for Charles Stuart Parnell during his visit in 1880, contributed money to the Home Rule fund, and

engaged lecturers to talk on the subject of 'The Cause of Ireland', to list but a few examples.[261] Entertainments provided by the temperance societies also tended to accommodate both Irish and Catholic interests. At the St. Gabriel's TA&B society's annual concert in 1881, for example, Father Salmon (pastor of St. Gabriel's) expressed himself as being 'highly gratified with the large number assembled', but gently chided his audience by suggesting that 'if they had turned out in such large numbers at the church in the morning, he would have had still greater cause for self congratulation'.[262] The evening commenced with the rendition of songs such as 'The Dear Little Shamrock' and 'Killarney', many of them sung by women or girls wearing 'green sashes' or 'magnificent dresses of Emerald velvet'. The second part of the evening featured a political address by the American priest Rev. John F. Cummins in which the Irish of St. Gabriel were reminded of their connection with Irish affairs:

> Never was Ireland in such a state of agitation as she is at the present moment....I know you are British subjects, but I know that children love their mother with more affection than their step-mother. People who talk about Irish affairs should study Irish history....When Cromwell conquered Ireland the Catholics were given the choice of hell or Connaught. They preferred the latter. Edmund Burke said that the penal laws should be graven on the walls of hell. I say they are, and no doubt there are plenty of Englishmen there to read them.[263]

Cummins' speech was reported as being received with great cheering, after which one of the parishioners spoke a few words on the present situation in Ireland and on 'the attitude manifested by certain well-known Irishmen in Montreal' whom he accused of 'giving the cold shoulder to their suffering country'.[264] In a similar fashion, other parish societies catered to both religious and national interests. The St. Ann's Young Men's Society, created in 1885 'for the promotion of a Catholic spirit among young men and the moral and mental improvement of its members', produced plays such as 'Lamh Dearg Aboo' (The Red Hand Forever), dealing with the period of the Rebellion of 1641 in Ireland,

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[261] *Ibid.*, Jan. 25, 1880; March 8, 1880; July 11, 1886; Sept. 19, 1886.
[262] *Post*, March 18, 1881.
[263] *Ibid.*
[264] *Ibid.*

despite being supervised by the Belgian Redemptorist fathers.[265] Thus, both the national and the Catholic constituents of Irish ethnic identity were accommodated within the parish societies.

The division of Notre-Dame thereby created a setting in which the parish could become an important site for the (re)construction of an Irish-Catholic ethnic identity in which religious affiliation played a central role. The following quotation, part of an entreaty made by the parishioners of St. Ann's to the General of the Redemptorist Order to have Father Strubbe returned to their parish, captures the cradle-to-grave nature of parish life at the turn of the century and also sets the scene for the discussion of the role played by women in parish life which is to follow:

> When the late Father Catulle and Father Strubbe arrived in our midst, they found the parish in a most lamentable condition, but, through the administrative ability of the former, and the executive talents of the latter, it soon became apparent that master hands had taken hold. Schools; asylums for the aged poor; were erected; the young men of the parish were bound together in a building of their own; societies of various kinds were established; Sunday liquor traffic was suppressed; and keepers of houses of prostitution were made to understand that St Ann's parish was no refuge for their infamous trade. Annual bazaars were instituted, the proceeds of which, amounting to thousand of dollars, were devoted to the alleviation of the misery of the poor during our long and severe winters. The standard of education was raised; work provided for our unemployed; the spirit of a laudable ambition was instilled into the hearts of our young men, so that they might take their place among those of other creeds and other nationalities, which position, unfortunately, they had not previously occupied. Young girls' schools were fostered with a paternal love; the after careers of the pupils were carefully guarded; they were enrolled in sodalities of 'Our Lady of Perpetual Help'; the 'Sacred Heart', and the 'Children of Mary', where they were instructed in the moral and social virtues of Catholic young women, and by which they were enabled to resist those temptations in life to which they were exposed, more particularly in a large city. Annual pilgrimages to St. Anne de Beaupré were inaugurated...Other pilgrimages to nearer shrines replaced excursions of questionable character. Space in the cemetery, affording last resting place for those of the parish who were unable to purchase the same, was provided, and there is nothing so dear to the Irish heart as the knowledge that their beloved dead are not resting in an unknown grave.[266]

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[265] *The Story of One Hundred Years: Centenary St. Ann's Church, Montreal* (Montreal, 1954); *True Witness and Catholic Chronicle,* March 8, 1893.

[266] ACAM, 355.128, 1902-1, Sept., Request made by Irish parishioners of St. Ann's parish to the General of the Redemptorist Order asking to have Fr. Strubbe returned to Montreal.

This letter is particularly interesting because it was signed by women (representing the Ladies of St. Ann's and devotional societies such as the League of the Sacred Heart and the Children of Mary) as well as men (representing societies such as the St. Ann's Young Men's Society and St. Ann's TA&B Society).

Women and the Parish

Recent work by ethnic historians like Franca Iacovetta has emphasized the need to uncover obscured aspects of the past in order to improve our understanding of the way in which gender mediated the immigrant experience.[267] As the above quotation demonstrates, the parish served as a focus for the lives of women as well as men. The gendered nature of parish activities may, however, help to explain why fewer records of women's participation exist in the archives. Clarke argues that 'women's activism and leadership were of community-wide significance, but within the male-dominated structures of the church they were typically located in the devotional or sewing circle and so remained largely invisible'.[268] There are various possible explanations for this. Women tended to be seen by the clergy as the means by which the rest of the family could be integrated into the public world of the parish.[269] Laverdure suggests that women were more comfortable than men in participating in devotional societies because 'dependence, obedience, and devotion corresponded to the role which nineteenth-century women were expected to assume in marriage'.[270] An equally probable interpretation might, however, be that women recognised that greater opportunities existed for them to exert influence at the parish level since they were excluded from participation in city-wide national associations like the St. Patrick's Society. Women may have seen cooperation with the clergy as a means of increasing their influence within the family and of creating the sort of society that would be conducive to the betterment of family life. While some men did join devotional societies, they seem to have been more willing to participate in self-improvement organisations like the temperance societies or the young men's clubs,

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[267] F. Iacovetta, *Such Hardworking People: Italian Immigrants in Postwar Toronto* (Kingston, 1993).
[268] Clarke, *op. cit.*, p. 83.
[269] *Ibid.*, pp. 62-96; Laverdure, *op. cit.*, p. 39.
[270] Laverdure, *op. cit.*, p. 39.

although they were less likely than women to participate in parish activities overall.[271] To provide an accurate account of the role of the parish in Irish-Catholic life, it is therefore imperative that we take account of women's participation.

What was probably the oldest Irish women's organisation in Montreal was the Ladies of Charity, belonging to St. Patrick's church. Its precise origins are obscure, but documents suggest that during the 1840s a group of Irish ladies participated in a society consisting principally of French Canadian ladies who met once a week to make clothing for poor children to encourage them to attend school. The meetings for work were interspersed with spiritual reading, thereby uniting the twin purposes of charity and religion.[272] It appears that in the late 1840s Father Dowd proposed to the then director of the society, Sulpician Superior Father Billaudèle, that the form of the society should be modified in order to 'permit an organised Irish body in the society' which would have separate officers and separate funds, and would 'carry on the same work in favour of Irish little children'.[273] The Ladies of Charity of St. Patrick's congregation then set to work raising money for the St. Patrick's Orphan Asylum through annual bazaars, thirty-six of which were held between 1849 and 1884, realising an aggregate sum of $135 000. After this time, the society appears to have declined and bazaars took place only sporadically before disappearing entirely in the early twentieth century.[274] The minute book of the Ladies of Charity from the 1880s indicates that the society did not have a particularly large membership at that point, consisting of twenty-two paying members in 1883, only nine in 1885. Fewer than ten women usually showed up for the sewing meetings. The yearly membership fee of one dollar suggests that a mass membership was not necessarily considered desirable, and instead the membership was drawn from the elite and included individuals such as Mrs. M.P. Ryan and Mrs. Edward Murphy, wives of some of most prominent Irish-Catholic men in Montreal. They, in turn, enlisted a larger number of women, between fifty and seventy depending on the year, to help organise and collect money for the Orphans' Bazaars.[275] It is not known when the Ladies of St. Ann's

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[271] *Ibid.*
[272] ASSM, section 35, 22.9, vers 1880, Note by Fr. Dowd discussing the Ladies of Charity of St. Patrick's.
[273] *Ibid.*
[274] ASPB, *The St. Patrick's Message,* Vol. XXXVI, June 1951, no.8.
[275] ASPB, Ladies of Charity, St Patrick's Congregation, Minute book, 1881-1900.

separated to form their own society: the two societies worked jointly on the bazaar until 1884, after which St. Ann's parish decided to hold its own annual fair.[276]

Women were the major participants in the confraternities and sodalities established by the Church which aimed to popularise Catholic devotions and integrate them into the daily lives of their members. They also played an important role in integrating Irish-Catholic women into the life of the parish and intensifying their Catholic identity. Unlike their male-dominated counterparts such as the temperance societies and young men's societies, devotional societies appear to have had very little Irish 'national' content. The officers of devotional societies were usually appointed by the parish clergy, in contrast to the temperance societies which had an elected executive.[277] Although membership in devotional societies seems to have taken off in the later part of the century, such societies had existed for a long time.[278] The Confraternity of the Scapular of Our Lady of Mount Carmel had been introduced into the Recollet church, where it existed alongside the Association for the Propagation of the Faith and The Christian Doctrine Society.[279] In 1868, both St. Patrick's and St. Ann's were listed as having a Scapular Society, a Living Rosary Society, a Society for the Propagation of the Faith, and a Children of Mary Society, all of which were said to be functioning very well.[280] The Sodality of St. Ann was erected in the church of St. Ann's in 1858 and by 1881 had a membership of 459 (representing approximately one in nine women in the parish).[281] The Union of Prayer and the Scapular Society also existed in St. Ann's at this stage. The Redemptorists, in keeping with their role as a preaching order, established many more devotional organisations following their arrival in the parish in the early 1880s. The Archconfraternity of the Holy Family, destined to become 'the spiritual powerhouse of the

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[276] ACAM, 355.121, 1885-1, Nov. 16, Fr. Dowd's response to the accusations made against him by the Redemptorists of St. Ann's parish regarding the running of the Orphan Asylum.
[277] Clarke, *op. cit.*, p. 82.
[278] B. Caulier, *Les Confréries de Dévotion à Montréal du 17e au 19e siècle,* Ph.D. thesis, Université de Montréal (1986).
[279] ASPB, Recollet book of weekly activities and marriages etc., 1839-1844.
[280] ACAM, 350.102, 1868-101, St. Patrick's parish report for 1868; 1868-5, St. Ann's parish report for 1868.
[281] ACAM, 355.128, 1881-3, Dec. 31, Fr. J. Hogan's financial report on St. Ann's parish. The figure of one in nine is based on the estimated English-speaking Catholic population of the parish of 8000 which is given in this document.

parish for years' with its sodalities for young men, married women, and young women and the Archconfraternity of Our Lady of Perpetual Help, were both erected in 1884.[282] The Sacred Heart League (Apostleship of Prayer) of St. Ann's parish started with an initial membership of 260 in 1888, which by 1895 had grown to 1369, and by 1900 to 1500 (see Table 5.3).[283]

Table 5.3: Membership in Devotional Societies in St Ann's Parish

Society	Year	Participation	Source
Sodality of St. Ann	1881	459 members	ACAM, 355.128, 1881-3.
Scapular Society	1881	79 regularly attending members	ACAM, 355.128, 1881-3.
Union of Prayer	1881	410 members	ACAM, 355.128, 1881-3.
Sacred Heart League	1888	260 - initial membership	*Golden Jubilee Number: Redemptorist Fathers at St. Ann's, Montreal* (1934)
Sacred Heart League	1895	1369 members	"
Sacred Heart League	1900	1500 members	*Le Diocèse de Montréal à la Fin du Dixneuvième Siècle* (1900)
Confraternity of St. Barbara (de la Bonne Mort)	1900	1200 members	"
Children of Mary - Arch. of the Holy Family	1900	700 members	"
Ladies of St. Ann - Arch. of the Holy Family	1900	450 members	"
Men of the Holy Family	1900	300 members	"

St. Patrick's parish also had its full complement of devotional societies by the turn of the century, including the Sacred Heart League (by 1874), the Scapular Society, the Holy Rosary Sodality, the Children of Mary, and the Holy Name Society.[284] A register, starting in 1893, for the Universal Association of the Holy Family contains the names of entire families.[285] St. Gabriel's had only two devotional societies at the turn of the century, the League of the Sacred Heart and the Holy Rosary Society, in keeping with the smaller size of the parish.[286]

Given the records available and the ephemeral nature of certain devotional societies, it is impossible to guarantee a complete inventory of devotional associations for

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[282] *The Story of One Hundred Years: Centenary St. Ann's Church, Montreal* (Montreal, 1954).
[283] *Ibid.*; *Le Diocèse de Montréal à la Fin du Dixneuvième Siècle* (Montreal, 1900).
[284] *Le Diocèse de Montréal à la Fin du Dixneuvième Siècle* (Montreal, 1900). The registers of most of these devotional societies for various years can be found in the ASPB.
[285] ASPB, Apostleship of Prayer and Sacred Heart, Register, contains registers of various societies, dates ranging from 1870s - early twentieth century.
[286] *Le Diocèse de Montréal à la Fin du Dixneuvième Siècle* (Montreal, 1900).

any given point in time. The above listing does, however, provide a representative picture of the various devotional societies existing in St. Patrick's, St. Ann's, and St. Gabriel's parishes during the nineteenth century, while Table 5.3 illustrates the level of participation in devotional societies. Clarke maintains that in Toronto male membership in devotional organisations had become common by 1895, and an examination of the registers of St. Patrick's parish from the late nineteenth century suggests that there is no reason to assume that a similar situation did not exist in Montreal, although women's names continued to predominate.[287] In 1888, for example, 212 women and 43 men joined St. Patrick's League of the Sacred Heart.[288] Estimates of the numbers who participated in a mission preached at St. Patrick's in 1892 by the Paulists of New York confirm both a high level of participation in parish life in the latter part of the century, as well as the gendered nature of this participation. During the Paulist mission, 10 300 communions were given and 8726 confessions were heard, 4728 of which were accompanied by a pledge of total abstinence.

Table 5.4: Participation in the Paulist Mission at St. Patrick's, 1892[289]

	Confessions	% of Total Confessions	Total Abstinence Pledges	Pledges as a % of Confessions
Married women	1983	23%	910	46%
Married men	1933	22%	833	43%
Single women	3110	36%	1710	55%
Single men	1700	19%	1275	75%
Totals	8726	100%	4728	54%

Table 5.4 indicates that while married men and women shared similar levels of participation in the mission, single women were more likely to have their confessions heard than their male counterparts. However, of the single men who did have their confessions heard, a surprisingly high percentage were also willing to take the total abstinence pledge. Father Simon Peter Lonergan's description of the contrast between the

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[287] Clarke, *op. cit.*, p. 96; ASPB, Apostleship of Prayer and Sacred Heart, Register, contains registers of various societies, dates ranging from 1870s - early twentieth century.

[288] ASPB, Apostleship of Prayer and Sacred Heart, Register, contains registers of various societies, dates ranging from 1870s - early twentieth century.

[289] ASPB, 'Church' book containing St. Patrick's accounts, 1892-1902, and other miscellaneous information.

young men and the married men and women of St. Mary's parish provides a particularly vivid confirmation of the gendered nature of participation in parish life and attempts to explain its causes:

> [T]he young men were far from being what they should be. The [Society for Young Men] was rather composed of married men; the single ones had dropped off gradually. They thought they should have more latitude...they left for the saloon and the street corner. There are exceptions,...but the vast majority of our young single men was of the poorest, the meanest class. No respect for themselves, no ambition to better themselves intellectually or socially....Strangers to the good works of the parish they remained strangers to their religious duties....Retreats were yearly organised for them; they never made a sacrifice to come and assist...and in 1883 to my sorrow about 350 made no Easter duty, principally young men. The married men, especially the leaders in the parish by their influence, wealth, were remarkably good....Our married ladies and our young ladies are good. The Rosary Sodality has done a great deal of good, and I am happy to say that confessions and communions were made more frequent by the works of the society....At our first devotion of the 40 Hours there were about 510 communions; only 90 men. May Our Lady of Good Counsel, May the Sacred Heart of Jesus do the good work.[290]

This is part of an account of the early days of St. Mary's parish, following its separation from St. Bridget's. Father Lonergan attributes the poor conduct of his young men to a number of different causes, but in particular he mentions that 'the want of a church of their own where they would be gathered and trained' had been a serious hindrance to integrating them into the life of the Church. With the formation of St. Mary's parish and the erection of the Sodality of the Sacred Heart, he is optimistic that 'the growing up children will be better'. Since the formation of a church for the exclusive use of Irish Catholics was delayed for many years in the city's 'east' end, it is possible that the situation might not have been so extreme in the 'west' end where churches and parishes were erected more promptly for the exclusive use of Irish Catholics. Nevertheless, gender-biased participation appears to have existed in Irish-Catholic parishes throughout the city.

While the 'rise of the parish' may have offered Irish-Catholic women opportunities for creating a society more conducive to family life and may even have had

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[290] ASPB, St. Mary's Parish, Book for registration of acts and deliberations of the Fabrique, 1880-1900, Fr. S.P. Lonergan's remarks on the early days of the parish, April 24, 1883.

an empowering aspect, the division of the monolithic city into smaller parishes facilitated clerical surveillance of women's activities and thereby allowed greater scope for the expression of the paternalistic attitudes of the clergy. As Elizabeth Wilson has argued, '[a]lmost from the beginning, the presence of women in cities, and particularly in city streets, has been questioned, and the controlling and surveillance aspects of city life have always been directed particularly at women'.[291] In a powerful sermon on temperance, for example, the Rev. J.A. McCallum focused on the way in which the sale of liquor in grocery stores returned woman ('man's pride') to the home 'not an angel of light and love and virtue, but a demon of darkness, and hate and vice; victim herself first, only to drag her children with her to the lowest depths of sin and misery'.[292] He therefore advocated the separation of the grocery from the liquor trade in order to protect women, arguing that 'no woman who respects her womanhood will enter a public saloon'. The clergy of St. Patrick's, St. Ann's, and St. Bridget's parishes also demonstrated great concern over the impact that balls and dancing might have on female virtue. Early in 1881, Father Dowd denounced those who had attended an Irish Ball and offered thanks to 'a large number of our influential families and individuals who, so soon as they knew they could not attend the Ball consistently with their duties as Catholics, at once gave up the idea of taking part in it'.[293] While Father Dowd viewed the Ball as 'a dangerous, extravagant, and immoral public entertainment', it was described in the papers as a magnificent affair, attended by 'the cream of Irish people in Canada'.[294] The Irish pastors' request that Bishop Fabre give them a written condemnation of such activities, written soon after the Irish Ball, reveals that the clergy had similar concerns about the entertainments of their working and middle class parishioners:

> For some years past an abuse dangerous to good morals, and especially to female virtue, has been on the increase amongst our flocks. Recreations that formerly were innocent, are now spoiled, and turned into dangerous occasions of sin, through an unrestrained passion for fashionable, - that is immodest dances....Young females are conducted to these nightly meetings by young men, and are detained there til a late hour, in the absence of their parents, and, in most instances in defiance of the authority of their parents and other

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[291] E. Wilson, *The Sphinx in the City* (Los Angeles, 1992), p. 14.
[292] *Souvenir of the Golden Jubilee of St. Patrick's TA&B Society, 1840-1890* (Montreal, 1890).
[293] ASPB, Box 1, Fr. Dowd's denunciation of the Irish Ball, Feb. 27, 1881.
[294] *Ibid., Post,* Feb. 24, 1881.

> guardians....these young females expose their virtue and reputation to the most imminent peril....The same rage for immodest dances shows itself in, if possible, a still more dangerous form - in dancing clubs. And lately it has found its way even to our excursions and picnics, got up for the purpose of charity or benefit, or only for recreation.[295]

In the above examples, there is no doubt that the priests had the best interests of their female parishioners in mind and it is also highly probable that the mothers in the congregation would have appreciated the support given them by the Catholic clergy in curbing their daughters' evening activities. The fact remains that the clergy's desire to protect female virtue and an idealised 'womanhood' resulted in attempts to limit their sphere of activity to a greater extent than that of their male counterparts.

With the creation of 'human-scale' Irish-Catholic parishes in Montreal, considerable effort was devoted to building up the social and associational life of the parish. Parish societies tended to promote a distinctly middle-class image of respectability, and it seems likely that many working-class members perceived membership as offering opportunities for self-improvement and social betterment. Money continued to be raised to support the institutions created by the early Irish community, and parish schools were built to meet an ever-growing need for literacy and education - another important means of achieving social mobility. The evolution of parochial life did not necessarily have the same impact on women and men. While many men's parish-based societies had a definite Irish national component to them, and thus played a role in reinforcing Irish identity as an integral part of Catholic identity, female-dominated devotional societies focused exclusively on religious affiliation. Women did, of course, attend the concerts, picnics, and other activities containing 'national' overtones that were organised by the temperance and other male societies and this may have helped to even out differences in the way in which women and men built up their sense of ethnic affiliation. It is also vital to recognise that the scope for women's organisation does not appear to have extended beyond the bounds of the parish. As will be discussed below, Irish-Catholic men also had the option of participating in city-wide and even broader

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[295] ACAM, 355.121, 1881-1, March 22, Fr. Dowd (in the name of the pastors of St. Ann's, St. Bridget's, and St. Gabriel's) to Mgr. Fabre.

national associations. One must therefore explore the possibility that the parish may have been a more significant site for the transformation of Irish-Catholic women's identity, than that of their male counterparts.

Part II: National Societies as Potential Building Blocks of Community Solidarity

'City-wide' National Societies in Montreal

National societies offered Irish men an alternative form of organisation to parish-based societies. Many such organisations had a distinct political element to them, which aimed at mobilising Irish-Catholic support for particular parties or at promoting explicitly Irish interests in the municipal, provincial, and national arenas. As such, broad organisation, meaning the association of as large a group of Irishmen as possible from a wide-ranging geographical area, was often considered highly desirable. The clergy, whose principal aim was to promote the spiritual well being of parishioners, did not necessarily see things from the same perspective. As a potential threat to clerical control, national societies were carefully monitored in Montreal and those that did not meet with clerical approval were swiftly condemned. Nationalist societies, such as the Montreal Hibernian Society which covertly supported the Fenian Brotherhood, were treated with even greater caution by the clergy because they posed the additional threat of breaking the fragile bond that made Irish national sentiment compatible with Canadian loyalty.

The St. Patrick's Society was the first 'national' society to be founded in Montreal and its transformation into an exclusively Catholic association in 1856 is particularly relevant to my argument. This event discouraged cooperation between Irish Protestants and Irish Catholics, reinforced the Church's attempt to cultivate religious particularism, and set a precedent for the future subservience of national societies to the Catholic Church in Montreal. This, in turn, may have limited participation in Irish national associations which did not have clerical approval and may have facilitated the rise of the parish as the principal focus of Irish-Catholic associational life.

The St. Patrick's Society, as established in 1834, admitted both Catholics and Protestants and aimed 'to promote harmony and good feeling amongst Irishmen; to relieve widows and orphans of deceased members; to render assistance...to persons of Irish birth

in the District; to ensure the due celebration of St Patrick's day'.[296] In contrast, the Young Men's St. Patrick's Association (YMSPA), founded in 1848, was an exclusively Catholic organisation with similar aims.[297] Although free from the Church's direct control, members of the YMSPA nevertheless desired 'to conduct themselves in accordance with the spirit of Catholic teaching' and therefore sought the Bishop's approbation on important matters.[298] Little is known about other early national associations. The Montreal Hibernian Benevolent Society participated in the blessing of the first seven stones of St. Patrick's church in 1843 and advertised meetings in 1850 and 1851, but not thereafter, while in 1864 another organisation, the Montreal Hibernian Society (founded the previous year), was condemned by Father Dowd for having Fenian connections and was moribund a year or two later.[299]

Previous accounts of the 1856 schism in the St. Patrick's Society, which have not made use of the Archives of St. Patrick's Basilica or of the *Archives de la chancellerie de l'Archevêché de Montreal*, have suggested that the event might have been connected to the Gavazzi Riot of 1853, which created bad feeling between Protestant and Catholics in the City, or have failed to offer a satisfactory explanation for the division.[300] The immediate aim of the division was to put an end to the bad feeling and competition between the St. Patrick's Society and the Young Men's St. Patrick's Association and to unite Irish Catholics in an exclusively Catholic national society. Referring to the St. Patrick's day procession of 1855, the newspapers noted that 'the people were chilled and disheartened by the absence of their clergy, who refused to join the procession, because of the bad feeling existing between the two societies'.[301] In February 1856, the two societies agreed, at the request of Father Dowd, to vote themselves into extinction and to enter a

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[296] ASPB, Box 1, Resolutions adopted at the special general meeting of the St. Patrick's Society held at St. Patrick's Hall, Feb. 12, 1856.

[297] *Address of the Young Men's St. Patrick's Association of Montreal delivered by B. Devlin, Esq. (President) at their annual meeting, held on 5 September, 1854* (Montreal, 1854); ACAM, 786.029, Oct. 23, 1854, F. Dalton, Secretary of the Young Men's St. Patrick's Association, to Mgr. Bourget; *True Witness and Catholic Chronicle,* June 1, 1855.

[298] ACAM, 786.029, Oct. 23, 1854, F. Dalton, Secretary of the YMSPA, to Mgr. Bourget.

[299] Keep, *op. cit.*, pp. 87-88; D.C. Lyne, *The Irish in the Province of Canada in the Decade Leading to Confederation,* M.A. thesis, McGill University (1960); O. Maurault, "La congrégation irlandaise de Montréal," *Revue trimestrielle canadienne,* 8 (1922), p. 269.

[300] Cross, *op. cit.*, p. 157; Keep, *op. cit.*, p. 91.

[301] *True Witness and Catholic Chronicle,* April 4, 1856.

new 'Grand National Society...which would be creditable to the Irish citizens of Montreal', and 'which would embrace elements now divided'.[302] Father Dowd approved of the alacrity with which the two societies assented to his request and wrote that he regarded their behaviour 'not only as an example worthy of imitation by any Catholic society but also a guarantee of that peace and cordial unanimity sought to be established amongst our people in order that united in one great national society all may labor together heart and soul for the good of religion and for the honour of our dear old Erin'.[303] By April 1856, the resurrected and Catholic St. Patrick's Society had already acquired approximately four hundred members.[304] Irish Protestants meanwhile went on to form the Irish Protestant Benevolent Society to care for their needy and assist immigrants.

While remaining a lay-run association, the new St. Patrick's Society was fundamentally different from its predecessor. Although Father Dowd informed members of the new society that 'the interests of religion and the honour of Old Ireland are in your hands', the constitution was submitted to the clergy of St. Patrick's for their examination and approbation, then to the Bishop of Montreal in order to obtain his sanction, before it was finally promulgated at a public meeting of the congregation of St. Patrick's church.[305] In July 1856, Bishop Bourget was presented with a copy of the St. Patrick's Society constitution which he duly approved, noting that he felt 'un veritable bonheur en voyant que votre société de Saint Patrice a un but aussi religieux que national: ce qui toutefois ne me surprend nullement; car je ne puis ignorer ce qui fait le caractère propre de votre nation c'est la foi catholique'.[306]

The willingness on the part of the members of the original St. Patrick's Society to dissolve their association and then reestablish it as an exclusively Catholic society presumably reflected the influence of the clergy, a lack of opposition to the exclusion of Irish Protestants, or both. This does not mean, however, that all Irish Catholics were in

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[302] *Ibid.*, Feb. 22, 1856; ASPB, Box 1, Resolutions adopted at the special general meeting of the St. Patrick's Society held at St. Patrick's Hall, Feb. 12, 1856.
[303] ASPB, Box 1, Fr. Dowd to Barclay Esq., President of the late St. Patrick's Society, Feb. 18, 1856.
[304] *True Witness and Catholic Chronicle,* April 4, 1856.
[305] ASPB, Box 1, Fr. Dowd to the Chairman of the Preparatory meeting got up to appoint a committee to frame a constitution for the new St. Patrick's Society, Feb. 21, 1856.
[306] ACAM, 789.029, July 19, 1856, H. Howard, President of the St. Patrick's Society, to Mgr. Bourget; August 15, 1856, Mgr. Bourget's response to H. Howard's letter.

favour of dividing the community along religious lines. Soon after the St. Patrick's Society's schism, an Irish National and Literary Association was formed by a group of individuals holding 'respectable positions in society' with goals very similar to those of the St. Patrick's Society, but with the intent of admitting both Protestants and Catholics.[307] Although Joseph Curran, the secretary of the new association, informed Bishop Bourget in April 1858 that the Irish National and Literary Association's *principal* goal was to combat the problem of Irish youth having 'no literary association here with which to unite, unless they link themselves to some of the hundred and one sectarian places of this city', Bishop Bourget denounced the society because, as a rival 'national' society, it was seen as posing a challenge to the St. Patrick's Society and therefore as capable of dividing the Irish Catholics into two factions.[308] Bourget was also unhappy with the policy of allowing Protestants to join and of forbidding sectarian discussions.[309] His advisor, Mgr. de Cydonia (whom Bourget quoted extensively in his letter to the society), argued that Protestants who joined the society would be able to exclude discussions touching upon Catholicism:

> [O]n a pourtant pour but avoué la littérature d'Irlande: quelle est donc la littérature ou l'histoire irlandaise qui puisse interesser sans le Catholicisme? L'Association ne devra donc jamais dire mot de l'histoire d'Irlande durant les trois derniers siècles, si elle veut être fidèle au principe d'éviter toute *sectarian discussion.* Maigre sera donc l'intérêt historique pour tout coeur catholique: plus maigre encore sera l'intérêt religieux: il n'existe même pas...Que reste-t-il donc à l'Association à célébrer dans sa fête nationale? La chair et le sang irlandais: - Mais la chair et le sang ne font pas une nation...il faut plus à une race que le souvenir qu'une même fluide rouge coule dans ses veines.[310]

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[307] ACAM, 901.137, 1858-5, April 16, Mgr. de Cydonia, opinion on the Irish National and Literary Association; 1858-16, Sept. 1, C. Walsh to Mgr. Bourget; 1858-17, n.d., Constitution and By-Laws of the Irish National and Literary Association.

[308] ACAM, 901.137, 1858-4, April 16, J. Curran, Secretary of the Irish National and Literary Association to Mgr. Bourget; 1858-17, n.d., Constitution and By-Laws of the Irish National and Literary Association; ASPB, Box 1, Bishop Bourget to J. Curran, April 17, 1858. J.J. Curran was the son of a blacksmith who had arrived in Montreal in the early nineteenth century. He was named Queen's Councillor in 1882 and later became a Judge of the Superior Court of Montreal (Cross, *op. cit.,* p. 61).

[309] ASPB, Box 1, Bishop Bourget to Mr. Joseph Curran, April 17, 1858.

[310] ACAM, 901.137, 1858-5, April 16, Mgr. de Cydonia, opinion on the Irish National and Literary Association.

Despite the society's decision to replace its ban on 'sectarian discussions' with one on 'immoral and anti-Catholic discussion' and its willingness to give the clergy control over all the 'literature and moral tendencies' of the association, their insistence on the right to admit Protestants made Bourget's continued disapproval inevitable, despite warnings that his actions might lead to the creation of an Irish Canadian Institute 'where hatred of the priests will be a cardinal dogma'.[311] In September, a supporter optimistically claimed that the Association was 'steadily progressing and, if upward growth is not yet very remarkable, it is casting deep roots' and also noted that the losses to the Association's membership resulting from Bourget's condemnation had been compensated for by new enrolment.[312] The Irish National and Literary Association never rose to any great prominence and was not mentioned in either Keep's or Cross's theses.

Although not a national society, the St. Patrick's Benevolent society can be used to demonstrate that at the time of the dismemberment of Notre-Dame the clergy also exerted considerable influence over the extensive working-class sector of the Irish-Catholic community. Cottrell argues that conflict existed in Toronto in the 1860s between the upwardly mobile Irish-Catholic middle class, who wished to keep a lower public profile in their bid to gain greater acceptance in the wider Protestant community, and the more radical working class who favoured protest over accommodation and tended to adopt an aggressively nationalist position.[313] Orange aggression was less prevalent in Montreal than in Toronto, and the strength of Montreal's Catholic Church made it less dependent than its Toronto counterpart on the 'uncompromising nationalism' of more radical national associations to 'reinforce the Church's attempt to foster religious particularism'.[314] One would therefore expect less disharmony between the middle and working class positions in Montreal, as well as greater scope for the clergy to exert leadership.

The St. Patrick's Benevolent Society of Montreal was founded in 1862 by Thomas Brennan, a cabinetmaker, so that Irish-Catholic working men could 'unite for the purpose

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[311] ACAM, 901.137, 1858-16, Sept. 1, C. Walsh to Mgr. Bourget.
[312] *Ibid.*
[313] M. Cottrell, "St. Patrick's Day Parades in Nineteenth Century Toronto: A Study of Immigrant Adjustment and Elite Control," *Histoire Sociale*, 25:49 (1992), p. 66.
[314] *Ibid.*

of assisting one another' through mutual benevolence between members.[315] By 1869 the society had 350 members. The President made it clear that while the St. Patrick's Benevolent Society had aims different from those of the St. Patrick's Society, the two nevertheless shared a common feeling 'for the elevation of Irishmen and their descendants in the social scale and their thorough identification with the state, - its duties, and honours'.[316] Although it was a secular society, it nevertheless had one of the Irish priests appointed as its director by the Superior of the Seminary of St. Sulpice and its constitution approved by the Bishop of Montreal 'in order to give them more authority and stability'.[317] After Father Hogan's resignation as Director in 1867 (on the grounds that the society had invited a Fenian to present a lecture), Father Dowd (the new director) resigned in 1869 when members refused to expel a fellow member convicted of menacing and preventing an officer of revenue from carrying out his duties.[318] The Superior of the Seminary refused to appoint a new director at this point, and - evidently loath to do without a clerical director - the Society amended its constitution in order to empower the Bishop of Montreal to appoint one, thereby involving itself in the ongoing conflict between the Seminary and Bishop Bourget.[319] In February 1873 the members, despite some dissension, came to the conclusion that they had not acted in accordance with their constitution and decided that placing themselves once again in the hands of the Superior of the Seminary was the best means of 'reconciling the action of this society with the unanimous wishes of all our Irish Catholic societies' and thereby of restoring harmony.[320] This incurred the wrath of Bishop Bourget, who promptly announced that the Church would no longer recognise the Society and that the members were henceforth forbidden to

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[315] ACAM, 789.029, Constitution and By-Laws of the St. Patrick's Benevolent Society of Montreal, 1864.
[316] ACAM, 789.029, Feb. 2, 1869, Newspaper clipping with an account of the address made by E. Spelman, President of the St. Patrick's Benevolent Society, to His Excellency the Right Hon. Sir John Young, Gov. General of the Dominion of Canada.
[317] ACAM, 901.137, 1864-6, July 15, Fr. Dowd to Mgr. Bourget.
[318] ACAM, 789.029, Nov. 30, 1869, Committee members of the St. Patrick's Benevolent Society to A.F. Truteau, Vicar General. In the case of Father Hogan's resignation it was suggested that the supposedly Fenian speaker was simply a pretext for his resignation.
[319] ASPB, Box 1, Amendment to Article 5 of the constitution of the St. Patrick's Benevolent Society, April 7, 1870.
[320] ACAM, 789.029, Feb. 27, 1873, B. McNally, President of the St. Patrick's Benevolent Society, and C. Shea, Secretary, to Mgr. Bourget.

appear as a body in religious processions or ceremonies.[321] In the context of the Fête-Dieu Procession, Father Dowd warned Bourget that...

> [w]ere the St. Patrick's Benevolent Society a bad society, and condemned as being opposed to good morals, or to the laws of the church, extreme measures might be employed without danger of compromising authority. But in the present circumstances, and especially in view of the fact that the said society now commands the general sympathy of the congregation, and of the other Irish societies, I fear much the result of employing extreme measures.[322]

The St. Patrick's Benevolent Society agreed not to participate in the 1874 procession; but the problem remained unresolved until 1876 when the St. Patrick's National Association led the other diverse Irish societies in a common refusal to participate in the Fête-Dieu Procession unless the Benevolent Society's position was restored, so that 'the harmony which has heretofore existed amongst the Catholic societies, in the celebration of this festival, should continue to prevail'.[323] These pressures resulted in an immediate resolution of the situation. Bourget agreed to approve Father Dowd as the new director of the St. Patrick's Benevolent Society, but requested that to avoid future confrontation the constitution be changed so that the Bishop's approval would be required for all future appointments.[324] The St. Patrick's Benevolent Society eventually disappeared in the early 1880s, probably as a result of amalgamation with the St. Patrick's Society and the St. Patrick's National Association.[325] Although this dispute was no doubt strongly influenced by the dismemberment debate taking place at the same time, it demonstrates that the working-class segment of the Irish-Catholic community was willing to defy the authority of their pastors and their bishop, but only up to a point. Having clerical approval and participating in religious processions both seem to have been of great importance. It is also clear that the working-class St. Patrick's Benevolent Society was responsive to the

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[321] ACAM, 789.029, Jan. 2, 1874, Resolutions passed at Jan. 2 meeting of the St. Patrick's Benevolent Society; Jan. 9, 1874, Mgr. Bourget to C. Shea, Secretary of the St. Patrick's Benevolent Society; May 14, 1874, Fr. Dowd to Mgr. Bourget.

[322] ACAM, 789.029, May 14, 1874, Fr. Dowd to Mgr. Bourget.

[323] ACAM, 789.029, June 5, 1874, Fr. Dowd to Mgr. Bourget; June 12, 1876, Extract from minutes of the St. Patrick's National Association; June 16, 1876, Seguin, ptre., to Mgr. Bourget.

[324] ACAM, 789.029, June 17, 1876, Bishop of Montreal to J.A. Baile, Superior of the Seminary of St. Sulpice.

[325] *Post,* March 26, 1881.

suasion of the other Irish-Catholic societies in Montreal, and in return they were willing to support it against undue interference from Bishop Bourget.

The quiet disbanding in 1856 of the St. Patrick's Society and the Young Men's St. Patrick's Association and their reformation as an exclusively Catholic organisation was a defining moment in the history of the Irish-Catholic community in Montreal. In the same year in Toronto, in contrast, the middle-class leaders of that city's Young Men's St. Patrick's Society (formed the previous year) seized control of the St. Patrick's day festivities from the clergy and transformed them into an Irish nationalist demonstration.[326] This suggests that in Montreal, perhaps because of the influence and financial resources wielded by the Catholic Church, Irish Catholics were more disposed to accept the authority of the Church over their national associations. Even societies such as the Irish National and Literary Association, which were opposed to the creation of exclusively Catholic associations, were willing to make major concessions to obtain clerical approval for their organisations. The controversy which took place over the Irish National and Literary Society also demonstrates the extent to which the French-Canadian clergy in the upper echelons of the Catholic Church of Montreal had a definite idea of what constituted an appropriate balance between religious and national identity, which they attempted to impose on Irish Catholics. Finally, the example of the St. Patrick's Benevolent Society demonstrates the strong leadership that the clergy had over the potentially volatile working-class sector of the Irish-Catholic community. While willing to accommodate 'city-wide' national societies that helped to foster religious particularism and were respectful of clerical authority, a concerted effort was made to curb and transform organisations that did not conform to the dictates of the Church.

'Nation-Wide' Irish Associations: The Organisation of National Societies on a Broader Scale

While the clergy of Montreal had relatively little trouble exerting control over most 'city-wide' national societies, since their leaders could easily be identified and contacted, the Catholic Church tended to be much more ambivalent about national associations which attempted to organise Irish Catholics on a pan-Canadian or pan-American scale. There is no question that many Irish Catholics considered broader

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[326] Clarke, *op. cit.*, p. 162.

associations as a potentially desirable means of improving their collective standing in Canadian society. At the annual meeting of the Young Men's St. Patrick's Society in 1854, the President, B. Devlin, proposed that the various St. Patrick's Societies in Canada unite in order to form an Irish Convention with a central committee that would be able to promote the interests of Irishmen throughout the country and remedy evils such as the exploitation of Irish immigrants by speculating ship owners...

> Unknown to each other as we now are, our actions would induce the belief, that we forget how rapidly the greatness of our country was eclipsed by a want of union to direct the power of the people. Perhaps, however, it may be said that in Canada the same necessity does not exist; that here it is more conducive to our welfare to imbibe foreign tastes and habits, and let the proof of our liberality be the unlimited extent of our concessions....I view our duties in a very different light; and I am led to this conclusion because I see that Irishmen are, even in this free country, systematically disregarded, and that an Irish Catholic with, of course, an occasional necessary exception, is always the last man thought of, when honours are to be conferred.[327]

In 1869, the St. Patrick's Society repeated the appeal to form, for political purposes, a 'Grand Dominion of Irish-Catholic St. Patrick's Societies'.[328] No evidence could be found of this particular organisation ever coming to fruition.

A closer examination of the Irish Catholic Union (ICU) may explain the reason why appeals for such unions were greeted with enthusiasm but often failed to fulfill their initial aims. The Irish Catholic Union of Montreal was described as a new society in the newspapers after approximately 260 of its young men participated in the St. Patrick's day parade of 1877.[329] From its rooms on Centre Street, the association aimed to promote Catholic interests and to strive to bring about a lawful union and spirit of harmony among Catholics of different nationalities.[330] The ICU played a prominent role in the outbreak of violence which took place on July 12, 1877 between Irish Catholics and Orangemen. In a newspaper hostile to Catholic interests the Union was described as 'a secret society of the class condemned by the church; the Union has maintained its position of menacing

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[327] *Address of the Young Men's St. Patrick's Association of Montreal delivered by B. Devlin, Esq. (President) at their annual meeting, held on 5 September, 1854* (Montreal, 1854).
[328] Connor, *op. cit.*, p. 111.
[329] *Montreal Star*, March 17, 1877.
[330] ACAM, 355.121, 1878-3, n.d., Oath required in order to become a member of the ICU; 1878-5, May 21, J.R. Ouellette, ptre., to Mgr. Fabre, opinion of the ICU.

hostility throughout...Such an order has no reason for existence in a community such as ours...We feel pretty sure that the honour and dignity of the Irish Catholic people require no such defence as this organisation, revolver-armed, pretends to offer'.[331] While the ICU was singled out as one of the principal provocateurs of violence on and around the 12th, the intentions attributed to the organisation were repudiated by its best members and they disclaimed all connection with the 'idlers and rowdies' who provoked the riots.[332] Despite the ICU's supposed participation in the Orange riots of 1877, and the commentator's description of it as 'a secret society of the kind condemned by the church', when asked by Bishop Fabre to comment on the constitution of the ICU of Montreal the following year, the pastors of St. Patrick's and St. Ann's decided that on its own it contained nothing objectionable.[333] While they approved of the ICU of Montreal as 'a separate and independent organisation', they noted that its situation had been radically altered since its first establishment so that 'it now stands before us not as a separate and independent society, but only as part of a more general organisation'.[334] The authority of the 'Catholic Union of Canada' (referred to elsewhere as the Irish Catholic Union of Canada) was vested in a committee of nine called 'the Supreme Council'. The pastors of St. Patrick's and St. Ann's were concerned by the fact that this council had no fixed location and that the rules provided no limit to the exercise of the council's authority - thereby making it possible for it to override the safeguards that had been imposed on, and accepted by, the local branch of the ICU. The pastors warned that the Supreme Council 'may cast aside the rightful authority and control of the Bishop and of the Pastors of Montreal over their flocks, and refuse to account for their action to anyone' and concluded that the ICU of Canada was 'wrong in principle'. They recommended that the local ICU of Montreal should receive approval, but only 'if entirely separated from this outside, unlocated, and irresponsible organisation'.[335] The members of the ICU of Montreal were then informed that the changes made to the constitution and rules of their society did not meet with Bishop Fabre's approval and that it was unlawful for them to

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[331] *Montreal Star*, July 11, 1877.
[332] *Ibid.*, July 13, 1877; *Montreal Daily Witness*, July 10, July 12, July 13, 1877.
[333] ACAM, 355.121, 1878-1, March 7, Frs. Dowd and Hogan to Mgr. Fabre, opinion of the ICU.
[334] *Ibid.*
[335] *Ibid.*

take the oath which had recently been introduced into the local ICU.[336] While the ICU played a prominent role once again in the St. Patrick's day procession of 1878, they did not participate thereafter. It appears that the Irish-Catholic pastors were willing to approve of the association as long as it did not participate in any sort of broader 'placeless' union that might be able to challenge their authority. Given their swift condemnation of the Irish Catholic Union of Canada, an organisation claiming to be committed to promoting explicitly Catholic interests, it seems reasonable to conclude that the clergy might also have felt equally, if not more, threatened by other nation-wide unions of national associations and used their considerable influence to discourage the formation of such coalitions.

Mention should, however, be made of two such organisations that achieved prominence in the latter part of the nineteenth century. In the late 1870s and 1880s, the Irish National Land League and its successor, the Irish National League of America, attracted considerable support for the cause of Parnell and his efforts to achieve change in Ireland through constitutional reform. These organisations recognised that Canadian-born Irish Catholics no longer felt a particularly strong connection with Ireland and did not attempt to provide their members with a comprehensive social life as previous national societies had done.[337] They did not, therefore, compete with the parish as the principal focus of Irish-Catholic communal identity or as a provider of social services. Several branches of the Irish National Land League were established in Montreal and it was reported that by the end of 1880 between seventy and eighty new members were joining each week.[338] Cross noted a decrease in activity after the passage of the Irish Land Act in 1881. Nevertheless, the St. Gabriel's Relief Association, which was St. Gabriel's branch of the Irish National Land League, still appeared to be conducting weekly meetings in 1883 when it received a letter from the Bishop of Raphoe thanking them for their 'kind letter enclosing a draft for £19 8s 8d' and stating that '[w]ere it not for the generous charity of our warmhearted countrymen in America, England, and Scotland I would

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[336] ACAM, 355.121, 1878-4, March 31, Fr. Dowd's condemnation, on behalf of Mgr. Fabre, of the oath and constitutional changes of the ICU.
[337] Clarke, *op. cit.*, pp. 232, 251.
[338] Cross, *op. cit.*, p. 185.

abandon in despair my endeavors to save the lives of the people'.[339] The parishes were also collecting money to send to Ireland independently of the Land League, in order to help those suffering from the poor harvests of the late 1870s, declining grain prices, and ruinous rents. In 1880, the Montreal branch of the Irish National Land League was forwarding an average of seventy-five dollars a week to Ireland.[340] In the same year, Father Dowd sent a comparable sum of £1727.18, collected by the congregations of St. Patrick's and St. Ann's (and including aid provided by a number of French-speaking Catholics as well as Protestants) to the Primate of All Ireland 'for the relief of the sufferings endured by our friends in certain districts of Ireland'.[341] The parish therefore appears to have competed successfully with the Land League as an alternative non-political channel by which financial assistance could be delivered to Ireland.

By 1883 the Irish National League of America had replaced the Land League.[342] The pastors of St. Patrick's and St. Ann's firmly opposed the affiliation of local Irish national societies with the Irish National League of America 'on the grounds that they were essentially non-political bodies and would inevitably be drawn into the vortex of American politics' should they affiliate.[343] Father Dowd also felt that affiliation might spoil the good relations between Irish Catholics and their neighbours in Montreal, and that any sign of disloyalty to Canada could be taken as an excuse for the resumption of Orange troubles, while Father Hogan of St. Ann's parish suggested that the solution lay in the formation of an Irish National League of Canada.[344] Public response to these pronouncements was mixed, with some commending the clergy's actions and others regarding them as 'an encroachment on the rights of people in matters political'.[345] An editorial in the *Post* went as far as to suggest that the pastors' opposition to affiliation could be construed as 'a condemnation of the two grandest objectives any race in exile could lay itself out to accomplish - the regeneration of their native land and the

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[339] *Post*, March 21, 1883.
[340] Cross, *op. cit.*, p. 186.
[341] ASPB, Box 1, Father Dowd to the Most Rev. Daniel McGettingan, Primate of All Ireland (copy), Feb. 12, 1880.
[342] Cross, *op. cit.*, p. 185.
[343] *Ibid.*
[344] *Post*, May 21, 1883.
[345] *Ibid.*

establishment of a bond of union between the millions that are spread over a mighty continent' and also argued that 'this dread of a rupture in the harmonious feelings among the classes and creeds composing the people of Montreal is totally unfounded'.[346] Once again, it is evident that the clergy had a very definite idea of the dangers posed by broader Irish leagues and discouraged their formation. This example clearly illustrates the difficult choice being made by Irish Catholics between obeying their pastors and participating in broader national unions created to promote the welfare of Ireland and strengthen the political influence of the American Irish. Compromise was reached with the formation of the Irish National League of Canada on June 4, 1883.[347]

There are parallels between the arguments used by the clergy to combat the formation of Irish national unions and those used to condemn the 'international' trade unions, such as the Chevaliers de Saint-Crépin and the Knights of Labor, that were emerging during the same period. Bishop Fabre of Montreal was moderately sympathetic to the Knights of Labor, not wishing to alienate the working-class faithful and having ascertained that the Knights of Labor would be willing to submit to constitutional changes in order to conform to the doctrines of the Church.[348] In contrast, Archbishop Taschereau was determined to condemn such societies. A pastoral letter published in 1886 expressed his fears:

> [l]e caractère cosmopolite des sociétés secrètes et en particulier celle des Chevaliers du Travail (Knights of Labor) expose nécessairement beaucoup de ceux qui en font parti, à exécuter les ordres d'un conseil siégeant dans un pays étranger, qui, à un moment donné, peut être en opposition d'intérêts et même en guerre avec le gouvernment auquel ces membres doivent fidélité.[349]

Secret societies were seen as a threat to clerical authority and therefore as likely to jeopardise the faith of their Catholic members, hence the clergy's censure of the 'oath' introduced into the Irish Catholic Union and its condemnation of freemasonry, the Oddfellows, and local trade unions that required an oath of secrecy on the part of their

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[346] *Ibid.*, May 22, 1883.
[347] Cross, *op. cit.*, p. 186. Cross states that there is no evidence that this was a direct result of Father Hogan's suggestion.
[348] F. Harvey, 'Les Chevaliers du Travail, les Etats-Unis et la société québécoise, 1882-1902,' in *Le mouvement ouvrier au Québec*, ed. by F. Harvey (Montreal, 1980), pp. 90-91.
[349] Quoted in F. Harvey, 'Les Chevaliers du Travail, les Etats-Unis et la société québécoise, 1882-1902,' in *Le mouvement ouvrier au Québec*, ed. by F. Harvey (Montreal, 1980), p. 89.

members. Affiliations with American trade unions and Irish national leagues (such as the Irish National League of America) were considered particularly undesirable on the grounds that they also endangered Canadian loyalism by subjecting their Canadian membership to the authority of a foreign body over which the Church had no control. Many Irishmen were involved in the labour movement, and it must have been a source of frustration for them to see the formation of both Irish national unions and trade unions opposed by high ranking members of the Catholic Church.

A second lay-run Irish organisation that had branches in Montreal during the latter part of the nineteenth century was the Ancient Order of Hibernians (AOH). Because of its questionable antecedents in the United States, its first appearance in Montreal in the late 1870s caused concern amongst the clergy. Father Dowd corresponded with several bishops and archbishops in the United States in an attempt to ascertain whether the AOH was a secret society and to determine whether he should denounce it as such and forbid its members the sacraments. He received a mixed response to his inquires, although there was a general consensus that the AOH was a secret society.[350] Nevertheless, by the time of its official foundation in Montreal in 1892, the AOH was considered to be a 'respectable' society, as testified by its participation in the St. Patrick's day processions alongside the parish societies.[351] The AOH was organised along parochial lines, with branches in at least two of the three parishes under study (St. Patrick's and St. Gabriel's).[352] It sought to promote Catholic principles of 'Friendship, Unity, and Christian Charity', as well as an awareness of Irish history and culture.[353] When the corner stone was laid for the Catholic High School in September 1898, Hibernians numbered almost a thousand of the eighteen hundred strong contingent of members of Irish societies who participated in the march prior to the ceremony. We can infer that it was the largest independent Catholic society in Montreal at this period in time.[354]

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[350] ASPB, Box 1, J. Loughlin, Bishop of Brooklyn, to Fr. Dowd, July 7, 1879; W. Quenn, New York, to Fr. Dowd, July 7, 1879; Archbishop of Boston to Fr. Dowd, July 10, 1879.
[351] *True Witness and Catholic Chronicle,* March 14, 1894.
[352] *Le Diocèse de Montréal à la Fin du Dixneuvième Siècle* (Montreal, 1900).
[353] Clarke, *op. cit.,* pp. 238-239.
[354] J.J. Curran, *Golden Jubilee of St. Patrick's Orphan Asylum* (Montreal, 1902), p. 136.

While highly centralised Irish national leagues with 'placeless' executive committees were anathema to the church, parish-based organisations such as the Ancient Order of Hibernians proved to be more acceptable. The importance of parish associational life and the close bonds created between Montreal's Irish pastors and their parishioners may have limited the Irish-Catholic community's enthusiasm to participate in associations that were disapproved of by the Church. The potential utility of territorial arrangements as a means for controlling national and nationalist organisations, which was explicitly recognised during the debate over the dismemberment of Notre-Dame when one of Bourget's champions argued that the Fenians would find it more difficult to influence Montreal's Irish Catholics when the city was 'formed into numerous parishes, than now when they are all together', appears to have played a significant role in the evolution of Irish-Catholic community organisation in Montreal.[355]

Part III: Parish Societies as Building Blocks of an Irish-Catholic Community

Inter-Parish Cooperation and City-Wide Parish-Based Unions

Having the parish as the principal foundation of associational life should not be seen simply as a factor limiting Irish-Catholic participation in national societies at both the city-wide and nation-wide scales. By limiting the power of city-wide national associations, the Church re-directed energy towards alliances of parishes as the basis for broader community organisation. The clergy recognised the need for, and desire of, Irish Catholics to come together as a community in Montreal, and parish-based societies were well suited to function as the new building blocks of Irish-Catholic community organisation.

During the 1870s and 1880s, the St. Patrick's Society was in decline as a result of internal dissension caused by the politicisation of the society, and in 1883 the *Post* wrote that 'for some years past the St. Patrick's Society has lamentably retrograded. Its active membership has dwindled to insignificance, and it has lost its status and influence...for all practical purposes it has ceased to be the representative society of Irish citizens in

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[355] ACAM, 355.121, 1867-2/3, n.d., Extract from the New York Tablet, written by J. McMahon, pastor.

Montreal'.[356] A mere thirty people attended its annual meeting in that year.[357] Evidently recognising the success of parish organisations, there was some discussion in the papers over whether to transform the St. Patrick's Society into a parish-based organisation. According to the *Post,* a leading gentleman in Irish affairs thought the best way to organise a 'representative society' of Irishmen was to 'take pattern by the St. Jean Baptiste Society, who had a branch of their powerful organisation existing in each parish, under the supervision of the parish priest, a committee from each of these branches having the power to elect the President of the whole'.[358] This solution was never implemented, but the fact that the oldest Irish national society in the city was considering transforming itself into a parish-based organisation under close clerical supervision demonstrates that the parish was considered to be a powerful basis for organising on a city-wide scale at this period in time.

Substantial differences existed between parishes (as demonstrated in Chapter 4) and the frictions created by these differences had to be overcome before inter-parish cooperation could take place. One example arises from the transfer of St. Ann's parish to the Redemptorists in 1884. Under Sulpician direction, St. Patrick's and St. Ann's had formerly operated almost as one parish. Annual collections in St. Ann's supported the St. Patrick's Orphan Asylum, and the Ladies of St. Ann's participated alongside the Ladies of St. Patrick's in the annual Orphans' Bazaar. The Redemptorists disrupted this arrangement by having a bazaar in St. Ann's at the traditional time of the Orphans' Bazaar and suggesting that St. Patrick's was indebted to St. Ann's. The richer parish of St. Patrick's was, in fact, subsidising the less wealthy parish of St. Ann's by allowing half the places in both the Orphan Asylum and the St. Bridget's Refuge to be filled by parishioners of St. Ann's, despite the fact that the parish contributed well under half the funds. Father Dowd argued,

> [b]esides the money value of the these contributions, there was another good of far greater and higher value. The people of St. Patrick's and St. Ann's were kept united, working in brotherly harmony to promote and secure their common interests....The people of St. Ann's were treated in every respect as

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[356] *Post*, March 26, 1883.
[357] *Ibid.*, April 3, 1883.
[358] *Ibid.*, March 26, 1883.

> the people of St. Patrick's. Their orphan children were taken into the Asylum on the same conditions as the St. Patrick's orphans....St. Patrick's and St. Ann's walked hand in hand, and precisely on the same level. The people of both formed but one and the same family.[359]

In other words, the threat to Irish institutions envisioned by Father Dowd at the time of the dismemberment of Notre-Dame was not exaggerated. In the early 1890s, the Redemptorists built their own home for the aged poor (outside the precincts of the parish), and placed it in the charge of the 'Little Sisters of the Poor'.[360]

Rifts also emerged between St. Ann's and St. Gabriel's in the course of a debate over the annexation of the southern portion of St. Ann's parish to St. Gabriel's. As a result of the loss of the French-Canadian portion of its congregation in 1883, St. Gabriel's was too small to be financially viable and therefore wanted to incorporate families living to the south of the Lachine canal into its congregation. Some of the parishioners of St. Ann's desired to be annexed to St. Gabriel's, arguing that they had been attending St. Gabriel's church for years and that 'the natural boundary between the two parishes is the Lachine canal'.[361] Others, particularly property owners, were firmly opposed to the division for fear they would be obliged to contribute to the building of a new church in St. Gabriel's.[362] The dispute became fairly acrimonious, and it is difficult to assess the true level of support for the annexation because accusations of fraudulent petitions were rampant.[363] The eventual outcome was favourable to St. Gabriel's parish, and the annexation of most of St. Ann's south of the canal took place on February 12, 1884.[364] Such disputes did little to enhance inter-parish cooperation.

Formal inter-parish unions were preceded by more informal types of cooperation between the parishes. Parish associations often sent members to participate in the

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[359] ACAM, 355.121, 1885-1, Nov. 16, Fr. Dowd's response to the accusations made against him by the Redemptorists of St. Ann's parish regarding the running of the Orphan Asylum.
[360] *The Story of One Hundred Years: Centenary St. Ann's Church, Montreal* (Montreal, 1954); *Golden Jubilee Number: Redemptorist Fathers at St. Ann's, Montreal* (1934).
[361] ACAM, 355.132, 1883-1, Nov. 29, Request by parishioners of St. Ann's parish to be annexed to St. Gabriel's.
[362] ACAM, 355.132, 1884-6, Jan. 26, Petition by parishioners of St. Ann's opposing annexation to St. Gabriel's.
[363] ACAM, 355.132, 1884-10, Jan. 31, Fr. Salmon to Rev. Racicot; 1884-11, Feb. 2, Parishioners to Rev. Racicot.
[364] ACAM, 355.132, 1884-14, Feb. 12, Decree annexing a portion of St. Ann's parish to St. Gabriel's.

meetings of their sister societies in other parishes, thereby ensuring that no parish association remained in isolation. So, for example, representatives from St. Bridget's TA&B Society, St. Gabriel's Literary and Benefit Society, St. Ann's TA&B Society, and St. Bridget's Young Men's Society all attended the third annual concert of the St. Gabriel's TA&B Society in 1881.[365] Likewise, the St. Gabriel's TA&B Society sent Mr. T. Butler to represent them at the Grand Annual Gathering of the Catholic Young Men's Association, where he encountered numerous representatives who had been sent by other parish societies.[366] The minutes of the St. Patrick's TA&B reveal that it was in constant contact with the other Irish Catholic parish-based societies of the city and participated with them in events such as organising receptions for visiting Irish Home Rule leader, Charles Stuart Parnell.[367]

While certain unions attempted to bring together parish societies with specific common interests, others attempted more all-embracing unions to which all parish societies could adhere. In 1879, the St. Bridget's TA&B Society proposed the formation of a temperance union which it was hoped would bring 'the various English-speaking Catholic total abstinence and benefit societies into more friendly and social relations with each other'.[368] After consultation with its reverend director, the St. Patrick's TA&B decided that the proposed union of temperance societies of Montreal would be of no practical value and the idea was dropped until 1882, when the concept was once again revived and, this time, accepted.[369] The mandate of the 'Irish-Catholic Temperance Convention' was to deal with general questions affecting the cause of temperance, 'such as may have to be treated with Parliament, License Commissioners, or other public authority charged with the direction or control of the sale of intoxicating drink'. It was explicitly stated that the Convention was not to interfere with the discipline or domestic concerns of the parish societies connected with it. The pastors of each of the four parishes participating in the convention (St. Patrick's, St. Ann's, St. Gabriel's, and St. Bridget's) were to take turns as president and the various parish societies were to come together in

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[365] *Post*, March 18, 1881.
[366] *Ibid.*, Jan. 18, 1884.
[367] ACU, P-109, Minutes of the St. Patrick's TA&B, Vol. 2, March 8, 1880.
[368] *Ibid.*, Dec. 14, 1879.
[369] *Ibid.*, June 17, 1883.

'temperance demonstrations' which would take place in 'reciprocal succession' in each of the several parishes.[370] The Convention appears to have been moderately active between 1883 and 1891. In 1888, however, the St. Mary's TA&B Society was dissolved and left the Convention and the following year delegates first raised the question of whether or not it was advisable to continue the enterprise. Although the reverend presidents of the parish societies recommended that it be continued, dissatisfaction grew, and it is likely that the Convention disintegrated in 1891 after a dispute over the division of funds among the respective parish societies.[371]

Towards the turn of the century, there was discussion of the formation of an organisation to unite the different Irish-Catholic societies, to be called the St. Patrick's League. Once again, the St. Patrick's TA&B hesitated, despite the fact that the reverend director saw 'no reason why the society should not take part, the League having erased from its preamble all objectionable features'.[372] Eventually they decided to join in May 1897.[373] Based on the reports of the St. Patrick's TA&B's delegates to the League, it appears that it was concerned with protecting and promoting the interests of Irish Catholics in Montreal. For instance, there was talk of establishing a labour bureau in connection with the society, and of efforts to place the True Witness ('our Catholic paper') on more solid foundations, as well as attempts to secure proper representation for Irish Catholics in the city council.[374] While the St. Patrick's League appears to have been 'a union of the various Catholic societies', there is also reference at this time to meetings of 'the various united Irish Societies'.[375] The St. Patrick's TA&B Society appears to have sent representatives to this convention too, which may also have included national societies like the St. Patrick's Society. Presumably this organisation was the same as, or a predecessor of, the United Irish League which was in existence at the turn of the century, since both were involved in providing receptions for visiting Irish speakers and envoys.[376]

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[370] *Ibid.*, June 17, 1883.
[371] ACU, P-109, Minutes of the Irish-Catholic Temperance Convention, Vol. 3, Sept. 11, 1888; Sept. 10, 1889; Dec. 17, 1889; May 20, 1890; Jan. 23, 1891.
[372] ACU, P-109, Minutes of the St. Patrick's TA&B, Vol. 4, Dec. 13, 1896.
[373] *Ibid.*, May 9, 1897.
[374] *Ibid.*, June 13, 1897; August 7, 1897; Nov. 14, 1897; Jan. 11, 1898.
[375] *Ibid.*, Aug. 9, 1896.
[376] *Ibid.*, Aug. 9, 1896; Vol. 5, Nov. 4, 1902.

While it is difficult to gain precise information about these unions and about which societies participated in them, it is clear that they must have gone some way towards satisfying the Irish-Catholic community's need for collective representation on a city-wide scale.

More is known about the Convention of Irish Societies that met each year to arrange for the celebration of St. Patrick's day in Montreal, since some of the minute books of this body survive. The Convention must have been formed prior to 1879 since in that year the secretary refers to having mislaid the previous minute book.[377] Such a convention would not have been required prior to the division of the Irish-Catholic community into an increasing number of parishes in the post-1866 period, which resulted in a proliferation of societies. It also seems highly probable that Father Dowd was the orchestrating force behind the Convention, since correspondence has been found in which he instructed the Secretary of the Convention to request the other pastors to notify the societies of their respective parishes, as well as the 'societies of St. Patrick's parish - i.e. St. Patrick's Society; St. Patrick's Temperance Society; Catholic Young Men's; Irish Catholic Benefit Societies', to send representation from each society to the Convention for the arrangement of the programme of the upcoming St. Patrick's celebration.[378]

While the primary purpose of the convention was to organise the St. Patrick's day procession, the members also felt that they had a mandate to speak out on matters concerning the Irish-Catholic community as a whole. In 1907, for example, the Convention, having established '[t]hat...we the presidents and representatives of the Irish Catholic societies and parishes of Montreal, the metropolis of Canada, and centre of Irish Catholic thought and expression in the Province of Quebec...[deem] ourselves competent and called upon to take cognizance of passing events that affect Irish-Catholic interests', protested the fact that Irish-Catholic representation on the Harbour Board of Montreal (which had been recognised for over thirty years) had lately been overlooked by the Dominion Government at Ottawa. Concern was also expressed that 'the right of

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[377] ASPB, Convention of Irish Societies, Minute book, 1879-1900, March 2, 1879.
[378] ASPB, Box 1, Fr. Dowd to W. Warren, Secretary to the Convention of Irish Catholic Societies, Feb. 26, 1891.

succession of an Irish-Catholic seat in the Senate recently vacated by the death of Sir William Hingston' was not going to be honoured.[379]

Participants in the Convention included national societies approved by the church, such as the St. Patrick's Society and the St. Patrick's National Association, as well as parish-based societies such as the St. Patrick's, St. Ann's and St. Bridget's Total Abstinence and Benefit Societies. St. Patrick's Benevolent Society, the Catholic Young Men's Society, the Irish Catholic Benefit Society, and the Young Irishmen's Literary and Benefit Association were also represented. Over the years, a number of societies joined the Convention, including St. Gabriel's TA&B Society, St. Ann's Young Men's Society, St. Mary's Young Men's Society, and the Ancient Order of Hibernians in 1894. Although never officially represented, groups such as the Hackmen's Union and the Shamrock Lacrosse Club were invited to participate in the procession. More significant are the exclusions. When a delegate from the Society of the Holy Family wished to participate in 1883, a discussion arose as to the expediency of allowing 'religious societies' to be admitted to the meeting. It was unanimously decided that 'in future all exclusively religious societies shall not be represented by a delegate or delegates at any future meeting of this Convention'.[380] Women's societies, many of which were devotional in nature, never appear to have participated in either the Convention or the parade, and the Catholic Mutual Benevolent Association (CMBA) and the Catholic Order of Foresters were excluded 'on account of the cosmopolitan membership of these societies'.[381] Referring to the exclusion of these same two organisations, it was stated that 'only societies similar to those already represented and which are not composed of men of mixed nationalities can be invited to send delegates here'.[382] In other words, there was a consensus that the Convention wished to retain its distinctly *Irish*-Catholic male identity. The evolution of inter-parish cooperation will be examined more closely in the context of the organisation of the St. Patrick's day procession.

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[379] ASPB, Convention of Irish Societies, Minute book, 1901-1919, Feb., 1907.
[380] ASPB, Convention of Irish Societies, Minute book, 1879-1900, March 3, 1885.
[381] *Ibid.*, Feb. 28, 1893.
[382] *Ibid.*, March 8, 1894.

The St. Patrick's Day Procession

In recent years, geographers have demonstrated a keen interest in the significance of public space in general and of parades in particular. Many have built on Habermas' conception of the public sphere 'as a sphere which mediates between society and state, in which the public organises itself as the bearer of public opinion'.[383] Habermas' original concept has been criticised for idealising the bourgeois character of the public sphere and thereby missing its diversity as well as the extent to which the public sphere was constituted by conflict. Eley suggests that 'the public sphere makes more sense as the structured setting where cultural and ideological contest or negotiation among a variety of publics take place, rather than as the spontaneous and class-specific achievement of the bourgeoisie'.[384] Conceptualising the public sphere in this way has led Peter Goheen to conclude that 'the idea of a public sphere took on meaningful definition in mid-nineteenth century Toronto through the agency of the active, insistent participation of the population in negotiating their claims to public space'.[385]

The study of parades provides insight into the negotiations that took place over public space in the nineteenth century and contributes to our understanding of the role played by such events in either weakening or fortifying ethnic community solidarities. Cottrell sees in the conflicts over the St. Patrick's day parades of nineteenth-century Toronto, 'a struggle for control of the Irish-Catholic immigrant community and a tension between strategies of protest and accommodation as appropriate responses to the host community'.[386] By the 1870s, these tensions were largely resolved in favour of those advocating accommodation. Cottrell argues that the parades played a vital role in allowing Irish immigrants to define their collective identity and that their abandonment after 1877 is evidence of assimilation. Similarly, Marston has argued that St. Patrick's day parades were the single most important expression of Irish solidarity and strength in

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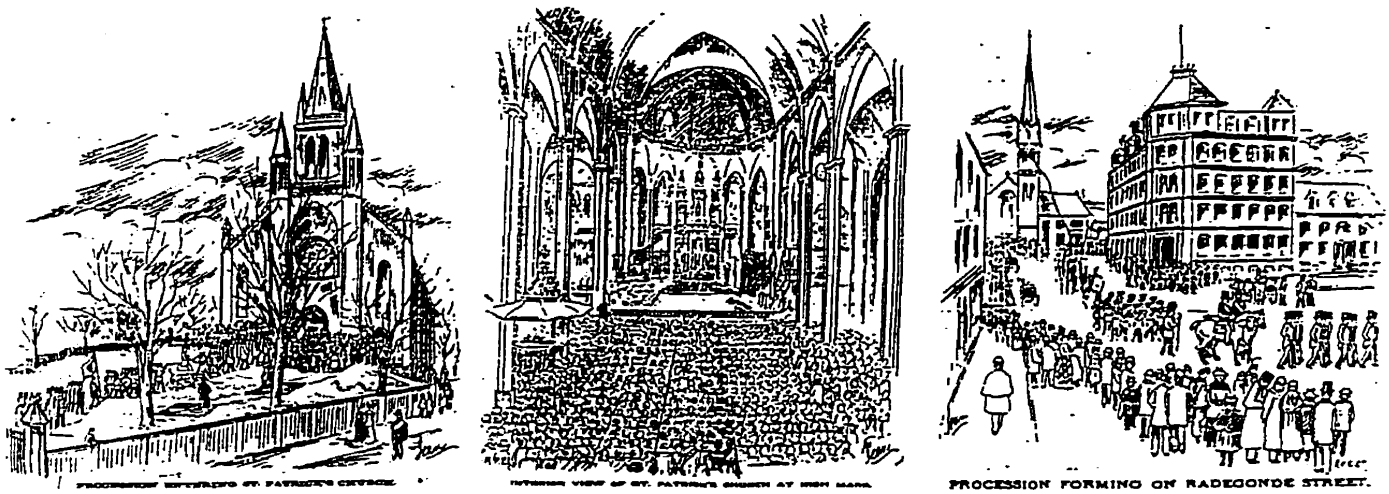
[383] G. Eley, "Nations, Publics, and Political Cultures: Placing Habermas in the Nineteenth Century," in *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, ed. by C. Calhoun (Cambridge, 1992), p. 289.
[384] *Ibid.*, p. 306.
[385] P. Goheen, "Negotiating Access to the Public Space in Mid-Nineteenth-Century Toronto," *Journal of Historical Geography*, 20:4 (1994), p. 446.
[386] Cottrell, *loc. cit.*, p. 57.

Lowell, Massachusetts.[387] By excluding particular groups, the conservative Irish Benevolent Society which controlled the parade was able to promote an image of the Irish community as being composed of temperate, peaceful, and law-abiding citizens.

Figure 5.2: St. Patrick's Day Procession, Montreal[388]



In Montreal, the most important of the national and religious collective demonstrations in which Irish Catholics participated was the St. Patrick's day parade (see Figure 5.2). Unlike their counterparts in Toronto, these events went largely unhindered by Orange intervention, whereas Orange demonstrations in Montreal were severely circumscribed by threats of violence.[389] In Ireland, 'collective action...was typically directed against concrete grievances, an enforcement of communal mores, an expression of regional antipathy, or a demonstration of territorial control', and often resulted in violent outbreaks.[390] In Montreal, however, Irish-Catholic demonstrations in the public

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[387] S. Marston, "Neighbourhood and Politics: Irish Ethnicity in Nineteenth Century Lowell, Massachusetts," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 78:3 (1988), p.426.

[388] *True Witness and Catholic Chronicle*, March 21, 1894.

[389] The most notable example of this was the decision to cancel the Orange march on July 12, 1877 after extensive negotiation on the part of representatives of the city's various national societies. Strong feelings had been aroused and an Orangeman was shot despite the cancellation of the procession. After threats of violence the following year, the provincial legislature passed a bill prohibiting party processions in public thoroughfares (Cross, *op. cit.*, p. 173). Religious processions, including the St. Patrick's day parade, continued unaffected.

[390] Clarke, *op. cit.*, p.162.

streets tended to be peaceful and served objects such as emphasizing the worthiness of Irish citizens, affirming group solidarity, or expressing their Catholic faith. The St. Patrick's day procession advanced all three objectives and was also used by the clergy and others to promote an explicitly religious form of Irish national identity. In 1851, for example, the clergy, 'knowing that there are always many Protestants present on St. Patrick's day', took advantage of the religious celebration in St. Patrick's church which formed an integral part of the parade to give 'a short explanation of the Catholic doctrine of the Invocation of Saints' and administer 'a strong reproof to those who affect to ridicule that salutary practice'.[391] This particular celebration was also described as 'the triumphant festival of a nation's joy, and the ever vivid manifestation of the faith of Ireland's children - scattered abroad as they are over the face of the earth, yet annihilating space by their unanimous celebration in every land of the feast of their beloved apostle'.[392]

St. Patrick's day processions in Montreal showed a remarkable degree of continuity over the course of the nineteenth century, but at the same time reflected the changing organisation of the Irish-Catholic community in terms of those participating in the parade. The changing route of the parade also reflected the changing geography of the Irish-Catholic community. Parades are reputed to have been held as early as 1824, although no record of them could be found in the newspapers of the time.[393] In the late 1830s, the parade was composed of the St. Patrick's Society (which at that time included both Protestants and Catholics), the committee of charity, the committee of management, and 'Irishmen now in town, not members of the society'.[394] The clergy do not appear to have taken part, although the route took the procession from Orr's Hotel to the parish church of Notre-Dame. In the early 1840s, members of the St. Patrick's Society were joined in their procession from the Recollet church to Notre-Dame church by the almost seven hundred children of both sexes who usually attended catechism in the Recollet and Bonsecours churches, as well as members of the Christian Doctrine Society and men of

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[391] *True Witness and Catholic Chronicle*, March 21, 1851.
[392] *Ibid.*
[393] ACAM, Album St. Patrick, A-1, *1824-1974: 150th anniversary celebrations of St. Patrick's day in Montreal, March 17, 1974.*
[394] *Montreal Transcript*, March 17, 1838.

the Temperance association (see Figure 5.3).[395] For the inauguration of St. Patrick's church on St. Patrick's day, 1847, the procession was larger and more formal and proceeded from the Recollet church, past the parish church of Notre-Dame through Place d'Armes (where participants were joined by the Sulpician clergy and Bishop of Montreal), up the hill to the new St. Patrick's. 'God Save the Queen' was played as the clergy and bishop entered the door of the new church.[396] On this occasion, the St. Patrick's Society was accompanied by the Hibernian Benevolent Society, the Temperance Society, banners, bands, and 'the whole body of Irish Catholics of the city'.[397] After the religious celebration, the procession resumed and proceeded to the rooms of the St. Patrick's Society in Place d'Armes (see Figure 5.4).

Throughout the 1850s, a route taking the procession from Place d'Armes to St. Patrick's church and back again was adopted. In 1855, the year after the opening of St. Ann's church, the Young Men's St. Patrick's Association continued marching after the main procession had broken up, in order to include a circuit via St. Ann's church (see Figure 5.5). Both the St. Patrick's Society and its rival the Young Men's St. Patrick's Association appeared in the parades during this period, as did the Temperance Society, and the men of St. Patrick's congregation 'who may not be members of any of the Irish Societies'.[398] Although the reverend gentlemen of St. Patrick's church 'gladdened the procession by their presence' and actually marched in 1853, they refused to march in 1855 because of the bad feeling between the two national societies.[399] This situation was resolved in 1856 with the creation of a single Irish-Catholic St. Patrick's Society, as

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[395] ASPB, Recollet book of weekly activities and marriages, 1839-1844.
[396] *Montreal Transcript*, March 16, 1847.
[397] Curran, *Golden Jubilee of the Reverend Fathers Dowd and Toupin*, pp. 11-12; *Montreal Transcript*, March 16, 1847.
[398] *Montreal Transcript*, March 12, 1852.
[399] *Ibid.*, March 25, 1853; April 4, 1856.

Figure 5.3: Joint St. Patrick's Society and Recollet Temperance Society procession, St. Patrick's day, 1842

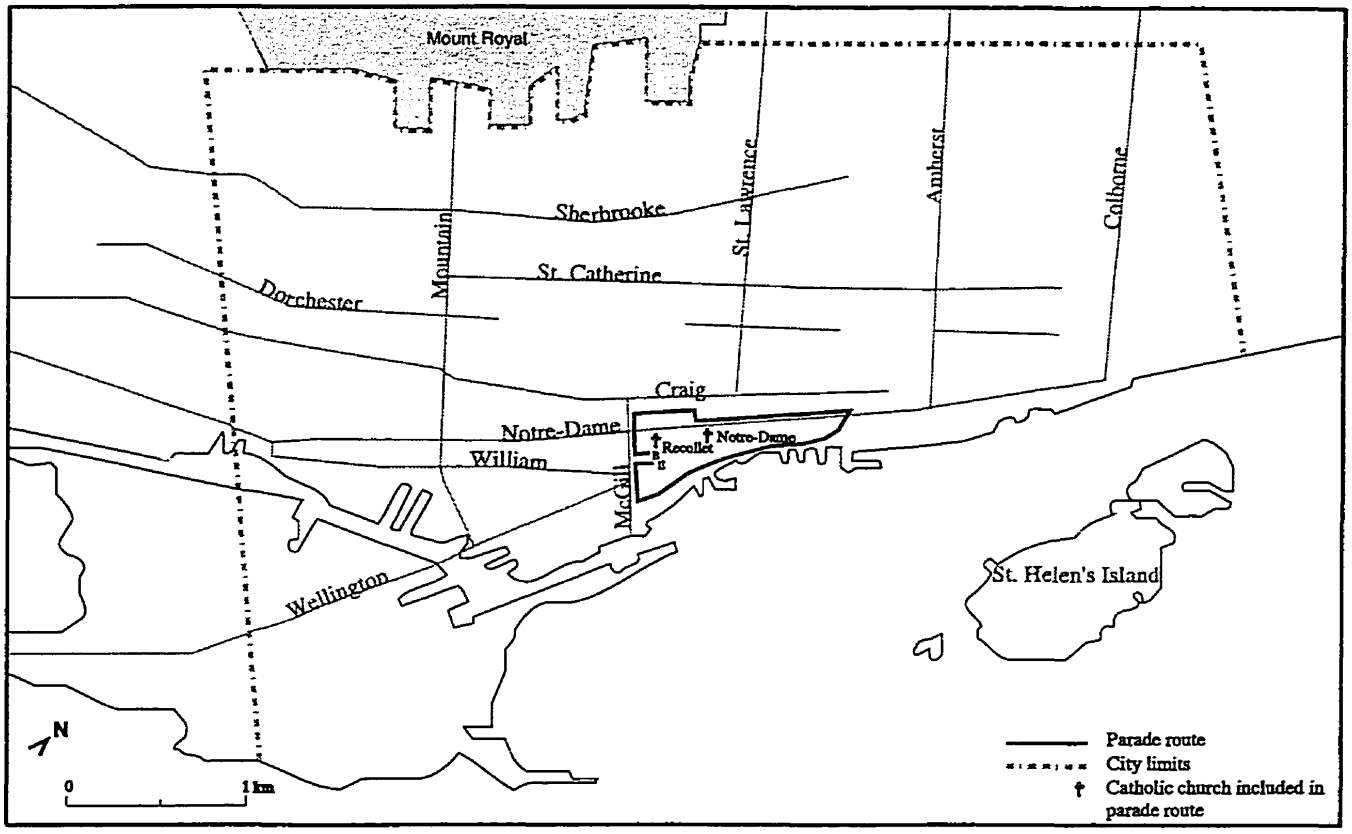


Figure 5.4: Celebrating the first service in St. Patrick's church, St. Patrick's day procession, 1847

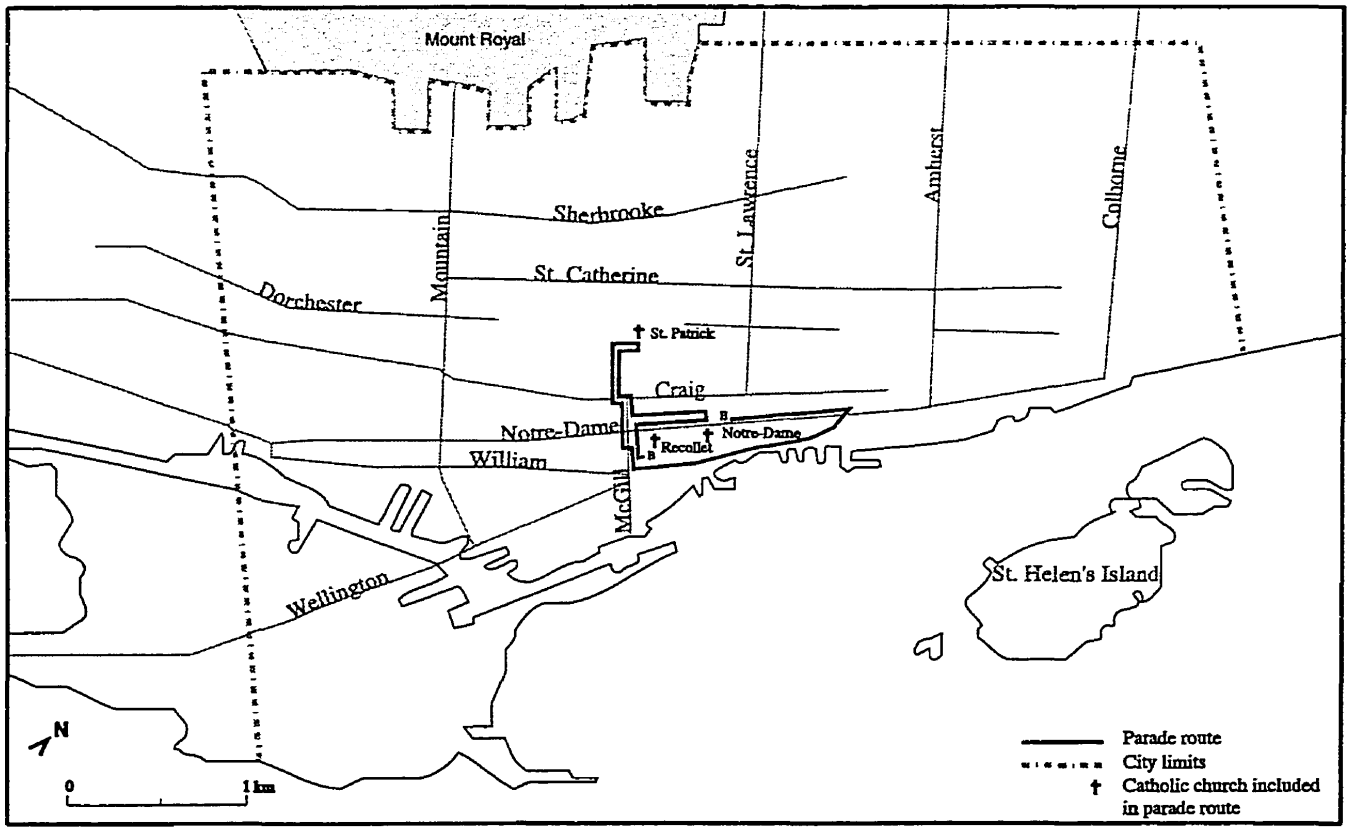


Figure 5.5: St. Patrick's day procession, 1855 - showing the extended parade of the Young Men's St. Patrick's Association

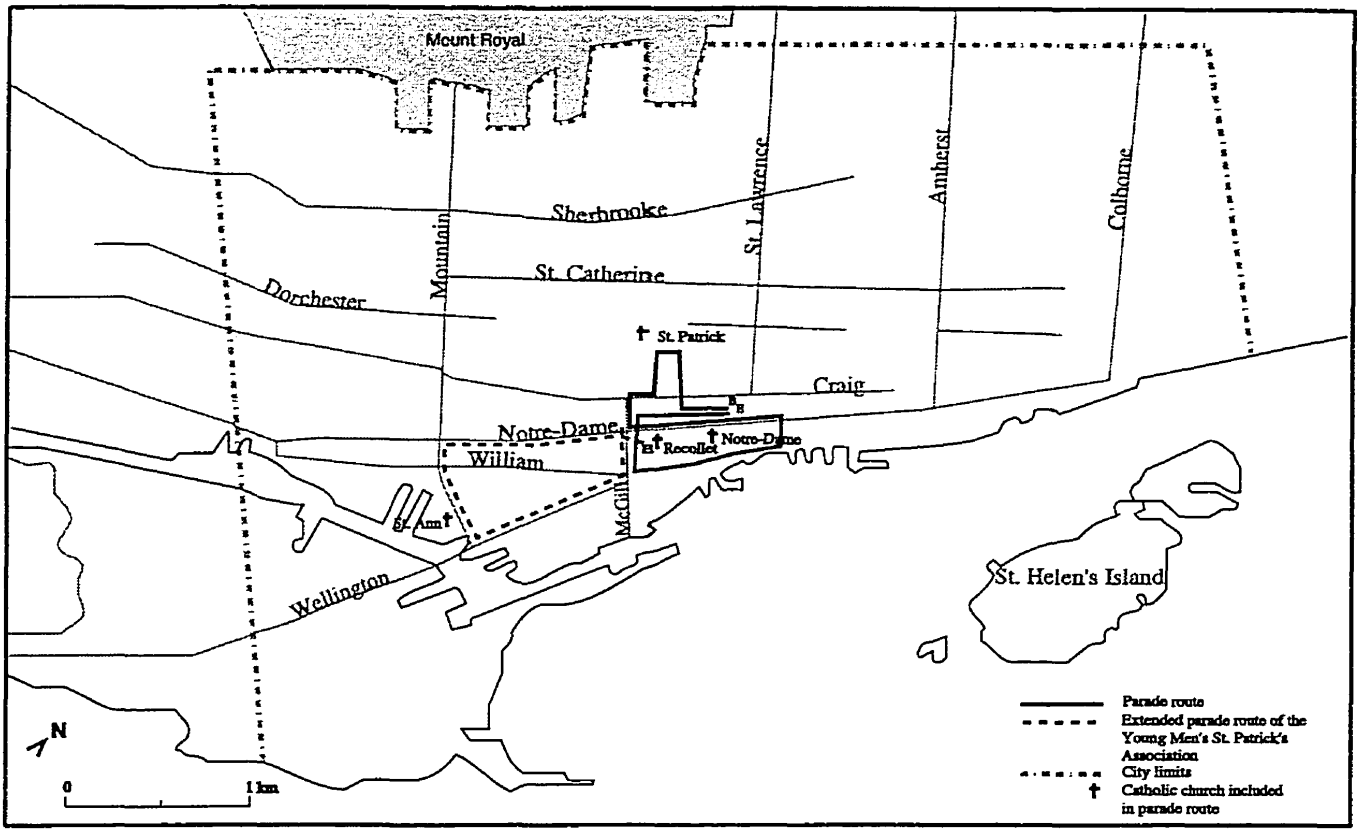


Figure 5.6: St. Patrick's day procession - 1865 'western' route and 1868 'eastern' route

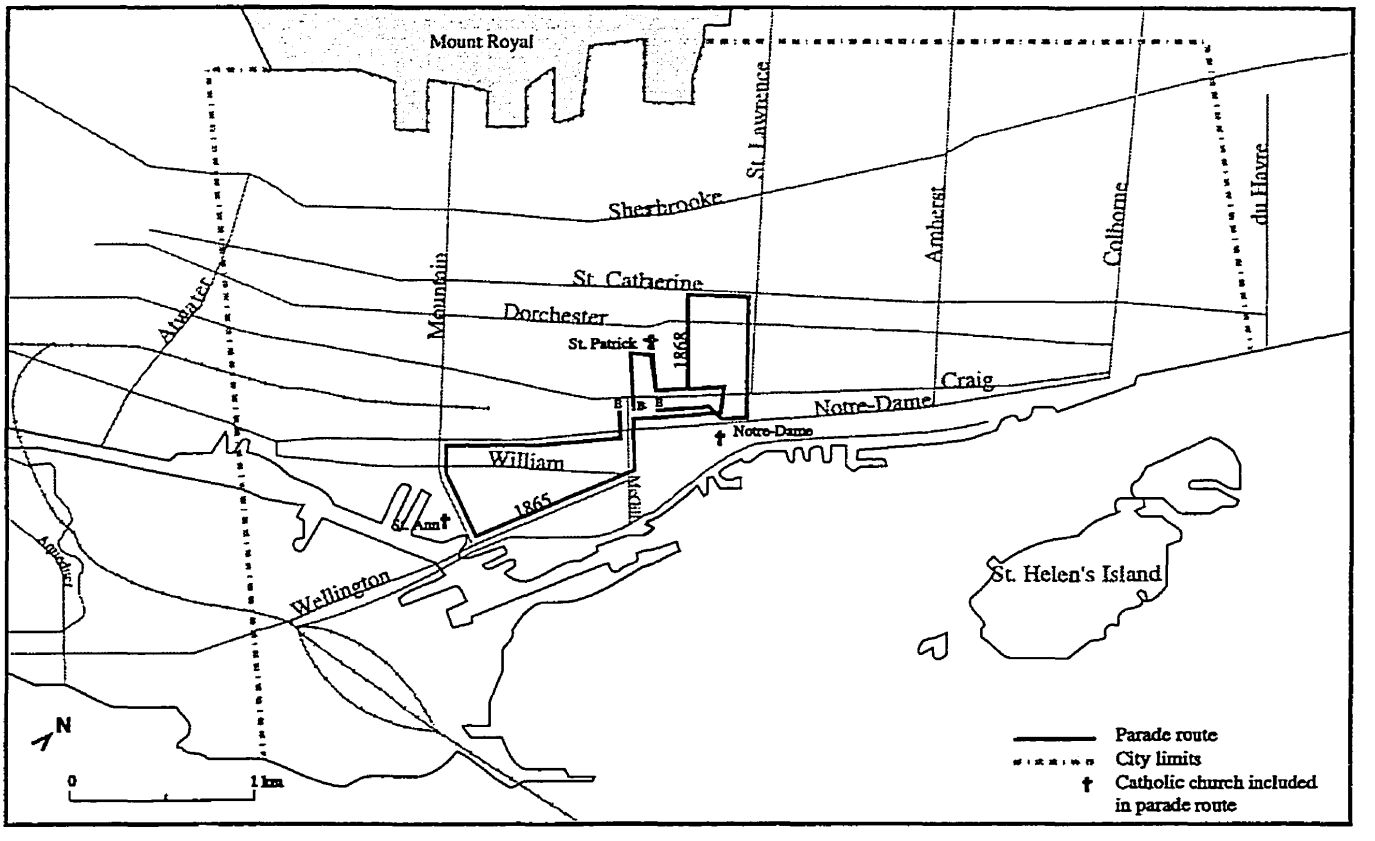
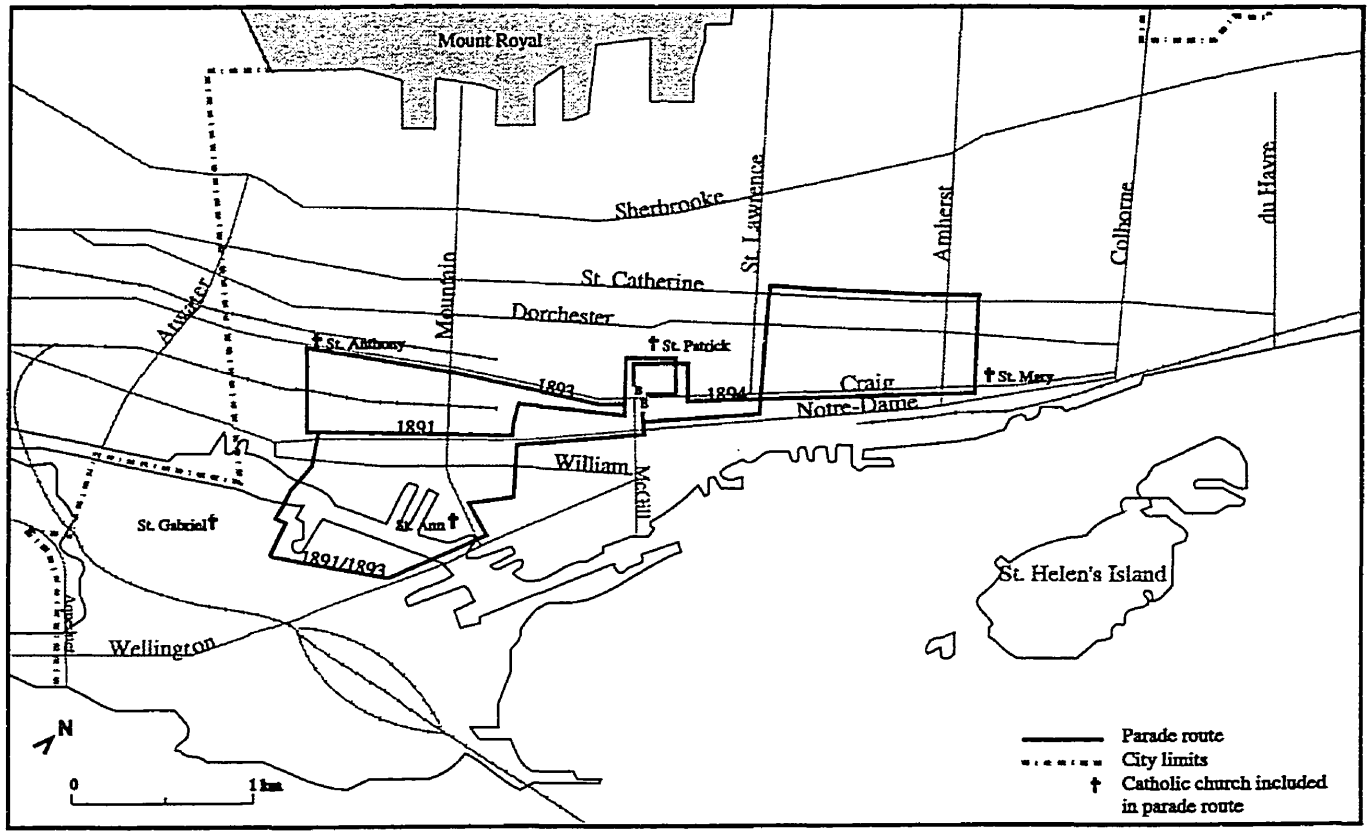


Figure 5.7: St. Patrick's day processions of the early 1890s - integrating the outlying parishes



described above. Presumably it was at this stage that the Protestants who had previously belonged to the St. Patrick's Society ceased to participate in the procession, thereby completing its transformation into an exclusively Catholic national-religious demonstration and establishing greater clerical authority over the way in which the procession was organised.[400]

Table 5.5: Participants in the St. Patrick's Day Procession, March 17, 1866.[401]

1	Irishmen of the Volunteer force, with band
2	Irishmen of the congregation of St. Ann's church
3	children of the Christian Brothers' School, St. Ann's
4	St. Ann's Young Men's Society
5	St. Ann's Temperance Society
6	members of the Hose Company
7	children of the Christian Brothers' School, St. Lawrence suburbs
8	Irishmen of the congregation of St. Patrick's church
9	Catholic Young Men's Society
10	St. Patrick's Benevolent Society
11	St. Patrick's Total Abstinence Society
12	St. Patrick's Society
13	bands of the Chasseurs Canadiens, the Christian Brothers' Schools, and the Victoria Volunteer Rifles
14	the Mayor, the Hon. Minister for Agriculture, President and V.P. of St. Patrick's Society
15	Irish clergy of St. Patrick's church

In the 1860s, the procession began to alternate annually between 'western' and 'eastern' routes through the city, a characteristic feature of the procession throughout the remainder of the century (see Figure 5.6). The western route went through Griffintown and passed St. Ann's church, while the eastern route, which usually went down St. Lawrence Main, was an attempt to reach out to the substantial Irish community in the city's east end. In 1866, the Fenian threat was responsible for a diversion from the 'normal' eastern route. After taking the conventional route to St. Patrick's church from Place d'Armes, the various Irish-Catholic societies and congregations (see Table 5.5), as well as 'Irishmen of the Volunteer force' (who had first participated in 1858), headed east to St. Denis and completed a 'circuit of the city' before returning to Place d'Armes. In the course of this circuit, the procession stopped at the St. Lawrence hall to pay their respects

[400]The Irish-Protestant presence prior to the division of the St. Patrick's Society in 1856 does not appear to have been very significant in numerical terms. In 1858, one commentator noted that 'up to a late period the St. Patrick's Society was open to Protestants, yet Protestants never joined it; a few only who sought for popularity did' (ACAM, 901.137, 1858-16, Sept. 1, C. Walsh to Mgr. Bourget).

[401] *Montreal Daily Witness*, March 17, 1866.

to the Governor General, Lord Monck (who was himself Irish), who thanked them for their show of loyalty on behalf of the Queen and gave a short speech that was received with extensive cheering.[402] More speeches were given in Victoria Square, including one by D'Arcy McGee, M.P., as follows:

> I am not, as you know, an advocate for public processions of one class of citizens - even when that class is our own; Yet I cannot but congratulate you on the spirit which has governed your movements this day. We went first, as was most proper and laudable, to return our thanks to Him to whom we owe that we are here today, and where we received, from the lips of His Minister, an instruction on our duties as Christians and citizens which we will all long remember (cheers). You next, on your tour of the city, went to pay your loyal homage to the representative of our sovereign, the Governor General; and you are now here to receive from the Mayor of the city the gratifying acknowledgement, that Montreal looks upon you, not as step-children or as foreigners, but as children of her own household, whom she does not distinguish unfavourably from any of her other children (loud cheers)....[W]icked or credulous men have dared to say that this great industrious body - one-fourth of the whole city - with their four millions' worth of property at stake; with all the rights, privileges, and advantages they possess; - would not be found true to the city and the country, if a day of trial came....There is no stigma of sedition in our ranks, and just as jealously and zealously as Father Phelan guarded the character and conduct of his flock, in the last great crisis of this country,[403] just as watchfully as (sic) Father Dowd and his *confrères* watch over their much larger flock at this moment. The Catholics are taught as a religious duty to render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and while we obey the teachings of the church - as I trust we all do cheerfully in Montreal - we can never cease to be good subjects and good citizens (cheers).[404]

In the context of the Fenian threat, this parade was carefully orchestrated by elite members of the Irish-Catholic community to discredit rumours that the majority of Irish Catholics were Fenian supporters. The 'circuit of the city' was a vehicle by which this message could be brought to as large a segment of the general public as possible. The elite was also attempting to combat Fenian infiltration of Montreal's Irish Catholic

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[402] *Ibid.*

[403] This refers to the Rebellion of 1837-38.

[404] McGee, *The Irish Position in British and Republican North America: A Letter to the Editors of the Irish Press - irrespective of party* (Montreal, 1866).

community.[405] In the 1870 parade rather different sentiments were expressed by F.B. McNamee, President of the St. Patrick's Society, in a resolution put forward to the vast audience that assembled at the end of the parade: 'Whereas clemency for political offences is in accordance with the spirit of the age. Be it therefore resolved, that the Irish citizens of Montreal...would deem it an act of grace and clemency were the government of Canada to extend and grant amnesty to Fenian prisoners now in confinement...'.[406] The sentiments expressed on this occasion were exceptional. Clerical influence in Montreal, as well as the absence of a serious Orange threat, meant that there was little opportunity for those advocating a more nationalistic and protest-oriented form of procession to gain ascendancy.

Subsequently, as parish societies proliferated and the Convention, described above, began to organise the St. Patrick's day parades, we see the emergence of a procession roster dominated by parish societies, of which the 1891 parade is typical:

Table 5.6: Participants in the St. Patrick's Day Procession, March 17, 1891[407]

1	Hackmen's Union and Benefit Society (mounted)
2	Congregation of St. Anthony
3	St. Anthony's Young Men's Society
4	Congregation of St. Gabriel
5	St. Gabriel's TA&B society
6	Congregation of St. Mary's
7	St. Mary's Young Men's Society
8	Congregation of St. Ann's
9	Shamrock Lacrosse Club
10	St. Ann's Young Men's Society
11	St. Ann's TA&B society
12	Congregation of St. Patrick's
13	Boys of the St. Lawrence Christian Brothers' School
14	Irish Catholic Benefit Society
15	Catholic Young Men's Society
16	St. Patrick's TA&B
17	St. Patrick's Society
18	Mayor - Invited guests
19	The Clergy

[405] *Gazette*, August 17, 1867, "An Account of the Attempts to Establish Fenianism in Montreal", by D'Arcy McGee.

[406] *Montreal Herald*, March 18, 1870. McNamee was later deeply involved in the St. Patrick's Society's decline into 'the political gutter', and was accused by the *Post* of grafting Fenianism onto the St. Patrick's Society in Montreal, only to betray its members for government money. His attempts to have the editor of the *Post* condemned for libel were unsuccessful (Cross, *op. cit.*, pp. 161-162).

[407] ASPB, Box 4, St. Patrick's day programme, 1891.

In the period between about 1875 and 1895, St. Patrick's day celebrations in Montreal showed the influence of the movement for Home Rule in Ireland. Banners were displayed in the public thoroughfares, speeches expressed the hope that Ireland would soon benefit from the same form of government that Irish Canadians presently enjoyed, and the procession occasionally included the presence of a 'sleigh load of Home Rulers'.[408] In 1880, the Convention voted ten to eight against having a procession, as an expression of their sympathy for those suffering from poor harvests in Ireland at this time.[409] Father Dowd, who argued that the procession was a religious celebration and overruled the decision of the Convention to cancel it, insisted that the delegates draw up a programme which he later described as 'miserable and incomplete' since it only included a short procession to the church.[410] The following year a debate took place once again over whether it was appropriate to hold a procession. Those in favour argued that it was important to present a 'spectacle of unity' and suggested that people should participate out of respect for Father Dowd and the wishes of the Convention of Irish societies, who endorsed this year's procession.[411] Others maintained that it was wrong to march while Ireland suffered, and questioned the religious credentials of the parade. William Conroy wrote that while the parades may have helped to keep the spark of Irish nationality burning in the period prior to the great stream of emigration, when the Irish were scattered in small detachments here and there and when such assemblies were forbidden in Ireland herself, demonstrations of community strength and love for Ireland were no longer necessary now that the Irish had formed a second Irish nation in the New World and had covered it with a network of Irish societies.[412] This debate is symptomatic of the tensions which underlay the procession over the course of the entire century. While some saw it primarily as a demonstration of Irish nationalism and solidarity with the Irish cause, and therefore as deeply bound up with events in Ireland, others saw it primarily as a religious procession, and important for promoting the unity and well-being of the Irish-Catholic community in Montreal. As time went on, those like Mr. Conroy were of the opinion that

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[408] *Evening Star,* March 17, 1875; *Montreal Herald,* March 18, 1885; *Montreal Daily Star,* March 18, 1895.
[409] ASPB, Convention of Irish Societies, Minute book, 1879-1900, March 3, 1880.
[410] *Post.*, March 15, 1880.
[411] *Ibid.*, March 12, 1881.
[412] *Ibid.*, March 15, 1881.

the community was strong enough not to need such processions, which often proved more of a liability as a result of the quantities of liquor consumed, while still others advocated D'Arcy McGee's assimilationist position.[413] The clergy attempted to maintain a careful balance between taking advantage of the national appeal of the celebration and not allowing their parishioners to lose sight of its religious significance. In the last decade of the nineteenth century, parish societies, including devotional societies like the Society of the Sacred Heart, participated alongside the St. Patrick's Society and the Ancient Order of Hibernians (which later took over from the Convention of Irish Societies as organisers of the parade in 1919). The predominance of parish societies and congregations in the procession pointed to their role as key players in the organisation of the wider Irish community.

In the late 1870s and 1880s, with an increasing number of Irish Catholics living in the suburban areas of Montreal, it was recognised that route changes were needed if the procession was to continue to represent Irish Catholics as a body and serve as a means of uniting the Irish-Catholic community. In 1884, the minutes of the Convention confirm that there 'seemed to be a general understanding that the route should be an eastern and a western one alternately, although no definite rule has yet been made to that end'.[414] The western route included St. Ann's and the Griffintown area, and after 1887 often crossed the Lachine Canal into St. Gabriel's parish, while the eastern route now took the procession to St. Mary's church. In the debate over the annexation of a portion of St. Ann's parish to St. Gabriel's in 1884, those opposed used the argument that 'as members of St. Gabriel's parish we would find our societies excluded from the cherished right to take part in the national celebration of the patron Saint of the Irish. So sacred is this right to our hearts that we will never consent to relinquish it except by the force of coercion'.[415] While there was clearly never any question of excluding St. Gabriel's from the parade, it is significant that the fear of being attached to a suburban parish could be manipulated in this way.[416] In fact, St. Patrick's, St. Ann's, St. Gabriel's, and usually St. Mary's could be

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[413] *Ibid.*, March 12, 1880; March 15, 1881.
[414] ASPB, Convention of Irish Societies, Minute book, 1879-1900, March 1, 1884.
[415] ACAM, 355.132, 1884-6, Jan. 26, Petition by parishioners of St. Ann's opposing annexation to St. Gabriel's.
[416] ACAM, 355.132, 1884-10, Jan. 31, Fr. Salmon to Chan. Racicot.

counted on to send delegates to the Convention. St. Anthony's seemed less enthusiastic about doing so, and in 1893 it was suggested that 'it would be a graceful act on the part of the delegation present to direct the route...towards St. Anthony's parish'.[417] This resulted in an extremely lengthy procession that took participants through St. Anthony's parish, across the Seigneurs Street bridge, and through St. Gabriel's and St. Ann's, before finally arriving back at St. Patrick's Hall on McGill Street (see Figure 5.7). By 1895, the general feeling of the societies was that 'the route of the procession should be divided alternatively in the direction of the different parishes', although soon calls for a shorter and more central procession came to the fore.[418]

As the number of English-speaking Catholic parishes continued to increase in the early twentieth century, the adoption of a Sunday afternoon procession allowed a greater number of people to participate. The route continued to be a topic of discussion amongst Convention members, eventually resulting in a polarization between two distinct opinions in 1914. Those advocating a march through the lower portion of the city and St. Ann's argued that 'it was there that the Irish of Montreal had practically sprung from, there that they had lived for years, and although the district was rapidly changing and being commercialised it was still regarded as the home of the Irish'.[419] Others no less vehemently argued for 'the need of wide and central streets in the upper portion of the city, where the ranks of the parade would spread itself to advantage and where people from the remotest sections of Montreal would be most apt to congregate to witness the display', adding that 'the Irish were not parading for themselves and for their own but rather to advertise their numbers and strength to the other branches of the community'.[420] In other words, the procession continued to reflect the changing geography of the Irish-Catholic community in Montreal and to reinforce its solidarity by bringing parish societies representing all parts of the urban and suburban Irish community together. The right of Irish Catholics to transform public space in the celebration of their national festival was never seriously contested by other groups in the city, and therefore the significance of the

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[417] ASPB, Convention of Irish Societies, Minute book, 1879-1900, Feb. 28, 1893.
[418] *Ibid.*, March 1, 1897; March 5, 1900.
[419] ASPB, Convention of Irish Societies, Minute book, 1901-1919, Feb. 12, 1914.
[420] *Ibid.*

procession lay more in its role as a vehicle through which competing aspirations *within* the Irish community could be negotiated and communicated within the public sphere.

St. Patrick's Church: Symbolic Centre of the Irish-Catholic Community

While the parish-based societies managed to organise themselves in such as way as to provide a strong basis for community solidarity, St. Patrick's church solidified this relationship through retaining its historic-symbolic significance as a place which held meaning for the entire Irish-Catholic community. In 1887, J.J. Curran wrote that '...the parishes of St. Ann and St. Anthony, St. Gabriel and St. Mary each have their large contingent of the Irish Catholic population of the City of Montreal, but all look up to the venerable pastor of St. Patrick's as the father of the Irish Catholic people in this city and district' ... 'the Irish Catholics of Montreal will ever look to St. Patrick's as the great centre towards which all their general interests converge'.[421] When Father Quinlivan was given what must have been the daunting task of replacing Father Dowd as pastor of St. Patrick's in 1891, he preached a sermon in which he emphasized the importance of remembering the sacrifices made by Father Dowd and added that '[a] remembrance of them would certainly help to unite us as a people, as members of the same parish, of the same spiritual family; and let us admit that there is some need of this. The people of St. Patrick's, dispersed as they are, over the territory of three French parishes, require more than an ordinary hand to hold them together'.[422]

In 1897, on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of St. Patrick's, the *True Witness* wrote that the celebration would '...foster and promote unity, harmony, and good feeling amongst a people whose best interests call for united action, and...remind them that since they so lately formed but one parochial family, they should feel and act towards one another as brothers'.[423] Likewise, the 1922 publication celebrating St. Patrick's 75th anniversary contained the following:

> March 17, 1847, is more that the date of dedication of the first church for citizens of other than French-Canadian origin. Rather it is the historic hour when Catholics of the Celtic strain found themselves possessed of a supremely worthy concrete expression of their collective religious and

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[421] Curran, *Golden Jubilee of the Reverend Fathers Dowd and Toupin*, p. 13.
[422] Curran, *Golden Jubilee of the St. Patrick's Orphan Asylum*, p. 169.
[423] *True Witness and Catholic Chronicle*, March 14, 1897.

> national self-assertion...on that day faith and patriotism were wedded and set up an inseparable status...Here on each successive St. Patrick's day came three generations of Irish men, women, and children from every new parish erected for the benefit of the ever-growing population, as to a home-coming feast where nationality and religion met.[424]

Justice Doherty even went so far as to suggest that in 1901 St. Patrick's was 'not only the representative Irish Catholic congregation of our city, but the centre of the interests of our people in the Dominion of Canada'.[425]

It is also clear that the clerical establishment recognised the importance that St. Patrick's held for the Irish Catholics of Montreal. Four years after the Sulpicians gave up the administration of St. Patrick's in 1903, controversy erupted over Archbishop Bruchesi's dismissal of Father Callaghan, the Sulpician pastor of St. Patrick's.[426] While some parishioners (including a contingent representing the Chinese-Catholics who attended St. Patrick's) politely petitioned to have the decision reversed, others saw the action in a much more menacing light.[427] One unsigned appeal to the 'Men of St. Patrick's' even argued that they should...

> [l]ook to the church which is yours; every stone bespeaks effort and sacrifice on your part or that of your progenitors....What surety have you that it will ever descend to your children, if you cannot like true Irishmen and yet true Catholics demand your rights and privileges. Racial questions are not dangerous so long as one race respects the privileges of the other, and the best safeguard that St. Patrick's will always remain Irish will be to prove that you can take care of your own'.[428]

It appears that the suggestion that St. Patrick's might be put under the direction of a non-Irish pastor provoked the 'ethnicisation' of the debate. Archbishop Bruchesi decided, 'irrespective of what takes place in other churches or amongst other congregations' that 'the parish of St. Patrick's, the bulwark of the Irish race in this province, will remain with

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[424] *The Story of Seventy-Five Years, St. Patrick's Church, Montreal, 1847-1922* (Montreal, 1922).
[425] Curran, *Golden Jubilee of the St. Patrick's Orphan Asylum*, p. 160.
[426] ACAM, 355.121, 1903-1, Jan. 8, Ch. Lecoq, p.s.s., to Mgr. Bruchési; 1907-3, Dec. 6, Mgr. Bruchési to Fr. L. Callaghan.
[427] ACAM, 355.121, 1907-8, Dec. 12, Petition by male parishioners of St. Patrick's to keep Fr. Callaghan; 1907-12, n.d., Petition by Chinese parishioners to keep Fr. Callaghan.
[428] ACAM, 355.121, 1907-9, n.d., Appeal to the 'Men of St. Patrick's' to oppose the retirement of Fr. Callaghan.

the Irish people and will be administered by Irish priests'.[429] While little attention was paid to the protests of St. Ann's parishioners prior to the transfer of the parish to the Redemptorists in 1884, St. Patrick's elicited special consideration and thus retained the right to be administered by Irish-Canadian priests.

While the subdivision of the grand parish of Notre-Dame de Montréal was initially seen as a threat to the coherence of the Irish-Catholic community, differences between parishes were overcome and the parish structure was transformed into a basis for uniting Montreal's increasingly dispersed Irish-Catholic citizens. Under the close supervision of the parish priests, associations were formed which allowed men's parish societies to come together with Irish national societies like the St. Patrick's Society in order to speak on behalf of the community as a whole, thereby providing them with a more powerful voice than they would have had as fragmented units speaking for only one parish. Likewise, the evolution of the St. Patrick's day processions brought Irish Catholics from the various urban and suburban parishes together in a visual demonstration that helped to reinforce group unity, in particular through the careful choice of which route to take through the city. The route continued to revolve around St. Patrick's church, which served as a symbolic point of unity even for those whose families had belonged to other parishes for generations.

Conclusion

The forms of organisation that are prevalent in any given ethnic community tend to reflect its specific needs at that particular point in time. Montreal's early Irish-Catholic community focused its attention first on gaining a church, and then on providing charitable institutions to accommodate the less wealthy Famine migrants. The second and third generations continued to contribute financially to these institutions, but with the creation of the Irish-Catholic parish network, attention shifted towards building parish churches in the suburbs, providing parochial schools to ensure the education and upward mobility of the younger generation, and organising parish-based societies and associations. This development was carefully guided by the parish priests, who wished to transform the parish structure into a complete 'cradle-to-grave' system that would be able

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[429] *Gazette*, Dec. 10, 1907.

to satisfy the needs of their parishioners throughout the various stages of the life course. Women played an important role in integrating their families into parish life, and appear to have participated in the 'devotional revolution' to a greater extent than their male counterparts. Spiritual sustenance, sociability, and access to the means for self-improvement and education were all provided through the parish. The parish also allowed for the expression and transmission of Irish national identity through its various societies and events like the St. Patrick's day procession. Pastors simultaneously discouraged parishioners from participating in national societies which did not see Catholic identity as being an integral part of Irish identity, and were particularly wary of pan-Canadian and pan-American affiliations of Irish societies which were more difficult to subject to clerical supervision. While the parish structure could be seen as a constraint to the development of a strong united Irish political body that was able to defend Irish-Catholic interests across Canada, it also provided many opportunities for community development on a more local scale that would not otherwise have existed.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

The aim of this research has been to demonstrate that the evolution of territorial and social structures is inseparable and that to study one without the other is to neglect a vitally important component of historical explanation. I have argued that the study of the creation not just of social boundaries between groups, but also of territorial boundaries, has much to teach us about the way in which ethnic communities evolve. My research has focused on the struggle of Irish Catholics in Montreal during the nineteenth century to maintain cohesiveness as an ethnic community, and of the vital role that the 'national' parish came to play in this process. As a result of defining the Irish-Catholic community through the parish, greater emphasis came to be placed on ethno-religious as opposed to explicitly Irish national forms of ethnic identification.

There are certain drawbacks to discussing ethnic communities as undifferentiated wholes, as I have done to some extent in the context of this research. The complexity of an individual's identity, which inevitably draws on a far wider range of features than just ethnic affiliation, tends to be obscured when persons are simply perceived as being members of an ethnic group. While certain individuals sharing a common cultural tradition come to define themselves in relation to the rest of society primarily on the basis of their ethnicity, and are therefore likely to feel a strong identification with their ethnic community, others do not define themselves in such a manner. This may have been the case with the many Irish Catholics, particularly Irish-Catholic women, who married their French Canadian or English Protestant neighbours. I have also argued that there were differences in the way in which men and women experienced parish life and that this had an impact on the role that they played in the wider Irish-Catholic community. In certain circumstances, strong national identities were seen as a hindrance to ethno-religious identification, as were class solidarities. While recognising these other claims to identity, it is nevertheless important to understand why and how ethnic affiliation came to the fore during this period, and the most satisfactory way of doing this is by studying ethnic communities as distinct entities.

Community studies offer certain insights into the nature of specific ethnic communities. It has been argued, for example, that the identification of neighbourhood

studies with community studies threatens to omit major spheres of interaction outside the neighbourhood.[430] This has led some to adopt a 'social network' approach which views communities as networks of individual relations that people foster, maintain, and use in the course of their everyday lives.[431] This notion of community claims to be informed by...

> neither place (as in neighbourhood studies) nor population (as in traditional kinship studies), but by the relationships that people actually possess. Hence the basic building blocks of community network analysis are relationships among community members. The essence of community is its *social* structure, not its *spatial* structure. Space remains important, but social relationships define community'.[432]

In terms of studying Montreal's highly dispersed Irish-Catholic population, this transactional approach seems at first to offer certain benefits. The application of this approach to the study of historical ethnic communities is, however, hindered by certain factors. While I appreciate the potential insights offered by social network analysis' focus on relationships between individuals, this approach not only has very limited practical application in terms of historical studies, but also fails to provide insights into the formal structures and organisations that are symptomatic of a particularly strong ethnic community. In extreme cases, ethnic communities are created that are able to perform all the services required by their members.[433] The Irish-Catholic community in nineteenth-century Montreal had a high level of institutional completeness which would be ignored by studies which focused exclusively on relationships between individuals. This approach is also unable to take into account the extent to which ethnic communities are defined by the communities with which they interact, nor is it able to recognise the disproportionately important role played by elite members of society or the clergy in defining an ethnic community.

I also appreciate Wetherell's argument that there is a need to look beyond the neighbourhood in order to study community. There is, however, an emerging critique within geography - discussed in Chapter 2 - of the very limited definition of 'place' which

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[430] B. Wellman and B. Leighton, *loc. cit.*.
[431] C. Wetherell et al., *loc. cit.*
[432] *Ibid.*, p. 645.
[433] R. Breton, *loc. cit.*, p. 194.

causes spatial structures to be seen as playing only a peripheral role in terms of defining community. In the context of nineteenth-century Montreal, parishes took on meaning as 'places' following the dismemberment of the parish of Notre-Dame and eventually became the building blocks of Irish-Catholic solidarity in the city. Prior to the division, the absence of territorial divisions amongst Montreal's highly dispersed Irish-Catholic population allowed them to create a number of important institutions focused on St. Patrick's church which contributed to a sense of shared purpose. With dismemberment of the Notre-Dame parish, it was feared that the ability of the community to unite would be threatened and the disputes which arose over Bourget's proposed territorial changes played an active role in defining Irish-Catholic identity in relation to its French-Catholic counterpart. The eventual outcome of the dispute, which was to create exclusively English-speaking Catholic parishes with boundaries superimposed over those of the French-Catholic parishes, provided the structural basis which underlay much of the subsequent social evolution of the Irish-Catholic community. The new arrangement offered a superior means of integrating 'suburban' populations like St. Gabriel's ward into this community despite the differences which existed between them and dwellers of the older parishes. As 'places', parishes can by no means be understood in isolation. Their development was influenced by global processes such as the rise of Irish nationalism and devotional Catholicism. The Irish clergy had long made a concerted effort to make the city-wide 'national' societies accountable to the clergy. This facilitated the 'rise of the parish', which in turn increased clerical influence and allowed the Irish clergy to perpetuate an explicitly ethno-religious basis for community affiliation. It also allowed them to limit participation in pan-American and pan-Canadian Irish national leagues, although associations which used the parish as the basis for organisation were not discouraged to the same extent, thereby influencing the scale at which an Irish-Catholic community could be formed. The clergy fostered unions of parish societies as the acceptable basis for community solidarity, while events such as the St. Patrick's day procession and other territorial demonstrations involving both parish and approved Irish national societies also helped to create a sense of community amongst Irish Catholics in Montreal, as did St. Patrick's church as the symbolic centre of the Irish community.

In other words, the parish played a vital role in creating a consolidated Irish-Catholic community in nineteenth-century Montreal, and was itself defined through the role it played in organising the larger community. Without the creation of national parishes as a basis for organisation, interaction among Irish Catholics would not have been as tightly bound up in parish-based societies, nor would it have had such a strong emphasis on ethno-religious as opposed to national identity. I am therefore arguing that territorial structures and social structures are intimately connected, since territorial structures can play an important role in organising and stimulating the social interactions which occur between individuals within an ethnic group. I am not advocating a determinist interpretation, in which the character of an ethnic community is determined by the sort of socio-territorial structures that are imposed on it. Instead I am suggesting that imposition of a specific territorial structure on an ethnic community offers a specific set of 'possibilities' for the future development of that community. Members of the community then have considerable discretion as to which avenue to pursue.

In his most recent book, David Harvey has placed greater emphasis on the importance of understanding the role of place and human agency than in previous writings:

> The places - material, representational, and symbolic - handed down to us by former generations were...built up through social struggles and strivings to create material, symbolic, and imaginary places to fit their own particular and contested aspirations. A better appreciation of such processes - of the social and political dialectics of space, place, and environment - has much to teach us about how to construct alternative futures. A renewed capacity to reread the production of historical-geographical difference is a crucial preliminary step towards emancipating the possibilities for future place construction.[434]

Our ability to explain how and for what purposes the Irish-Catholic national parish was collectively invested with sufficient permanence to become what Harvey calls 'a locus of institutionalized social power' is therefore of great significance.[435] The elite's desire to promote institutional division along ethnic lines no doubt contributed to this, as did the hostilities often encountered by Irish-Catholic immigrants. The absence of state-provided

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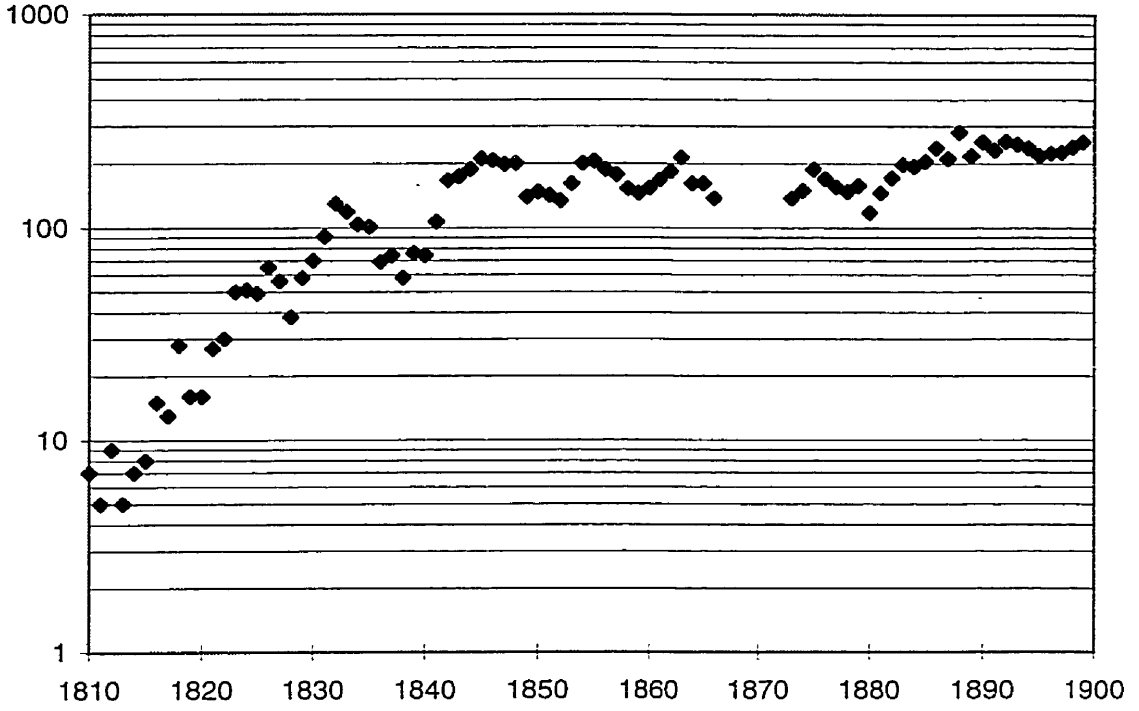
[434] Harvey, *op. cit.*, p. 326.
[435] *Ibid.*, p. 320.

welfare and education in industrializing Montreal also created a desperate need for organisations that could provide charity, mutual benefit, and the means for self-improvement. In the context of a society which encouraged institutional division along ethnic lines, the parish provided the best means available of providing these services which were necessary for the material and spiritual well-being of the Irish-Catholic community. In such a context, one can readily empathise with Father Dowd's lack of confidence, as illustrated in the opening quotation, in the benefits offered to his people by 'amalgamation' as opposed to 'separation'. Understanding the production of historical-geographical difference is indeed a crucial preliminary step towards emancipating the possibilities for future place construction.

APPENDIX

English-speaking Catholic Marriages in Montreal (Approximation):
1810-1866, 1873-1899



Source: Registers of Notre-Dame, 1810-1858; St. Patrick's church, 1859-1866; Parishes of St. Patrick's, St. Ann's, and St. Gabriel's, 1873-1883; Parish of St. Mary's, 1882-1899; Parish of St. Anthony's, 1884-1899.
Note: No data was collected for the period between 1867 and 1872 because of disruption resulting from the dismemberment of Notre-Dame. English-Catholic names were included from the period when St. Gabriel's was a bilingual parish (1873-1883). It is likely that the figures for 1873 to 1883 are an underestimate of the actual number of marriages taking place because not all English Catholics belonged to English parishes during this period.

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355.121 Paroisse St. Patrick
355.124 Paroisse St. Henri
355.127 Paroisse St. Joseph
355.128 Paroisse St. Ann
355.132 Paroisse St. Gabriel
355.136 Paroisse St. Mary (Notre-Dame du Bon Conseil)
355.137 Paroisse St. Charles
355.138 Paroisse St. Anthony of Padua
465.101 St. Sulpice
465.106 Rédemptoristes
486.101 Father Patrick Dowd
786.029 St. Patrick's Society of Montreal
786.030 St. Patrick's Orphanage
789.106 Chevaliers du Travail
790.021 Tempérance
901.136 Notre-Dame
901.137 Notre-Dame et St. Sulpice
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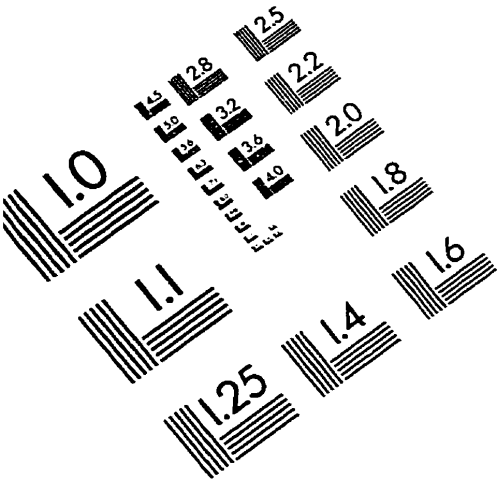

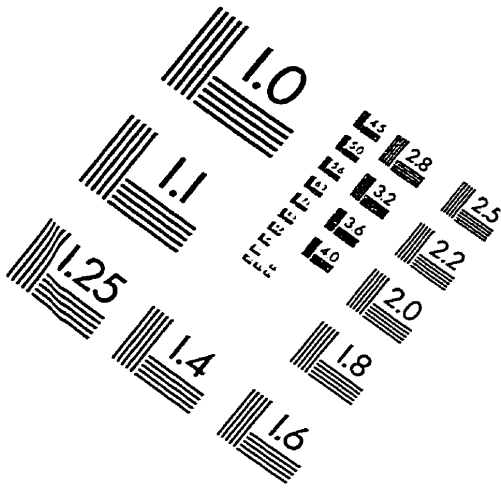

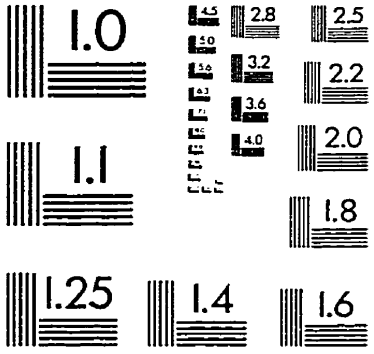

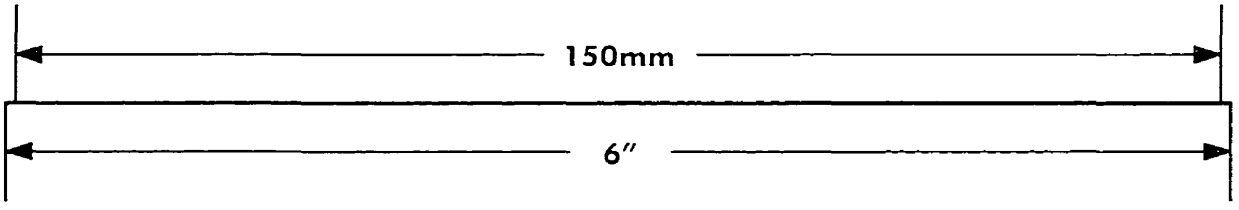

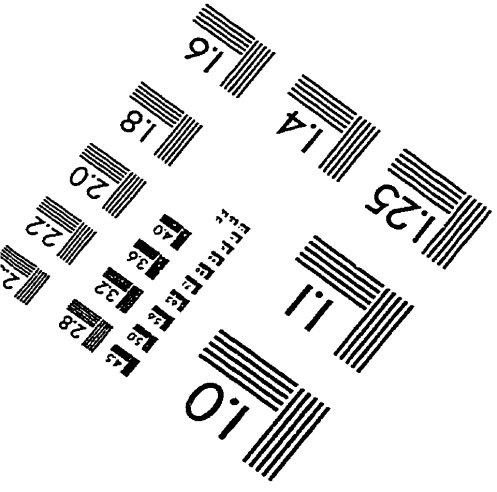

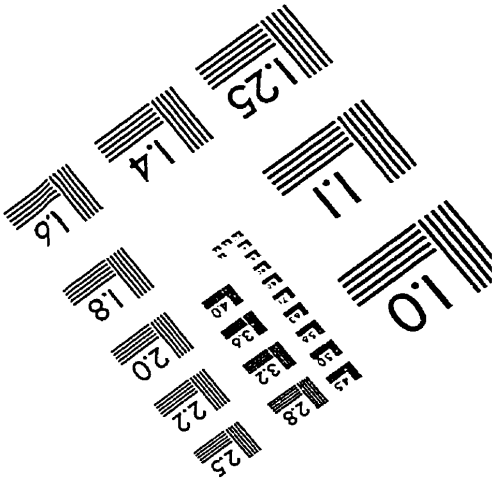

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