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At 45 ed

# OLD MONTREAL

*in the*

## EARLY DAYS *of* BRITISH CANADA

1778-1788

*by*

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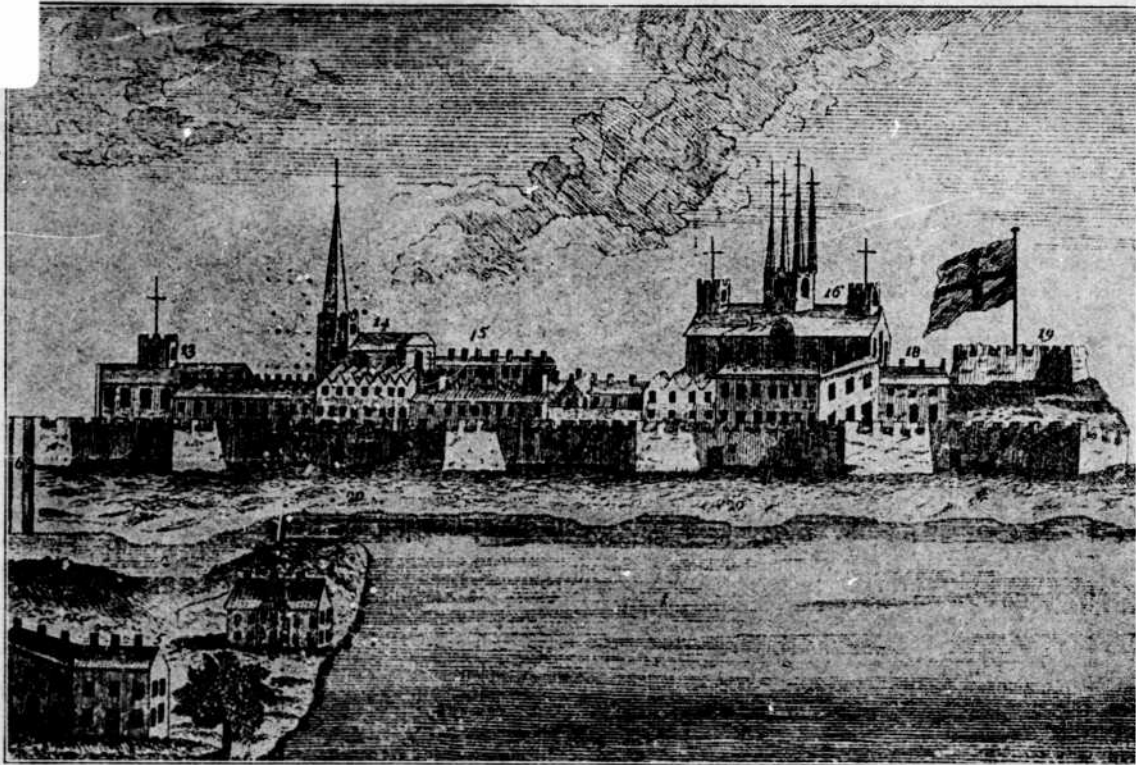
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A SKETCH OF MONTREAL CIRCA 1760

D. Pomarade, Sc.

(This appeared in an English magazine of the period. The architecture of the buildings is imaginative, but the perspective and relative positions are fairly correct.)

1—R. St. Lawrence 2—R. St. Pierre 3—Stone Bridge (now inside the Dominion Government buildings on the spot, the St. Pierre in the city being incorporated in the sewerage system) 4—Chateau de Calliere at Pointe à Calliere 5—General Hospital ("Grey Nuns") 6—The Fosse or Ditch 7—West Glacis 8, 9, 10, 11, 12—Gates 13—"Recollects" 14—Parish Church (Notre Dame) 15—Hotel Dieu Hospital 16—"Jesuits" 17—Chateau de Vaudreuil 18—House of M. de Longueuil 19—The Citadel 20—The Water Front. (The Chemin de Rond, for military access to walls, ran between the walls and houses.)

(The artist has omitted "Bonsecours" Chapel between 18 and 19; the "Congregation", E. of Hotel Dieu, which it adjoined; the "Seminary" adjoining, W. of 14; Chateau de Ramsay and Bonsecours E. of 16.)

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# MONTREAL IN 1778

## PART I.

(Copyright, 1925.)

By WILLIAM HENRY ATHERTON,  
Author of "Montreal (1535-1914)"

The Montreal Gazette first appeared on June 3, 1778, and it was printed only in French. As the date is so near that of the beginning of British rule in Montreal, I propose to present a review of the city and its life as reached at 1778.

And first of the physical city. In 1778 it was not much changed in appearance from the little fortified town, an outpost of French civilization, into which, after the articles of capitulation had been signed on September 8, 1760, the British army marched next morning through the Recollect Gate and by way of Notre Dame street to the Parade or Place d'Armes, opposite the Parish Church. The old walls, built by de Lery in 1722, succeeding the picket palisading of 1686, which was repaired in 1693, were still standing in 1778, though giving signs of crumbling, so that they were finally demolished in 1803.

In shape, the fortifications resembled a trapezium, enclosing 110 arpents, or 93 acres, and broadest at the west end. Within was the old town, established since 1642 and bearing, till 1701, the official name of Ville Marie. It was built on a foothill, the highest ridge being Notre Dame street, parallel streets being St. Paul, near the river front, and St. James, near the northern wall; the longitudinal streets in between—St. Peter, St. Francis, St. Joseph (later St. Sulpice) and others—having all been first surveyed in 1672. Others were added subsequently.

### TOUR OF THE FORTIFICATIONS.

A walk around the fortifications in 1778 would start from Fortification Lane (at the corner of Victoria Square and the Canada S.S. Line offices of today). On the left, the north walls had a sloping glacis, at the foot of which ran the St. Martin creek (now Craig street). Going east, the St. Lawrence Gate would

be passed (this led to the suburb which bore the same name), then the walls continued eastwards, skirting the old "Jesuits' Gardens" (or the upper part of the Champ de Mars of today), then on to the narrow end of the trapezium, in the centre of which was the Quebec Gate, leading to the Quebec suburb (this being today the site of the Viger Station as far as Berri street). The walker would then turn the south corner of the trapezium and, returning westwards by the river bank, would pass the military district and farther on the Bonsecours Church (recently rebuilt in 1771-1773 after the fire of 1754) and the former Intendant's Palace, afterwards Sir John Johnson's house (erected in 1698, razed in 1793), and would continue by the river banks and by the little harbor to the old market place, the first public space in Montreal, now called Place Royale to commemorate Champlain's Place Royale at which he landed. The walls did not follow the river any farther west, but turned and ran along what is now the northern side of Place Youville, keeping on the north side of the little St. Pierre River that ran from Lachine to the harbor (today running underground in the sewerage system). Then the walls ran on to McGill street of today, turning north, past the Recollect Gate and back to the starting point at Fortification Lane.

This was the walled city. Outside, near the water at Place Royale, however, there was an important suburb. Indeed, here had been Maisonneuve's first Ville Marie. It was a narrow triangular neck of land, formed by the juncture of the St. Lawrence and the River St. Pierre, and was called Point à Callière, from the chateau there of the Montreal Governor of that name (1685-1698), and its ruins were still standing in 1778. Around here was once the old fort and the common, and in 1778 the gardens and buildings of the Grey Nuns (who in 1747 had succeeded to the Charron Freres' general hospital, built in 1692-4 and still standing today, 1925).

## WALK THROUGH THE TOWN.

If you want to visualize your walk around the walls, look at the well-known "spy" map of Montreal, published by Jeffries in London in 1758. Using the same map, you will now enter within the walls. At the west end, below the Recollect Gate, and below Notre Dame street, are the Recollect monastery and church (1693-1867) and the gardens. Farther up there is another large block, that held by the first Parish Church proper (begun in 1672 and continuing in use until the opening of the present Notre Dame Church in 1829); and the Seminary of St. Sulpice (foundations laid in 1685, finished about 1712 and standing today), with their gardens extending down to St. Paul street. Passing further east on Notre Dame street, two large blocks of gardens and buildings stood on the south, namely, the Hotel Dieu (founded by Jeanne Mance in 1644), and the Congregation (founded by Marguerite Bourgeoys about 1657) running down to St. Paul street. Still continuing east on Notre Dame street, in 1778 you would have come to the old "Jesuits," a block of buildings and lands, now the site of the Court House and the upper part of the Champ de Mars. The Jesuits (church and residence built about 1692-4) had been suppressed in 1773, and in 1778 the jail was installed, inadequately indeed, in a part of their house, remaining until 1803, and the court house there also, which was so used till 1800. On the south side were standing the Chateau de Ramezay of today, then in 1778 the Government House, originally built between 1705-25, and by its side, but now demolished, the House of the Becancours, built about the same time. About 1775 this had probably been the home of the famous Magistrate Walker, a wealthy but disagreeable merchant, whose ear the turbulent military had cut off in 1764. In 1800 this became the old "McGill House" and family mansion (demolished in 1903).

Facing the "Jesuits" was what is now Jacques Cartier Square, but then a stretch of gardens. At the bottom, at St. Paul street, and with gardens to the front, stood what was once the chateau of Governor de Vaudreuil (begun in 1723 on the site of Duluth the explorer's house). Since 1773 this had become the College of St. Raphael, the first predecessor of the present College de Montreal on Sherbrooke street west. [With the exception of the Becancours House

and the Chateau de Ramezay, all of the buildings in this section just described, round and about Jacques Cartier Square, were gutted by fire in 1803.]

The walk further east on Notre Dame street would have taken a visitor in 1778 to Citadel Hill, a little fortified arsenal on an eminence of about 40 feet high, on the highest point of the saddleback ridge of the city, overlooking the Quebec Gate. This had been used as a fortified redoubt since it was built by the Sulpicians in 1659, and was used as such till it was demolished in 1818-21. Its site can be located by that portion of Notre Dame street where the old Notre Dame Hospital still stands. The earth of the eminence was removed to extend the Champ de Mars to Craig street.

## SOME OF THE BUILDINGS.

A walk along St. Paul street would have meant a visit to the merchants' part and to the fur stores of the past and present regimes. There the merchants lived over their shops and guarded their bullion in their strong chests, there being no banks till the Bank of Montreal was founded in 1817. Uptown, St. James street, and its extension beyond Place d'Armes, was the quieter and country part of the town, for not many as yet had homes in the "suburbs" immediately outside the walls. Here and there in our walks we should have found the houses of those Seigneurs who had Montreal town houses, such as the Lotbiniere house on St. Sacrament street, and types of rich merchants' houses, such as that of Hubert dit Lacroix on St. Jean Baptiste street, demolished during the last decade.

You would have noticed that it was a rather grey, picturesque town, very French, very religious, with its spires and turrets of convents and monasteries peeping out of the verdure. The streets were flagged and most of the houses were built solidly of stone or rubble work. A good specimen of the houses then being built is to be seen still standing today, at the corner of St. Peter and Notre Dame streets—the Forrestier house, built in 1767, which became in 1775 the military headquarters of Montgomery's officers during the American occupation. The old pictures by Bourne at a later period reproduce many of the houses standing about 1778 and before. St. Amable street, near Jacques Cartier Square, was not built up till after the fire of 1803.

### POPULATION IN 1778.

The population within and without this quaint provincial town was not much beyond 8,000, mostly French, with an ever-increasing number of British, the military camp followers, the disbanded soldiers, the adventurous and more solid merchants who came in from the New England States after the cession of 1760 and more numerous after Canada became definitely British in 1763, and who had begun to be of importance before 1778.

The "old" British subjects early became important, for after the three years of military government between 1760 and 1763, the French-Canadians (known as the "new" subjects), being Catholics, were disfranchised and the new civil government of the city and all positions of trust were placed in the hands of the few "old" subjects, many of whom were adventurers who were severely stigmatized by the Governors Murray and Carleton. They were succeeded by better groups, but the situation was unpleasant, until Catholic Emancipation, not granted in England till 1829, was given to French-Canadians by the Quebec Act of 1774, when both "old" and "new" subjects were named magistrates to rule the city till it was incorporated with the mayoral and aldermanic system in 1822. The notes I now give will lead up to the state of the city as it appeared in 1778.

### FIRE PROTECTION.

The first British magistrates had soon a difficult task, and to give them justice they met it well, for after it many improvements in building by-laws were effected. This was due to the great fire of May 18th, 1765, when 215 French families, "Canadians newly become subjects, were burnt out." I have found no record of the rebuilding of this section, but in general we may say that the reconstruction was the main change in the old city effected between 1760 and 1778. The valuable document of 1766, quoted above, entitled "The Case of the Canadians," published in England and appealing for funds for the relief of the Montreal fire sufferers, gives illuminating sidelights. Thus, we learn that though the houses were built of limestone, they were covered with "tile"-like shingles of cedar, or with boards, and that at the time of the fire there were no fire engines in Montreal.

To prevent fires, however, the Canadians' houses had the rooms floored with clay and then covered

with stones. The postscript goes on: "It is hoped that every expedient that reason and experience can suggest will hereafter be brought into use, now that they have such able instructors as ourselves." Then various devices for protecting the roofs are suggested. "Iron plate coverings are certainly the best as practised in Sweden and in Russia. Two layers of brown paper dipped in hot tar placed over the wooden roof and under layers of iron plates will probably answer better. Some of the persons now going to Canada intend to try if slate will not stand the frost."

Another fire took place in 1768, with the destruction of a hundred houses. In 1777 inspectors were appointed by Governor Sir Guy Carleton, who had to see that chimneys were swept once a month, and each tenant was obliged to take certain precautions against fire, under penalty of a fine. Under the French regime regulations had already been issued that buckets of water should be kept in readiness and should be carried to the scene of the fire when the signal was given. The carpenters were to carry their axes. From all this fear of fire, the merchants, for mutual protection, organized fire clubs.

The account of the 1765 fire notices that there were no reservoirs; indeed the first gravity system of waterworks, with wooden conduits, was not in function till 1800. There was no street oil lamp till 1815 and no gas till 1838.

In the meantime the municipality provided a few public pumps, one of them being at Place d'Armes, another the only market place (Place Royale). For the rest, the citizens provided themselves with water from the private wells and cisterns, and by watering carts from the St. Lawrence and the creeks, the principal one being St. Martin's, where Craig street now is. The poor women washed their linen on the river bank against the boulders there.

### LAW AND PUNISHMENTS.

As the street lighting was primitive, it may be conceived that the darkness abetted crimes. There were no policemen proper, the first local police, established in 1815, being only watchmen, the modern system not beginning till 1838. As yet law and order were preserved by a few citizens in each district appointed to act as constables.

If one wishes to read of the nature of legal punishments meted out, he learns that "those good old days" were stern ones for evildoers. Indeed, until 1840 executions were frequent exhibitions. Borthwick states that from 1812 to 1838 death sentences were imposed as follows: Twenty for stealing, larceny, shoplifting or burglary; ten for horse stealing; three for rape; four for highway robbery; five for sacrilege; one for forgery. Some of these, however, were respited. In 1813 a boy, B. Clement, thirteen and one-half years old, was executed for stealing a cow. It will be noticed that murder was rare, and the first record of an execution for such an offence after the cession was in 1781. Milder forms of punishment were the whipping post, being placed in the pillory with a paper label around the neck, the stocks, or being "burned on the hand," the hangman applying a red-hot iron, hissing in the palm of the hand, imprinting on it for life the crown and some other device.

The punishment of the cat o' nine tails and whipping at the cart tail was in vogue. The first recorded since the cession was that ordered by the first magistrates at their May sitting of 1765; the case being one of stealing by William Marsh, his wife Elinor and "George the Nagra" (negro). The verdict was: "They are to go back to their place of confinement, the said William to be stripped to the waist and Elinor Marsh to have her back only stripped, and the said George the Nagra, and each tied to the cart tail and, beginning at the jail or prison between the hours of 8 and 9 o'clock in the forenoon of Friday next, are to proceed along around by the Intendant's and then go to the market place and round by St. Francis street and through the parade to place begun at, during which round they are to receive twenty-five stripes each on the naked back, besides twenty-five each on the naked back when at the market place." In 1765 the jail would have been in a building west of St. Lawrence Main, on Notre Dame street, the site of Cadillac's house being at the corner. The "parade" mentioned I take to be the present Place d'Armes.

"It is remarkable," writes Borthwick ("History and Gazetteer," page 17), "that in the record of court of sessions, for years after the conquest of the country, there are very few French names before the magistrates for those crimes for which punishment by whipping, the stocks or the

pillory, or branding on the hand, was meted out. This shows how thoroughly they obeyed their cures to respect the law and be faithful to their allegiance."

The town at this period was a sleepy burg. There was no theatre, and the amusements were home made. There were no public places except the market and the parade at Place d'Armes. The Champ de Mars did not exist, but there were the picturesque water front (now no longer so), and the country in the suburbs and the mountain for picnic parties in summer, and there were dance parties and snowshoeing in winter. A visitor about this period described the city as a place "where a veteran officer of moderate means might entrench himself for life." There seems to have been only one little post office—not now locatable—established by Benjamin Franklin in 1763 when he was Postmaster-General.

As yet Montreal had no port pretensions. The Lachine Canal had not been developed; there was no separate Harbor Commission, or "Trinity House," till the act of 1832. There was no custom house proper, independent of Quebec, till about 1836. There was no steamboat until John Molson, who arrived here in 1782 and established his brewery in the East End, built his "Accommodation" in 1809, nor were there any sailing ships built here till 1806, and the flat-bottomed Durham barges did not begin to supplant the "bateaux" till 1812. There were no bridges across the St. Lawrence, and there was, of course, no railway. The arrival of a ship in the spring was a great excitement for the burghers. The ladies could then secure the fashions of the year before last in England.

The destiny of Montreal as a trading centre, though not fully seized until the next decade, and especially in the beginning of the nineteenth century, was in the making. Helped by British capital, trade was brisk after the conquest; then there was a lull for a time, but after the war of 1775 business began to flourish again, especially after the Quebec Act of 1774 began to function in 1777. There was no formal organization until the Committee of Trade was formed in 1822, yet the merchants held great power. By 1774 the McGill brothers—James, John and Andrew—Edward Chinn, Ezekiel Solomon, Benjamin and Joseph Frobisher, Todd, Patterson and Charles Grant were well established. Later, in 1783-4, some were to found the Northwest Company in Montreal as a rival to the Hudson's Bay Company. These were fur

traders who had taken up their special Montreal venture early after the cession or after 1763, and by 1774 had founded new posts up west hitherto unknown to the French. After 1774, Alexander Henry, Peter Pond and Thomas Frobisher had penetrated up to Lake Winnipeg and had built Fort Cumberland on the lake. Many of these were Scotch, others English and there were some Jews.

#### CHURCHES AND CEMETERIES.

A few notes on their places of worship will suffice. The French had the Parish Church of Notre Dame, the "Recollects" and the "Jesuits," as also "Bonsecours." The Anglicans had a Swiss Huguenot, the Rev. D. C. de Lisle, chaplain of the garrison, who spoke English indifferently. He officiated in a portion of the Recollects church on Sundays, and his services were attended by the Scotch Presbyterians, of whom there were a few in the city, old soldiers of the Fraser Highlanders, who had settled here after the capitulation. The Anglicans were given the old Jesuit church in 1789. The Presbyterians, however, had organized and held their services in a school room in St. Lawrence suburb on March 12, 1786, and eventually opened St. Gabriel church in 1792 (demolished in 1909).

No other denomination had any conscious existence except the Jews. The Shearith Israel synagogue was formed in 1768 by the first Jewish settlers, mostly of Spanish and Portuguese descent. Their first place of worship was in a room on St. James street, but in 1777 the first synagogue was established at the junction of Notre Dame and St. James streets, near the present Court House, on ground belonging to David Lazarus, the first Jewish settler, who came to Montreal in 1759, and was the first to be buried on October 22, 1776, in the first Jewish cemetery, which was established on a St. Janvier street near the present Dominion square, then, of course, outside the city. The first Jewish rabbi came in 1778—Jacob Raphael Cohen.

The other cemeteries of the city were the principal one for Catholics behind the parish church, and the subsidiary ones in the bastions within the walls, from St. Peter street to near St. Lambert hill. Here, too, the Protestants were buried, the Dorchester street cemetery, formerly at Dufferin square, not being acquired till 1799, and being used as such till about 1847.

#### THE POLITICAL SITUATION.

The Gazette was born in stirring times. The city had only recently settled down to become British. This had been determined by the granting of the Quebec Act in 1774, but a temptation came in 1775, when the revolting colonies across the border sent an army to invade Canada and to make it throw in its lot with them. Montreal was occupied by this army from the capitulation on November 13, 1775, to the evacuation by Benedict Arnold in June, 1776. During that time the Continental Congress sent a delegation of Commissioners—Benjamin Franklin, Samuel Chase, and Charles Carroll of Carrollton and his brother, John Carroll, a Catholic priest—and they brought Fleury Mesplet, a printer, for propaganda purposes. The commissioners made the Chateau de Ramezay their headquarters. They failed to seduce the French-Canadians to annexation and they returned home, but it must be confessed this was not the fault of certain disloyal Britishers, like Price and Walker, who had abetted the revolutionists from the beginning and had invited them to come to Montreal.

The troubles of 1775-6 being over, the Quebec Act of 1774, held up in its functions till 1777, was about to be tried out, but not whole-heartedly, by the English merchants of Quebec and Montreal, for on April 3, 1778, their committee in England was petitioning the Colonial Secretary for the repeal of the act. They were still anxious for a parliamentary assembly, as desired by them from the beginning and until they finally did get it in 1791.

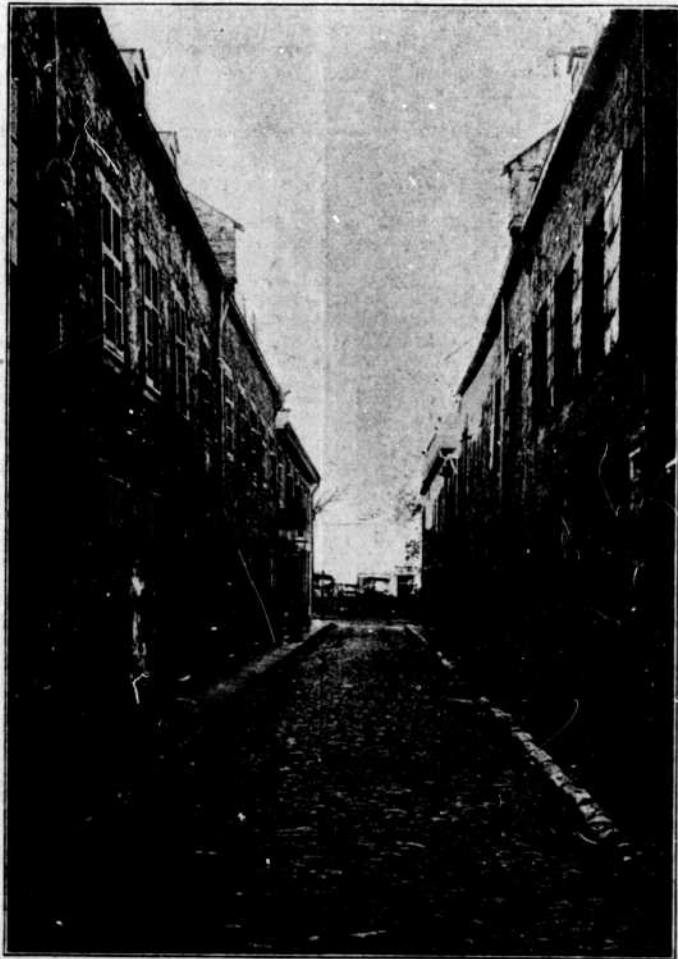
The Americans were still looking with eager eyes on Canada and plotted the annexation of French-Canadians by an appeal to their love of France. Thus about 1777 the young Marquis de Lafayette, who had joined the American Continental army and had become a major-general, was chosen by some of his exploiters to lead a separate command against Montreal, thinking the French would hearken to his call. But he came not, being not sufficiently supported. Benedict Arnold and Gouverneur Morris thought such a venture only spelt ruin. But shortly after the first number of The Gazette appeared, France having on July 15th declared war against England and having made a treaty of trade with the United States, a dangerous temptation came to French Canada. Canadians were put in a ferment by the receipt of a letter, written to them on October 28th, from the French ship

Languedoc in Boston harbor by Comte d'Estaing, who had been sent to the United States with twelve ships of the line and six frigates. This letter invited the ancient French of North America to link themselves with the revolted colonies and assured them that they could rely on His French Majesty for protection and support.

It was a subtle temptation, which disconcerted many, but owing to the common sense of the chiefs of the clergy and the seigneurs, remember-

ing the blessings of their charter of the Quebec Act, and owing also to the vigorous and stern military policy of General Haldimand, who had recently succeeded Carleton as Governor, nothing came of it. Haldimand was perhaps over-suspicious, and had his eye on Fleury Mesplet, the French editor of *The Gazette*, so that little political news was allowed to filter through its pages in the first issues.

In such conditions was *The Gazette* born and cradled.



**ST. AMABLE STREET (off Jacques Cartier Square)**

*Owing to the narrowness of this street, its picture is frequently used with the legend that it was one of the early streets of Montreal under the French Regime. But the St. Amable street buildings only date from after the fire of 1803 which gutted the neighbourhood of Jacques Cartier Square, then the site of the former Chateau de Vaudreuil, at that time St. Raphael College, a predecessor of the present "Collège de Montréal" on Sherbrooke St. W.*

# MONTREAL IN 1788

## PART II.

The year 1788, closing the first decade of *The Gazette*, Montreal's first and as yet only newspaper, offers a suitable date to present a further picture of life in the little fortified town. The walk around the bastions and the walls (eighteen feet high, four feet thickness at the base and three at the top) would have revealed that they were crumbling more than ever. There were more houses within the walls and without in the suburbs, but the population was not very much greater than in 1778, being not yet 9,000. Otherwise the picture already given of 1778 remains true in its essentials.

### ADVENT OF U. E. LOYALISTS.

But though the material aspect of the city was little changed, there was progress in its communal and business life. The *Gazette* of 1788, still published by Fleury Mesplet, was no longer in quarto form, but in foolscap of four pages, printed in double columns. It was now bilingual, and was soon to become entirely English. This shows that the English population had become more important. The advent of the United Empire Loyalists, as the loyal British refugees from the revolting colonies were called, was one cause. In a census of the Montreal district, taken in 1779, there were already 209 U.E.L. at St. John's, 27 at Chambly, 126 at Pointe Claire, 196 at Yamachiche, 87 at Sorel and Nouvelle Beauce, and 208 at Montreal.

### BRITONS GROW IN NUMBER.

These latter added strength to the merchant class of the city, who more than ever were eager to secure British institutions, and to that end sought the repeal of the Quebec Act of 1774. Immediately after the Treaty of Paris in 1783, by which England had recognized the independence of the United States, and when Canada was able to breathe in peace again, petitions appeared for a parliament, for the habeas corpus,

for trial by jury and for English commercial law.

In the absence of any directory of the city until Doige's in 1819, the names of Montreal signers of these petitions give an idea of the nationality of the people. Thus the petition of 1784 reveals a strong list of Britishers. Among the signers of the earlier petition of 1774 are to be found the names of men like Joseph and Thomas Frobisher, Peter Pond, Alexander Mackenzie, Isaac Todu, James McGill and Simon McTavish, who had founded in the winter of 1783-4 the famous North-West Company of fur traders and had become the rivals of the long-established Hudson's Bay Company, hitherto almost supreme. These men and others of the period laid the solid foundation of that Montreal which has become the commercial metropolis of Canada.

### THE NORTH-WEST COMPANY.

The origin of this famous organization was as follows:—After the fall of Montreal in 1760 and during the uncertain days until 1765, and owing to the departure of the *Compagnie des Indes*, which had held the fur trade monopoly hitherto, the trade with the Indians was irregular and conducted by independent traders. Of these Alexander Henry started west in 1761, and his "Travels and Adventures" describes his experiences of the next sixteen years, while James Finlay, who had gone west in 1766, went far beyond Michillimackinac and Sault Ste. Marie, Green Bay and Green Portage, and had wintered in his post, built on the Saskatchewan in 1767. But the need of cohesion was felt, and in 1769 Benjamin and Joseph Frobisher formed a connection with Messrs. Isaac Todd and James McGill (who died in 1813, leaving his estate of Burnside with £40,000 to found the university known by his name). Joseph Frobisher, who died in 1810 (Benjamin died in 1787 and Thomas in 1788) was the builder of the home called "Beaver Hall," a long picturesque cottage, standing half way up Beaver Hall Hill. This was burned down in

1847. Other combinations were made, but there was required more unity, to secure themselves against the encroachments of the United States on the line of boundary as ceded by treaty from Lake Superior to Lac du Bois. Thus in 1779, as Lawrence J. Burpee states, nine distinct firms signed an agreement for one year. This contract was renewed in 1780 for three years, but only lasted two. At last, in 1783-4, a third agreement was signed for five years under the title of the North-West Company, with 16 shares divided thus: Todd and McGill 2, Benjamin and Joseph Frobisher 2, McGill and Patterson 2, (Simon) McTavish & Co. 2, Walker & Co. 2, McBeath & Co. 2, Ross & Co. 1, Oakes & Co. 1. This was the nucleus of the company which afterwards challenged the famous Hudson's Bay Company, established since 1670; and with which finally it became amalgamated in 1821.

#### THE BEAVER CLUB.

As a result of this trade combination of 1783-4, the social medium of the famous Beaver Club of Montreal was established in 1785 for the purpose of welding their commercial interests into one. It lasted till 1827 with varying fortunes. Its picturesque story and that of its fur traders' baronial hall at Fort William have recently been carefully retold by Lawrence J. Burpee in the Canadian Historical Association Annual Report, 1924. Until quite recently the original warehouse of the North-West Company stood off St. Gabriel street, entry being made by a lane.

The social club had originally nineteen members, all of them having traded in the west. Four had made their first trips into the Indian country before the capture of Quebec—Charles Chabollez (1751), Maurice Blondeau (1752), Hypolite des Rivieres (1753), Etienne Campeau (1753). After the taking of Montreal in 1760, Gabriel Cote had gone west, followed the next year by Alexander Henry, the first of the British traders. The three Frobisher brothers, Benjamin, Joseph and Thomas, dated from 1765, 1768, and 1773 respectively; James McGill from 1766, and his brother John four years later. The remainder of the nineteen were Louis Joseph Ainsie (1762), George McBeath (1766), James Finlay (1766), Peter Pond (1770), Mathew Lessey (1770), David McCrean (1772), John McNamara (1772), Jean Baptiste Jobert (1775).

It will be noticed that the early membership of the club was bilingual.

James McGill married a des Rivieres, and Simon McTavish (called "the Premier" and "the Marquis" for his haughtiness) and Roderick Mackenzie (cousin of Sir Alexander Mackenzie, the great discoverer of the Mackenzie river and the overland passage to the Pacific), each married a daughter of Charles Chabollez. Besides these first nineteen, others joined later, some being members of the original North-West Company, and others of the rival North-West Company formed in 1784 by Peter Pangman, John Gregory, A. N. McLeod and Sir Alexander Mackenzie, the latter leaving this company and forming the X.Y. Company (called the "Little Company" or "the Potties," an American corruption of "Les Petits"). Roderick Mackenzie, Alexander's cousin, was an active agent of the X. Y. Company. Both companies joined together in 1804 as the North-West Company, when the Beaver Club was re-organized under more harmonious auspices.

Montreal was mainly and substantially at this period a fur-trading emporium, but the way was being opened to others. Benajah Gibb, the founder of the present firm of Gibb & Co., tailors, who started business in Montreal in 1775, was one of the signers of the 1774 petition.

An outstanding type of the merchant class at this time was John Molson, the founder of the brewery business of today. He arrived in 1782, but his name does not appear on the 1784 list of petitioners for the Assembly. He is said to have come with a capital of £5,000, with which he founded the first brewery in 1786. He had a great reputation among the French for his bonhomie and straightforwardness in his business dealings with them. At his brewery he wore the habitant costume of the tuque bleu and sabots, with local homespun clothing, but at night he was quite the gentleman in black, with white choker and eyeglasses with long ribbon holders. Later, as the proprietor of the first steamboat service, he appeared "en grande toilette." It was he who built the famous Molson House at the corner of St. Lawrence and Sherbrooke, the first one on this latter street, but this was not till well on in the next century.

#### A FAMOUS REPORT.

These Montreal merchants were wideawake and very shrewd. They had no Board of Trade, but in 1786, on the return from England of Carleton as Lord Dorchester, a bilingual committee of merchants was appointed by the Council of the Legislature to give their views, and those of the

citizens of Montreal, "on internal commerce and the police of the province" ("police" being here used in the old general sense of government, with especial reference to the enforcement of law and the preservation of order). One of their reports suggested the incorporation of the city, this not occurring, however, until 1832.

The question before them was: "Whether or not we should apply for a charter incorporating a select number of citizens, on some good and approved plan, with powers to make by-laws, decide civil and criminal cases under certain restrictions, whether under the style and title of recorder, mayor, aldermen and common council." Their reply was: "The bad state of the police of the town calls loudly for reform." So they approved of a charter of incorporation, but "for the purpose of police only." They recommended that on such a corporation the Governor, Lord Dorchester, "should bestow such lots of grounds and houses, the property of the Crown within the town and suburbs of Montreal, as Government shall not have present use for, in order to the same being applied towards the erecting schools, work-houses and other establishments of public utility." The solicitude of the Montreal merchants for the betterment of education was a noticeable feature in the history of this time.

#### NEW JAIL WAS WANTED.

Again, the report of the merchants complains bitterly of the need of a proper jail, and they recommend that an assessment be imposed on the district for building one. At that time a portion of the old "Jesuits" house (abandoned shortly after 1773) was so used.

"The house," says the report, "which at present serves for a gaol, consists of four very small rooms in which are frequently confined promiscuously persons of different sexes and for very different degrees of crimes. The unfortunate debtor cannot have a room to himself, nor can the malefactor when preparing for another world be accommodated with a place of retirement to deprecate the wrath of an offended Deity.

"The insufficiency of the gaol in point of security occasions a guard of soldiers to be kept in the lower part of it, and, even with that precaution, many atrocious offenders have escaped, inasmuch that the sheriff of the district has refused to confine debtors unless the prosecutor agreed to take upon himself the risk of an escape.

"The situation of the insufficient gaol heightens the sufferings of those persons whom the law dooms to imprisonment, offends every passenger in the warm weather, and is a nuisance to the neighbourhood, being without those conveniences requisite for carrying off the filth accumulated by want of them."

The names of those who signed the report were: P. Bouthillier, Th. Perinault, John McKindlay, Jas. Walker, Thomas McCord, Jacob Jordan, Jas. McGill, Pierre Guy, Benjamin Frobisher, M. Blondeau, A. Auldjo and Richard Dobie.

#### ANNEXATION WARDED OFF.

The political situation in this bilingual walled-in town may be summed up thus: While there were heart-burning struggles between the "old" (or British) subjects, who had come in as conquerors but had to submit, by the Act of Quebec, to the civil laws of the conquered, and the "new" subjects, who tenaciously held to their old rights and privileges, yet there was a decidedly British mentality growing up as far as loyalty to the British constitution and British institutions was concerned. This had been proved by the French-Canadians in rejecting the overtures to join the Continental Congress in 1775-6 and the suppression of the seditious British pro-Congress party in Montreal, led by Walker and others. Moreover, this loyalty had been further defined, for when the more subtle temptation came to the French-Canadians in 1778 from Comte d'Estaing, to join the French and American allies, it had little effect. The remembrance of the justice of the Parliament of the new Mother Country in making the Quebec Act their charter of religious and civil emancipation showed the leaders and their people their straight path for the future. On September 14, 1779, Governor Haldimand wrote to Lord Sackville Germain, the colonial secretary, that d'Es'aing's call had had little influence in French-Canadian households, but after the lesson of the examination by British spies and emissaries in 1775, he took no risks, and arrested and threw into jail without trial several Montreal suspects: Hay, Cazeau, Fleury Mesplet, the French printer of The Gazette, Jotard the advocate and Mesplet's editor, and the notorious Pierre du Calvet. They were charged with connivance with the seditious emissaries of the new republic. This explains the suspension of The Gazette at times.

Haldimand's actions sometimes were high-handed, but as the historian Chapais admits, there was no doubt of the culpability of the prisoners. No doubt he was too suspicious, and his action in sending back to France two inoffensive Sulpicians who were coming to Montreal, simply because they were French, earned him opprobrium, but he is no longer characterized by French-Canadian historians of today as the "sombre despot" of early historians misled by the lucubrations of the untrustworthy adventurer du Calvet. Haldimand ought to be recognized as one of the saviours of Canada.

#### THE POLITICAL STRUGGLE.

Once the tension was over and the fear of invasion or rebellion was allayed by the Treaty of Paris of 1763, the Montrealers were free to look after their civil and political household and to fight merrily over the juridical and constitutional problems then confronting them. The armed duality was about to be broken through. The time was getting ripe when the French as well as the English could agree to welcome a Parliamentary Assembly. Haldimand's government lasted till 1784, Carleton coming back in 1786 as governor for the third time, but now as Lord Dorchester. In the meantime, Hope and Hamilton had acted as administrators. Haldimand had stood firm for the maintenance of the Quebec Act. He maintained that even with the arrival of the United Empire Loyalists, there was no need for a repeal of the act, for, said he in his letter of October 24, 1783, to Lord North: "Some wish a form of government which, by resembling the Republican one in the neighboring States, may prepare the people for an union with them upon some future event." And in his letter of November 3, speaking of the U.E.L., "I have great reason to believe these unfortunate people have suffered too much by Committees and Houses and Assemblies to have retained any prepossession in favor of that mode of government and have no reluctance to live under the constitution established by law in this country."

#### ASKED ENGLISH COMMERCIAL LAW.

But he was wrong. The times had changed. A great influence for British institutions and towards the repeal of the Quebec Act was the new Chief Justice Smith, recently from one of the British North American colonies, and who had come with Dorchester. Smith led the "American" party, and in the session of the Council of 1787, he proposed his duality bill for the establishment of English civil law for the English and French for the others. It was rejected, and a contrary bill was proposed by M. de St. Ours. This was fought by the English merchants of Montreal, who held most of the trade in their hands, and they, more than other citizens, needed English commercial law to deal with their English affiliations. Hence they appealed at the Bar, being represented by Attorney-General Monk. Unfortunately, he cast aspersions on the French lawyers, especially those of Montreal, so that there was a pretty "how-de-do," and he was suspended for four years.

#### DEMAND FOR AN ASSEMBLY.

To this intense interest in the juridical question at Montreal there was added the renewal of the fight for a Parliament. For the first time, there was wavering in the Council itself. In 1784, five of the French-Canadian Councillors voted for the maintenance of the act, but two others were against it. This change of heart was further marked when in the public petition of November 24, 1784, many important French-Canadians signed with the English, demanding a parliament and English commercial law. For the first time there was public co-operation. Chapais says this was justified, but a counter-petition of objections, at a meeting of French signers at the Recollects convent on November 30, 1784, restored the status quo of conflict. Each party sent representations to England. This was the all-prevailing topic in the public places and taverns of Montreal when The Gazette was published bilingually in 1788. For three years the strife was continued, but more weakly, till not only one parliament, but two parliaments, were created by the Constitutional Act of 1791, dividing the country into Upper and Lower Canada.

