

Griffintown

Golroo Mofarrahi

Post-professional graduate program in Cultural Landscapes
School of Architecture
McGill University

August 2009

Report Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements of the Degree of Master of Architecture

Golroo Mofarrahi, 2009

Abstract:

This study originates from observation that urban neighbourhoods are in continuous transition as the economy ebbs and flows. Residential neighbourhoods will either collapse or redlined for new development as their residents start to move out (The Lure of the Local, 202). At the same time, country towns are being abandoned, working class neighbourhoods are further ghettoized and steel towns are rusting in decay as “deserted downtowns contrast with exurban building booms” (The Lure of the Local, 202). An example of this type of neighbourhood is Griffintown, which was once a working class neighbourhood squeezed between Saint Gabriel farm and the suburbs of Recollets and Victoria town in Montreal. Griffintown was an industrial and residential district. It was urbanised in the 19th century and gradually decayed through the 20th century. As an industrial district it saw the birth of very first large factories of Canada and was known as the industrial heartland of Canada. The area was of great interest to most developers, and various projects have been proposed for this area. This report addresses the following question: How does the extent artefact system in Griffintown represent tangible evidence of the way of life before forced resettlement, and are there any artefacts worth preserving in Griffintown, an area slated for imminent development?

Résumé:

Cette étude trouve son origine dans la notion selon laquelle les quartiers urbains sont engagés dans un cycle de croissance et de déclin soumis aux aléas de la conjoncture économique. Les quartiers résidentiels se désintègrent à mesure que leurs occupants se relocalisent. Ils peuvent aussi être distingués comme zones à redévelopper. Les municipalités rurales abandonnées, les quartiers ouvriers ghéttoisés, les villes décrépies où avait prospéré l'industrie de l'acier, les centres urbains désertés, font contraste avec l'expansion immobilière exurbaine (Lippard, 1997). Griffintown est un exemple d'un quartier ayant subi un sort similaire. Autrefois un quartier ouvrier de Montréal, situé au croisement de la ferme Saint-Gabriel, du Faubourg des Récollets et de Victoriatown, Griffintown accueillait les usages industriels et résidentiels. Après son urbanisation au XIXe siècle, le district a accusé un déclin progressif au XXe siècle. Ayant vu la naissance des toutes premières grandes usines du Canada, le quartier était connu comme le cœur industriel du pays. Étant donné l'attrait que suscite aujourd'hui ce quartier auprès d'un nombre considérable de promoteurs, et sachant que plusieurs projets immobiliers ont été élaborés, ce rapport se propose d'adresser la question suivante: dans quelle mesure peut-on dire que le patrimoine bâti de Griffintown constitue une trace tangible du mode de vie tel qu'il était avant les déplacements de population forcés, et existe-t-il des éléments valant la peine d'être préservés à Griffintown dans la perspective d'un redéveloppement imminent?

Acknowledgements

I would like to express the deepest appreciation to my supervisor Professor Robert Mellin for his valuable support, encouragement, supervision and useful suggestions throughout this research work. I am also highly thankful to Dennis Delaney, a former resident of Griffintown. I also really appreciate the assistance received from Steven Peck. Special thanks to everyone who helped me in this research.

Table of Contents

Abstract

Acknowledgments

Chapter One:

- Introduction 2
- Historical Background 5
- Report Structure 5

Chapter Two:

- The Nazareth Fief 7
- The Urban Formation of Griffintown 10
- The Birthplace of Canada's Industrial Revolution 12
- The Construcion of the Lachine Canal 12
- Transportation Routes Built around Griffintown 18
- The Enlargement of the Lachine Canal 19
- Saint Gabriel's Lock and Hydraulic Power 21
- Tragic Events in Griffintown 22
- Basins of The Lachine Canal 25
- Industries and the Railroad 25
- Comuinty Conditions 27
- Floodng in Griffintown 29
- The Population of the area during 1880 to 1915 31
- Arrival of New Factories 32
- The Central Station, The CNR viaduct 32
- Decline of Industries and the Residential District 34
- Griffintown in Evolution 38

Chapter Three:

- The Griffintown Community 42
- Ethnicity of the People 47
- Time Capsule 48

Chapter Four:

- Reminiscence of Griffintown Today 51

Chapter Five:

- Conclusion 80

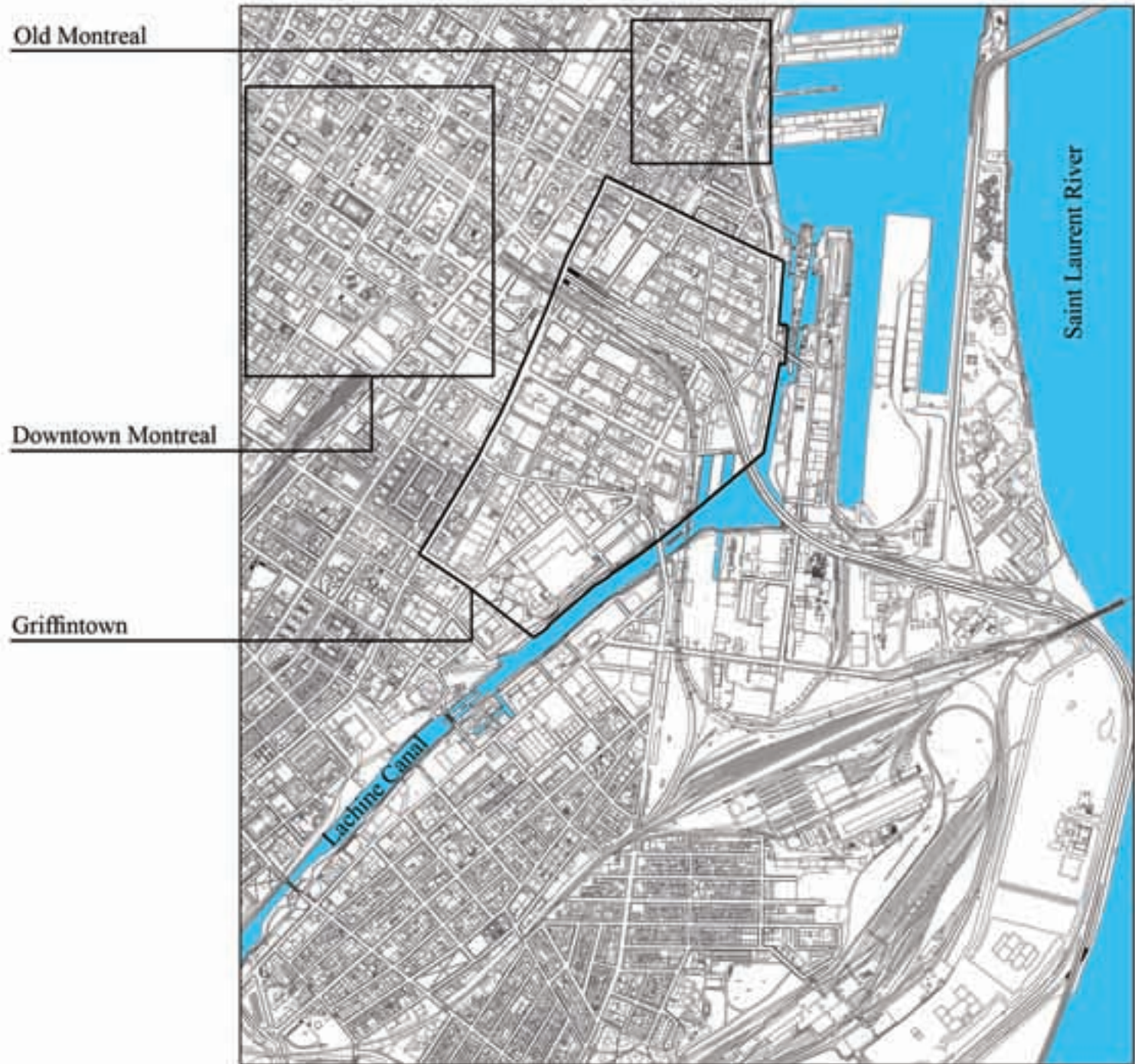
Bibliography

Chapter One

Introduction

This study focuses on the history of formation of an old district situated southwest of downtown Montreal, Quebec known as Griffintown. Griffintown is considered to be one of the most historically significant areas of Canada as well as a fundamental portion of the historical fabric of city of Montreal. The areas built framework played a very significant role in shaping the urban and social fabric of the city of Montreal. Griffintown existed from the 1820's to 1960's. The majority of its population were Irish immigrants and their descendents but it gradually became home to Jewish, Ukrainians, French Canadian and Italian families. The area started to depopulate during the post-world war II period as a result of economic boom and in 1960's the area was re-zoned as an industrial neighbourhood and eventually the area vanished in the 1970's. Today, the basic built framework of the area and the few architecture evidence remains in Griffintown resembles somewhat what it was once there. This study explains the progressive evolution of the urban fabric of the area by studying historical traces, the formation of its identity, and its urban character that was shaped by its architecture and its viable community. In addition, this study documents the few interesting architecture remains of Griffintown as the area is slated for development and it's at the verge of being demolished.

Today, Griffintown is defined by Notre-Dame Street to the north, McGill Street to the east, Guy Street to the west and the Lachine Canal to the south. It also borders the national historic site of the Lachine Canal and is very close to the Old Port, the international district and the downtown district of Montreal.





Historical background

From the early to the mid-1800s, land reforms and the Potato Famine forced many Irish peasants to leave their homeland for the United States and Canada. Close to half a million settled in Canada and many chose Griffintown as their new hometown. But it was a hard transition, with thousands dying of typhus along the harbour front. “Some who survived the journey settled where they landed, on low-lying land at the edge of the St. Lawrence River” (Richard Burman, 2002). The area around the Canal and the Harbour got populated with Irish, English, Scottish and French Canadian families. They worked on the docks and in the local foundries, and thus working-class communities began to develop in “the core of Montreal’s vast sea-to-rail shipping system” (quebecheritageweb.com). But it was a difficult place to live because the land was low-lying, which resulted in frequent floods and overcrowding (Richard Burman, 2002). On one hand, the area had a slum-like living condition which had a significant influence in Montreal having the worst infant mortality rate at the end of the 19th century (Richard Burman, 2002). Fires were also frequent in the area and a constant threat to the mostly wood-frame buildings. On the other hand, Griffintown was an ideal location for manufacturers because of the Lachine Canal, which was completed in 1825 and provided access to cheap water transportation routes for shipping goods to the interior of the continent (Richard Burman, 2002). The poor residents of the district also provided manufacturers a “pool of cheap labour”, which quickly led to a boom of industries alongside the Canal. Factories soon dominated much of Griffintown’s landscape, a trend that continued until the 1960’s, when the neighbourhood was partly destroyed to build the Bonaventure Expressway. Griffintown landlords demolished many of the original worker’s row houses after the area was re-zoned. Long-time tenants were forced to move away,

and today, the old factories along the Canal remain closed (Richard Burman, 2002).

At present the density of the buildings in Griffintown is considerably low, especially when compared to downtown Montreal. The area has a small number of light industrial and business-related firms with few retail stores, and a small number of sparsely dispersed residents. At the same time, a number of industrial structures, historic sites and buildings including old residencies, the fire and police stations, the Horse Palace and Saint Ann’s church foundations have survived, along with infrastructures including rail lines, roads and the Lachine Canal. Some of the large-scale industrial buildings situated along the south shore of the Lachine Canal have also survived and thus it takes only a little effort to experience a sense of the past while walking on the streets.

Report structure

The document is divided into three parts. The first part describes the phases of the formation of the urban fabric that makes up Griffintown and its surrounding areas. I have gathered a detailed analysis of the old built framework of the area with maps that describe the structure and the history of the area. The second part examines the culture that existed in the area for a long period of time. The third part relates to the current urban context of Griffintown.

The Urban history of Griffintown

The Nazareth Fief

Griffintown's history begins soon after the founding of Montreal, founded by Paul de Chomedey, Sieur de Maisonneuve and Jeanne Mance on May 17, 1642. The ideal location for the first settlers of Montreal was the harbour front, which formed a triangle bound by the St. Lawrence, the Saint-Pierre River and marshland. It provided the future settlers with security (The Montreal Harbourfront: A History). But after just 24 years, that society of first settlers was succeeded by the "Messieurs de Saint-Sulpice," a Paris-based community of secular priests who began fully developing the region (The Montreal Harbourfront: A History).

This foundation of Montreal was followed by a number of years of war, during which a fortification called Ville Marie was built as part of a project to create a French colonial empire (ville.montreal.qc.ca). In 1654, a parcel of land approximately 112 arpents, known as the "Nazareth Fief," was offered to Jeanne Mance by de Maisonneuve in compensation for the money used to build Montreal's first hospital, the Hôtel-Dieu (Denis Delaney, "Griffintown History"). Nazareth Fief was also called "Le Grande Des Pauvres" or "the barn for the poor," as its proceeds were used for the benefit of the poor of the Hôtel-Dieu (Denis Delaney, "Griffintown History"). The title to the Nazareth Fief was granted in 1654, and it became the core of the district later called Griffintown.

When a fire in 1721 destroyed nearly half the town, an ordinance was issued stating that all buildings erected inside the fortifications be constructed

of masonry (The Montreal Harbourfront: A History). But only the more prosperous could afford to obey the ordinance. The poor, who could only afford to use wood, were left with no option but to build their homes outside the walls (The Montreal Harbourfront: A History). Consequently, Montreal's first suburb was birthed within the boundaries of this triangular plot of land. The earliest suburbs to undergo rapid growth lay along the Lachine Canal west of the Montreal city line, along the St. Lawrence River, just east of the city (ville.montreal.qc.ca).

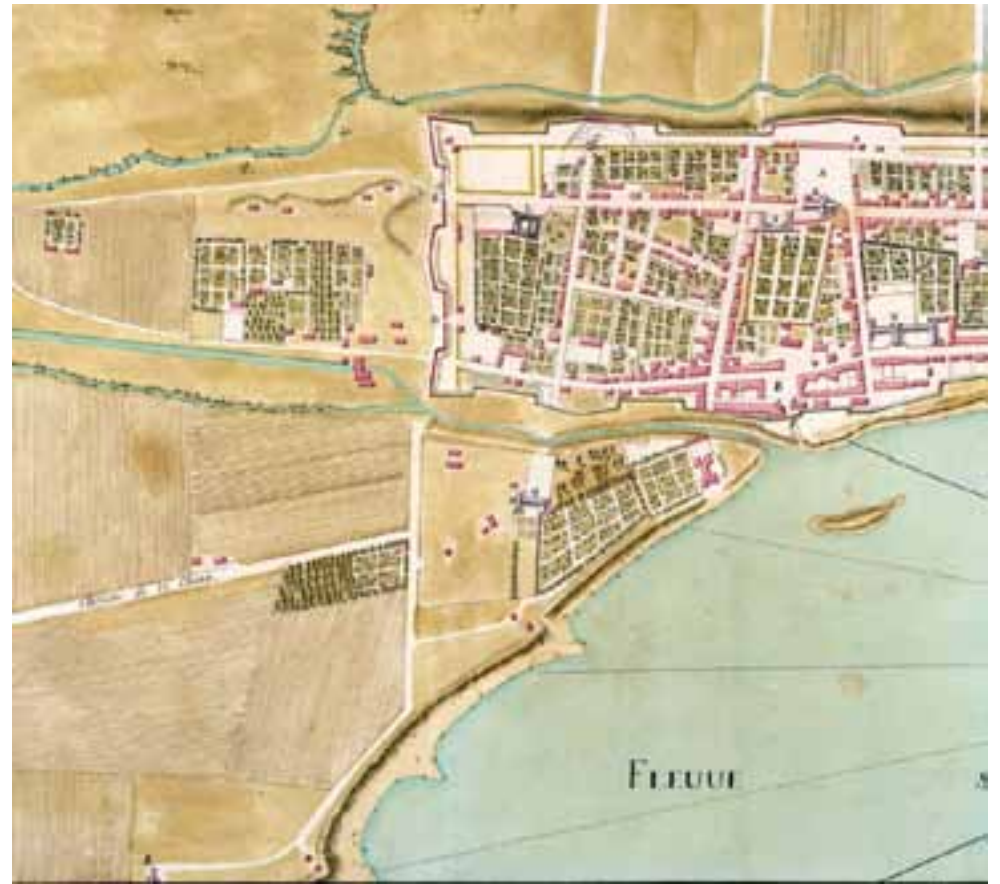


Figure 2.1: Map of Montreal, 1728. Bibliothèque et Archives Nationales du Québec.

The area that would soon become present-day Griffintown is located at the bottom-left of the map. The city's western wall, located on the present day McGill Street which was demolished between 1804 and 1817, will become the eastern boundary of Griffintown (Recollets: Montreal's Downtown Neighbourhoods, 1977). The Recollets Gate is near present day Notre-Dame Street, which will become the northern boundary of Griffintown. A few settlements already exist outside of the city walls in present-day Griffintown (ville.montreal.qc.ca).

During the years between the founding of Montreal and the arrival of the British, Nazareth Fief was primarily used as a farm (Delaney, “Griffinotwn History”).

The land, which begins from the west of the Nazareth Fief from the mountain street, was called Saint-Gabriel. It had belonged to Sulpician priests and a river called the Saint-Pierre once flowed freely over the landscape but disappeared over the 19th century.

The river started from the west, crossed the Saint-Gabriel farm, and after crossing the Nazareth Fief spilled out into the St. Lawrence River (ville.montreal.qc.ca). It had been used as a system of drainage for the arable lands and a source of energy for the water mills, with topography and the hydrographical network directing the river’s configuration (ville.montreal.qc.ca).



Figure 2.2: Nazareth Fief



Figure 2.3: Saint-Gabriel farm



Figure 2.4: Saint-Pierre River

Roads were built through the Nazareth Fief and along the banks of the Saint Lawrence River, the first of which being Notre Dame Street and Wellington Street. These two first roads connected the establishments, served the arable lands and lined up the allotment of first suburbs (Denis Delaney, “Griffinotwn History”).

Wellington Street follows a French colonial road that once linked Old Montreal to Lachine (Marsan, 1981).

- Notre Dame Street
- Wellington Street

In 1791, a protestant Irishman, Thomas McCord, leased the Nazareth Fief from the nuns of The Hôtel-Dieu for a term of 99 years (Recollets: Montreal’s Downtown Neighbourhoods, 1977). He was a businessman and a trader who when attending to business interests in Ireland and England in 1796, put his Montreal’s affairs in the hands of his associate Patrick Langen (Recollets: Montreal’s Downtown Neighbourhoods, 1977). That decision ended badly. While Thomas McCord was in Great Britain, the Nazareth Fief was illegally sold by Patrick Langan to Mrs. Mary Griffin, wife of Robert Griffin, a soap manufacturer (Recollets: Montreal’s Downtown Neighbourhoods, 1977).



Figure 2.5: Notre Dame Street, Wellington Street

The urban formation of Griffintown

Between 1804 and 1817, the fortifications of Ville-Marie were demolished (Marsan, 1981). From this point on, any urban development of Griffintown can be connected with the urban development of the city.



Figure 2.6: Plan of Ville-Marie, 1804. Ville de Montréal.

The red areas on this plan are roads and public spaces that were proposed to be constructed as part of the reconstruction of the city in sections once covered by the fortifications. The blue areas are other building projects which were designed to complement the Commissioners Plan.

The Nazareth Fief was a very popular land because of its strategic location beside the long-anticipated Lachine Canal. Mrs. Marry Griffin signed an agreement with the nuns of The Hôtel-Dieu to draw up a plan dividing the land into streets and building lots (Denis Delaney, “Griffinotwn History”).

Around 1804, Louis Charland, a land surveyor, was commissioned by Mary Griffin to subdivide the land and plan streets for the area (Denis Delaney, “Griffinotwn History”). Today two elements of this plan remain: The new name of the land, Griffintown, in honour of Mrs. Marry Griffin, The orthogonal pattern of the streets comprised of regular rectangular batches without lanes (ville.montreal.qc.ca). This plan is known as one of the oldest in North America and the oldest and first in Montreal (Recollets: Montreal’s Downtown Neighbourhoods, 1977).

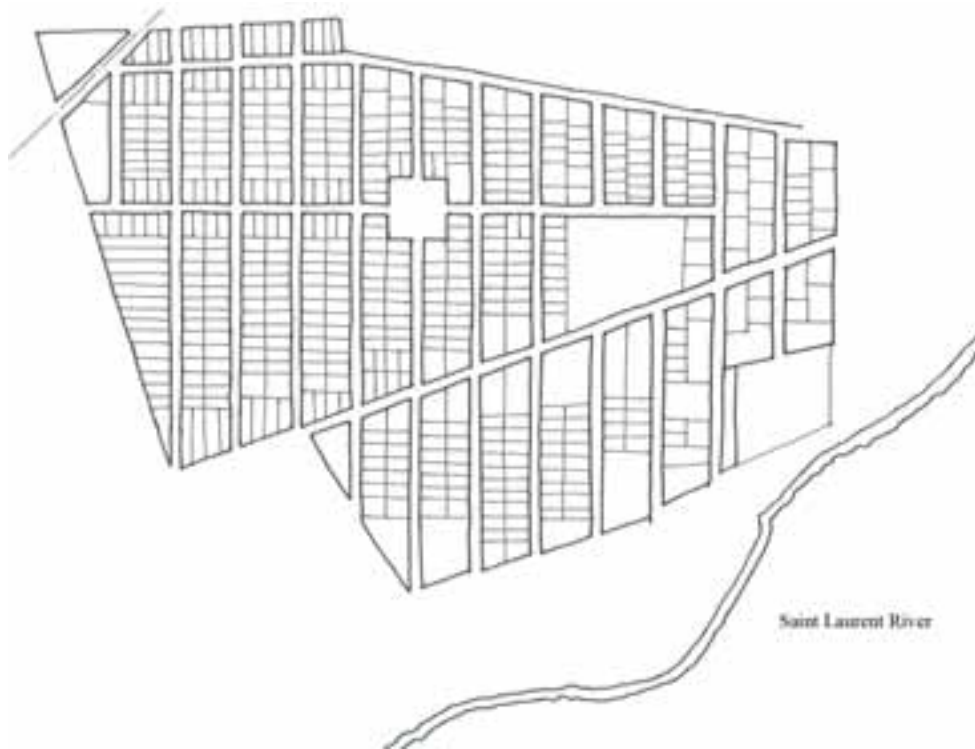


Figure 2.7: Plan of The Nazareth Fief, Louis Charland, 1804. McCord Museum.

In 1805, Thomas McCord returned to Montreal. He sued in order to recover his property. The courts decisions were all in his favour. As a result he was once again in possession of the Nazareth Fief in 1814 (Denis Delaney, “Griffintown History”). He left his name on the last street of the Nazareth Fief, which today is Mountain Street (Denis Delaney, “Griffintown History”). He also erased the name of Griffin Street, which is present-day Wellington Street. But Mary Griffin triumphed in leaving her name on the entire area, which today is called “Griffintown.”



Figure 2.8: Thomas McCord, McCord Museum.

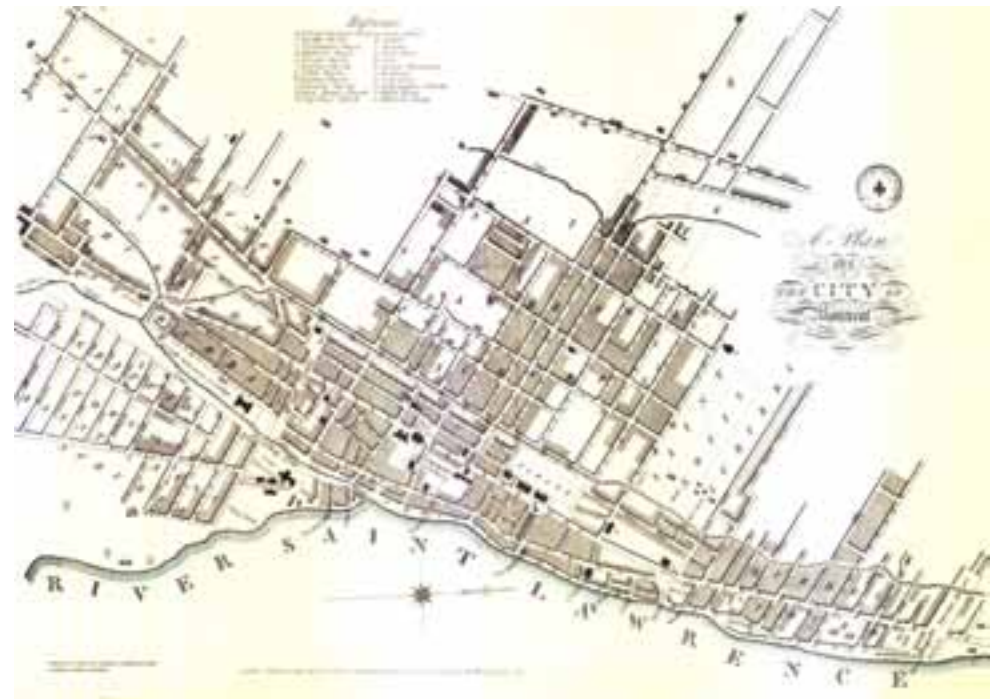


Figure 2.9: Map of Montreal, 1823. Bibliothèque et Archives Nationales du Québec.

Griffintown clearly appears on this map. Although the street grid is mostly intact today, many street names have been changed. As for the North-South streets, the easternmost all exist today under their original names (Ann to Grey Nuns) (ville.montreal.qc.ca). West of Ann, the present day street names have changed.

The birthplace of Canada's Industrial Revolution

Griffintown was Montreal's first genuinely industrial area and the scene of Montreal's entry into the Industrial Revolution (Denis Delaney, "Griffintown History"). According to an 1831 newspaper account, Griffintown had "more machinery in operation within its limits than any other portion of Montreal." The industries in the area have existed, mixed in among the houses from its very beginning. In 1816, William Smith founded a brickyard in the area close to the future streets of Ottawa and Murray and also the arrival of the Eagle Foundry Company introduced a new technology based on iron and vapour in 1823 (ville.montreal.qc.ca). But the most significant event of this period was the construction of the Lachine Canal between 1819 and 1826. It was widely considered the most significant road toward the interior of the country because it was through this road that manufactured goods could be shipped to the west and the west's agricultural products including fur and potash could be shipped to points further east and overseas (An Industrial

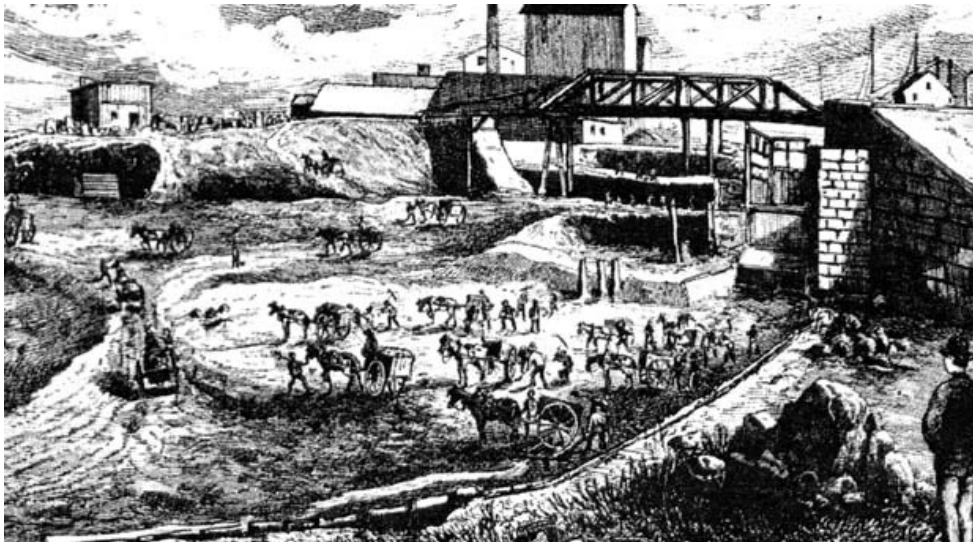


Figure 2.10: With the opening of the Lachine Canal, all the elements needed to trigger Canada's industrial revolution were present by 1841. McCord Museum.

Landscape Observed; The Lachine Canal, 1992).

The construction of the Lachine Canal

The Lachine Canal structured the development of the urban fabric of Griffintown, and thus is fundamental to its layout. Its first layout dates back to 1825, when it permitted ships to bypass the obstacle of the Lachine rapids (An Industrial Landscape Observed; The Lachine Canal, 1992). The Lachine Canal was dug, widened and equipped with several quays, basins and diversion canals. As a result of its development the industries which benefit from the hydraulic power were attracted to the site of the Lachine Canal (An Industrial Landscape Observed; The Lachine Canal, 1992).



Figure 2.11: Plan of the canal proposed by the Sulpicians (not constructed), designed to bypass the Lachine Rapids. Plan by Gaspard-Joseph Chaussegros de Léry, 1733. Bibliothèque et Archives Nationales du Québec.



Figure 2.13: Plan of Montreal, 1846. Bibliothèque et Archives Nationales du Québec.



Figure 2.14: One Of the First images of the Lachine Canal at the entrance where Griffintown will later be, Griffintown is pretty much farmland at this point, About 1850, 19th century. McCord Museum.

In the seventeenth century when Paul de Chomedey de Maisonneuve founded Montreal, the only means of connection in New France were the Saint Lawrence River and its tributaries (An Industrial Landscape Observed; The Lachine Canal, 1992). Since the Lachine Rapids upstream made it impossible to continue upstream from the future site of Montreal, the site that Paul de Chomedey Maisonneuve chose was last stop on the river navigation (An Industrial Landscape Observed; The Lachine Canal, 1992). To travel further inland meant unloading cargo, portaging and reloading the boat. In 1611 A Canal was proposed by Samuel de Champlain as a mean to bypass this natural obstacle (The Montreal Harbourfront: A History).

Nevertheless, in the beginning of the 19th century, the Lachine Canal became

a necessity for the Montréal merchants who sought to make their city one of the main hubs of North American trade. Work began in 1821 and the canal was completed in 1825 (An Industrial Landscape Observed; The Lachine Canal, 1992). It had three major functions: waterway, provider of hydraulic power and industrial impact. The most significant industries in the city of Montreal and in Canada were attracted to the waterway and the energy it provided as it also facilitated inland navigation (The Montreal Harbourfront: A History).

The first canal enabled the passage of small flat-bottomed sailboats. It had to be enlarged twice in response to the increase in shipping and in tonnage. The enlargement of the canal was carried out from 1843 to 1848 and from 1873 to 1884” (pc.gc.ca).



Figure 2.15: The Lachine Canal

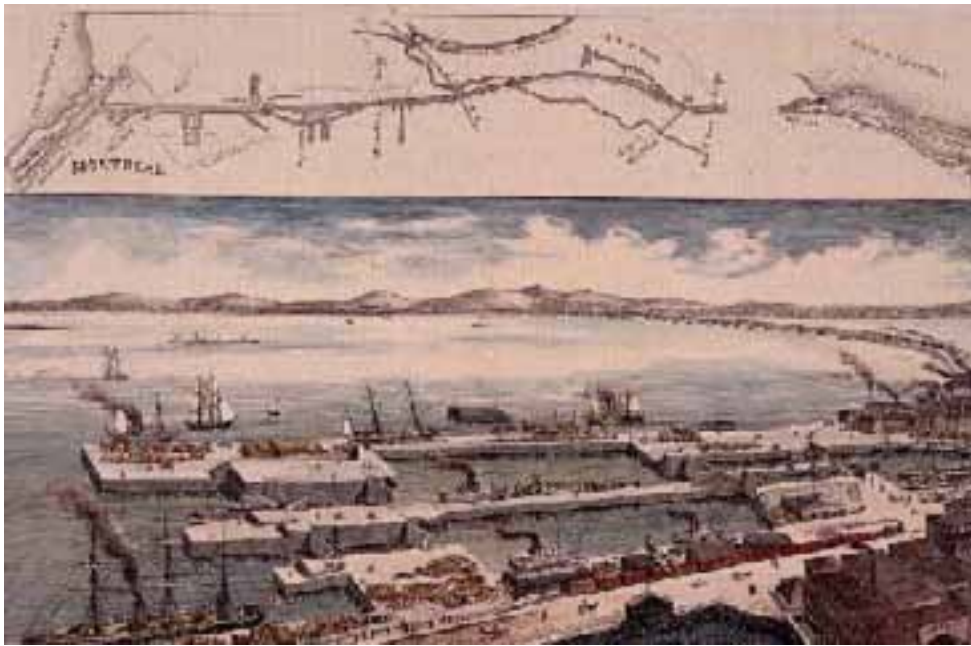


Figure 2.16: The Lachine Canal, Montreal, 1877. McCord Museum.

The proximity of the port, the use of the canal for commercial shipping, and its large capacity led naturally to the development of adjacent industry based at first on coal and iron, later on grain and sugar (ville.montreal.qc.ca).

The construction of the Lachine Canal supported the arrival of other factories into the district and the establishment of a population of Protestant and Catholic Irish immigrants (Denis Delaney, “Griffintown History”). Westbound navigation was facilitated by the hard work of over 1500 men, who were mainly Irish (ville.montreal.qc.ca). Workmen assigned to the digging of Lachine Canal set up roots in this area and then sought to work in the local companies and the port. Recent immigrants of English and Scottish origins also established themselves in Griffintown, in the suburb of Recollets and in the new district of St. Anne, forming working-class ethnic ghettos (ville.montreal.qc.ca). At a time when transport and communication were sparse, industry played a very important role on the structure of the

settlement and on the topographical orientation of urban development (An Industrial Landscape Observed; The Lachine Canal, 1992).



Figure 2.17: Griffintown is located on the north-
ern bank of The Lachine Canal

Figure 2.18: The “Fauberg of Recollets” develops
in the west of Ville-Marie

The Canal was originally built for small, flat-bottomed boats, at 14.6 meters wide and 1.5 meters deep, with seven cut-stone locks and a towpath (The Montreal Harbourfront: A History). It was the first link in a chain of canals that allowed shipping access to Lake Superior, and acted as a corridor for urban development in the west of the Island of Montréal (The Montreal Harbourfront: A History). But with traffic growing sevenfold between its opening in 1825 and 1840, canal administrators found the waterway overcrowded and boats traffic too slow through the seven locks between Montreal and Lachine. Thus, the canal was widened, creating three hydraulic sites around the three main pairs of locks in the Montreal portion (historycooperative.org).



Figure 2.19: One lock installed at the mouth of the Lachine Canal and the second lock near the buildings of Saint-Gabriel farm

With the widening of the canal, basins were created for the unloading of goods. In 1848, the first rectangular basin, Saint-Gabriel Basin, was dug at the site of 1500 Ottawa Street, along the current Rue du Séminaire (lesbassins.ca). It included an artificial island used to transfer logs that had been rafted up the Lachine Canal. In 1853, The Saint-Gabriel Basin was expanded in order to accommodate the increase in commercial activities on the canal (lesbassins.ca).

Transportation routes built around Griffintown

Montreal's first railroad was laid down in 1847, just to the north of Griffintown, and began operating the same year. The main terminal for the railway from Montreal to Lachine, named Bonaventure station was built on Saint Jacques Street in 1847 (Marsan, 1981). The Lachine Canal was also widened for the second time in 1847. The arrival of the Montreal railway, the Lachine Canal of 1847, and Bonaventure station, located at the west of the Chaboillez Square, opened up the surrounding area of the Lachine rapids and increased the importance of the city as a port (ville.montreal.qc.ca). The district of Griffintown was expanding.

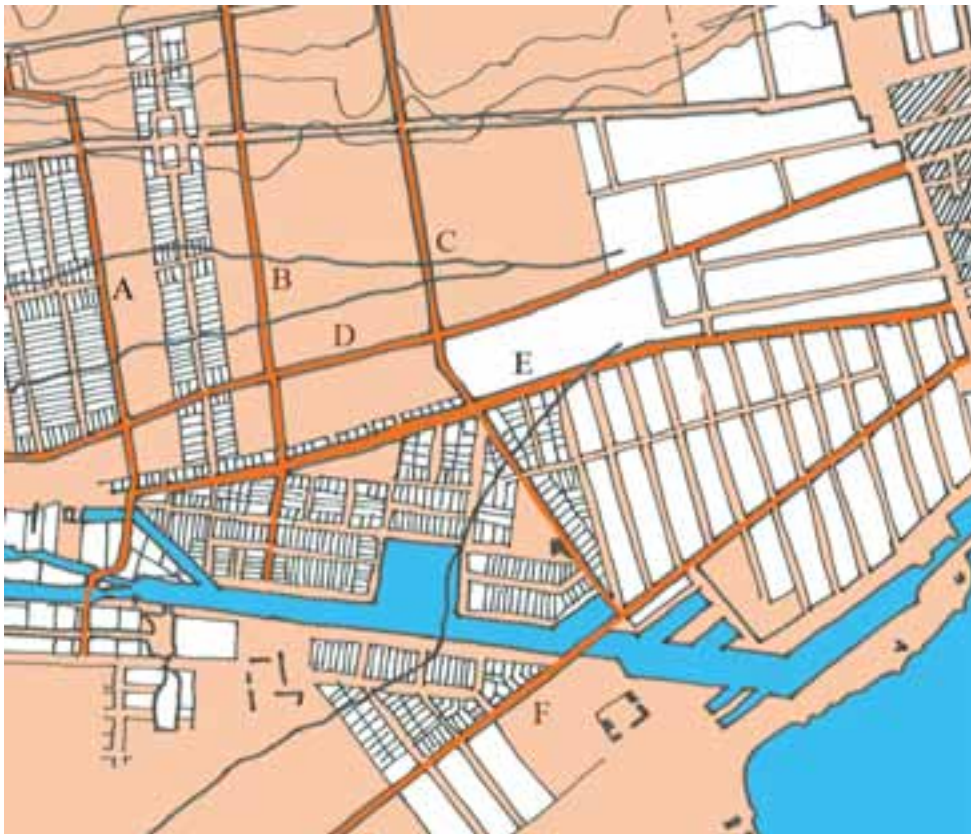


Figure 2.20: Montreal and Lachine railroad define the boundaries of Griffintown, 1851. Bibliothèque et Archives Nationales du Québec.

The enlargement of the Lachine Canal



The access to Notre-Dame Street improved with the arrival of the transportation corridors: Seigneurs Street connected the Sulpicians' farm to Mountain; Guy Street connected the Lachine Canal to Cote-des-Neiges Street and to Mount Royal, Mountain Street adopted the angle of the agricultural allotment of the Sulpicians and then connects to Wellington Street (ville.montreal.qc.ca). William Street connected Saint Gabriel lock to Place d'Youville (ville.montreal.qc.ca).



A: Guy Street
B: Mountain Street
C: Lords Street
D: Notre Dame Street
E: William Street
F: Wellington Street

In 1848, a network of canals along the St. Lawrence River and the dredging of the river permitted navigation of the steam-boats on the waterway from the Atlantic Ocean to the Great Lakes (Marsan, 1981). Within two years, Montreal was a transit point between ocean-going vessels and riverboats. Combined with the improvement of the port facilities and the canals of the Saint Lawrence River, the railway “proved to be the most precious ally of the Montreal metropolis” (Marsan, 1981). The railroad enabled access to areas inaccessible by boat and was not affected by the cold, icy winters the way that rivers are. It also facilitated communications between Montreal and New York (Marsan, 1981).

In 1853, Montreal experienced its first link with an ice-free port, via a second road constructed by a connection with the Grand Trunk Line, which linked Montreal with Portland, on the coast of Maine (Marsan, 1981). Grand Trunk Line would also, around 1855, lay the tracks for a rail line between Toronto and Montreal and by 1859 had constructed the first bridge over the Saint Lawrence River (Marsan, 1981). It was called Victoria Bridge and at the time was the longest bridge in the world, spanning a huge river that had never been bridged. The bridge provided the first fixed link from the Island of Montréal to the mainland, enabling railroad connections with Portland, Maine (ville.montreal.qc.ca). All the construction and activities related to the transportation routes took place around Griffintown.



Figure 2.21: Griffintown develops and forms, with the old suburb of Récollets and part of the point Saint-Charles, the Saint Anne district.



Figure 2.22: Composed of a metal tube supported by limestone piers, Victoria Bridge would be described as the “eighth wonder of the world” in 1873. McCord Museum.

Saint Gabriel’s lock and Hydraulic power

With the widened Lachine Canal providing a water core, the canals’ locks providing hydraulic energy, and rail transportation, the time was right for the first factories to be established (quebecheritageweb.com). Saint Gabriel’s lock powered some of the old factories in Montreal and large businesses thrived on the canal’s shores (pc.gc.ca). The hydraulic power provided by the canal led to the establishment of the Redpath sugar refinery and the Ogilvy flourmill near Saint-Gabriel’s lock in 1920 (ville.montreal.qc.ca). In 1846, Montreal’s most important steamboat builder, Augustin Cantin, occupied more than four hectares around this lock. His shipyard in the Saint-Gabriel



Figure 2.23: Saint Gabriel’s hydraulic lock

sector was one of the first to put a marine engine in an iron-hulled ship and was the most important shipyard in Montréal (ville.montreal.qc.ca).



Figure 2.24: Augustin Cantin’s Canada Marine Woks, Montreal, about 1855. McCord Museum.

Tragic events in Griffintown

From 1845 to 1880, various tragic events happen in Griffintown. In 1845, fire destroyed all the buildings between Queen Street and Nazareth Street, north of Wellington Street. In 1847, a flood of Irish immigrants released from the quarantine station came to Montreal aboard three large steamers on the St. Lawrence between Grosse-Île and Montreal (ville.montreal.qc.ca). Others arrived directly from Quebec City. No adequate arrangements had been made to receive the flood of the destitute and ill. But it was too late. The government erected large sheds at Windmill Point, on the shores of the St. Lawrence, to house those who had fallen sick from typhus (ville.montreal.qc.ca). Thousands died at Windmill Point in that terrible year, despite the sacrifices of men and women from medical and religious communities in Montreal, a number of whom also died while helping the Irish in need (ville.montreal.qc.ca). In total, 6,000 people died from typhus in the area and were buried in a common grave. Monumental stones mark the commemoration of the Irish famine victims “who fell to typhus in the land of hope,” placed there in 1859 by Irish labourers working on Montreal’s Victoria Bridge. They hauled an enormous rock to a spot near Windmill Point “in memory of these souls” (mccord-museum.qc.ca).

In 1852, a fire from a carpentry shop burned down more than half of Griffintown and all the buildings on the Queen Street and Shannon Street, in what is known as “the north and the south of Wellington Street burn” (ville.montreal.qc.ca). In 1853, the area is described as being “entirely built up” (Denis Delaney, “Griffintown History”). The number of factories in Griffintown did not cease growing until 1861, and the industrialization of the area transformed the landscape (ville.montreal.qc.ca). The population boomed

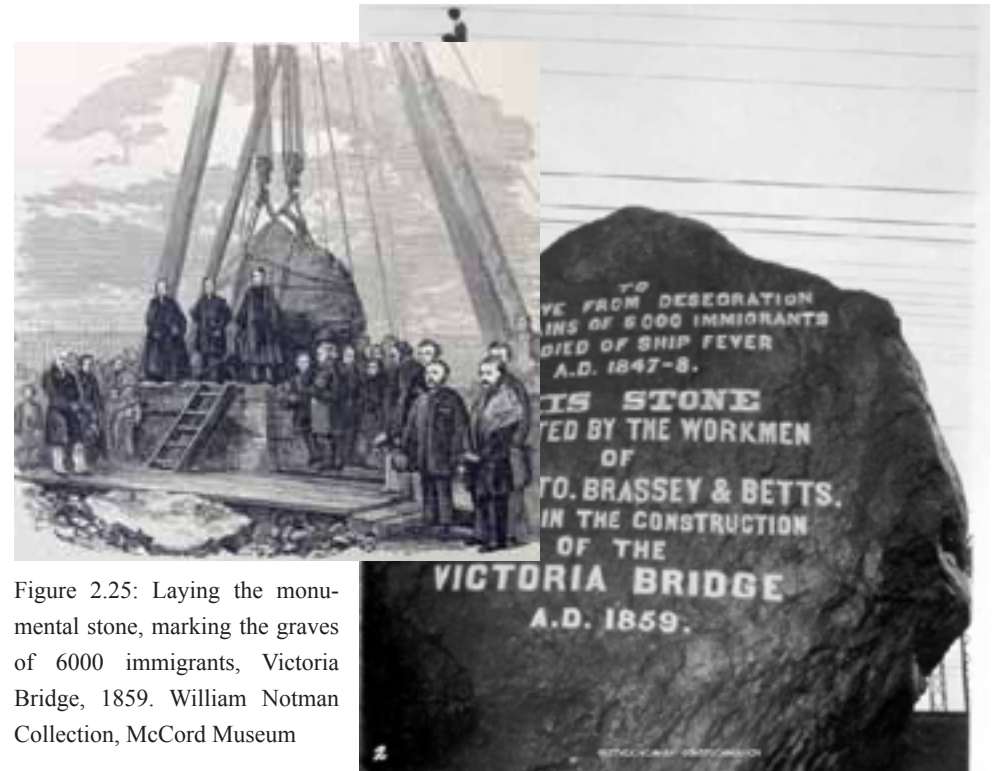


Figure 2.25: Laying the monumental stone, marking the graves of 6000 immigrants, Victoria Bridge, 1859. William Notman Collection, McCord Museum

along with factories and industry, with a workers’ district extending south of Griffintown, on either side of the canal. It was called Saint Anne and by 1871 it harboured 18,639 inhabitants, becoming quickly overcrowded with the number of people working in shipyards and factories growing larger than its population 40 years before (Marsan, 1981). Eventually the district became degraded to an extent characteristic of 19th century industrial cities, with long hours of work; low salaries; and the employment of women and children as a source of cheap labour.

In 1875, workers tired of poor working conditions went on strike, as they had in 1843 (one of the first labour strikes in Canada, by maltreated workers employed in the widening of the Lachine Canal). In 1876, poverty was

extreme and the death rate was very high. Approximately six decades later, in 1944, several buildings on the south side of the intersection of Ottawa and Shannon Streets were destroyed due to the worst air disaster on the island of Montreal (ville.montreal.qc.ca). A Liberator bomber crash-landed shortly after takeoff from Dorval airport and 15 people were killed (dungen.ca).



Figure 2.26: Campbell & Jones, Canal Basin, Saw Works, (1831-1899). McCord Museum.



Figure 2.27: Montreal Warehousing Co. on the Lachine Canal. about 1875. McCord Museum.

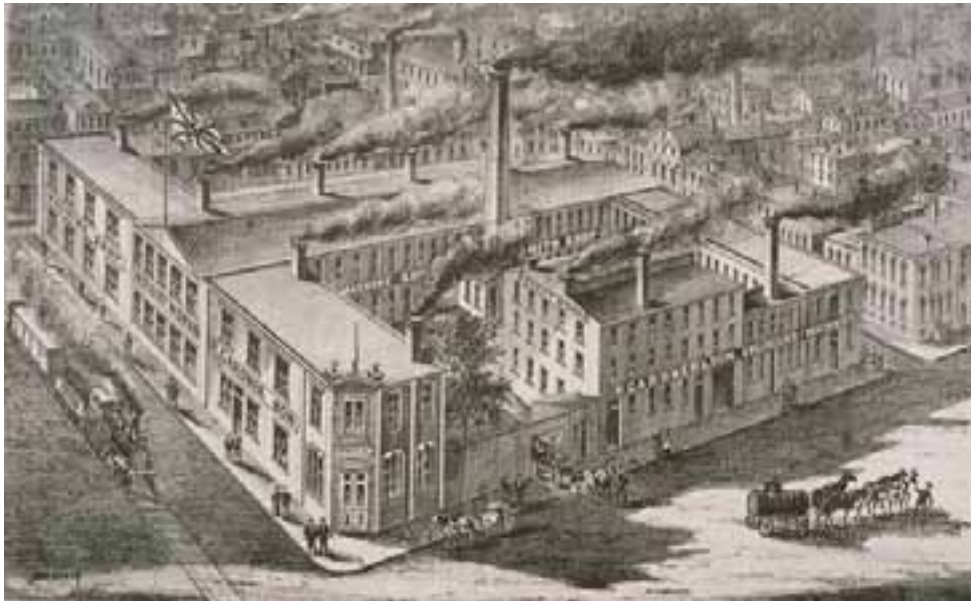


Figure 2.28: R. Gardner and Son, 1874. McCord Museum.

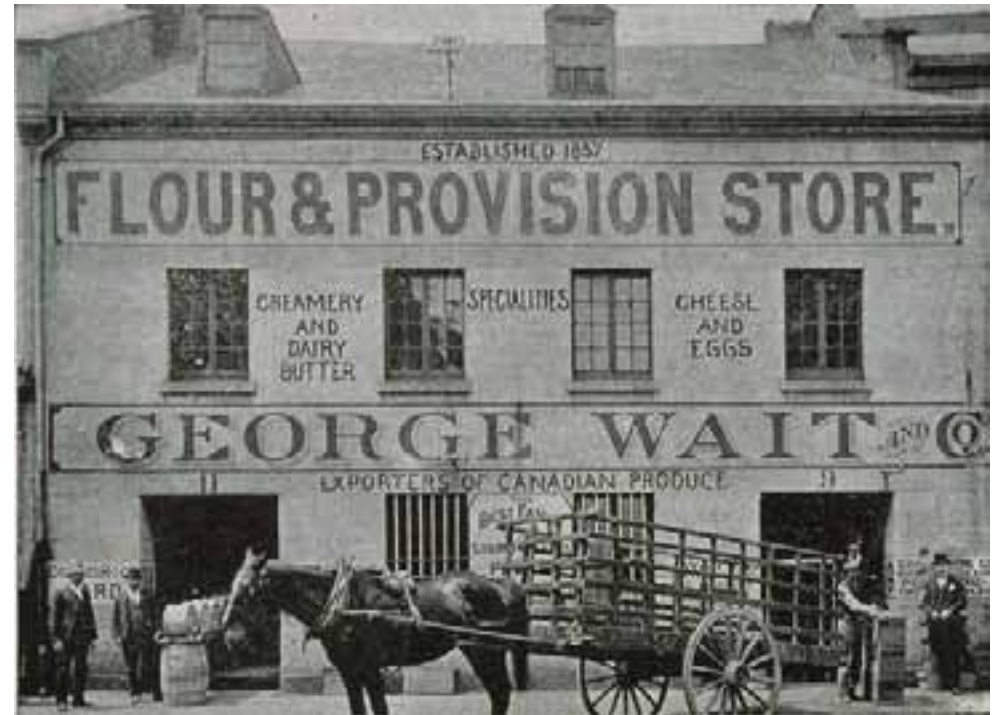


Figure 2.29: George Wait & Company. McCord Museum.

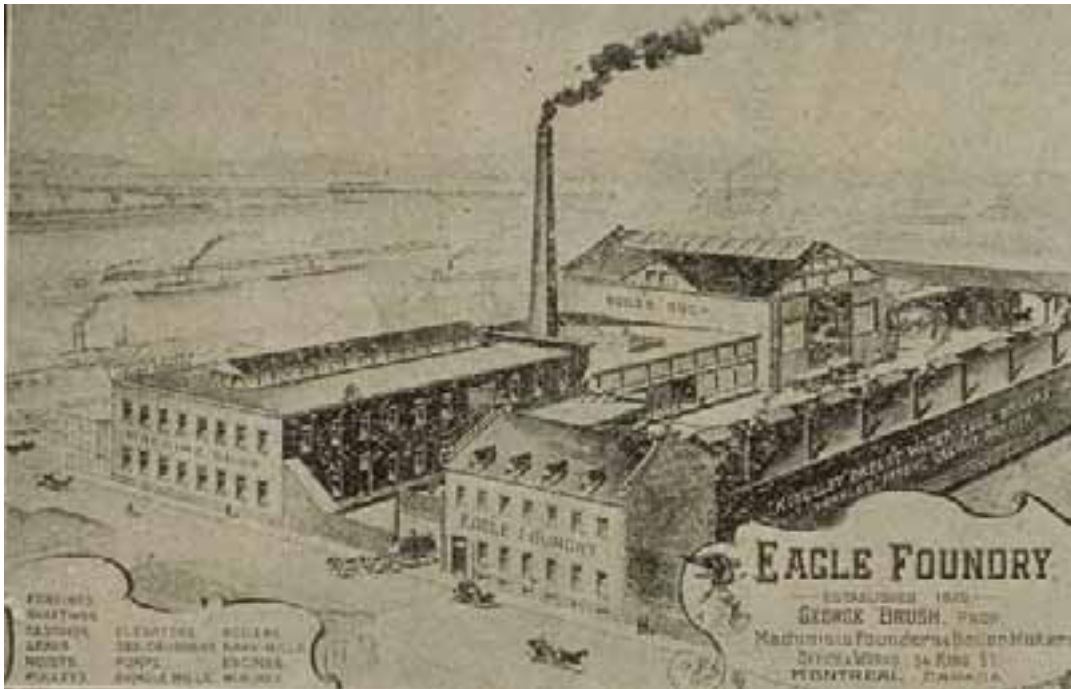


Figure 2.30: Eagle Foundry, King Street, 1905. McCord Museum.



Figure 2.31: Clendinneng & Son , William Street, 1891. McCord Museum.



Figure 2.32: Esplin, G. & J. Co., Duke Street, 1891. McCord Museum.



Figure 2.33: Montreal Light, Heat & Power Company, Ottawa/ Prince, 1911. McCord Museum.



Figure 2.34: Canada Cold Storage Co., 1905. McCord Museum.

Basins of the Lachine Canal

In 1880, Basins 1 and 2 were created by dividing the Saint-Gabriel Basin. Basins 3 and 4 were dug to the west, near the intersection of Guy, William and Ottawa streets, between 1873 and 1885, following the expansion of the canal (dungen.ca). With the four basins between Lachine Canal and Ottawa Street, the mooring surface for ships increased and the piers became crowded. At the same time, warehouses were built to provide sand and gravel storage, reservoirs, cranes and access ramps (lesbassins.ca). In the same year, the factories of Griffintown that were connected to the markets of Mid-West Union states by the waterway now had a new mode of transport: the railroad. Henceforth, the Grand Trunk Company was to run to Chicago (ville.montreal.qc.ca). A new era began.

Industries and the railroad

From 1880 to 1915, the Grand Trunk Railway was built, making Griffintown and the surrounding areas Canada's industrial centre. More Irish settled here, and the neighbourhood's population reached an estimated 30,000 at the turn of the century (ville.montreal.qc.ca). But the housing situation got worse as rapid immigration continued. In 1861, the Grand Trunk was Montreal's largest industrial employer. A third of the company's manufacturing jobs were located in Point Saint Charles, shaping the town's growth. (quebecheritageweb.com). Grand Trunk became an enormous machine of transshipment, the most modern and effective in North America. This created a very important industrial growth in Griffintown.



Figure 2.35:

A: The Grand Trunk Railway Company constructs workshops at Point-Saint-Charles,

B: The Victoria Bridge

Economic development was booming and coal and steel were highly desired materials lacking in Montreal, so it was necessary that they be delivered by boat and rail (Marsan, 1981). During this period, the basins of the Lachine Canal became the port for the entry of coal and steel. Coal was used as fuel for producing gas for heating and lighting in Griffintown. The New City Gas Company burned coal to produce gas, which was used to light Montreal's streets before the advent of electricity (Denis Delaney, "Griffintown History"). The same carriers introduced other raw materials to Montreal. Products such as grain were transported by train and vessels to Griffintown (ville.montreal.qc.ca).

The number of industries continued to increase in Griffintown. Two breweries in the area, Dow and Williams, became major around 1850, while four flour

mills of the Lachine Canal declined. This created a dramatic impact because the flour mills represented more than half of Canadian exports in 1860. The total industrial capacity moved toward Ontario and Manitoba in 1880. The metallurgical industry continued to increase, while also including the loss of the large Clendinning's Foundry on William Street. That loss was made up for with the arrival of the Phoenix Bridge, as did the fast expansion of companies such as James Robertson Co. and the J. Waterson & Co. on Murray Street. The chemical industry, especially acids, manure, oils and painting, was booming and the district was to witness the emergence of new industrial sectors, particularly the textile company of Gault, and telecommunications of the large Northern Electric factory, in 1906. By contrast, the industry of wood and furniture manufacturing was declining. (ville.montreal.qc.ca)



Figure 2.36: The Peel basin



Figure 2.37: Several basins and quays of transshipment and storage of goods are arranged around Saint-Gabriel lock and around the Peel basin

“In Griffintown lots were small and shallow, often with openings leading to courtyards, where horses and carts could be sheltered. Accommodation and amenities were limited, luxuries and green spaces rare or none existent: yet though pared to a basic minimum these dwellings retained a human scale, creating neighbourhoods to which many could feel a very real attachment” (Gubbay, 1981)

Figure 2.38: Houses for Mr. Meredith, 1903. McCord Museum.



Community conditions

From 1880 to 1915, the majority of utility services at the community level were already built. Schools for Anglo-Protestant girls and Anglo-Catholics increased and the Young Men’s Club and a nursery were important and innovative assets. But at the residential level, the majority of the houses were in poor conditions (ville.montreal.qc.ca).

Throughout the 19th century, public health conditions in Montréal were among the worst of any industrialized nation. The situation for working-class families was deplorable; garbage removal was inefficient and drinking water was difficult to obtain (Ames, 1972). In 1897, Herbert Brown Ames, a shoe manufacturer and social reformer carried out a sociological study that found living conditions around Griffintown very difficult. His studies showed the area was overcrowded, half the living units were without toilets and there was no enough green space for the inhabitants of the area. The typical home in the area was a five-room flat in a terrace of duplexes (Ames, 1972). Ten percent of the total housing stock in the area surveyed by Ames consisted of “rear tenements,” which were either ancient wooden cottages of



the rural habitant type or a two story buildings encased in refuse bricks and reached by rickety wooden stairs or galleries.

Figure 2.39: Houses for Mr. Meredith, corner of Barré and Aqueduct Streets, 1903. McCord Museum.



Figure 2.40: Griffintown and the Lachine Canal, 1888. McCord Museum.

“The floods brought a carnival atmosphere to the Griffintown, for eduring them, people made the best of a bad situation by boating around serenading one another in song accompanied by guitars, fiddles and ‘music boxes’. This helped them to forget that a big task lay ahead, the yearly ‘clean up’ after the waters receded” (Gubbay, 1981).

The population of the area during 1880 to 1915

The census of 1911 shows that Griffintown lost a great part of its Anglo-Protestant female population during this period as this group migrated to new district. Catholic Irish men became the principal residents of the sector. A very few French Canadians were scattered in Griffintown, especially in the northern fringe. Since the beginning of the century, the first Jewish families and Italians settled temporarily in Griffintown. (ville.montreal.qc.ca).



Figure 2.45: Griffintown 1896, The birth of the industrial town, Sight of the sector and the basins of the Lachine Canal in 1896. McCord Museum.

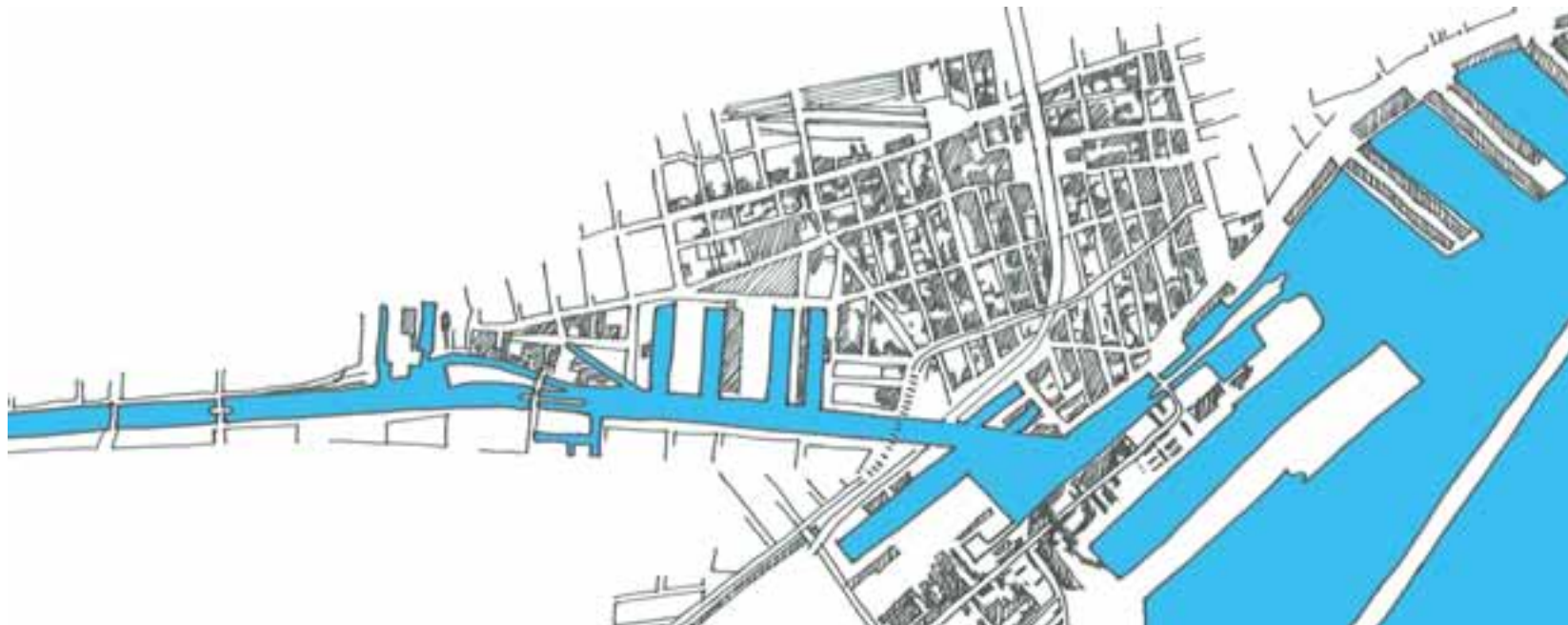


Figure 2.46: Residential districts surround the sector of Griffintown planning.

Arrival of new factories

Beginning in 1920, industrial activity in Griffintown declined. In spite of that, some industries expanded, the National Breweries in particular, which rebuilt the Imperial Brewery (Dowes) in 1909 and the Dow Brewery in 1924 (ville.montreal.qc.ca). These two giant factories dominated the district and filled two blocks between Notre Dame and William Streets (north and south) and between Murray and Inspector streets (east and west). The Canadian Paint factory and Canadian Paper Board factory, located at the west of the Saint-Gabriel locks, also increased their manufacturing areas (ville.montreal.qc.ca). One of the rare companies that was established in the area during this time was Drummond McCall, importer of British steel on Wellington Street (the current Smith Street) (ville.montreal.qc.ca). Meanwhile factories were converted into warehouses. Installations including the flour mill Glenora Millets of A. W. Ogilvy, Augustin Cantin's shipyard, and Canadian Marine Works were demolished (ville.montreal.qc.ca). A new flour mill, Robin Hood Millets, was established on the site of Cantin's shipyard. Certain companies sold their buildings and moved, including Northern Electric factory, which moved to the southern part of the Lachine Canal (ville.montreal.qc.ca). In 1921, the Saint Ann District of which Griffintown was formed, posted the second highest rate of mortality by tuberculosis in Montreal. In 1922, Griffintown's infant mortality rate was the fourth highest in Montreal. To live in Griffintown was clearly unhealthy, but the Catholic Irishmen remained there because of their institutions. A majority of the population left the district. The future of Griffintown was abruptly decided in the Great Depression, when all industry slackened. Because of the economic failure, qualified jobs grew rare, and as a result living conditions became very difficult for the residents (ville.montreal.qc.ca).

The central station, the CNR viaduct

After the formation of the Canadian National railways in the 1920's, which incorporated the Grand Trunk and other railways, there were plans for a new central station to be built (Marsan, 1981). The Canadian National railways built a downtown terminus "central station" requiring a viaduct running through the center of Griffintown (ville.montreal.qc.ca). With the construction of this viaduct, Griffintown was divided into two (east and west) parts. The viaduct destroyed two blocks between the Dalhousie and Nazareth Street. The old Haymarket square, between William and Saint-Paul Streets, was cut in half (Denis Delaney, "Griffintown History").



Figure 2.47: An elevated railway crosses Griffintown to connect the Victoria Bridge to the central station.

The viaduct connected the central station located at the foot of Mount Royal Tunnel to Victoria Bridge. It was a little over two miles in length and was bordered by oblique streets. Its construction began from Saint Antoine Street and continued towards the south (ville.montreal.qc.ca). Wellington Tunnel,



Figure 2.48: Construction of the railway viaduct leading to Central Station had the effect of dividing Griffintown in two, 1941. Ville du Montreal.

which was built as part of the public works effort of the Great Depression, was the first of three under the Lachine Canal (ville.montreal.qc.ca). Streetcars and automobiles ran through four tunnels, but Wellington Street did not connect directly to it, rather, Smith Street was widened and extended to connect with Wellington Street (ville.montreal.qc.ca). In 1952, Bonaventure Station was demolished to make way for the joining of Colborne and Windsor Streets and the construction of the Canadian National Railways Express and Communications building (ville.montreal.qc.ca).



Figure 2.49: The railway, arranged in the center of Wellington Street, cuts the bond between Peel and De la Commune Streets. The Wellington Bridge is replaced by one tunnel dug under the Lachine Canal.

Decline of industries and the residential district

From 1960 to 1990, dwellings and social reference marks began to disappear from Griffintown with the new industrial zoning of the sector and demolition of key institutions, which forced long-time tenants to move away. In 1963, Montreal changed the zoning of Griffintown to a strictly industrial zone. The timing was ironic; coming just as industry was fleeing. Meanwhile, new industry was not drawn to the lack of space for modern factories, as existing dwellings deteriorated, were condemned and turned to rubble (ville.montreal.qc.ca). As of 1964, the Lachine Canal was no longer in service. Certain parts of the Canal, in particular between the port and Wellington Street, were protected (ville.montreal.qc.ca).

When the Champlain Bridge opened in 1962, the National Harbours Board that had built the bridge and Montreal officials added the Bonaventure Autoroute to the city's master plan. That provided direct highway access from the South Shore to downtown Montreal (montrealroads.com). Griffintown stood in the path of the expressway, thus a vast part of the area was razed to make way for the Bonaventure expressway. All the small islands between Nazareth Street and Duke Street were demolished. Today the expressway, at the north and west of the Victoria Bridge, transitions to a viaduct that carries A-10 over the Port of Montreal and the Lachine Canal. As it crosses the Lachine, it runs parallel to the CN railroad right-of-way (montrealroads.com).



Figure 2.50: The expressway



Figure 2.51: View of Bonaventure Expressway. Ville du Montreal.

At the end of 1960, the population of Griffintown was in decline. The schools and churches of the district had closed their doors. Saint Ann church was closed in 1970 and was demolished to great heartbreak for the Irishmen of Montreal (Denis Delaney, “Griffintown History”). Even the presbytery, which the residents failed to save as a community centre or low rent apartments for the elderly, was demolished (Denis Delaney, “Griffintown History”). Saint Ann nursery on the corner of the Ottawa and Eleanor streets was demolished in 1970 and soon Griffintown was a barren wasteland of vacant lots that had replaced dilapidated buildings. In fact the entire block of Murray Street was turned into a lot by Dow brewery (Denis Delaney, “Griffintown History”). Many dwellings were condemned because of their poor condition, while others were burned down. Despite the dismal outlook, the

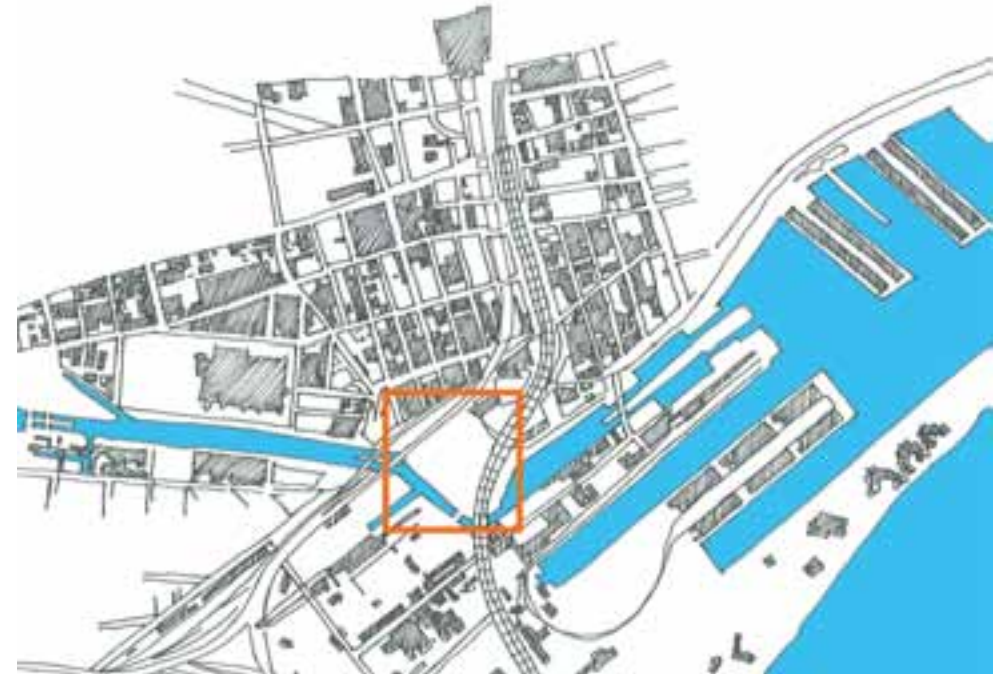


Figure 2.52: The Peel basin is partially embanked.

houses on the east coast of Mountain Street, between Wellington and Ottawa were restored (Denis Delaney, “Griffintown History”).



Figure 2.53: Saint Ann's Church built in 1854 and demolished in 1970. McCord Museum.

Parks Canada took over the Lachine Canal in 1975. A bicycle path was constructed along its banks and partial excavation of the first two locks was undertaken in 1984 (pc.gc.ca). A postal office is built on old basins 1 and

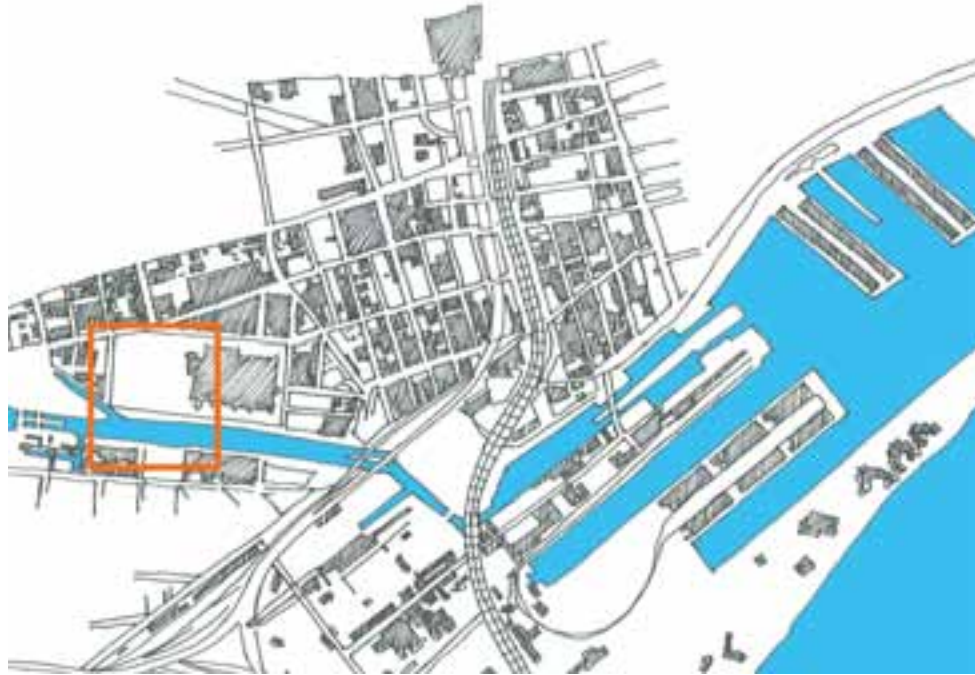


Figure 2.54: A postal sorting office is built on old basins 1 and 2.

2 and The Saint-Gabriel hydraulic basin, diversion canals and four basins downstream from locks are now embanked.

From 1990 to the present, various projects encouraged the development of Griffintown's historical and development potential. In 1992, new master guidelines that presented concepts of sustainable development, of inheritance and of urbanity of the area around the Lachine Canal and the adjoining neighbourhoods were published. Urban planning and other operations undertaken by the City of Montreal between 1997 and 2002 involved this

area (ville.montreal.qc.ca). In 2002 the Lachine Canal reopened to pleasure boating (pc.gc.ca). Between 1997 and 2002, Peel basin is cleared and the Lachine Canal reopened to recreational boating.

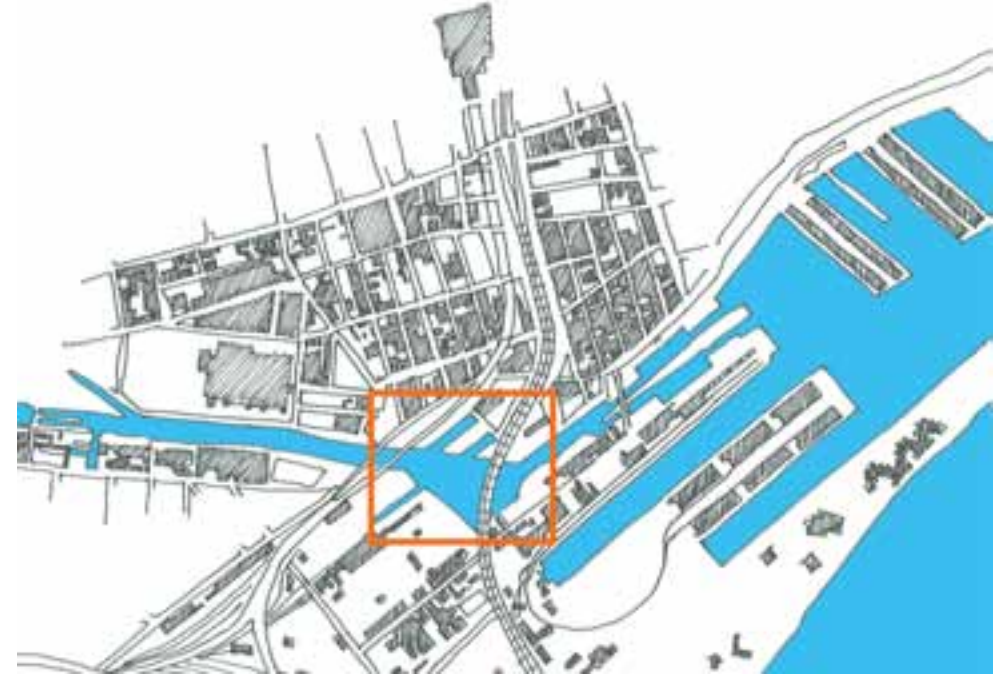


Figure 2.55: Peel Basin is Cleared.

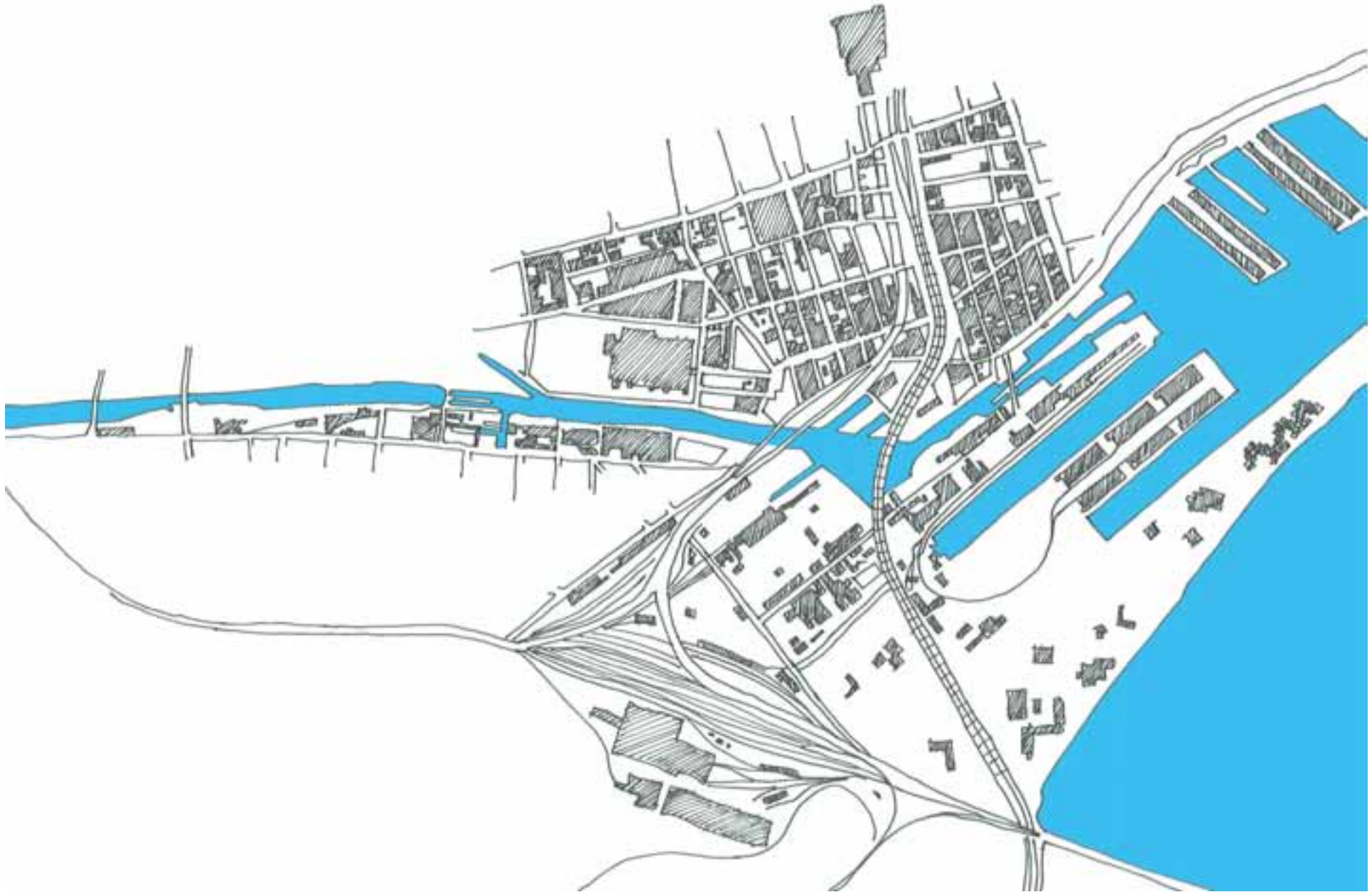


Figure 2.56: Areas pertaining to Canada Post, as are several other areas of small size, are vacant and available for development.

Griffintown In evolution:



Figure 2.57: Griffintown in 1804.



Figure 2.58: Griffintown in 1914.



Figure 2.59: Griffintown in 1949.



Figure 2.60: Griffintown in 2007.



1. Natinal Light, Heat and Power Company

2. Gasometer

3. Where the Liberator bomber crashed in 1944

4. Robertson Thos & Co. Ltd.

5. J & R Wier Ltd. Machine Shop

6. G & L Company

7. Darling Brothers Foundry

8. M. L. H. & P. Company Central Station

9. Black Bridge Tarvan

10. Terminal Warehouse

11. Leo Leonards Horse Palace

12. Saint Ann's Kindergarden

13. O'conell Plumbing

14. Fire Station No.3

15. Borden's Milk Garage

16. McDonnell's Coffee pot

17. McCormick Michinery

18. Comfort Station

19. Gallary Square Playground

20. St Ann's Church

21. Presbytery

22. St Ann's Girls Academy

23. Quinn Cartage Company

24. Oka Sand and Gravel Company Ltd.

25. Dow Breweries Ltd.

26. National Brewery Garage

27. Griffintown Boys and girls club

28. St Helene School

29. St Helene Roman Catholic

30. Presbytery

31. St Edward Anglican

32. National Brewery

33. Lowneys Chocolate.

34. Haymarket Square

35. O'Connell Public Bath

36. James Robertson Company Ltd.

37. William Lunn Protestan School

38. King's Transfer Reg'd

39. Canada National Rail General Office

40. Borden's Milk

41. Canada Cycle and Motor Company

42. McRobert Spring Service

43. Kander Paper Stock

44. Provincial Transport Company

45. Stables

46. Where Mary Gallagher was Murdered

47. H. Turner Barrels Yard

In his History of Montreal, Steven Leacock describes Griffintown:

“...the area west of McGill Street, between the new railway and the new canal. This Wretched area, whose tumbled, shabby houses mock at the wealth of Montreal, was the first of our industrial slums, the gift of the machine age...” and, the unhappy settlement of Griffintown...built on low land for working class, who must take what they can get...”

Chapter Three

Griffintown resident Denis Delaney has had many bad memories associated with poverty, hunger and alcoholism in his family which plagued his father, his brother and himself. “There was a two-year period when the only food I got was what I was able to scavenge out of other people’s garbage,” he recalls. “I’ll never forget the first time I ate lobster, I rooted it out of the garbage behind Mother Martin’s restaurant; they always had great garbage.” Nonetheless, he said, “the memory of Griffintown is a nurturing thing for me. It’s a place to go, physically and mentally, when I am trying to work something out. I am one of the future ghosts. I have told my wife that I want to be cremated and to have my ashes sprinkled all over Griffintown.”

Over the course of several hundred years, people left Ireland for the land which was first inhabited by aboriginal people. It soon became by turns a French colony and a British colony and ultimately it became a Canadian provenance called Quebec (mccord-museum.qc.ca).

Irish men and women were forced to leave their small island in the North Atlantic because of many factors. First, the English invaded and occupied Ireland in the 17th century. After occupying the country they imposed severe restrictions on Irish Catholics and Presbyterians that resulted in extensive poverty. This situation was worsened by evictions, epidemic diseases and the final disaster of 1845-1850, the Great Potato Famine (mccord-museum.qc.ca).



Figure 3.1: The Great Irish Famine.



Figure 3.2: The Great Irish Famine.

Many Irish farmers, laborers, servants, builders and all kinds of artisans emigrated to Quebec, which was more vast and had a rigorous climate and rugged geography. After the 1759 Conquest of New France, a few of the more fortunate Irish also came to help govern and run the new British colony, some of who were members of the elite “Protestant Ascendancy” (mccord-museum.qc.ca). Griffintown and nearby areas around Montreal’s port were among the many places that thousands of 19th-century Irish workers and businessmen flowed into. With the assistance of Irish labour, Griffintown became the hub of Quebec’s emerging industrial economy. Many homes, churches schools and taverns were gradually built by prosperous Irish families (mccord-museum.qc.ca). A unique Irish Quebec urban culture was born in Griffintown as a result of new traditions created by the Irish immigrants and their descendents. These immigrants preserved old traditions while creating new ones in their work, play and prayer adapted to Montreal’s complex, bilingual society (mccord-museum.qc.ca).

The great famine of the 1846 was a disaster for Irish culture: Over a million and a half people died and two million left the country never to return in the next five to 10 year period. This completely shook the social and cultural fabric of Ireland, eradicating for some time the social structure based. People fled from the isolated land, leaving behind haunting landscapes.



Figure 3.3: The government inspector’s office, 1850, 19th century. McCord Museum.

Those who didn't fall victim to the famine managed to make their way to the coastal immigration point where they passed a minimum health check. New York and Quebec were among the most ideal locations, but in crossing the Atlantic, the Irish immigrants were essentially trapped for several months. They were weak and sick from many diseases and naturally, considering the conditions aboard small vessels crossing the Atlantic, mortality rates were high. Many died in hospital sheds erected near the landing places. Many of those who survived went on to live in Griffintown, many in renovated hospital sheds bought by the Grand Truck Railway for their workers around 1853 (Richard Burman, 2002). Some of these workers were employed by the Grand Truck Railway to build Victoria Bridge and others worked in the nearby yards and repair shops. This area became known as Victoria Town or Goose Village and had close ties with Griffintown across the canal (Richard Burman, 2002). Goose Village was occupied by people of all nationalities. But Goose Village was completely destroyed and replaced with a parking lot and a stadium because of Montreal World's Fair of 1967 (Richard Burman, 2002).

The Irish in Montreal worked the longest hours, at the toughest manual tasks, with the least rest on the canal. The second phase of work for Irish immigrants appears to be their movement into the industries of transport around Montreal, particularly with horses, including shoeing, feeding, maintaining and driving horses. A landscape with architectural inspiration and roots of forms from the industrial cities of Ireland and England began to take shape. Thus, Griffintown came to have the same basic structure as other Victorian industrial cities.



Figure 3.4: The Irish Jaunting Car. 20th Century Griffintown in Pictures.

The general pattern of Griffintown formed into red brick row houses inhabited by working class people whose main social focal points were the church and other institutions characteristic of similar neighbourhoods in Ireland and in Britain.

In 1817, Irish Catholic immigrants gathered for church service in Montreal for the very first time (Richard Burman, 2002). As the story is recalled in Griffintown history, Father Richards Asopission, who served at Bon-secure church in old Montreal, noticed several new people at a Sunday mass. After finding out that this group of 40 people were Irish, he arranged a weekly service for them. By 1829, the church on Notre Dame Street, their new parish seat, was overflowing from the growing population of Irish immigrants (Richard Burman, 2002). A grand gothic church, Saint Patrick's, was built on



Figure 3.5: St. Ann's Church. 20th Century Griffintown in Pictures.

the hill in 1847. But the church was too far for Griffintown Irish Catholics. As a result, in 1854 Saint Ann's church was built in Griffintown which was a significant focal point of its community.

Saint Ann's was a missionary church, meaning that most of the priests were in training to work in foreign countries, mostly in Asia. The priests of this church were closely involved with the community of Griffintown, which boasted many other nationalities in addition to Irish Catholics. That was

mostly due to the area's location, near the port, and its affordability. As a result, at the beginning of the 20th Century, many Jews and Italians also lived there, but eventually moved to the other neighbourhoods to settle. A strong French population also once inhabited the area and built their own church, called Saint Edwards Anglican church and a school, William Lunn School (Richard Burman, 2002).

In 1914, the Catholic School Commission was pursued by Father George Daily to build a kindergarten and a day nursery in Griffintown. Mother Mary Julienne, a superior general of the sisters of the provenance, was asked by Father George Daily to lead these new centers (Richard Burman, 2002). She agreed, and her kindness and sympathy for the mothers who had to earn their daily bread led her to train the nuns to act as social workers. They were often out in the community, helping those in need. The kindergarten had a nursery



Figure 3.6: St Ann's Academy girls' school. 20th Century Griffintown in Pictures.



Figure 3.7: St Ann's Kindergarten and Day Nursery. 20th Century Griffintown in Pictures.



Figure 3.8: St Ann's Kindergarten sisters'. 20th Century Griffintown in Pictures.



Figure 3.9: The Boxing Room. 20th Century Griffintown in Pictures.

and it also served the first and second grade children. The nuns' lived adjacent to the kindergarten (Richard Burman, 2002).

Children learned boxing at Saint Ann's school and on the streets of Griffintown. Brother Norbert's choir became known through all of Canada as one of the top boys' choirs (Richard Burman, 2002). If children could sing, they joined the choir, otherwise they were placed in Brother Francis' altar boys group (Richard Burman, 2002). Saint Ann's academy for girls was built in 1861 adjacent to the church. The "congregation of Notre Dame Sisters" taught at the school and helped at the church. The nuns were known to be very devoted to the children, bringing children into the classroom from the schoolyard to keep them warm, where they would stay until five o'clock, when school was finished (Richard Burman, 2002).



Figure 3.10: St Ann's Boy's School. 20th Century Griffintown in Pictures.

The fire station was also very community-involved. The firemen white-washed a building every June. They would build an altar, and the priest would stop the annual procession with the congregation to hold their service there (Richard Burman, 2002).

The amateur theatre was also an integral part of Saint Ann's young men's society. On a Saint Patrick's Day weekend people would fly in from all over the city to the Monument National on Saint Lawrence to watch their plays. But Saint Ann's men's society had a broader mandate which was conceived in 1885. The mandate was meant to promote a Catholic spirit among young men and the moral and mental improvement of its members. To this end, their building was erected with a bowling alley and a library with good lit-

erature. There were debating teams and lectures by various professionals. There were social and religious functions and of course participations in the Saint Patrick's Day parade. They excelled at sports; most of the players of the famous **Shamrock Lacrosse** team were part of this society. Because of World War II the society suspended its activities in 1941, but other groups within the parish continued to provide entertainment in Saint Ann's parish hall (Richard Burman, 2002).



Figure 3.11: St. Ann's Boys' School hockey team. 20th Century Griffintown in Pictures.

Sports became a part of the Griffintown social fabric as well, with the boys and girls club bring instrumental in the training of young people, many for whom it was the sole place to receive family resources including dentistry and medical checkups (Richard Burman, 2002). Trades and sports originated

here, along with the great boxers of Montreal. In the summer a trolley car went up to the mountain and young people could spend the day at the campground at Beaver Lake (Richard Burman, 2002). The original Griffintown boys-only club had its humble beginning at the Nazareth Street mission and grew over the years to be the boys' and girls' club in its own building at the corner of Shannon and Ottawa (Richard Burman, 2002). People played hockey on Basin Street Park as rough as they could; and baseball; for that was also a part of the Irish sentiment – to be strong and tough to survive in Griffintown.



Figure 3.12: The Clubhouse. 20th Century Griffintown in Pictures.

Ethnicity of the population

As described earlier, Griffintown was originally settled primarily by Irish Catholics. The Irish Catholics' dominance continued throughout the 19th century, especially after the immigration of Irish Catholics into Montréal both before and during the potato famine crisis of the late 1840's in Ireland (mccord-museum.qc.ca). But, as the 19th century progressed, the small Canadian population began to grow in size and a good number of Anglo-Protestants also moved into the neighbourhood (mccord-museum.qc.ca). By the turn of the 20th century, while Irish Catholics remained the largest group in Griffintown (approximately one-third of the population) the Anglo-Protestants and Canadians each comprised approximately 25 per cent of the population.

Time capsule

In 1984, a time capsule was buried in Griffintown, on the canal bank. It is marked by a simple stone, with no identification or marks. It is described as an aluminum canister about 6 to 7 feet circular with a whole cover and a gasket that residents were asked to put artifacts within. “Leo’s wife put in a tea set, people put in coin newspapers of the day, their own personal impressions of what it was to live in Griffintown. In 2084 it will be opened.” (Denis Delaney, Interview 2007)



Figure 3.13: simple stone covering the time capsule

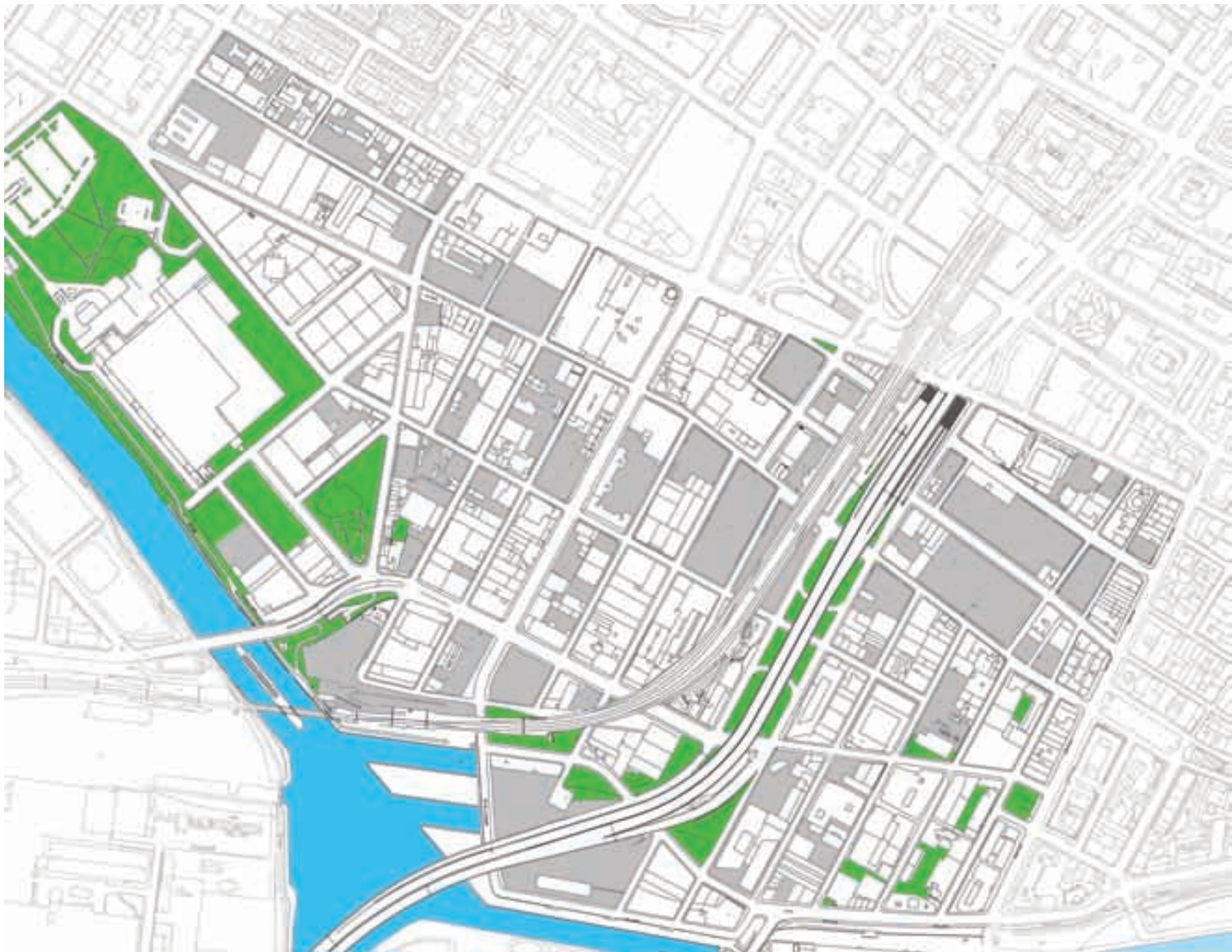
Chapter Four



Reminiscence of Griffintown today

At present, Griffintown hosts several vacant spaces used as storage and parking lots. Very few people live in the district. In recent years, a few small mixed-use buildings have been renovated in the area. Units of old industrial buildings have been recycled for use as dwellings or offices. The public spaces, roadways and the pavements are in poor condition.





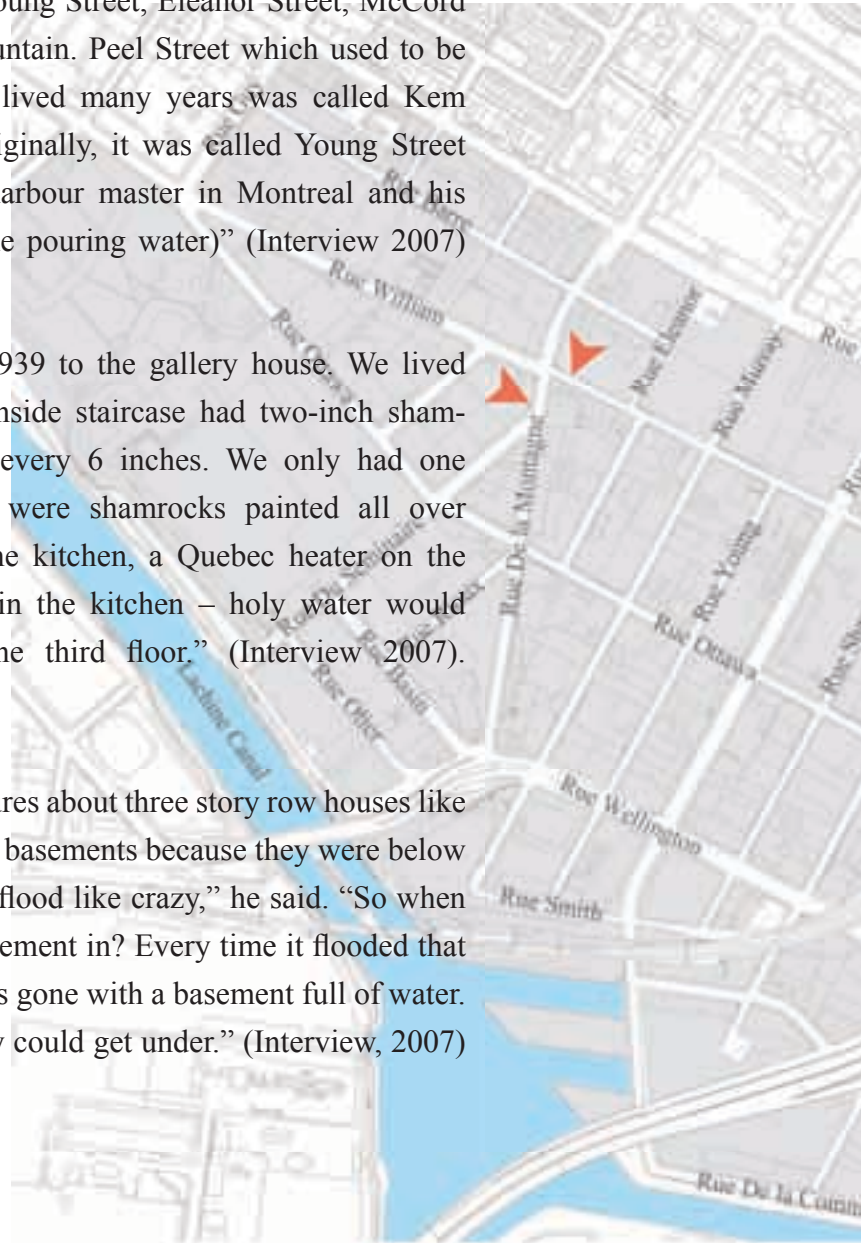
- Empty Plots
- Green Spaces
- Lachine Canal

Denis Delaney was born in Griffintown in 1933 and lived there until he was in his late 20's. He shared personal accounts of his life that hint to the larger history of Griffintown:

“Over here is a typical block, this block right here, is a typical type of housing that was in Griffintown when it was first built. Griffintown got its name from Mary Griffin whose husband built all these houses all over Griffintown. What you are seeing here extended all the way up to Notre Dame Street all along Ottawa street, Young Street, Eleanor Street, McCord Street, this is McCord now called Mountain. Peel Street which used to be called Cobber, Young Street which I lived many years was called Kem Street, which was a German name originally, it was called Young Street after John Young who was the first harbour master in Montreal and his statue is down at the old port (Neptune pouring water)” (Interview 2007)

“We moved to 344 Young Street in 1939 to the gallery house. We lived on the second and third floors. The inside staircase had two-inch shamrocks all the way up on both sides every 6 inches. We only had one closet in the 11-room house. There were shamrocks painted all over the closet wall. Two stoves, one in the kitchen, a Quebec heater on the second floor landing, we would boil in the kitchen – holy water would freeze in the glass receptacle on the third floor.” (Interview 2007).

Delaney said one of the interesting features about three story row houses like the one he was raised in was the lack of basements because they were below level of the Lachine Canal. “It used to flood like crazy,” he said. “So when they built these houses – why put a basement in? Every time it flooded that you are going to end up after the flood is gone with a basement full of water. There was a crawling space so that they could get under.” (Interview, 2007)







The Griffintown Horse Palace has been an Irish-owned stable since the 1860s, and is one of the last remaining stables in central Montreal, Delaney continued. Today, it houses horses that pull tourist calèches in Old Montreal. But 150 years ago, they called it the Griffintown horse palace. “Back in the 1800s as I said there were 3 storey row houses all through Griffintown and there were lanes periodically that went in so you could get into the back of the house. And what you had behind was where people had wooden sheds where they would keep their personal horses, so there were a lot of horses when I was growing up in the thirties and forties there. There were still (a) hell of a lot of horses and I remember from my bedroom of four and half years of age when they were bringing wagons out of this lane” (Interview, 2007).

Many of Delaney’s memories are tinged with sadness for the town he remembers. “I can remember these 2 trees sixty five years ago.”



The wooden sheds were also used as storage for ice. “Mr. Stacy was the ice man; back in the thirties and forties nobody had a refrigerator,” Delaney said. “We all had ice boxes so Mr. Stacy would go up to the ice house... there was an ice house in the winter, they would go to the Saint Lawrence and cut out these big huge slabs of ice and put them in the big huge shed up there, in the wooden shed, and they would put slabs of ice there, put on top of it, put another on top of it, and this would keep the ice cold. In the summer Stacy would go up with his horse and wagon buy some ice, go down Griffintown selling them.” (Denis Delaney, Interview 2007)

Horses and self-sufficiency were part of the town’s culture, Delay explained. “There were a lot of people who used to go around with horse and wagons, selling stuff. There was the iceman, in the summertime there was a guy going around selling fruit and vegetables, there was the milk man, and there was the bread man. All these had horses and wagon. There was a rag and bullman he would go around and buy old rags” (Interview 2007).



This is called the number 3 fire station which is located on the corner of Ottawa Street and Murray Street.





Griffintown was like any other town, with its share of murders and crimes, some of which continue to mark the cultural imprint of Griffintown to this day. As a result of these conditions, what many consider to be the first police station in Montreal was built on Young Street. “In the evening of June the 26, 1879, in the corner on Mary and William Street there were two women living together and they were both prostitutes. During the evening they met a young fellow by the name of Michel Flannigan, one of the problems that came up is that young Michel Flannigan was more interested in the older woman Mary Gallagher than younger one Susan Kennedy. Susan became extremely jealous and when Mary fell asleep in a drunken stew bar Susan took the axe and cut her head off. The story goes (that) every seven years Mary Gallagher would come back in search of her head.” (Interview 2007)

“This particular building, the door on the left is where they brought Susan Kennedy after they got her, after she killed Mary Gallagher,” Delaney said. “that’s where they brought her in, she was in the basement, there were cells down there and Susan Kennedy, her husband who is a bit soft, two women followed her upstairs. The inquest not the trial but the inquest took place up there and if you walk up there now there is artefact stuff.” (Denis Delaney, Interview 2007)

“This is the police station that is now being used by Centaur Theatre. This is where they do the rehearsals and also where they make their stage, like if they need a Grecian column that looks like its marble it’s made here. (Denis Delaney, Interview 2007).





Walking down the streets of Griffintown with Delaney is like walking back in time. “There was a lady down here who ran a blind pig. Blind pig: during the forties and thirties on Sundays because of the Catholic Church no liquor at all was allowed to be sold on Sunday. None! Well Irish men like to drink. So there were certain houses where people lived and they had an illegal place where they sold beer, so you would come in around the other side and you would go in their house and you would buy the beer on Sunday even the police used to go to buy beer and drink it.” (Denis Delaney, Interview 2007)



The canal is twelve kilometres in length and it extends west from Old Montreal to Lachine. The Lachine Canal was a vital element in Montreal's economic growth.



CN Railway



Darling Foundry Complex 1890's

The Foundry was built by the Darling brothers, as a complex of brick loft factories and office houses. It is one of the oldest businesses in Griffintown. The company was very successful from the start and added buildings over the years. The Darling foundry closed its doors in 1991; it's now an art gallery and restaurant.





This building is a 3-storey brick welding shop with residences above. when new it served as a blacksmith shop.



This building is a 3-storey brick loft with finely-detailed facades. In good condition, it serves a national food-catering business.



An unusually fine complex of grey stone houses, they enclose an intimate courtyard that is reached via a tunnel entrance from King Street. In the 1860's, these houses served as married men's quarters. In the 1870's it was used as a technical planning office for the expansion of the Lachine Canal. Around 1900 the buildings were taken over by a dairy products firm (Recollets: Montreal's Downtown Neighbourhoods, 1977). The buildings are a landmark because they stand at the head of what used to be "Foundling" Street; the oldest part of William Street and they form an important part of the townscape associated with Old Montreal.



This building is a 4-storey loft that features a richly-decorative, brick facade. Its Duke Street front, faces the site of the old Haymarket Square.



Together these massive stone warehouses stand prominently at the heads of de la Commune and Brennan Streets and they make up a picturesque landmark. A century and a half before their construction, the Chapel of St. Ann stood here, marking the edge of the Commune Street. They have served various warehousing businesses.



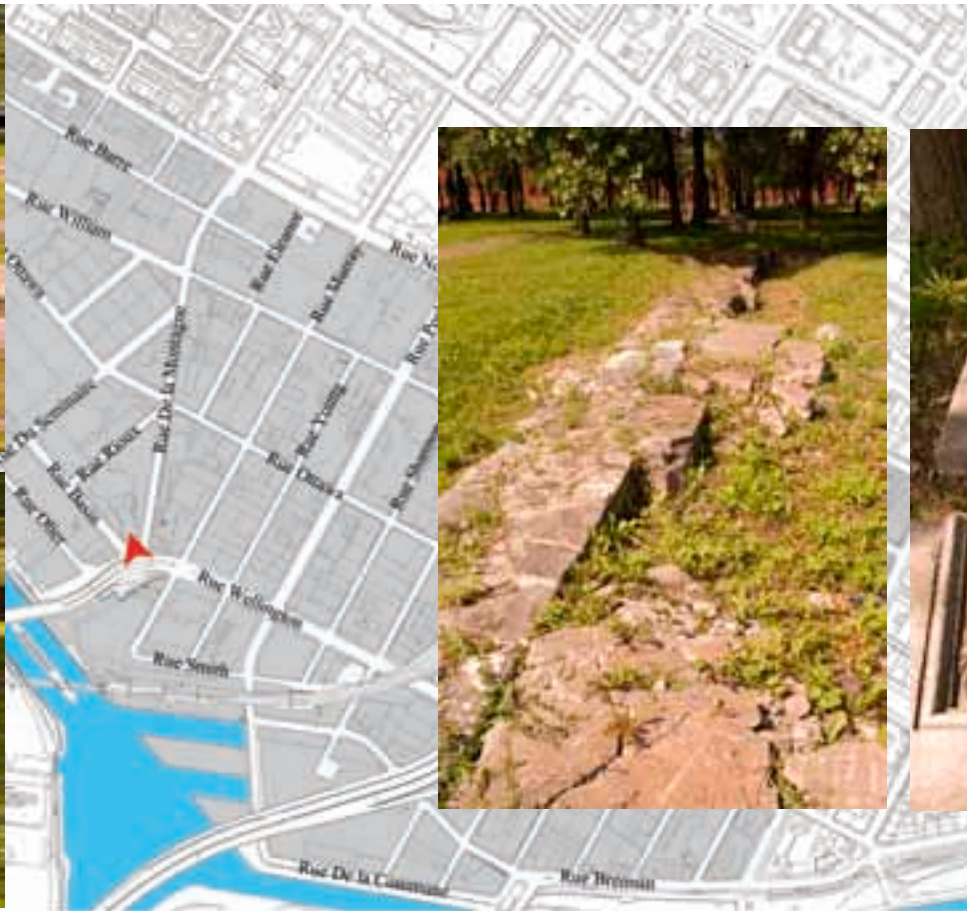


This is the New City Gas Company which was built in 1859. This building is one of the oldest surviving factories of Montreal. Before the advent of the electricity, the coke was burned in the New City Gas Company to light Montreal's streets (quebecheritageweb.com).

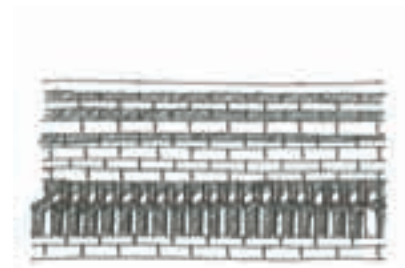
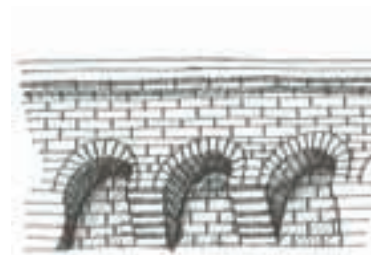
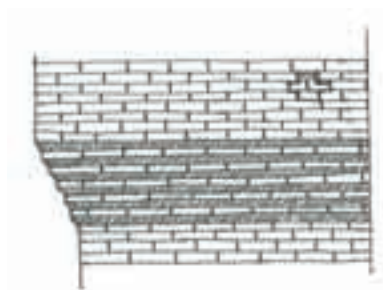
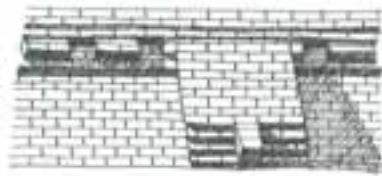
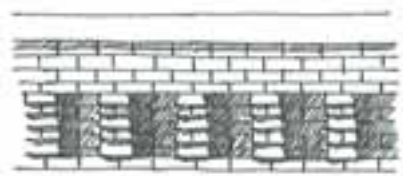
St. Ann's Church Historic Site

There was a church once located in this park which was called St. Ann's Church. It was the heart of Griffintown's Irish Catholic Community. The Church was built in 1854 and it became Montreal's second English Catholic church after St. Patrick's church.

The Population of Griffintown started to decline after the World War II and the City of Montreal determined that the area had no longer a chance as a place for people to live. As a result of the loss of the population, St. Ann's church lost most of its parishioners and it was demolished in 1970 (quebecheritageweb.com). The site of the church is a park today and there are a number of benches located at the same direction as the church. There are also some remains of the foundation of the St. Ann's Church existing in the park and they bring back the memory of the building which once stood up there.



Brick Works in Griffintown:



Signs in Griffintown:



Chapter Five:

Conclusion:

This study is an attempt to illustrate a different perspective about the urban fabric of a specific neighbourhood in Montreal that has caught the interest of many developers and has been slated for imminent development. Plans are currently being developed, the purpose of which is to remodel and transform the area into a residential and commercial district. Several sections of this study provide short overviews of the history of the urban fabric of the area, of the community which once lived there, and of what is still remaining in the area. The goal is to demonstrate that some artefacts are worth preserving in Griffintown. The artefact system of Griffintown represents the viable community which once inhabited it.

In the early 19th century, Montreal entered a new phase in its development as the largest North American city in the British Empire, becoming, from an eighteenth century fortified town, a flourishing merchant city. One of the most significant events in the history of Montreal is the construction of the Lachine Canal, which became the focus of industrial interests and as a result witnessed increased shipping. Montreal thus became one of the largest ports in North America. The area surrounding the Canal had the highest concentration of industrial buildings in the country. Building types were diverse, and included factories, elevators, warehouses, mills, and refineries. The first industries to locate along the canal were flour mills, nail manufacturers, foundries and sawmills. The presence of newly introduced factories changed both the texture and the appearance of the surrounding areas of The Lachine Canal. Factory owners came to the city to benefit from its pool of cheap, unskilled labour. At the same time, a large population of immigrants

and workers were attracted to the city as a result of the work opportunities provided by the presence of factories. The area around the Lachine Canal was quite densely built; Griffintown and Point-Saint-Charles were transformed into working-class neighbourhoods and became home to Irish immigrants fleeing the potato famines and generations of their descendants. Residents of these neighbourhoods worked on the construction of the Lachine Canal, the Grand Trunk Railway and the Victoria Bridge.

Until it was transformed into an industrial neighbourhood during the preparation for Expo '67 in the mid twenty century; Griffintown was a residential predominantly Irish Working class neighbourhood. Griffintown residents faced many social problems, such as child labour, poor working conditions, long working hours, unsanitary living conditions and high mortality rates. Griffintown fell apart as its inhabitants moved from the area, and most homes were torn down, along with St Ann's Catholic Church, which was turned into a park. Cold water flats have been replaced by luxury condos and the Lachine Canal flows only for pleasure craft. Foundries have been turned into art galleries and theatre spaces. However, a number of historic sites and buildings survive today.

The industrial boom lasted well into the 20th century until changes in industrial production caused many of the factories to relocate to larger and more modern facilities and other forms of transportation made business less reliant upon water and rail. The remains of Montreal's early period can still be seen today in Griffintown. Many of the original factories and warehouses are being converted for residential and other commercial uses or have been demolished.

The orthogonal streets pattern in Griffintown is a very important aspect of the built heritage of the neighbourhood and Montreal as it is one of the oldest in North America. Actually the old Montreal's general street pattern begins from these grids. This street pattern is therefore priceless. There are still numerous buildings in Griffintown which have heritage value and are nineteenth century civic buildings or houses. They are the evidence of the core of the old village that the immigrants used to inhabit and shouldn't be destroyed.

Today, Griffintown is a place where remnants of life can be found and overwhelming sense of history still exists. Although the viable community of Griffintown has vanished, it is very much alive in the memory of its former residents.

Bibliography:

Ames, Herbert Brown. “The City Below the Hill” a sociological study of a portion of the city of Montreal, Canada . Montreal : Bishop Engraving and Print. Co., 1897.

An industrial landscape observed : the Lachine Canal, 14 July to 25 October 1992. Montreal: Canadian Centre for Architecture , 1992.

Atherton, William Henry. Montreal, 1535-1914 . Montreal: S. J. Clarke, 1914.

B.R.I.C, Atelier. ville du montreal. 1 May 2009 <http://recherche.ville.montreal.qc.ca/?c_18467=on&t=0&s=&q=griffintown>.

Bergeron, Diane. Lachine Canal : historical atlas . Ottawa: Parks Canada, 1988.

Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec. 11 May 2009 <<http://www.banq.qc.ca>>.

Bunting, Trudi and Pierre Filion, Canadian cities in transition . Toronto , 1991.

Burman, Richard. 20th century Griffintown in pictures : book one & two . Lachine, QC: Burman Productions, 2002.

Copp, Terry. The anatomy of poverty : the condition of the working class in Montreal 1897-1929. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1974.

Creates, Marlene. Marlene Creates : signs of our time. Halifax, N.S. : Saint Mary’s University Art Gallery, 2006.

Cullen, Gordon. Townscape. London: Architectural Press , 1961.

Desloges, Yvon. “Behind the Scene of the Lachine Canal Landscape.” The Journal of the Society for Industrial Archeology (2003).

Dunton, Nancy. A guidebook to contemporary architecture in Montréal / Nancy Dunton, Helen Malkin ; with essays by George Adameczyk, Ricardo L. Castro. Vancouver : Douglas & McIntyre, 2008.

- Franck, Karen A. Loose space : possibility and diversity in urban life. Ed. Karen A. Franck and Quentin Stevens. London, New York : Routledge, 2007.
- Ghosts of Griffintown [videorecording] : stories of an Irish neighbourhood . Dir. Richard Burman. 2003.
- Gournay, Isabelle and France Vanlaethem, Montreal metropolis, 1880-1930. Toronto: Stoddart in association with the Canadian Centre for Architecture, 1998.
- Grace, Robert J. The Irish in Quebec : an introduction to the historiography. Québec: Institut québécois de recherche sur la culture, 1993.
- Griffintown History. 12 May 2009 <<http://www.dungen.ca/jeff/griffintown/history/index.htm>>.
- Gubbay, Aline. Montréal : the mountain and the river / text, photos. Montreal: Trillium Books, 1981.
- Hanna, David B. Montreal, a city built by small builders, 1867-1880. Montreal, 1986.
- . The layered city : a revolution in housing in mid-nineteenth-century Montreal. Montreal: Dept. of Geography, McGill University, 1986.
- Hanna, David. The layered city : a revolution in housing in mid-nineteenth-century Montreal . Montreal : Dept. of Geography, McGill University, 1986.
- Harris, Steven and Deborah Berke, Architecture of the everyday. New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1997.
- Heritage, Canadian. Quebec Heritage Web. 9 June 2009 <http://www.quebecheritageweb.com/trail/trail_details.aspx?&trailId=33>.
- “Industrial architecture of Montréal.” Blackader-Lauterman Library of Architecture and Art, McGill University. Montréal, 1999.
- Industrial architecture of Montréal . 1999. 11 June 2009 <<http://digital.library.mcgill.ca/industrial/> >.
- Jacobs, Jane. The death and life of great American cities . New York : Random House, 2002.
- Kalman, Harold. A concise history of Canadian architecture /. Don Mills, Ont.: Oxford University Press, 2000.
- Kaplan, David H. and Li. Wei, Landscapes of the ethnic economy. Lanham : Rowman & Littlefield, 2006.

“Lachine Canal : redevelopment plan.” Parcs Canada. Ottawa, [1977?].

Lachine Canal National Historic Site of Canada : management plan. Montréal: Parks Canada, 2004.

Lewis, Robert. Manufacturing Montreal : the making of an industrial landscape, 1850 to 1930. Baltimore : The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000.

Lortie, André and Marcel Fournier, The 60s : Montreal thinks big. Montreal: Canadian Centre for Architecture, 2004.

Lynch, Kevin. The image of the city. Cambridge: Technology Press, 1960.

Mark Poddubiuk. Goose Village. 1983.

Marsan, Jean Claude. Montreal in evolution : historical analysis of the development of Montreal’s architecture and urban environment. Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1981.

Mccord Museum. 13 June 2009 <<http://www.mccord-museum.qc.ca/en/>>.

Mellin, Robert. Tilting : house launching, slide hauling, potato trenching, and other tales from a Newfoundland fishing village. New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2003.

Montréal, Sauvons. Montreal’s downtown neighbourhoods. Montreal : Save Montreal, 1977.

Rudofsky, Bernard. Streets for people : a primer for Americans. New York : Van Nostrand Reinhold Co., 1982, c1969.

Tufte, Edward R. Visual explanations : images and quantities, evidence and narrative. Cheshire, Conn: Graphics Press, 1997.

Zardini, Mirko. Sense of the city : an alternate approach to urbanism. Montréal : Centre canadien d’architecture , 2005.