

STORIED STONES: ST. PATRICK'S BASILICA
History, Identity, and Memory in Irish Montréal, 1847-2017

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Abstract

This thesis will explore the history of a segment of the Irish Catholic population of Montréal by engaging in a micro-study of St. Patrick's Basilica, one of its religious meeting grounds. In researching St. Patrick's as a historical, diasporic, ethnic and memory space, this thesis will examine the past and the present incarnations of a community that has dealt with evolving notions of identities and memories. It is the experiences of Irish Montrealers outside Griffintown, the "lace-curtain" Irish, which will be under analysis here. An investigation into the particulars of St. Patrick's Church - now a Basilica - provides the perfect nexus to glimpse how this Irish community "above the hill" was formed, fractured, and evolved over the course of a hundred and seventy years.

From attempts at procuring a church in the 1820s to the St. Patrick's Day celebrations in 2017, episodes of institutional construction at St. Patrick's illustrate how identities and memories were formed and transformed "above the hill," within the storied stones of St. Patrick's. In researching the Basilica's history, one inevitably contends with its role in fostering Irishness in the city. An analysis of the Church's prominent role in fashioning the ethnic and class identity of its constituents will form a large segment of the analysis. Irish identities in ideological transition, from Irish-Canadian to Canadian-Irish, will also be uncovered by unveiling the Basilica's history.

This thesis will finally focus on the church as a physical manifestation of Irish presence in Montréal. Despite the changing demographics, and the arrival of new English-speaking Catholics in Québec, the enduring presence of St. Patrick's Basilica as an Irish landmark in Montréal speaks to its importance as an ethnic monument and a place of pilgrimage for generations of Irish-Quebecers. The church can therefore be read as a memoryscape revealing of the changing identities of the Irish community of Montréal. Exploring the church as a *lieu de mémoire*, this research will uncover how the Irish community of Montréal has reflected and remembered itself over time.

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I have become aware of varieties, shades if you will, of meanings for the word Irish and its various compounds. Also, host cultures have responded in widely varying ways to newcomers from Ireland.

Different reactions by the same host culture at different times for historical reasons. The same identifying word, 'Irish', is used to identify people in many countries of the Irish Diaspora who have very varied life experiences, religious and other beliefs, and most interestingly very different relationships to Ireland. The content, for want of a better word, of that identity is clearly different throughout the Irish Diaspora.

William H. Mulligan, Jr.

Chapter 1: Introduction

Establishing Credentials and Definitions: Review of Pertinent Literature

In the last three decades, the study of Irish communities in Canada – and elsewhere - has revealed the breadth and depth of the lived experiences of Irish migrants to North America and has acknowledged the vast regional differences inherent to the Irish experience in Canada.¹ The Irish in Montréal, one of the four founding ethno-cultural groups in the city, present a formidable research opportunity for scholars of the Irish diaspora in North America interested in this diversity and the unique experience of urban Irish Catholics in the *Belle Province*. This thesis will explore the experience of a segment of that ethno-cultural group by engaging in an interdisciplinary micro-study of St. Patrick’s Basilica, one of the religious meeting grounds for the Irish Catholics in Montréal.

In his 2007 article, “The Irish Parish,” Jay Dolan highlights that parishes are useful frames by which to investigate Irish Catholic communities.² Decades earlier, the work of historian Marianna O’Gallagher on St. Patrick’s Church in Québec City and, more recently, Rosalyn Trigger’s work on Irish parishes in Montréal have illustrated how Irish churches in Québec constitute ideal windows into their constituent communities.³ Since the Irish community in Montréal continues to claim the Basilica as its own, even while it has dispersed geographically, St. Patrick’s stands as a potent *lieu de mémoire*, a palimpsest of collective cultural memories.⁴ Hence,

¹ Donald H. Akenson, *The Irish Diaspora: A Primer* (Streetsville, Ontario: P.D. Meany, 1993), 264.

² Jay P. Dolan, “The Irish Parish,” *U.S. Catholic Historian* Vol. 25, No. 2 Reform and Renewal: Essays in Honor of David J. O’Brien (Spring 2007), 14.

³ Marianna O’Gallagher, *Saint Patrick’s, Quebec – The building of a church and of a parish: 1827 to 1833* (Quebec: Carraig Books, 1981).; Rosalyn Trigger, “The Role of the Parish in Fostering Irish-Catholic Identity in Nineteenth Century Montreal” (M.A. Thesis, McGill University, 1997).

⁴ “*Lieu de mémoire*” is a term coined by French historian Pierre Nora to designate locales that are: “The ultimate embodiments of a memorial consciousness that has barely survived in a historical age that calls out for memory because it has abandoned it. They make their appearance by virtue of the deritualization of our world - producing, manifesting, establishing, constructing, decreeing, and maintaining by artifice and by will a society deeply absorbed in its own transformation and renewal, one that inherently values the new over the ancient, the young over the old, the future over the past.”

Pierre Nora, “Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémoire,” *Representations* No. 2 Special Issue: Memory and Counter-Memory (Spring 1989): 12.

in researching St. Patrick's storied stones as a historical, diasporic, ethnic and memory space, I propose to study the past and the present incarnations of a segment of the Irish in Montréal, highlighting how this community has dealt with evolving notions of identities and memories in a cosmopolitan microcosm. After all, as Angele Smith remarked, "although the history of the urban Irish migrant is not the complete story [of Irish immigration], their experiences did indeed help to shape the identity of urban centres in the Canadian landscape," and therefore the multiple facets of the Montréal Irish experience are worth investigating.⁵

This thesis is the result of a reflection and research on the multiplicity of Irish experiences in the diaspora. Because Irish migrants encountered an array of conditions, circumstances, prejudices and advantages in the locales in which they settled, the narratives of their experiences should reflect this diversity.⁶ In Montréal, however, one particular experience has been immortalized in public memory and folklore. The history of the Irish of Griffintown has been at the heart of scholarship examining the Irish in Montréal. The pervasiveness of a Famine (1845-50) narrative associated with the Griffintown experience has also been at the core of a majority of contemporary professional and amateur research.⁷

Hebert Brown Ames' *The City Below the Hill: A Sociological Study of a Portion of the City of Montreal, Canada*, published in 1897, has been central to the development of this particular strain of scholarship.⁸ Although Ames' turn of the century sociological study was not centered on the

⁵ Angele Smith, "Fitting into a New Place: Irish Immigrant Experiences in Shaping a Canadian Landscape," *International Journal of Historical Archaeology* Vol. 8, No. 3 (2004): 220.

⁶ For a similar reflection on the diversity of Irish experiences in Britain, see Mervyn Busted, "Little islands of Erin: Irish settlement and identity in mid-nineteenth-century Manchester," *Immigrants & Minorities: Historical Studies in Ethnicity, Migration and Diaspora* Vol. 18, No. 2-3 (1999): 94-127.

⁷ Colin McMahon, "Recrimination and reconciliation: Great Famine memory in Liverpool and Montreal at the turn of the twentieth century," *Atlantic Studies* Vol. 11, No. 3 (2014): 344.

For a thorough investigation of the history of Griffintown, see Matthew Barlow, *Griffintown: Identity and Memory in an Irish Diaspora Neighbourhood* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2017).

⁸ As the expressions, "above the hill" and "below the hill" will reoccur throughout the thesis, a clear understanding of what their meaning is provided here.

"If one were to draw a line across the map of a portion of the city of Montreal, following Lagauchetière street from its junction with Bleury street to the Windsor Station and thence along the tracks of the C.P.R. as far as the city limits, he

realities of the Irish “below the hill,” it nevertheless contained segments on the poorest districts of the city that made abundantly clear the deplorable conditions in which the Irish inhabitants of Griffintown lived: “If one desires to find where drunkenness and crime, disease and death, poverty and distress are most in evidence in western Montreal, he has only to search out the near tenements. [...] Those sections bordering the canal and within the limits of Griffintown are most backward and in great need of attention and ameliorating effort.”⁹ These images were compounded by Ames’ remarks that this poverty was not the result of recent immigration; residents of the neighbourhood had lived in the city for most of their lives, contributing to the propagation of the image of Irish Montrealers as poverty-stricken working-class citizens.¹⁰

This particular image of poor Irish Famine migrants, their descendants, and their working-class experiences in Griffintown has been at the forefront of Irish Montrealers sense of identity, especially since the 1990s.¹¹ The decade saw what historian John Matthew Barlow has branded a *re-Irishfication*, a reinvigoration of ethnicity in the Irish diaspora; the phenomenon being particularly

would divide the south-western half of our city into two occupied districts of nearly equal extent. One of these districts, that to the west, is upon high ground; the other, that to the east, is in the main but little above the river level. The former region, for lack of a better name, we shall call ‘The city above the hill,’ the latter, in contrast therefrom, ‘The city below the hill.’ [...] Looking down from the mountain top upon these two areas, the former is seen to contain many spires, but no tall chimneys, the latter is thickly sprinkled with such evidences of industry and the air hangs heavy with their smoke. ‘The city above the hill’ is the home of the classes. Within its well-built residences will be found captains of industry, the owner of real estate, and those who labor with brain rather than hand. Here in predominating proportion reside the employing, the professional and the salaried classes. [...] ‘The city below the hill,’ on the other hand, is the dwelling place of the masses. [...] ‘The city below the hill’ is the home of the craftsman, of the manual wage-earner, of the mechanic and the clerk, and three-quarters of its population belong to this, the real industrial class. *This area is not without its poor, and, as in other cities, a submerged tenth is present with its claims upon neighbourly sympathy.*” In Herbert Brown Ames, *The City Below the Hill: A Sociological Study of a Portion of the City of Montreal, Canada* (Montreal: Bishop Engraving and Printing Co., 1897), 6.

⁹ Ibid., 45-46.

¹⁰ Ibid., 75.

¹¹ The Heritage Minutes produced by Historica Canada, for example, have one segment interested in the history of the Irish in Canada. It is strictly preoccupied with the Famine narrative. Illustrating the adoption of Irish orphans by French-Canadian families after Black 47 (mistakenly portrayed as the 1850s in the video), the Minute reflects particularly well the 1990s Canadian-Irish ethos. See, <https://www.historicacanada.ca/content/heritage-minutes/orphans>. More recently, a “Walking Tour of Irish Montreal,” included in the 2016 Bloomsday celebrations, also reinforced the Griffintown/Famine narrative. Guided by Donovan King, the tour - the proceeds of which went to the Montréal Irish Monument Park Foundation - portrayed a very distinct version of the Irish Montréal experience by visiting a Famine exhibit, Griffintown, the Grey Nun’s Motherhouse and the Memorial Rock near the Victoria Bridge. See <https://bloomsdaymontreal.com/the-irish-at-blue-metropolis-literary-festival/>.

significant in Montréal and Griffintown especially.¹² The neighbourhood was once a flourishing area, but in the 1990s only traces and memories of its former glory survived. It nevertheless came to anchor a re-invigorated notion of Irishness that was disseminated in the larger Irish community of Montréal.¹³ With the physical manifestation of Griffintown gone – the once flourishing residential district repurposed as industrial, then abandoned and eventually caught by gentrification – only the memory of the Irish neighbourhood could be salvaged.¹⁴ Of course this meant that a *reconstructed* version of Griffintown could abridge its history and erase other ethno-linguistic and religious groups from the neighbourhood’s narrative. French Canadians, Anglo-Protestants, Jews, and other communities thus became footnotes in the Irish history of Griffintown.¹⁵ Barlow argues that:

[Griffintown was] reconstructed as a *lieu de mémoire* in recent years: a symbolic site of remembrance created by and for Montréal’s Irish (Catholic) community, to serve as its official preserve of an imagined historical past, or better yet, memory, to be jealously safeguarded by the “official” custodians of the community’s memory. [...] This allowed the Irish community of Montréal, or at least an interested faction of it, control and power to reconstruct the memory of the neighbourhood to suit its own particular needs and to allow for the construction of a meta-narrative of the history of the Irish in Montréal, one that is perhaps typically Irish, as it is one of resilience and strength in not only maintaining Irish culture in Montréal, but ensuring that that culture thrived.¹⁶

Central to the identity and subsequent memory of Griffintown was its working-class culture. Historically, this helped to forge a Griffintown Irish-Catholic narrative that did not leave any latitude in which a more middle-class Irish identity could be highlighted.¹⁷ This despite the fact that a degree of heterogeneity in the Irish population in Montréal translated into a plurality of lived

¹² Barlow, *Griffintown*, 144-147 & 156-160.

¹³ For a thorough examination of this phenomenon, that Matthew Barlow has termed the Griffintown Commemorative Project, see Barlow, *Griffintown*, chapter 5.

¹⁴ Jessica J. Mills has examined a similar but somewhat less intense phenomenon in Point Saint-Charles. See Jessica J. Mills, “What’s The Point?: The Meaning of Place, Memory, and Community in Point Saint Charles, Quebec” (M.A. Thesis, Concordia University, 2011), 66.

¹⁵ Barlow, *Griffintown*, 149.

¹⁶ John Matthew Barlow, “Forgive My Nostalgia: The construction of Griffintown, Montréal, as a *lieu de mémoire*” (paper presented at the Canadian Historical Association Annual Meeting, University of Western Ontario, London, Ontario, 30 May 2005), 5 & 19.

¹⁷ This is a phenomenon that has been observed by other scholars examining the history of the area. See Sylvain Rondeau, “Les irlandais du quartier Sainte-Anne à Montréal, sources et institutions: 1825-1914” (M.A. Rapport de recherche, Université du Québec à Montréal, 2011), 91.

experiences and construction of Irishness in the city.¹⁸

Furthermore, this reconstructed Griffintown identity has been closely linked with another meta-narrative, linking the genesis of Irish Montréal very closely to the Irish Famine migration. This is a phenomenon numerous scholars have commented on in the Canadian case.¹⁹ In *An Irish heart: how a small community shaped Canada*, published in 2010, journalist Sharon Doyle Driedger illustrates how vivid descriptions of Famine migrations helped reinforce stereotypes about the Irish experience in Montréal:

In the sorrowful summer of 1847, more than sixty thousand Irish refugees streamed into Montreal, a city of fifty-four thousand. Frail, emaciated, their clothing soiled and ragged, the emigrants filed down the gangways of the streamers and sailing ships, brigs and barques that had cleared Grosse Isle, as many as two thousand in a single day. Fitzgeralds. O'Neills. Kellys. Connollys. Boyles. Men, women and children bearing Irish names, scant baggage and frayed hopes. They wound their way past a tangle ropes and boxes, through the shouts and chatter of French-Canadian dockworkers, onto the busy stone wharves at the port of Montreal.²⁰

Marguérite Corporaal and Christopher Cusack explain the popular adoption of the Famine meta-narrative by positing that watershed events such as the Famine can become enshrined in artefacts, as well as in social and cultural practices. One could suggest that they also permeate memory practices and that, consequently and unsurprisingly, the events of 1845-50 have been used to produce a monolithic sense of Irish identity in Montréal.²¹ Oona Frawley frames this phenomenon by suggesting that “just as repeated exposure to a given story or event makes it increasingly likely that that story or event will persist as a memory in the individual mind, it would appear that the repeated

¹⁸ Rionach Casey has explored the necessity to investigate this diversity of experiences in an urban setting. See Rionach Casey, “Community, difference and identity: The case of the Irish in Sheffield,” *Irish Geography* Vol. 43, No. 3 (2010): 211-232.

¹⁹ Amongst them Jason King and Marianna O’Gallagher, who has remarked that “the famine migration of 1847 has coloured Canadian history.” See Jason King, “Remembering and Forgetting the Famine Irish in Quebec: Genuine and False Memoirs, Communal Memory and Migration,” *The Irish Review* Vol. 44 (2012): 20-41; Marianna O’Gallagher, “The orphans of Grosse Île: Canada and the adoption of Irish Famine orphans, 1847-48,” in *The Irish World Wide: History, Heritage, Identity. Volume 6 – The Meaning of the Famine*, ed. Patrick O’Sullivan (Leicester & London: Leicester University Press, 1997), 102.

²⁰ Sharon Doyle Driedger, *An Irish heart: how a small community shaped Canada* (Toronto: Harper Collins, 2010), 35.

²¹ Marguérite Corporaal, and Christopher Cusack, “Rites of passage: The coffin ship as a site of immigrants’ identity formation in Irish and Irish American fiction, 1855-85,” *Atlantic Studies: Global Currents* Vol. 8, No. 3 (2011): 344-345.

exposure of a particular culture to a particular narrative contributes to making that narrative extraordinarily persistent.”²²

The prevalence of a Famine narrative in the popular understanding of the history of the Irish in the city, as well as in other *loci* of Irish migration in Québec, has been an enduring phenomenon and has often prevented studies on other forms of Irish histories and identities.²³ Scholars and amateurs alike have contributed to this trend. John Matthew Barlow’s 2009 dissertation, “The House of the Irish: Irishness, History, and Memory in Griffintown, Montréal, 1868-2009,” and his recent monograph, are a brilliant exploration of the history of this particular locale and how it is now remembered and reinterpreted.²⁴ As previously seen, Barlow believes that Griffintown has become a *locus* where a monolithic history of the Irish in Montréal can be promoted.²⁵ Unfortunately, as Barlow himself noted, this mythologised Griffintown offers only a “universalising and essentialising representation of [the neighbourhood] as the Irish Catholic, if not Irish, experience in Montréal.”²⁶ In fact, Griffintown was never home to the majority of Irish Catholics in the city.²⁷ Moreover, he underlines that “this reconstructed, essentialised Griffintown serves to remove those Irish Catholics of Montréal who were not working class, the so-called “lace curtain Irish,” from the community’s collective memory.”²⁸

What Barlow is in fact hinting at is the dearth of acknowledgement and research on those Irish Catholics that lived, not in what Ames so aptly described as the “city below the hill” - in the squalid conditions his sociological survey uncovered along the Montréal waterfront – but those Irish

²² Oona Frawley, *Memory Ireland – Volume 1: History and Modernity* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2010), 28.

²³ For an exploration of the experiences of Irish Protestants for example, see Wayne Timbers, “Britannique et irlandaise: l’identité ethnique et démographique des Irlandais protestants et la formation d’une communauté à Montréal, 1834-1860” (M.A. Thesis, McGill University, 2001).; Raymond Jess, “Re-centering the Periphery: The Protestant Irish of Montreal and the birth of Canadian National Identity” (M.A. Thesis, Concordia University, 2014).

²⁴ John Matthew Barlow, “The House of the Irish: Irishness, History, and Memory in Griffintown, Montréal, 1868-2009” (PhD Dissertation, Concordia University, 2009).

²⁵ Barlow, “Forgive My Nostalgia,” 5; Barlow, *Griffintown*, 184.

²⁶ Barlow, “Forgive My Nostalgia,” 6.

²⁷ Barlow, *Griffintown*, 149.

²⁸ Barlow, “Forgive My Nostalgia,” 6.

that lived and congregated “above the hill” in different circumstances. Already well established before the Famine, these Irish Montrealers came to form a multigenerational core of “lace-curtain” Catholic Irish who were distinct in socio-economic outlook from their Griffintown counterpart. These are the Irish Canadians whose narratives will be uncovered in the following chapters. An examination of their interactions and the way they shaped, maintained and promoted their identities will be the core analysis of this thesis. Remembering Gordon Darroch’s assertion that “[Irish] identities and communities are fabricated from the threads of a shared heritage, but in widely varying conditions that mould their local institutional forms and meanings,” the following argument will uncover the narratives and experiences of Irish Montrealers outside Griffintown, the Irish “above the hill” living in different surroundings.²⁹ Following in the footsteps of historian Mark McGowan, this thesis does not “seek to destroy or erase” the Irish Famine migration and the working-class Irish experiences from Montréal’s historical record.³⁰ Rather, by conducting a micro-study of St. Patrick’s Basilica, one of the spaces in which another section of the Irish population congregated, this research wishes to highlight a different Irish Montréal.

1.1 Argument and Objectives

By examining moments of community formation or reaffirmation in the history of the Irish “above the hill,” one quickly grasps that issues of ethnicity, religion and class have been at the core of identity politics for these Irish Montrealers over the course of two centuries. An investigation into the particulars of St. Patrick’s Church - now a Basilica - provides the perfect nexus to glimpse how the Irish community “above the hill” was formed, fractured and evolved over the course of a hundred and seventy years. From their first attempts at procuring a church for themselves in the

²⁹ Gordon Darroch, “Half Empty or Half Full? Images and Interpretations in the Historical Analysis of the Catholic Irish in Nineteenth-Century Canada,” *Canadian Ethnic Studies* Vol. 25, No. 1 (1993): 6; James W. McAuley, “Editor’s Introduction: Sociological perspectives of the Irish diaspora,” *Irish Journal of Sociology* Vol. 11, No. 2 (2002): 5.

³⁰ Mark McGowan, *Creating Canadian Historical Memory – The Case of the Famine Migration of 1847* (Ottawa: The Canadian Historical Association, 2006), 15.

1820s to their St. Patrick's Day celebrations in 2017, episodes of institutional construction at St. Patrick's can serve to illustrate how identities and memories were formed and transformed "above the hill," within the storied stones of St. Patrick's.

The purpose of my research is therefore fourfold. Researching first the history of St. Patrick's and its ties with Irish ethno-cultural history in Montréal, I wish to further our academic understanding of the city's Irish community, more specifically a segment of its middle-class Catholic population. In researching the Basilica's history, one inevitably contends with its role in fostering Irish identity in the city. An analysis of the Church's prominent function in fashioning the ethnic and class identity of its constituents will therefore form a large segment of my analysis. This portion of the thesis will explore the cleavages within the Irish community of Montréal, along religious and class lines, which came to be embodied at St. Patrick's. Moreover, Irish identities in ideological transition, from Irish-Canadian to Canadian-Irish, will be uncovered by unveiling the Basilica's history.

My research will also focus on the Church as a physical manifestation of Irish presence in Montréal. Despite the changing demographics and the arrival of new English-speaking Catholics in Québec, the enduring presence of St. Patrick's Basilica as an Irish landmark in Montréal speaks to its importance as an ethnic monument and a place of pilgrimage for generations of Irish-Quebecers. The Church can therefore be read as a memoryscape revealing of the changing identities of the Irish community of Montréal. Exploring the Church as a *lieu de mémoire*, my research strives to uncover how the community has reflected and remembered itself over time. Lastly, having established St. Patrick's Basilica's pedigree as a historical, ethnic and memorial space, the Church will offer a basis for an analysis of the Irish in Montréal as a diasporic community. Due to its unique and long-standing history, the Basilica represents an ideal vantage point to reflect on the notion of diaspora

and analyze how the now-popular concept applies to the real and imagined realities of Irish Montréal.

Scholarship on the material manifestation and the history of St. Patrick's has appeared since the physical edifice has been made a National Historic Site of Canada in 1990, at once recognizing the quintessential qualities of both its structure and history. I am consequently indebted to scholars such as Rosalyn Trigger, Gillian Leitch, as well as journalist Alan Hustak, for their superb research into St. Patrick's history. The focus of their scholarship being mostly on the early years of the Church, they shy from engaging with the site in a *longue durée* perspective. This has permitted a reification of the site as a monument to a by-gone Irish reality. To rectify this, I will engage with the Church's early history as well as that of the twentieth century. I will finally examine its recent past and the present times of the Basilica, a church that has become the meeting ground for multiple Catholic communities that have to deal with its heritage.

It is the significance of St. Patrick's Basilica as an ethnically encoded historical space, one that stands not only as a monument but also a repository for Irish Montrealers' memories, and its position as a contemporary urban parish that will be investigated here. As Doreen Massey has skilfully remarked, in her essay "For Space," space is always under construction, because it "is a product of relations-between, relations which are necessarily embedded material practices which have to be carried out, it is always in the process of being made. It is never finished; never closed. Perhaps we could imagine space as a simultaneity of stories-so-far."³¹ This concept of "simultaneity of stories-so-far" explains how the Basilica became such a layered location, where different iterations of Irish identities and memories have emerged, all the while the church remains an active and diverse Catholic parish.

³¹ Doreen Massey, *For Space* (London: Sage Publications, 2005), 9.

1.2 Theoretical Framework

Patrick O’Sullivan, in his *Irish World Wide* project, has underlined that any investigation into the Irish Diaspora – meaning here Irish emigration, and the settlement of Irish communities in the New World – necessitates an interdisciplinary approach.³² My own research lends itself to new trends in Irish Studies in Canada, which, according to Michael Kenneally, strive to move in a “genuinely interdisciplinary direction.”³³ A thorough review of the pertinent literature in history, diaspora studies, ethnic studies and memory studies is important in establishing the credentials of the disciplinary frameworks which will contextualize the analyses in this thesis. Presented as somewhat separate entities, they will underscore this micro-study of St. Patrick’s Basilica as an integrated framework of analysis.

Historical inquiry forms the keystone of my research. Cultural, ecclesiastical, and metropolitan histories are all facets of this project. The history of Irish migration into Canada, Québec, and Montréal, is necessary to the contextualization of the history of St. Patrick’s. An analysis of the Irish communities’ role in the religious life of the city and the province is also highly significant. As a “haut lieu” of Irish Catholicism in the city, St. Patrick’s Church stands as a testimony to the changing nature of Catholicism in Canada as well as to the fracture between ethno-linguistic factions within the Catholic Church in this province. The rise of secularism in Québec - especially in urban centers such as Montréal - as well as the changing demographics in the province in the later part of the twentieth century can also be studied via the prism offered by St. Patrick’s

³² Patrick O’Sullivan, “Developing Irish Diaspora Studies: A Personal View,” *New Hibernia Review* Vol. 7, No. 1 (Spring 2003): 131.

³³ Michael Kenneally, “Reconfiguring Irish Studies in Canada: Writing Back to the Centre,” in *Ireland Beyond Boundaries: Mapping Irish Studies in the Twenty-first Century*, ed. Liam Harte and Yvonne Whelan (London & Dublin: Pluto Press, 2007), 33.

Basilica.³⁴ Hence, a history of St. Patrick's is indicative of the social and historical trends that influenced English-speaking Quebecers in the nineteenth and twentieth century.

This study of St. Patrick's Basilica exists at the confluence of new scholarship trends in the study of religious history in Québec and Canada. In the past two decades, a new interpretation of the social role of churches has emerged. Previously, these institutions – especially after the 1880s – were seen as the “repository of unchanging ‘tradition’, buttresses of older communal social relations and remain[s] mired in an idealized, utopian past.”³⁵ New scholars, on the other hand, have been adamant that religion and church institutions were well established in Québec until the 1960s, and that they did not function on the margins of secular society. Social historians posit that churches adapted to the liberal world and that social evolution happened through the development of social activism deeply rooted in church activities.³⁶ A detailed examination of the social life taking place at St. Patrick's during the nineteenth and twentieth century therefore highlights how its community adapted to the changing realities of urban Montréal. According to Ollivier Hubert and Michael Gauvreau, starting in the 1840s, the Catholics in Québec did not experience religion only in the codified settings of Mass; they encountered it in an array of organizations tightly or loosely associated with their church.³⁷

Christian churches were, after all, the “most important cultural institutions” because before the 1960s – in Québec's case at least – the liberal state was weak and religion “exerted a powerful cultural influence and articulated and transmitted the core elements of both public and personal

³⁴ Ronald Rudin, *The Forgotten Quebecers: a history of English-speaking Quebec, 1759-1980* (Québec: Institut québécois de la recherche sur la culture, 1985), 251-280.

³⁵ Michael Gauvreau, and Ollivier Hubert, “Introduction: Beyond Church History: Recent Development in the History of Religion in Canada,” in *The Churches and Social Order in Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century Canada*, ed. Michael Gauvreau and Ollivier Hubert (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2006), 7.

³⁶ Catherine Larochelle, “Le fait religieux au Québec et au Canada: regard critique sur deux historiographies récentes,” *Revue d'histoire de l'Amérique française* Vol. 67, No. 3-4 (2014): 277.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 283.

identities.”³⁸ This phenomenon is easy to understand since, in early industrial towns and cities, churches were the ones providing basic social and community services. For immigrants, these institutions were often the first port of call, and it is there that communities addressed their psychological, social and spiritual needs.³⁹ In Montréal, the early use of churches dedicated to the English-speaking Irish Catholics in the city helped facilitate the integration of immigrants into the pattern of urban life.

Later during the nineteenth century, as Québec became a bastion of ultramontanism, the Catholic Church’s position had specific consequences on the formation of immigrant and ethnic identities because the inherent devotion to Catholicism implied in ultramontanism coalesced in a system in which an almost insular Catholic life – from cradle to grave – was made possible.⁴⁰ With the establishment of national parishes, that catered to specific ethnic communities and provided a focal point for social, economic and neighbourhood life, a separate Catholic existence could take a distinctively ethnic component.⁴¹ This phenomenon, Jay P. Dolan argues, helped to create cultural enclaves, “separate from other ethnic and religious groups, the key institution within this enclave [being] the parish.”⁴² As English-speaking Catholics, Irish Catholics remained separated by

³⁸ Nancy Christie, and Michael Gauvreau, “Secularisation or Resacralisation? The Canadian Case, 1760-2000,” in *Secularisation in the Christian World – Essays in honour of Hugh McLeod*, ed. Callum G. Brown and Michael Snape (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010), 95.

³⁹ Paul Bramadat, and David Seljak, eds., *Christianity and Ethnicity in Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008), 6.

⁴⁰ Terence J. Fay describes ultramontanism as follows: “The origin of ultramontane spirituality can be found in seventeenth-century France. Religious orders such as the Jesuits and the Dominicans opposed the four Gallican articles upgrading French autonomy and episcopal powers and downgrading Roman primacy and political leadership. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, after the devastation wrought on Catholicism by the French Revolution, neo-ultramontanes encouraged loyalty to the spiritual and political leadership of the Holy See as the best way to reconstruct Catholic life, worship, and culture. Catholics in France and other European countries [as well as overseas in places such as Montréal] sought a new spirituality beyond the rationalism of the French enlightenment.” One key component of ultramontanism is its adherence to the precept of Papal Infallibility. Though the idea had been in circulation for centuries, the concept was clearly defined during the First Vatican Council, in 1870. Summoned by Pope Pius IX, the council postulated that, when the Pope speaks *ex cathedra* (acting as St. Peter’s successor and as the pastor of all Christians) on doctrine concerning faith and morals, he becomes possessed of infallibility, or the inability to err. In Terence J. Fay, *A History of Canadian Catholics* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2002), 69.

⁴¹ Mark McGowan, “Roman Catholics (Anglophone and Allophone),” in *Christianity and Ethnicity in Canada*, ed. Paul Bramadat and David Seljak (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008), 75.

⁴² Dolan, “The Irish Parish,” 24.

language from their French-Canadians coreligionists and by religion from their ethnic brethren, the Irish Protestants. In that liminal space, the national parish created an environment in which a “third solitude,” a “double minority,” prospered from the mid-nineteenth century to the Second World War.⁴³

As an entity, the parish started to change rapidly in the postwar period. In Québec, changes in urban demography as well as in religious demands complicated the established role of the parish. If, as Terence J. Fay claims, “English-speaking Catholics in the postwar period continued to say their prayers and sing their songs at Sunday Mass,” they started to do so less as communities and more as individuals.⁴⁴ The national parish had ceased to be a fully functional and necessary entity, capable of fostering ethnic identity. Finally, in the 1960s, the Catholic Church (as did other denominations) underwent a significant change in Québec. Disestablished, it relinquished its focal role in the life of Catholics and accepted what Fay refers to as a role of *compagnon de route*. Now devoid of political and social clout, the Catholic Church in Québec became the seat of a more restricted religious activity.⁴⁵ In the case of the Irish in Montréal this meant that the national parishes, St. Patrick’s amongst them, would no longer be the primary seats of ethnic identity formation. The Church continued its Catholic mission but now served an increasingly diverse population. By the 1990s, St. Patrick’s had completed its transformation from the center of an Irish ‘enclave’ to a multicultural Basilica whose links with Irish Montréal were those of heritage, commemoration and memory.

Contextualizing St. Patrick’s as an historical space does reveal an invaluable wealth of information about the history of the Irish in Montréal. However, an ethnographical approach to the story of St. Patrick’s reveals even more about the formation of Irish communities in the city.

⁴³ John S. Moir, “The Problem of a Double Minority: Some Reflections on the Development of the English-speaking Catholic Church in Canada in the Nineteenth Century,” *Histoire Sociale/Social History* Vol. 7 (1971): 55.

⁴⁴ Fay, *A History of Canadian Catholics*, 256.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 283.

Mindful of the scholarship of Benedict Anderson, which stresses that “all communities larger than primordial villages of face-to-face contact (and perhaps even these) are imagined, [they are thus] to be distinguished, not by their falsity/genuineness, but by the style in which they are imagined,” my research interrogates how the Irish communities were imagined in *Montréal*.⁴⁶ The “imagined” community congregating at St. Patrick’s will be examined using Roger Brubaker’s theorization of groups. He posits that substantial groups should be seen as “practical categories, situated actions, cultural idioms, cognitive schemas, discursive frames, organizational routines, institutional forms, political projects, and contingent events.”⁴⁷ Brubaker and Anderson’s understanding of the formation of groups – that there is no inherent quality that groups individuals together but that processes are at the core of ethnicity – will be the mainstay of my own analysis.

Sociologist Fredrik Barth introduced the notion that ethnic groups were categories of “ascription and identification by the actors themselves, and thus have the characteristic of organizing interaction between people.”⁴⁸ Shifting investigations from the “internal constitution and history of separate groups to ethnic boundaries and [processes of] boundary maintenance,” Barth’s theory allows for complexities in the history of one ethnic “group.” Brubaker’s own conclusion, that “ethnic and other category memberships are ascribed (and rejected), avowed (and disavowed), displayed (and ignored) in local places and at certain times... as part of the interactional work that constitutes people’s lives,” is quite complementary to Barth’s theorization of ethnic groups as evolving: with their sense of ethnicity being transformed, along with the boundaries maintaining them, and the processes necessary to enforce such boundaries.⁴⁹

⁴⁶ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities – Revised Edition* (London: Verso, 2006), 6.

⁴⁷ Roger Brubaker, *Ethnicity Without Groups* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004), 11.

⁴⁸ Fredrik Barth, ed., *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: The Social Organization of Culture Difference* (Boston: Little Brown and Company, 1969), 10.

⁴⁹ Brubaker, *Ethnicity Without Groups*, 69.

This concept of “groupness without groups” answers for varying level of ethnic engagement at different times.⁵⁰ Brubaker suggests that certain dramatic events “can galvanize group feeling, and ratchet up pre-existing levels of groupness.”⁵¹ In turn, these events are often moments of inter-ethnic contacts.⁵² The history of St. Patrick’s parish, as well as the institutions that flourished under its care, represents a fertile ground to explore the social construction of ethnic identities in the Irish diaspora of Montréal, as those identities were, indeed, reinforced during specific periods and events.

Examining the historical formation of the Church reveals that the place of worship has stood as a beacon for the “institutional completeness” of a section of the Irish Catholic ethnic community. This is a phenomenon that Raymond Breton has observed, wherein he notes that “if the ethnic group develops its own institutions and forms its own associations, it will in this way control to a large extent the interpersonal integration of at least those of its members who become participants [and if] there is at least one church in the community, a large proportion of the immigrant’s personal relations [will be] contained within the social boundaries of the community.”⁵³ St. Patrick’s, with its numerous associated institutions, thus served as a boundary maker, keeping the Irish Catholics congregating there as a distinct “community.” As a site of identity formation, the narratives and discourses put forward by the clergy and the congregation of St. Patrick’s warrant further analysis. Situated “above the hill,” the Church was, in the late nineteenth century, the creation site of a particular brand of identity based on middle-class values and religion. The boundaries established at St. Patrick’s were indeed instrumental in creating an Irish Catholic community “above the hill.” By maintaining boundaries at various moments, the Irish Catholics of the parish were engaging in the kind of social organization of difference that, according to Fredrik Barth, is at the core of ethnic

⁵⁰ Ibid., 52.

⁵¹ Ibid., 14.

⁵² Barth, ed., *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: The Social Organization of Culture Difference*, 16.

⁵³ Raymond Breton, “Institutional Completeness of Ethnic Communities and the Personal Relations of Immigrants,” *American Journal of Sociology* Vol. 70, No. 2 (September 1964): 199.

groupness.⁵⁴ A particular ethnic identity coalesced at St. Patrick's during the nineteenth century, and this identity evolved during the twentieth century. Always in flux, this identity underwent major transformations, not maintained as "a result of phylogenetic evolution, but rather as a result of socialization and customs."⁵⁵ Irish identity in Montréal at the end of the twentieth and at the onset of the twenty-first century thus came to be embodied very differently. The evolution of Irishness in the context of St. Patrick's Church can be contextualized within existing frameworks of ethnic analysis.

Scholars of ethnic history have had to contend with the ever-present concept of assimilation.⁵⁶ Contemporary scholars have come to the conclusion that in some societies the possibility remains for the cohabitation of a multitude of ethnicities, but also for assimilationist processes which affect these ethnicities to varying degree.⁵⁷ The linear trajectory and inevitability of assimilation has therefore been successfully rejected. However, it has also been accepted that a measure of assimilation usually affects ethnic groups in most North American settings. After all, as Paul Frederick Cressey highlights, as a group becomes less concentrated physically, as they disperse, they are more susceptible to integration into the general population.⁵⁸ This does not imply, however, that their ethnic identities are completely subjugated. There can be a degree of

⁵⁴ Barth, ed., *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: The Social Organization of Culture Difference*.

⁵⁵ Jan Assman, "Collective Memory and Cultural Identity," in *Kultur and Gedächtnis*, ed. Jan Assman and Tonio Hölscher (Frankfurt & Main: Suhrkamp, 1988), 10.

⁵⁶ An early definition of the phenomenon, penned by Robert E. Park in the 1920s for the *Encyclopedia of the Social Science*, described the phenomenon as "the name given to the process or processes by which peoples of diverse racial origins and different cultural heritages, occupying a common territory, achieve a cultural solidarity sufficient at least to sustain a national existence." This early definition does not suggest what many critics of the assimilation theory later rejected i.e. the implied assumption that with assimilation comes the erasure of all signs of ethnic origins. However, until at least the 1960s, when the assimilation theory fell out of style, this was the prevailing paradigm. From the 1960s to the 1980s conversely, the persistence of ethnic groups came to occupy the forefront of the scholarship on ethnicity. Examined in isolation, these independent ethnic units were seen as occupying the same space but rarely interacting. Then, in the 1980s, scholars from different disciplines came to re-examine the concept of assimilation in the North American context.

For further details on the trajectory of the concept of assimilation see Richard Alba, and Victor Nee, "Rethinking Assimilation Theory for a New Era of Immigration," *International Migration Review* Vol. 31, No. 4 Special Issue: Immigrant Adaptation and Native-Born Responses in the Making of Americans (Winter 1997): 828; Russell A. Kazal, "Revisiting Assimilation: The Rise, Fall, and Reappraisal of a Concept in American Ethnic History," *American Historical Review* Vol. 100, No. 2 (April 1995), 437-471.

⁵⁷ Kazal, "Revisiting Assimilation: The Rise, Fall, and Reappraisal of a Concept in American Ethnic History."

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 445.

assimilation, which takes into account persisting ethnic ties, especially those at the familial level. Culturally, an individual might not engage with his ethnic identity on a daily basis, but at the familial level, a degree of ethnic awareness persists. Herbert Gans enunciated these principles in two seminal articles.⁵⁹ One of Gans' key concepts is the degree to which individuals practice and engage with their ethnicity. The term he coined, "symbolic ethnicity," contends:

"That as the functions of ethnic cultures and groups diminish and identity becomes the primary way of being ethnic, ethnicity takes on an expressive rather than instrumental function in people's lives, becoming more of a leisure-time activity [...] Ethnic symbols are frequently individual cultural practices which are taken from the older ethnic culture; they are 'abstracted' from that culture and pulled out of its original moorings, so to speak, to become stand-ins for it."⁶⁰

Symbolic ethnicity explains the continued existence of ethnic individuals several generations after immigration, and is key to understanding how ethnic consciousness is retained in long established diasporas.

In the Irish diaspora of Montréal, symbolic ethnicity plays a central role in preserving Irish Montrealers' identities. In March each year, events – some taking place at St. Patrick's – help preserve Irish identities in the city. An examination of these identities developed and preserved at the Church reveals how the Irish of Montréal have not been assimilated over time. Instead, their Irishness has evolved and been incorporated into modern sense of self. More specifically, the happenings around St. Patrick's Day reveal how Irish Canadians have become Canadians over time; and how during a very brief festive season, they once again inscribe themselves within an ethnic community – displaying ethnic groupness – that is not necessarily at the core of their everyday lives and identities.

⁵⁹ Herbert J. Gans, "Symbolic ethnicity: The future of ethnic groups and cultures in America," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* Vol. 2, No. 1 (January 1979): 10; Herbert J. Gans, "Toward a Reconciliation of "Assimilation" and "Pluralism": The Interplay of Acculturation and Ethnic Retention," *International Migration Review* Vol. 31, No. 4 Special Issue: Immigrant Adaptation and Native-Born Responses in the Making of Americans (Winter 1997): 876.

⁶⁰ Gans, "Symbolic ethnicity: The future of ethnic groups and cultures in America," 9.

St. Patrick's Day festivities are an appropriate focal point to study Irish identities abroad because in most *loci* of the Irish Diaspora, they are symbolic "statements about the current state of the local social order."⁶¹ The St. Patrick's Day festivities in Montréal, which are not obscured by the political tensions found in New York and England, highlight the success of the community and how it wishes to be seen and remembered. This is in keeping with Paul Connerton's reading of social memory and its links to commemoration.⁶² Moreover, as Kenneth Moss asserts, St. Patrick's Day festivities are the "memory site *par excellence*" because in the discourses, speeches, and the forms taken by these festivities, Irish communities abroad tend to reaffirm and validate their sense of self and commemorate their perceived common past.⁶³ St. Patrick's Basilica, during the March festive season, becomes intrinsically linked to that memory site described by Moss. However, the Church can definitively be seen as a memory site, a *lieu de mémoire*, in its own right. Pierre Nora explains that sites of memory "originate with the sense that there is no spontaneous memory, that we must deliberately create archives, maintain anniversaries, organize celebrations, pronounce eulogies, and notarize bills because such activities no longer occur naturally [and] that without commemorative vigilance, history would soon sweep them away."⁶⁴ Throughout its history, St. Patrick's Basilica has stood as an evolving site of memory, and it is this transformation that this thesis plans to chart.

Ian McBride, in his introduction to *History and Memory in Modern Ireland*, highlights that the "relationship between memory and identity is always a two-way one, with ideas of the communal past setting limits to the perceptions and aspirations of the current generation. [...] Although remembrance is always selective, the selections depend upon a complex interaction

⁶¹ Sallie A. Marston, "Making difference: conflict over Irish identity in the New York City St. Patrick's Day parade," *Political Geography* Vol. 21 (2002): 375.

⁶² Paul Connerton, *How societies remember* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 42-71.

⁶³ Kenneth Moss, "St. Patrick's Day Celebrations and the Formation of Irish-American Identity, 1845-1875," *Journal of Social History* Vol. 29, No. 1 (Autumn 1995): 130.

⁶⁴ Nora, "Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémoire," 12.

between the materials available and the dominant modes of political and social organisation.”⁶⁵ Inherent to the memory paradigm is an exploration of the intrinsic link between identity and memory. Anchored in places, identities are nourished by history and memory. Memories are, in turn, harnessed in various ways to foster identities at different times. Therefore, the academic study of memory pertaining to groups - those memories “made up of socially constituted forms, narratives, and relations, but also amenable to individual acts of intervention in it, [these memories that are] always open to social revision and manipulation,” according to Mieke Bal, Jonathan Crewe, and Leo Spitzer - helps to contextualize St. Patrick’s history and its evolving memory.⁶⁶ The remembered history of St. Patrick’s was, and is, created at the intersections of social interactions. Inherent to its designation is the fact that individuals who participated in the creation and propagation of such a constructed history are doing so by their active engagement with memory. This memory does not spring from the collective but is reiterated in social acts of recall.

This constitutes the third strand of my analysis. Over time, St. Patrick’s has embodied varying notions of Irishness in the city and has been the repository for changing and divergent narratives about its constituent community. Social acts of recall have been the norm at St. Patrick’s. The Church has been, and still stands as a memory site. As David Lowenthal remarks, “the past is not only recalled, it is incarnate in the things we build and the landscapes we create.”⁶⁷ Neal Leach concurs by acknowledging that “just as words can be understood by the manner in which they are used, so buildings can be grasped by the manner in which they are perceived – by the narratives of

⁶⁵ Ian McBride, ed., *History and Memory in Modern Ireland* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 13.

⁶⁶ Mieke Bal, Jonathan Crewe, and Leo Spitzer, eds., *Acts of memory : cultural recall in the present* (Hanover : Dartmouth College, 1999), xiii.

⁶⁷ David Lowenthal, “Past Time, Present Place: Landscape and Memory,” *Geographical Review* Vol. 65, No. 1 (January 1975): 6.

use in which they are inscribed.”⁶⁸ What is fascinating about the Basilica is the evolving nature of those narratives that have come to be associated with the building.

Aware of Lowenthal’s caution that the past is often altered to make history conform with memory, and that, in turn, memory is selective and amends so that we do not remember exactly what was but, most often, recall the past as the present dictates, the changing narratives held at St. Patrick’s are made intelligible.⁶⁹ The nineteenth century witnessed increased detachment with the history of the Famine at St. Patrick’s. The community congregating there did not wish to remember that particular past in light of its present success and rising social standing. As opposed to other Irish locales in the city, St. Patrick’s became a repository for a more successful and bourgeois reading of Irish identity in Montréal. In recent narratives however, the Basilica - which now stands as one of the last Irish monuments in the metropolis – has been linked once again with Famine narratives.

There has, indeed, been a resurgence of pride in this particular narrative after the sesquicentennial of the Famine and the presidency of Mary Robison. Moreover, the dismantlement of other Irish monuments - St. Ann’s Church amongst them – has seen narratives heralded elsewhere being transferred to St. Patrick’s Basilica. This evolution is in keeping with Doreen Massey’s analysis of the links between place and memory: “the past of a place is as open to a multiplicity of readings as is the present. Moreover, the claims and counter-claims about the present character of a place depend in almost all cases on particular, rival interpretations of its past. [...] The identity of places is very much bound up with the *histories* which are told of them, *how* those histories are told, and which history turns out to be dominant.”⁷⁰ Numerous histories of St. Patrick’s have lasted into

⁶⁸ Neil Leach, “Belonging: Towards a Theory of Identification with Place,” *Perspecta* Vol. 33 Mining Autonomy (2002): 129.

⁶⁹ David Lowenthal, “Past Time, Present Place: Landscape and Memory,” 27.

⁷⁰ Doreen Massey, “Places and Their Pasts,” *History Workshop Journal* No. 39 (Spring 1995): 185-186. In her 2005 monograph, *For Space*, Massey will come to refer to this phenomenon as “simultaneity of stories-so-far.”

the present, and their examination should yield an revealing conclusion on the nature of the memories held at St. Patrick's over time.

Finally, the reading of the Church as a *lieu de mémoire* seeks to address what academic Laurier Turgeon has framed as “patrimoine immatériel” (intangible heritage). Turgeon describes this heritage as the vast wealth of stories, memories and histories that surround a building such as St. Patrick's Basilica, but are never captured and celebrated because the building itself takes precedence. This project therefore delves into how the Basilica is remembered, how its history was transmitted and how it is used today by members of the Irish community and by members of the practicing congregation.⁷¹ St. Patrick's is thus never inert: people engage with it, re-work it, appropriate it and contest it.

The formation of ethnic identities and memories is intrinsically linked to space where social interactions and the maintenance of boundaries can occur. In early immigrant communities, religious institutions often provided such anchors.⁷² As physical meeting grounds but also as the heart of a number of religious and lay organizations, churches not only provided the fulcrum for Breton's “institutional completeness,” but also provide migrants with environments in which they could indulge their national and ethnic sentiment. In fact, churches often served as vehicle for forms of diasporic nationalism. After all, in these churches the language remained that of the homeland, the imagery and the saints used to worship mirrored those of the old country. Furthermore, churches also became site of diasporic identity formation because religious leaders “frequently [became] advocates and preachers of a national ideology, providing a *raison d'être* for the ethnic community and a motivation for identification with it.”⁷³

⁷¹ Laurier Turgeon, “Introduction. Du Matériel à l'Immatériel. Nouveaux Défis, Nouveaux Enjeux,” *Ethnologie française* Vol. 40, No. 3 (2010): 393.

⁷² Breton, “Institutional Completeness of Ethnic Communities and the Personal Relations of Immigrants,” 200.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 201.

In urban settings, identities were produced, negotiated, performed, and reshaped collectively and individually through the use of particular places.⁷⁴ In her study of the Ottawa Valley, Johanne Devlin Trew points out that *places* are not only physical but also cultural, historical and emotional. Often imagined and reimagined, places hold power because they “gather and hold experiences, languages, histories and thoughts. Places have an indefinite quality – the borders are indistinct or permeable – they take on the characteristics of their occupants, and they lend themselves to narration in histories or stories.”⁷⁵ The power of place in shaping identities is contingent on the fact that places are not only the space inhabited by individuals and groups but the culmination of the practices which take place in said space.⁷⁶ One can therefore understand how churches became much more than hallowed stones: they became a repository of ethnographic behaviours which can be observed through time. A nexus for social interactions, as well as a *haut lieu* of boundary maintenance, churches provide us with an invaluable area in which to study the emergence and reiteration of ethnic identities. In an example of what Anthony P. Cohen called “ethnography of locality,” the following micro-study of St. Patrick’s Basilica investigates how Irishness has evolved at St. Patrick’s, and how the Church has anchored developing notions of Irish ethnic identity in the Montréal diaspora.⁷⁷

The concept of diaspora has become quite trendy in the last decades and its popularity has been a source of critique in academic circles. Ethnographer Rogers Brubaker has remarked that the concept, applied to a vast array of migratory experiences, has in fact lost some of its

⁷⁴ Bettina Bradbury, and Tamara Myers, eds., *Negotiating Identities in 19th- and 20th-Century Montreal* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2005), 4.

⁷⁵ Johanne Devlin Trew, *Place, Culture and Community: The Irish Heritage of the Ottawa Valley* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2009), 31.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 29.

⁷⁷ Anthony P. Cohen, ed., *Belonging: Identity and Social Organisation in British Rural Cultures* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1982), 3. In his 1985 publication, Cohen explored the necessary symbolic construction that sustains these localities. Anthony P. Cohen, *The Symbolic Construction of Community* (London & New York: Routledge, 1998).

“discriminating” power.⁷⁸ Nevertheless, as Nadja Johnson urges, we need to move from a critique of the scholars of migration to an analysis of the actors in migration and diasporas. This shift will yield a more thorough understanding of diaspora migration and the way immigrants define themselves, their lives and their impacts on host societies as well as their homeland.⁷⁹ This analysis takes advantages of one of the crucial contribution of diaspora studies, the fact that they are not only concerned with migration, but attentive to the dynamics and processes of identity formation in scattered communities.⁸⁰ For James Clifford, diaspora communities are congregate of migrants with a continuous sense of a “prior home.”⁸¹ As the migrants maintain, revive and imagine their links to a ‘homeland’ they are far less likely to assimilate completely in their new homeland. Hence, what distinguishes diaspora communities from traditional migrant communities is the permanency of their “dwelling in displacement.”⁸² The sense of difference these communities sustain precludes their full and complete integration into the host society.⁸³

⁷⁸ Rogers Brubaker, “The ‘diaspora’ diaspora,” *Ethnic and Racial Studies* Vol. 28, No. 1 (2005): 3.

For some, diaspora scholars and populations have not only have been applying the notion to too many experiences of migration but have indeed been capitalizing on the innovative nature and freshness of the concept underlining the field. These diaspora converts have also been capitalizing on the cultural and political implications that are inherent to the concept of diaspora, according to James Clifford. The scholar admits that there is no “ideal type” for the concept of diaspora. Furthermore, he reminds us that “whatever the working list of diasporic features, no society can be expected to qualify on all counts, throughout its history, [a]nd the discourse of diaspora will necessarily be modified as it is translated and adopted.” Mary Hickman concurs that students of Diaspora Studies should be fully cognisant that the concept has its drawbacks in the case of the Irish. Moreover, she stresses that the “idea of ‘a global Irish imagined community’ or an ‘Irish diaspora’,” suggests communal interests whereas in fact the Irish diaspora is actually fractured (as are national imagined communities) by class, gender and other differences which in many cases reveal deep conflicts of interests among the Irish abroad.”

See James Clifford, “Diasporas,” *Cultural Anthropology* Vol. 9, No. 3 Further Inflections: Toward Ethnographies of the Future (August 1994): 302 & 6; Mary J. Hickman, “‘Locating’ The Irish Diaspora,” *Irish Journal of Sociology* Vol. 11, No. 2 (2002): 20.

⁷⁹ Nadja Johnson, “Global Journeys: From Transnationalism to Diaspora,” *Journal of International and Global Studies* Vol. 4, No.1 (2012): 44.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Clifford, “Diasporas,” 310.

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ These early theorization of the concept of diaspora coalesced in *Global Diasporas: An Introduction*, published by Robin Cohen in 1997, which presents a thorough assessment of the world’s dispersed communities. Judged by the standard set by the Jewish experience – one contemporary diaspora scholars are also deconstructing – or not, diasporas appear to be communities of people that have left their home countries. These people, as well as their descendants, share in a sense of belonging to a distinct immigrant community that retains ties to the homeland over time. Their complete assimilation within their new countries is precluded by their unique identities. This is something diaspora studies have been quite apt in highlighting since the field negates readings of migration equating assimilation.

The identities formed in the diaspora are usually hybrid but closely linked with the mythologization of the homeland, and the fostering of cultural traditions that have been imported from the home country. These traditions do not necessarily resonate with the contemporary realities of these nations.⁸⁴ Therefore, for academics, the concept of diaspora facilitates the analysis of multi-generational migrant communities, and the “emotive politics of transnational and transgenerational affiliation and belonging” that accompany them.⁸⁵ The concept yields more on the issue of identity in ethnic communities and it explains what migration studies’ assumptions about progressive assimilation cannot. For the diasporans themselves, the notion contextualizes their existence and the links they have with the homeland and similar communities in other nation-states.⁸⁶

Before moving forward to an examination of the Irish diaspora itself, one has to address the inherent notion of collective identity that accompanies the concept of diaspora. Collective identity is always evolving; it emerged, changes, declines and re-emerges at different times and in different spaces.⁸⁷ Since it reflects the character of groupings of people evolving over time and space, the notion challenges the romanticized view of a crystallized diasporic identity, and underlines how diasporas remain places of contestation and evolution.⁸⁸ The Irish diaspora should therefore be understood as an amalgamate of Irish *diasporas*. Over time, and in different locations, the multiplicity of experience encountered by the members of the scattered Irish community has created diverse incarnations of the phenomenon.⁸⁹ Nonetheless, as Mary Hickman remarks, these differences - the heterogeneity of Irish experiences abroad - do not mitigate the reality of an Irish

For a complete analysis of the diaspora concept see Brubaker, “The ‘diaspora’ diaspora”; Johnson, “Global Journeys: From Transnationalism to Diaspora”; as well as William Safran, “Diasporas in Modern Societies: Myths of Homeland and Return,” *Diaspora: A Journal of Transnational Studies* Vol. 1, No. 1 (Spring 1991).

⁸⁴ Safran, “Diasporas in Modern Societies: Myths of Homeland and Return,” 83-99.

⁸⁵ James W. McAuley, “Editor’s Introduction: Sociological perspectives of the Irish diaspora,” *Irish Journal of Sociology* Vol. 11, No. 2 (2002): 6; Breda Gray, “The Irish Diaspora: Globalised Belonging(s),” *Irish Journal of Sociology* Vol. 11, No. 2 (2002): 123.

⁸⁶ Brubaker, “The ‘diaspora’ diaspora,” 7.

⁸⁷ Ludger Pries, “Ambiguities of global and transnational collective identities,” *Global Networks* Vol. 13, No. 1 (2013): 22-40.

⁸⁸ Brubaker, “The ‘diaspora’ diaspora,” 7.

⁸⁹ Floya Anthias, “Evaluating ‘Diaspora’: Beyond Ethnicity?” *Sociology* Vol. 32, No. 3 (August 1998): 564.

diaspora, it only layers and deepens our understanding of the phenomenon.⁹⁰

As far as scholarship is concerned, the notion of an Irish Diaspora *per se* is something to establish.⁹¹ According to Robin Cohen's definition, the Irish communities abroad can legitimately be ascribed the status of diaspora communities. Cohen's definition of diaspora contends that it can result from a traumatic dispersal or expansion of trade and empire. Moreover Cohen notes that it involves a collective identity as well as collective memories of an idealized homeland. Both tenets fit the Irish. They sustained a strong ethnic consciousness over time that resulted in a particular relationship with the host societies and a sense of solidarity with members of similar ethnic communities elsewhere.⁹² David Lloyd has been very critical of espousing of the concept of diaspora to describe the Irish abroad. His main indictment is that the notion emphasises the experience of certain waves of emigration from Ireland. For him, a focus on emigration rather than diaspora yields more because it incorporates Irish migrations that do not conform to Cohen's definition.⁹³ Lloyd's critique is important but it fails to account for the multi-generational phenomenon that is Irish migration and identity formation. Class, gender, religion and other differences might fracture the realities of Irish dispersal - the membership of the diaspora might not be static - but what is primordial is the degree to which people still reflect on their hybrid consciousness, on their hyphenated identities.⁹⁴ Hence, for those that *identify* with an Irish diaspora, Cohen's definition is a lived reality. People might individually envision different incarnations of the community they belong to, but they effectively and communally form alliances on an ethnic basis. They also share a sense of history and identity with co-ethnic groups in other locations, and do not always have harmonious rapport with host societies. For these reasons, because they consistently

⁹⁰ Hickman, "'Locating' The Irish Diaspora," 20.

⁹¹ David Lloyd, "What's in a Name: The Dialectics of Diaspora and Irish Emigration," *Breac: A Digital Journal of Irish Studies* Vol. Migration and Diaspora (April 2013), web journal.

⁹² Hickman, "'Locating' The Irish Diaspora," 11.

⁹³ Lloyd, "What's in a Name: The Dialectics of Diaspora and Irish Emigration."

⁹⁴ Noel Gilzean, and James W. McAuley, "Strangers in a Strange Land?: (Re)constructing 'Irishness' in a Northern English town," *Irish Journal of Sociology* Vol. 11, No. 2 (2002): 55.

continue to identify as diasporans, the Irish abroad should be included in the canon of diaspora studies.

Thus, the lived heterogeneity of Irish diasporic experiences does not undermine the existence of the group *per se*, because the people themselves acknowledge that their communities are part of a diaspora, part of a hybrid world. The geographical and cultural space in which the Irish abroad function influence the diverse hyphenations of their identity, but they meet on common ground when searching for new ways of encapsulating being Irish in the world.⁹⁵ The literature on the Irish diaspora and the Irish experience abroad abounds and reflects the fact that Irish migration has to be understood as a multilayered, multifaceted phenomenon. Reading each *locus* of the diaspora as territorially bound, anchored in different moments of history thus helps our understanding of how the Irish diaspora has evolved over time in each of the spaces the Irish have come to occupy: “the Irish diaspora constantly involves processes of ideological and physical reconstruction. If notions of Irishness are changing, then so too are the diasporic community's needs to refurbish a senses of identity that may transcend ideological, generational and geographical differences.”⁹⁶ In other words, the Irish diaspora is not only composed of various diaspora communities, each with their own distinct experiences, but these communities have also been experiencing changes over time. One thus needs to be aware of the historically contingent nature of the diaspora.

Cognisant of these basics principles, I will incorporate diaspora theory within my analysis of St. Patrick's Church and the Irish community of Montréal. I will examine different Irish experiences in the city through a diasporic lens. My early findings coincide with what Kevin Kenny has observed for the Irish in America: that the Famine dispersal can definitively be read in diasporic terms, and that the events of 1845-52 do indeed create an Irish diaspora.⁹⁷ But the fact remains that

⁹⁵ Hickman, “‘Locating’ The Irish Diaspora,” 8-26.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 7.

⁹⁷ Kevin Kenny, “Diaspora and Comparison: The Global Irish as a Case Study,” *The Journal of American History* Vol.

“what tends to be overlooked is that the Great Famine was but one especially tragic and dramatic episode in a much larger story.”⁹⁸ It is this larger story that I am interested in uncovering here. Irish identities in the diaspora have tended to be essentialized and reified by observers and members from within the communities. For academics, the struggle is to fully comprehend how diaspora discourses essentialize notions of place and identity, even while the lived reality of evolving hybrid identities in the diaspora negates those discursive efforts.⁹⁹ Diasporic identities remain changing entities, and one should always be aware of this state of affairs when drawing conclusions on any segment of the diaspora.

One final note on the interdisciplinary nature of my research project: as history forms the core of my analysis, but is supplemented by memory studies, ethnography and diaspora studies, the final project will follow a linear chronology examining St. Patrick’s Basilica throughout its history. The different disciplines presented here will thus not constitute different sections of analysis but will be integrated together to yield a *longue durée* examination of St. Patrick’s that goes both in depth and in breadth. To facilitate this endeavour, Chapter 2 contextualises Irish emigration to Canada, and Montréal specifically. It also explores Irish Canadians’ experiences in the city. It will outline how the pre-Famine Irish community requested and obtained a church within the larger framework of Québec Catholicism. Chapter 3 examines the defining years of St. Patrick’s to the end of the nineteenth century, and especially Father Patrick Dowd’s pastorate. Identity and class will be under investigation in this chapter. Chapter 4 explores the last golden era of the parish, from the turn of the twentieth century to the 1950s, and Father Gerald McShane’s legacy. Changing Irish identities will be at the core of this chapter. Finally, Chapter 5 explores the evolution of St. Patrick’s from mid-

90, No. 1 (June 2003): 144.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ Sean Carter, “The geopolitics of diaspora,” *Area* Vol. 37, No. 1 (2005): 54.

century to the new millennium. The making of a modern Basilica will be under scrutiny in this last chapter exploring the history of the storied stones of St. Patrick's.

Chapter 2

Situating the Irish in Montréal, 1801-1847

2.1 Irish Emigration to the 1850s

Literature on the Irish Diaspora and Irish emigration tends to emphasize the fact that emigration became a way of life after the Great Irish Famine, and that the Irish nation became one of dispersal.¹ After all, an estimated eight million Irish men, women and children emigrated between 1801 and 1921.² However, one should be cognizant of the fact that scholars have also established that emigration from Ireland was well under way before the events of 1845-50. Historian Donald Akenson has long professed that the Irish in Canada were mostly the result of pre-Famine migration.³ For destinations such as the United States, Australia and Canada, the Irish as a group coalesced before the Famine, in the 1830s most especially. The dramatic circumstances of the 1840s only confirmed and accelerated pre-existing trends.⁴ Irish migration did indeed evolve during, and after the Famine, but the events of 1845-50 did not *create* the phenomenon.

At the end of the Napoleonic Wars in 1815, surplus population and demobilized soldiers facing a collapsed wartime economy in Ireland started to immigrate to British North America.⁵ Passenger Acts from 1816 and 1817, aimed at restricting the number of passengers embarking for the United States, helped to bolster emigration to Canada for at least the next decade.⁶ The economic outlook of these early Irish migrants varied, but scholars have reached the conclusion that these migrants were not of the lowest order and were most likely from the comfortable farming classes which were now facing a constricted economy and were aware, as well as capable, of seeking their

¹ David Fitzpatrick, "Irish Emigration in the Later Nineteenth Century," *Irish Historical Studies* Vol. 22, No. 86 (September 1980): 126

² David Fitzpatrick, *Irish Emigration 1801-1921* (Dublin: Economic and Social History Society of Ireland, 1984), 1.

³ For his complete argument see Akenson, *The Irish Diaspora: A Primer*, 217-269.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 20.

⁵ Cecil J. Houston, and William J. Smyth, *Irish Emigration and Canadian Settlement: Patterns, Links & Letters* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990), 21.

⁶ William Forbes Adams, *Ireland and Irish Emigration to the New World from 1815 to the Famine* (New York: Russell & Russell, 1967), 88; William M. Nolte, "The Irish in Canada, 1815-1867" (PhD Dissertation, University of Maryland, 1975), 11.

fortunes in North America.⁷ Some of these migrants were even relatively prosperous since in Québec City they establish their own Catholic church as early as the 1820s.⁸

In fact, Irish emigrants coming to Canada in the 1820s were described by A.C. Buchanan, the emigration agent stationed in Québec, as “generally of a superior description, from the north of Ireland, from Tyrone and Fermanagh; they were men generally possessing a little property, and in anything but a distressed state.”⁹ The early 1830s also saw the arrival of what Buchanan noted as “a recognizable component of better-off farming classes. Very many respectable and wealthy farmers came out this year from almost every portion of Ireland.”¹⁰ If Buchanan might have exaggerated the gentility of the migrants he had secured for the colony, one can still establish their distinction from their destitute brethren who arrived in the 1840s. The Irish immigrants who came to form the core of Irish communities in eastern Canada therefore came from a diverse background. The rise of basic literacy in Ireland after the 1830s helped foster an informed generation of young Irish men and women who would come to bolster Irish-Canadian communities.¹¹ Moreover, “chain migration,” where earlier migrants sent information and money to the homeland in order to facilitate the passage of kith and kin, became a notable phenomenon in Canada, sustaining the numbers of pre-existing communities well before the Famine.¹²

Until the early 1840s, Irish emigration to Canada was neither a pauper’s nor a wealthy man’s affair – apart from distinctive waves during the 1832 and 1834 cholera epidemics – ordinary

⁷ Houston, and Smyth, *Irish Emigration and Canadian Settlement: Patterns, Links & Letters*, 21; Fitzpatrick, “Irish Emigration in the Later Nineteenth Century,” 131.

⁸ Rudin, *The Forgotten Quebecers: a history of English-speaking Quebec, 1759-1980*, 60.

⁹ Report by A.C. Buchanan in *Emigration report of Commissioners: Return to an address to His Majesty, dated 11 August 1832, for copies of any reports from the Commissioners for Emigration to the Secretary of State for the Colonial Department, since the last session of Parliament* (London HMSO, 1832), 20. Early Canadiana Online.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ Fitzpatrick, *Irish Emigration 1801-1921*, 24.

¹² *Ibid.*, 21.

farmers, tradesmen, artisans, and labourers crossed the Atlantic.¹³ As the Report of the Census Commissioners reported in 1841:

The counties, however, which supply the greatest amount of emigrants are not these which seems the poorest in point of stock; still there can be no doubt that immense numbers carry no capital but their manual labour and the great majority are of agricultural habits, without acquired skill of any kind. It may, however, be doubted whether voluntary emigration will ever prevail among people wholly destitute. It would appear to be the first step in the march of improvement. It is when man has already begun to move upwards, that he seeks a more advantageous field than his native country affords.¹⁴

These men, who sought a more advantageous future in North America, formed well-established communities, which afforded an “important foothold” for new emigrants of the Famine period.¹⁵ These later migrants had very little – in outlook and philosophy – in common with their predecessors. On October 3, 1847 the *Cork Examiner* described them: “The Emigrants of this year are not like those of former ones: they *are actually running away* from fever and disease and hunger, with money scarcely sufficient to pay passage and find food for the voyage.”¹⁶

In 1844, on the eve of the Famine, the Irish population of Montréal comprised about fourteen thousand individuals. In fact, more than half the English-speaking population of the city was ethnically Irish. The arrival of thousands of migrants in 1847, and in the remaining years of the Famine, therefore had an immense impact on the social and economic fabric of the metropolis.¹⁷ Estimates for Irish arrivals in Québec, in 1847 only, vary between sixty thousands and eighty thousands.¹⁸ Of course, most of these migrants were only stopping in Québec City and Montréal, en

¹³ Robert J. Grace, “Irish Immigration and Settlement in a Catholic City: Quebec, 1842-61,” *The Canadian Historical Review* Vol. 84, No. 2 (June 2003): 15-16.

¹⁴ Report of the Census Commissioners, Census of Ireland, 1841, xxiv in Cecil J. Houston, and William J. Smyth, “Irish Emigrants to Canada: Whence They Came,” in *The Untold Story: The Irish in Canada*, eds. Robert O’Driscoll and Lorna Reynolds (Toronto: Celtic Arts of Canada, 1988), 31.

¹⁵ George Rex Crowley Keep, “The Irish Adjustment in Montreal,” *Canadian Historical Review* Vol. 31 (1950): 40.

¹⁶ J. I. Cooper, “Irish Immigration and the Canadian Church Before the Middle of the 19th Century,” *The Journal of the Canadian Church Historical Society* Vol. 2, No. 3 (1955): 4; George Rex Crowley Keep, “The Irish Migration to Montreal, 1847-1867” (M.A. Thesis, McGill University, 1948), 13.

¹⁷ Robert J. Grace, *The Irish in Quebec: an introduction to the historiography – Followed by An Annotated Bibliography on the Irish in Quebec* (Québec: Institut québécois de recherche sur la culture, 1993), 64.

¹⁸ Sherry Olson, Patricia Thornton, Colin McMahon and Dan Horner all cite different estimates. Sherry Olson, and Patricia Thornton, “The Challenge of the Irish Catholic Community in Nineteenth-Century Montreal,” *Histoire*

route for the United States and Upper Canada. In fact, by 1871, the Irish population in the city had only been augmented by approximately seven thousand individuals from its levels in the 1840s.¹⁹ Nevertheless, the sheer numbers of Irish emigrants flooding from the Grosse Île quarantine station during the worst years of the Famine had lasting effects on the perception and the composition of the Irish population in Québec, and especially on the Montréal community.²⁰

By 1849, the heavy period of Irish emigration to Canada, which had seen a shift from genteel farmers and artisans to indigent Famine refugees, was coming to a close.²¹ The next decade saw the phenomenon reduced to a trickle.²² David Fitzpatrick remarks that, after the mid-1850s the urgency of emigration from Ireland had diminished.²³ As food supplies and general living conditions in the Old World improved in the wake of mass emigration and the death of the most destitute, emigration to North America continued but never on the scale witnessed in the 1840s.²⁴ Moreover, the destinations and outlook of those post-Famine migrants were altered. If the first half of the century had been marked by emigration to Canada, the second half of the century definitively became an American period. New legislations, fares, and the opportunities offered in America channelled the new mode of Irish emigration (less family centric, more individualistic, with a higher ratio of women) south of the border.²⁵ In fact, from 1852 to 1910, approximately three million Irish migrants crossed cross the Atlantic heading for the United States.²⁶

The communities established before the Famine, and demographically reinforced during the

sociale/Social History Vol.35, No.70 (2002): 335; Colin McMahon, "Montreal's Ship Fever Monument: An Irish Famine Memorial in the Making," *The Canadian Journal of Irish Studies* Vol. 33, No. 1 (2005): 48; Dan Horner, "If the evil now growing around us be not staid: Montreal and Liverpool Confront the Irish Famine Migration as a Transnational Crisis in Urban Governance," *Histoire sociale/Social history* Vol.46, No.92 (2013): 353.

¹⁹ Grace, *The Irish in Quebec*, 64.

²⁰ McMahon, "Montreal's Ship Fever Monument: An Irish Famine Memorial in the Making," 48.

²¹ William M. Nolte, "The Irish in Canada, 1815-1867," 73-74.

²² Grace, *The Irish in Quebec*, 30.

²³ Fitzpatrick, *Irish Emigration 1801-1921*, 28-29.

²⁴ Donald MacKay, *Flight from Famine: The Coming of the Irish to Canada* (Toronto: Dunburn Press, 2009), 316.

²⁵ Houston, and Smyth, *Irish Emigration and Canadian Settlement: Patterns, Links & Letters*, 23.

²⁶ Cormac Ó Gráda, "A Note on Nineteenth-Century Irish Emigration Statistics," *Population Studies* Vol. 29 No. 1 (1975): 143-149.

massive influx of 1845-50, are the core of Irish Canada.²⁷ This is significant because, as Akenson has posited, “frequently “Irish” is employed to mean immigrants from Ireland” but just as often, it also refers to second and third generation Irish Canadians.²⁸ Scholars who collect data on the Irish in Canada have to reckon with the fact that the “Irish” in North America are a “multigenerational collective experience.”²⁹ One that includes the original migrants and their descendants; thus “the chronicle of the immigrant generation” is only one part of the story of the Irish as an ethnic group.³⁰ Hence, the Irish diaspora in British North America is an example of the complexity and diversity of Irish migration, and the contrasting patterns of experiences in the diaspora:

No one Irish community developed just like another. On the one hand the geographical region of origin influenced the kind of people who were able to come [...] What they found on their arrival in Canada also contributed to the experience of the different groups: variations in natural resources, land economies, degrees of accessibility, opportunities for social mobility and the extent of ethnic intermixing have all operated upon the incoming Irish population, and after several generations the accumulated effect could be striking.³¹

Understanding the complexities of Irish experiences in Canada requires one to put aside views of Irish Canadians as “God’s Unfortunate People” and embrace their multiple realities.³² If their story was “interwoven into the very substance of Canada itself and the emergence of that nation into modern history,” as Robert O’Driscoll and Lorna Reynolds propose, they would also share in its successes.³³ As Montréal rose to be the *de-facto* economic capital of the country, Irish Canadians, as a multigenerational community, participated in its rise at all levels.

For Akenson, as well as historian Mark McGowan, the memorialization of Irish Canadians as

²⁷ Ibid., 218.

²⁸ Donald H. Akenson, “Data: What Is Known About the Irish in North America,” in *The Untold Story: The Irish in Canada*, eds. Robert O’Driscoll and Lorna Reynolds (Toronto: Celtic Arts of Canada, 1988), 15.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Houston, and Smyth, “Irish Emigrants to Canada: Whence They Came,” 30.

³² William H. Baker, ““God’s Unfortunate People”: Historiography of Irish Catholics in Nineteenth-Century Canada,” in *The Untold Story: The Irish in Canada*, eds. Robert O’Driscoll and Lorna Reynolds (Toronto: Celtic Arts of Canada, 1988), 70.

³³ Robert O’Driscoll, and Lorna Reynolds, “Introduction,” in *The Untold Story: The Irish in Canada*, eds. Robert O’Driscoll and Lorna Reynolds (Toronto: Celtic Arts of Canada, 1988), xiii.

stereotypically poor, urban, exiled Irish Catholics from the Famine is a disastrous remainder of an English-speaking historiography of the Irish in Canada that adopted the American narrative.³⁴ Akenson proposes a model that describes Irish Canadians as mostly Protestant and rural. Unfortunately, the scholar, by extrapolating from his findings in Ontario, created a Canadian paradigm that does not necessarily apply to other Canadian locales.³⁵ The Irish community in Montréal is the epitome of the phenomenon and can actually offer an interesting vantage point to compare the experiences of urban Irish migrants in Canada and in the United States. If a significant proportion of Irish Protestants immigrated to Canada, it was a Catholic majority that came to Montréal. Even before the 1830s, and the start of a more concentrated Catholic emigration, Montréal already had a significant Irish Catholic community.³⁶ Moreover, if the Irish in other parts of Canada settled in rural areas, those in the province of Québec were primarily concentrated in Québec City and Montréal, in urban settings. In doing so, they illustrated perfectly the importance of circumstances in creating different iterations of the Irish diaspora.³⁷

2.2 Contextualizing the Irish in Montréal

Apart from those Irish soldiers who arrived with French battalions during the eighteenth century, and were completely assimilated into the French-Canadian population, Montréal already had a small but distinct Irish population at the beginning of the nineteenth century.³⁸ Many authors have acknowledged that a “sizeable Irish community existed in Montréal prior to the wave of Irish

³⁴ McGowan, *Creating Canadian Historical Memory – The Case of the Famine Migration of 1847*, 2-3; Mathieu Rompré, “L’historiographie des Irlandais en Amérique du Nord: Le cas de Saint-Colomb-de-Sillery en 1871” (M.A. Thesis, Université Laval, History Department, Québec, 2006), 2 & 30; Baker, “‘God’s Unfortunate People,’” 64.

³⁵ Robert J. Grace, “A Demographic and Social Profile of Quebec City’s Irish Populations, 1842- 1861,” *Journal of American Ethnic History* Vol.23, No.1 (Fall 2003): 56; Houston, and Smyth, “Irish Emigrants to Canada: Whence They Came,” 35; David A. Wilson, “The Irish in North America New Perspectives,” *Acadiensis* Vol. 18, No. 1 (Autumn 1988): 210.

³⁶ Donald H. Akenson, “The Irish in North America: Catholic or Protestant?” *The Irish Review* No. 11 (Winter 1991/1992): 18.

³⁷ Grace, *The Irish in Quebec: an introduction to the historiography*, 53.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 21; Nolte, “The Irish in Canada, 1815-1867,” 3.

immigrants that swept across the Atlantic in 1847-1849.”³⁹ If some scholars posited that Irish-Canadian communities were the result of pre-Famine migration, scholar Robert J. Grace has also noted that the port of Québec handled at least two-thirds of the Irish who came to North America, and that when pre-Famine departures for the United States are taken into account, migration from the Famine and post-Famine periods becomes a majority.⁴⁰ Grace does not, however, dispute the fact that large numbers of immigrants settled in Québec City and Montréal decades before the 1840s, and that “to lump together the latter immigrant group with people of Irish extraction who were not only born in Canada but who also had generations of access to education, trades, or quite simply inherited the family farm or business does little to advance our understanding of how the immigrant Irish adjusted to the Canadian economy in the nineteenth century.”⁴¹

In such a case, the formation of identities based not on Famine experiences and narratives, but on class, religion, and ethnicity resonate with the experiences of a core of Irish Montrealers. One can draw such conclusions only when reminded that the Irish who settled in Montréal had to adapt to circumstances “quite different from those encountered in most other cities of eastern North America.”⁴² The Montréal community, formed in the decades before the 1840s, and reinforced by the influx of migrants coming during the Great Irish Famine was left, from that point forward to reinforce itself in a discrete manner. As its population was no longer augmented by new arrivals, the community turned inwards.⁴³ After all, the Irish in Montréal came to an environment in which the population was already divided along ethnic, religious, and linguistic lines.⁴⁴ For Irish Protestants,

³⁹ Trigger, “The Role of the Parish in Fostering Irish-Catholic Identity in Nineteenth-Century Montreal,” 22.

⁴⁰ Grace, “Irish Immigration and Settlement in a Catholic City: Quebec, 1842-61,” 7.

⁴¹ Grace, “A Demographic and Social Profile of Quebec City’s Irish Populations, 1842-1861,” 67.

⁴² Rosalyn Trigger, “The geopolitics of the Irish-Catholic parish in nineteenth-century Montreal,” *Journal of Historical Geography* Vol. 27, No. 4 (2001): 553.

⁴³ Sherry Olson, and Patricia Thornton, *Peopling the North American City: Montreal 1840-1900* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2011), 51.

⁴⁴ Interestingly, even migrants from the Famine period, for which the Irish language might have been the mother tongue, chose to adopt English as their dominant language in Montréal. Karen P. Corrigan explains this phenomenon in the

this meant being for the most part in a double minority. Exceptionally, for Irish Catholics this was a “place in which being Roman Catholic did not imply belonging to a minority group,” nor an underclass.⁴⁵ On the other hand, Irish Catholics in Montréal had to contend with an ethnic division within their Church, which was controlled by the established French-speaking population.⁴⁶ For French Canadians the Church became a symbol of their own survival. This was not compatible with the Irish’s attachment to the Church as an essential tie to home. As William M. Nolte remarks “sharing a belief in the Communion of Saints and the oneness of the Church was not enough to prevent discord and disunity between Lower Canada’s major Catholic groups.”⁴⁷

In these experiences of discord, an Irish Catholic leadership emerged. Fostering a distinct identity, with what Sherry Olson and Patricia Thornton have labelled “political competence, a political will, and impressive ingenuity in inserting themselves into a politicised context,” this leadership would be vital to the establishment of an enduring Irish Catholic community that came to congregate at St. Patrick’s.⁴⁸ Placed as they were between two other ethno-linguistic groups, the Irish of Montréal in the early nineteenth century relied heavily on institutions to create shared identities and a notion of community. Since they did not inhabit a single area, the Irish could not rely on an ethnic neighbourhood or enclave for the formation of their ethnic identities.⁴⁹ Institutions therefore had to “bolster ethnic identity by facilitating day to day contact within the ethnic group

diaspora by arguing that migrants adopted the mores and norms of the elites they encountered in order to ensure their possibility for social advancement.

See Karen P. Corrigan, “‘I gcúntas Dé múin Béarla do no leanbháin’: eisimirce agus an Ghaeilge sa naoú aois déag’ (For God’s sake, teach the children English’: emigration and the Irish language in the nineteenth century),” in *The Irish World Wide: History, Heritage, Identity. Volume 2 – The Irish in the New Communities*, ed. Patrick O’Sullivan (Leicester & London: Leicester University Press, 1992), 143.

⁴⁵ Trigger, “The geopolitics of the Irish-Catholic parish in nineteenth-century Montreal,” 553; Grace, “A Demographic and Social Profile of Quebec City’s Irish Populations, 1842- 1861,” 78.

⁴⁶ Trigger, “The geopolitics of the Irish-Catholic parish in nineteenth-century Montreal,” 553.

⁴⁷ Nolte, “The Irish in Canada, 1815-1867,” 191-192.

⁴⁸ Olson, and Thornton, *Peopling the North American City: Montreal 1840-1900*, 81-82.

⁴⁹ Sherry Olson, “Research Note: Ethnic Partition of the Work Force in 1840s Montréal,” *Labour/Le Travail* Vol. 53 (2004): 160-202.

while reducing the level of contact with other groups.”⁵⁰ From the 1810s to the 1830s, what would become known as Little Dublin, the area surrounding St. Patrick’s Church, was not yet the seat of a well-established community nor the only area inhabited by Irish Catholics. It is with the construction of St. Patrick’s in the 1840s, and the subsequent decades, that the neighbourhood came to reflect the socio-economic standing of the Church’s congregation.⁵¹

This Church came to be a bastion of institutional segregation, “at times effectively segregating two communities [the Irish Catholics and the French Canadians] that [were] spatially mixed.”⁵² As a “cultural construction accomplished over historical time,” identity in the Irish diaspora of Montréal became intrinsically linked with institutions where the negotiation of identity relied on objective and subjective identification. Anthony P. Cohen has surmised that such identification is premised upon dynamics of inclusion and exclusion.⁵³ These processes of inclusion and exclusion within the Irish community were made possible by its size. Both the pre- and post-Famine communities were large enough to sustain endogenic marriages practices, and the Montréal community showed a marked tendency towards “ethnogenèse” – the creation of a distinct community established along ethnic lines.⁵⁴ This has, in turn, been proven by careful analysis of the Irish genetic contribution to the population of Québec. The conclusion of Marc Tremblay and al., in their 2009 analysis, proves that for urban areas - Montréal included - the Irish did not contribute a high proportion of genes. Their demographic strength enabled them to restrict their marriages – and

⁵⁰ Trigger, “The geopolitics of the Irish-Catholic parish in nineteenth-century Montreal,” 555.

⁵¹ Barlow, “The House of the Irish: Irishness, History, and Memory in Griffintown, Montréal, 1868-2009,” 131.

⁵² Houston, and Smyth, *Irish Emigration and Canadian Settlement: Patterns, Links & Letters*, 175.

⁵³ Kevin James, “The Saint Patrick’s Society of Montreal: Ethno-religious Realignment in a Nineteenth-Century National Society” (M.A. Thesis, McGill University, 1997), 6.

⁵⁴ Aidan McQuillan, “Pouvoir et perception: une communauté irlandaise au Québec au dix-neuvième siècle,” *Recherches sociographiques* Vol. 40, No. 2 (1999): 267; Aidan McQuillan, “Des chemins divergents: les Irlandais et les Canadiens français au XIXe siècle,” in *Le dialogue avec les cultures minoritaires*, ed. Eric Waddell (Sainte-Foy: Presses de l’Université Laval, 1999), 155.

thus their contribution to the genetic pool – to their own community.⁵⁵ In 1872, in an historical portrait of the Irish in the province, John O’Farrell commented on this tendency towards “ethnogenèse.” He highlighted the community’s practice of endogenic marriages, and underlined how even early Irish arrival had formed “a sort of colony apart.”⁵⁶ Boundary maintenance and a heavy reliance on their own institutions became the basic tenets for the formation of Irish Catholic communities in Montréal. The creation and safeguarding of St. Patrick’s Church can therefore be read as one part of a long narrative of “ethnogenèse” in Montréal.

2.3 An Irish Community Congregates, 1810s to 1847

John Breuille surmises that churches constitute one of the scarce pre-modern institutions that served as “vehicles for the construction, preservation, and transmission of national identities.”⁵⁷ For that reason, investigation into the creation of St. Patrick’s Church, opened on March 17, 1847 – the year remembered as Black’47 – serves a two-fold purpose. First, it clearly illustrates the presence of a substantial Irish Catholic community in the city prior to the Famine migration.⁵⁸ Moreover, since the congregation of St. Patrick’s obtained a church of their own within the larger workings of a French-Canadian Catholic Church, this episode serves as a reminder that the community had separated themselves from their religious brethren on the basis of ethnicity. From the late 1810s onward, English-speaking Catholics in Montréal, meaning at this point Irish Catholics, were

⁵⁵ Marc Tremblay, Maude Letendre, Louis Houde, and Helene Vezina, “The Contribution of Irish Immigrants to the Quebec (Canada) Gene Pool: An Estimation Using Data from Deep-Rooted Genealogies,” *European Journal of Population* Vol. 25, No. 2 (2009): 230.

⁵⁶ John O’Farrell, *Annual Concert and Ball of the St. Patrick’s Society, Montreal, 15th of January, 1872: Address delivered on invitation of the Society, by John O’Farrell, Esquire, Advocate, President of the Hibernian Benevolent Society of Quebec. Printed by John Lovell in 1872, St. Nicholas Street, Montreal* (Montreal: Reprinted for The Honourable Charles Murphy by The St. Lawrence Press Print, 1908), 5 & 10. BANQ

⁵⁷ John Breuille quoted in Rosalyn Trigger, “Irish Politics on Parade: The Clergy, National Societies, and St. Patrick’s Day Processions in Nineteenth-century Montreal and Toronto,” *Social History/Histoire Sociale* Vol. 37, No. 74 (2004): 165.

⁵⁸ Gillian I. Leitch, “‘The Irish Roman Catholics in Body Assembled’: Ethnic Identity and Separate Worship in Nineteenth Century Montreal,” in *Constructions identitaires et pratiques sociales*, eds. Jean-Pierre Waliot, Pierre Lanthier, and Hubert Watelet (Ottawa: Les Presses de l’Université d’Ottawa, 2002), 205-206.

attended to by an English-speaking Sulpician, Father Richards, who effectively helped to create an ethnic and linguistic sub-community within the Catholic Church in the city.⁵⁹

In 1826, a first petition was addressed to the Marguilliers of the Fabrique of Notre-Dame for the extension of the Recollet Church (a branch church) and signed by the members of a committee of parishioners, indicating that the Irish community was already using the Recollet for its English language services.⁶⁰ In the early nineteenth-century then, the Irish Catholics had already distinguished themselves from other co-religionists by attending separate religious services. In 1833, the Recollet once again became insufficient for the needs of the growing Irish Catholic congregation. The community organized once more and petitioned the Catholic Church for a resolution. As a community assembled they sent documents to Bishop Lartigue and to the Sulpician Seminary, all dated from January 1833.⁶¹ The petition stated:

That the said church has for many years past been too limited in extent, and incommodious in other respects to contain or accomodate [sic] the persons in habit of attending thereat, and at this particular period, is not capable of containing one half the persons composing its said congregation: in consequence whereof disorder and confusion not unfrequently occur [...] That to remedy the evils and inconvenience above mentioned the constituents of your

⁵⁹ Trigger, “The Role of the Parish in Fostering Irish-Catholic Identity in Nineteenth-Century Montreal,” 22. As the Seminary of Saint-Sulpice features heavily in the history of St. Patrick’s, it is necessary to introduce it here. Brian Young, in his book on the Sulpicians, defines the Seminary as: “The Séminaire de Saint-Sulpice was founded in seventeenth-century Paris to train a reformed Roman Catholic clergy. Powerful and aristocratic, the company participated in the founding of Montreal in the 1640s, became perpetual rectors of the parish of Montreal, and acquired the seigneuries of Montreal, Two Mountains, and Saint-Sulpice. Perennially Gallican, the seminary was always characterized by a political suppleness that allowed it to prosper on two continents despite French monarchical crises, the British conquest of Canada, the French Revolution, and the Napoleonic upheavals. This political Machiavellianism contrasted sharply with the seminary’s moral and social rigidity, its vigorous training of priests, its strict attitude to nuns and other female occupation-groups, and its disciplining of popular classes – useful institutional characteristics in the unstable social environment of nineteenth-century Montreal.” The Sulpicians’ role as pastors of Montréal ensured that they would minister to the Irish Catholics in the city. Powerful seigneurs, their Gallicanism often put them at odds with the Bishop of Montréal, especially as Ignace Bourget embraced ultramontanism. This ultimately meant that the Irish Catholic community was to be the witness and collateral of disputes between the Seminary and the Bishop. The erection of St. Patrick’s therefore occurred against a power struggle between religious orders and visions of Catholicism in Québec.

In Brian Young, *In Its Corporate Capacity: The Seminary of Montreal as a Business Institution 1816-1876* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1986), xii.

⁶⁰ Gillian I. Leitch, “Community and Identity in Nineteenth Century Montreal: The Founding of Saint Patrick’s Church” (M.A. Thesis, University of Ottawa, 1999), 35.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 68.

petitioners are desirous to build in this city at their own expense, a Roman Catholic church to be called Saint Patrick's church [...].⁶²

As a constituted group, the Irish community congregating at the Recollet recognized themselves as a separate entity within the Catholic Church of Montréal, and asked for the recognition of their status as a distinct congregation by requesting the erection of a church of their very own.

The recognition of their singular religious status might have been the most significant impetus behind this petition, but one could also suggest that, because of newspapers and family connections, Irish Montrealers were aware of their counterparts in Québec City erecting their own St. Patrick's Church, which opened July 7, 1833.⁶³ Gillian Leitch has suggested that its "impending opening that year might have spurred the Montreal community to have a church of its own. The community stated a desire to name the church St. Patrick's, and this might reflect the achievements of the Québec City Irish to establish a National church."⁶⁴ Therefore, the erection of a church to replace the Recollet might have been a matter of community pride. In fact, an element of class was distinctively behind the erection of a new 'National' church. In the 1833 petition, a passage hints at the class dynamics within the community, and how some echelons of the Irish community wish to resolve the issue, and the chaos they observed, by petitioning for a grander church:

The aisles of the said Church at an early period in the morning [...] are occupied to repletion by persons who from necessity place themselves therein, but who nevertheless prevent the holders of pews from obtaining access to their seats, and compel many to remain out of doors and attempt an observance of the rites of their Holy Religion in the street, whereby they are subject to frequent interruption in their devotion, often exposed to the ridicule of the irreligious, and totally deprived from benefiting from Sermons and other religious instruction.⁶⁵

The fraught relationships between coreligionists, at this point, might have been influenced by the cholera epidemic of 1832, and the French Canadian response to what they perceived as a threat sent

⁶² *Petition to Quiblier and Seminary from Irish community for a church, January 1833*, in Gillian I. Leitch, "Community and Identity in Nineteenth Century Montreal: The Founding of Saint Patrick's Church," 68.

⁶³ O'Gallagher, *Saint Patrick's, Quebec – The building of a church and of a parish: 1827 to 1833*, 17.

⁶⁴ Leitch, "Community and Identity in Nineteenth Century Montreal: The Founding of Saint Patrick's Church," 73.

⁶⁵ *Petition to Quiblier and Seminary from Irish community for a church, January 1833*, 68.

by the British in the form of sick and contagious Irish migrants.⁶⁶ In the end, the erection of a new church was unfortunately not possible in 1833 and the congregation waited until the early 1840s to once again broach the topic with ecclesiastical authorities.

Once again, the dynamics of class came into play as, after a High Mass in January 1841, members of the congregation met to discuss the issue of an Irish church once again. The group cited the image of the “poorer classes [who] attended to their Religious Duties, even in the most rigorous season outside of the Doors of the churches.”⁶⁷ It was thereafter resolved that the most influential members of the congregation should assemble to devise the measures necessary for the construction of a church that could accommodate the *whole* of their “Catholic brethren.”⁶⁸ This group of men, which the minutes of the St. Patrick’s Church Committee remembers as illustrious, formed a deputation, and were charged with meeting with the Seminary to “ascertain their views with respect to the building of the church.”⁶⁹ The Seminary, from this point onwards, took upon itself to erect a church for the English-speaking Catholics of Montréal.⁷⁰ Supported in its initial stages by some prominent individuals and companies – the Bank of Montreal, Lord Sydenham, Attorney General Odgen, the Hon. D. Daly, and Albert Furniss to name a few – St. Patrick’s Church broke ground in 1843, during a ceremony where the Bishop lay the first stone, the Mayor the second, the Speaker of the House of Assembly the third, and the Chief Justice the fourth; the Presidents of the Temperance Society, the Hibernian Benevolent Society, and the St. Patrick’s Society laid the final three cornerstones.⁷¹

⁶⁶ Mathieu Rompré, “Trois leaders irlandais au Bas-Canada,” *Cap-aux-Diamants: la revue d’histoire du Québec* No. 88 (2007): 18; Joseph Schull, *Rebellion: The Rising in French Canada 1837* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1971), 30; Scott W. See, ““An unprecedented influx”: Nativism and Irish Famine Immigration to Canada,” *The American Review of Canadian Studies* Vol. 30 (Winter 2000): 442.

⁶⁷ St. Patrick’s Church Committee, *Minute Book*, January 1841. SPBA

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

⁶⁹ St. Patrick’s Church Committee, *Minute Book*, February 1841. SPBA

⁷⁰ Leitch, ““*The Irish Roman Catholics in Body Assembled*,”” 215.

⁷¹ Leitch, “Community and Identity in Nineteenth Century Montreal: The Founding of Saint Patrick’s Church,” 95; St. Patrick’s Church Committee, *Minute Book*, March 1841 and *Minute Book*, September 1843. SPBA

The erection of St. Patrick's Church and the community's continued demands for their own religious institution occurred at a particular nexus in the history of the Irish in Montréal. As the more prominent members of the community petitioned the proper authorities for a new church, as they affirmed their cohesion as a group for that particular purpose, they also created other cultural and religious institutions to foster their sense of identity.⁷² The climate of the time was first influenced by the epidemics of 1832 and 1834, when the relationship between the Irish and the French Canadians became more fraught.⁷³ The 1830s also saw the Irish community courted by the *Patriotes*. The plight of Ireland became equated with that of Canada, and liberal leaders in both the French Canadian and the Irish community drew parallels between their countries' situation.⁷⁴ A distinct radicalization of the movement in the mid-1830s, a move towards radical republicanism and armed rebellion, alienated the masses of Irish Catholics who might have been sympathetic to the cause.⁷⁵ Only a small Irish intelligentsia, comprised mostly of middle-class liberal professionals, remained committed to the *Patriote* cause. This might be explained by the fact that religious leaders in the Irish Catholic community spoke against the rebellion. Father Phelan, the first official Irish priest in charge of the Irish congregation, is remembered as the "priest of order" for that particular reason.⁷⁶ Some Irish Catholics would, in fact, actually fight against the rebels in 1837-38.⁷⁷

The St. Patrick's Society, founded in 1834 by a group of reformers, then became, a year later, distinctively more conservative under the aegis of the Catholic conservative Michael O'Sullivan, later Chief Justice of Montréal. The Society placed itself as a staunch proponent of civil

⁷² Leitch, "The Irish Roman Catholics in Body Assembled," 205.

⁷³ MacKay, *Flight from Famine: The Coming of the Irish to Canada*, 147.

⁷⁴ Mary Haslam, "Ireland and Quebec 1822-1839: Rapprochement and Ambiguity," *The Canadian Journal of Irish Studies* Vol. 33, No. 1 (2007): 78; Louis-Georges Harvey, "'L'exception irlandaise': la représentation de l'Irlande et des Irlandais dans la presse Anglophone du Bas-Canada, 1823-1836," *Les Cahiers des dix* No. 65 (2011): 129-130.

⁷⁵ James Jackson, "The Radicalization of the Montreal Irish: The Role of 'The Vindicator'," *The Canadian Journal of Irish Studies* Vol. 31, No. 1 (2005): 94; Rompré, "Trois leaders irlandais au Bas-Canada," 19; as well as Nolte, "The Irish in Canada, 1815-1867," 211.

⁷⁶ J. J. Curran, ed., *Golden Jubilee of the Reverend Fathers Dowd and Toupin, with a historical sketch of Irish community of Montreal and biographies of "Recollet" and "St. Patrick's"* (Montreal: Printed by John Lovell & Son, 1887), 22.

⁷⁷ For an example of the way in which this Irish Catholic resistance to the Rebellion was organized, see Appendix 1.

order and imperial institutions.⁷⁸ On the occasion of its celebration of St. Patrick's Day, the Society therefore offered toasts to the King, the Queen, the Royal Family, the Army, the Navy and to Lord and Lady Aylmer, the colonial governor and his wife, as well as "Ireland, the land of our faiths. May unity exist among her sons of all classes and of all creeds."⁷⁹ At its inception an association for "all Irishmen, irrespective of religion," the Society capitalized on a strong associational culture dating back to the early 1820s, when Montréal saw the appearance of an Irish Literary Association, a Hibernian Society and a Society of Friends of Ireland.⁸⁰ The St. Patrick's Society became a vehicle by which both Protestants and Catholics could indulge and reaffirm their ethnic difference.⁸¹ By the 1820s, "Montréal's Irish cohort was mature and stratified to an extent that allowed for the emergence of social, benevolent and labour associations."⁸² The St. Patrick's Society was such an association. It served both a socio-economic and a political agenda.⁸³

According to Kevin James, the "implicit criterion for membership at this time was class, and the men assembled for the Society's founding were an impressive lot, representing the high and middling echelons of capital and civil power."⁸⁴ As James points out, portions of the Irish community, both Protestants and Catholics, were well established in 1830s Montréal. Their ethnic brothers might be tolling on the Lachine Canal, but a small number of Irish "above the hill" moved "comfortably within the nascent finance and merchant sectors, attaining prominence in middle-class social circles and institutions."⁸⁵ In fact, by 1842, the Irish population of Montréal was singularly polarized. Forty percent of Irish Catholics were merchants, members of the petite bourgeoisie, clerks

⁷⁸ John Loye, "St. Patrick's Society 100 years old today," *The Gazette*, March 17, 1934; James, "The Saint Patrick's Society of Montreal," 2; Timbers, "Britannique et irlandaise," 47.

⁷⁹ John Loye, "Saint Patrick's Day in Montreal, 1835," *The Gazette*, March 16, 1935.

⁸⁰ Kevin James, "Dynamics of Ethnic Associational Culture in a Nineteenth-Century City: Saint Patrick's Society of Montreal, 1834-56," *The Canadian Journal of Irish Studies* Vol. 26, No. 1 (Spring, 2000): 50.

⁸¹ James, "The Saint Patrick's Society of Montreal," 19.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 18.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 3.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 18.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

and skilled workers, while the rest of the population was comprised of semi-skilled workers and labourers. As for Irish Protestants, labourers represented forty-five percent of their population.⁸⁶ This cleavage between well-established multi-generational segments of the Irish population and more recent arrivals, who occupied the lower rungs of the socio-economic order, manifested themselves in occupational outlooks and rents, as well as in political agency. In 1843, for example, a more prosperous segment of the community, led by Father Phelan and members of the St. Patrick's Society, were credited with defusing a labour conflict at the Lachine Canal.⁸⁷ Historian Dan Horner contends that, at this juncture, "the Irish elite had proven themselves capable of doing the heavy lifting that came with the positions of leadership and authority to which they were seeking greater access."⁸⁸

In conjunction with the St. Andrew's, St. George's and German societies, the St. Patrick's Society became a mouthpiece for the Irish middle class opposed to the liberal *patriote* programme.⁸⁹ But this was not the Society's only mandate. According to its *Rules*, it was to "advance the cause and welfare of Irishmen, its chief duties shall be to afford advice, information, and assistance to Fellow-Countrymen immigrating hither, and to promote their settlement in this Province whenever they can be encouraged to it by the view of advantageous prospects."⁹⁰ Moreover, "*any complaints which Irish Emigrants* [emphasis is in the original] may have against passenger ships, & c. or any frauds practised or attempted to be practised against such Emigrants, *it shall be their duty to*

⁸⁶ Olson, "Research Note: Ethnic Partition of the Work Force in 1840s Montréal," 200-201.

⁸⁷ For more details on this episode see *Montreal Transcript*, 7 March 1843.

⁸⁸ Dan Horner, "Solemn Processions and Terrifying Violence: Spectacle, Authority, and Citizenship during the Lachine Canal Strike of 1843," *Urban History Review/Revue d'histoire urbaine* Vol. 38, No. 2 (2010): 43; J. J. Curran, ed., *Golden Jubilee of the Reverend Fathers Dowd and Toupin, with a historical sketch of Irish community of Montreal and biographies of pastors of "Recollet" and "St. Patrick's"* (Montreal: Printed by John Lovell & Son, 1887), 22.

⁸⁹ James, "The Saint Patrick's Society of Montreal," 25.

⁹⁰ St. Patrick's Society, *Rules and Regulations for the Government of the St. Patrick's Society of Montreal* (Montreal: Printed by James and Thomas A. Starke, 1834), 3. MCMA

investigate, and take such proceedings, either at law or otherwise, as they may deem advisable.”⁹¹ Clearly then, the Society presented itself as an institution for all Irishmen - established and newcomers - under the gentle and firm guidance of an established middle class.

In turn, this segment of the Irish “above the hill” used the Society as an arena in which ethnic “equilibrium was negotiated, the category of Irish ethnicity was constituted and filled, and in which ties were created to integrate the ethnic and institutional units into a broader patchwork of public participatory space.”⁹² Socio-economic differences and political ideology seem to have been the defining factors of Irish identities “above the hill” in the 1830s and early 1840s. The St. Patrick’s Society, indeed, served as a vehicle through which the middling classes “negotiated the structures and meanings of civil society and were integrated into the culture and practices of public politics.”⁹³ In March 1837, the Management Committee of the Society reflected: “The Committee feels a just pride in alluding to the high character of the Society has attained [and] the generous spirit of emulation evinced by every member, to promote, as far as lay within his power, that harmony, mutual forbearance, and good feeling so essential to the prosperity, and so identified with the future existence of the Society.”⁹⁴ Congratulating themselves, the St. Patrick’s Society members were clearly illustrating the aspirations of the Irish “above the hill” to middle-class status and how far their community had come. So much so, that during the bleak events of 1847, this middle-class organization was taken to task by observers who lamented its unwillingness to help during the crisis: “the St. Patrick’s Society, as now constituted, is a mere burlesque on that nation which it purports to represent.”⁹⁵

⁹¹ St. Patrick’s Society, *Constitution of the St. Patrick’s Society of the district of Montreal* (Montreal: Printed by the Irish Advocate Office, 1836), 13-14. MCMA

⁹² James, “The Saint Patrick’s Society of Montreal,” 46.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 3.

⁹⁴ *Transcript*, March 4, 1837.

⁹⁵ *Transcript*, February 25, 1847.

This was the community that was campaigning for its own religious institution. They had already created, in 1840, a temperance society. This society was most certainly influenced by Father Theobald Mathew's temperance movement, which flourished in Ireland from 1838. This creation of a Montreal temperance association underlines, quite clearly, early moments of community organization. On February 23, 1840 Father Patrick Phelan gathered his congregation and enrolled them under the banner of the Irish Roman Catholic Temperance Society of Montreal, the first Catholic association of this nature in the city.⁹⁶ Meeting every Sunday after Vespers, the Society had nearly 3,000 pledged members a year after its inception.⁹⁷ After a change of name to Irish Roman Catholic Total Abstinence Society in February 1841, "the name of the Society was again changed to the "St. Patrick's Total Abstinence Society" a little before St. Patrick's Church was opened in March 1847."⁹⁸

The Society evolved while preparations were underway to create St. Patrick's Church. Starting early in 1841, even before the community received any official validation from religious authorities, donations were received towards a new church.⁹⁹ In April 1842, the organizing committee approached the Seminary once again to point out that "the Recollet church is now put for want of sufficient room" and to exhort the Sulpicians to proceed with plans to build a suitable site of worship for the Irish Catholics. It took another year for the Seminary to move forward with any plans. The Sulpicians were acting on the belief that the Irish Catholics were raising a promised £3000. If efforts were made to reach the objective, and on many occasions Father John Joseph Connolly, the new priest in charge of the Irish congregation, called from the Recollet pulpit for

⁹⁶ St. Patrick's Total Abstinence and Benevolent Society, *Souvenir of the Golden Jubilee of St. Patrick's T. A. & B. Society 1840-1890* (Montreal: Printed by the Dominion Illustrated Co., 1890), 9 & 23.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 23.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 24-25.

⁹⁹ St. Patrick's Church Committee, *Minute Book*, March 1841. SPBA

donations, the result was never £3000.¹⁰⁰ It is finally in February 1843 that the Fabrique of Notre Dame and the Sulpicians realized the “absolute necessity” of a church for the Irish Catholics, and put into actions the plans that would bring forward the laying of the foundations during the summer.¹⁰¹ The community continued its fundraising efforts, as it became a point of honour: “Undertake to collect in their districts it being the desire of the minds of their Catholic Brethren a religious feeling and that the poorest man may have had contributed his mite towards the building of Saint Patrick’s Church.”¹⁰²

Past this point however, St. Patrick’s Church was to be constructed without much input from the Irish Catholics. As Gillian Leitch remarks, the “Seminary used the building of Saint Patrick’s as a way to fill a gap in the service of Montreal Catholics and demonstrate to the Bishop of Montreal that they retained the power to act unchecked in their own parish. [...] If Saint Patrick’s was built on a grandiose scale it was not a reflection on the might or importance of the community, but that of the Seminary of Saint Sulpice.”¹⁰³ The actual construction of the Church reveals how little impact the community had on the hallowed walls they were to inhabit. Messieurs Comte were engaged to erect the new building and, despite recommendation that as “the church is raised principally for the use of the Parishioners speaking the English Tongue [it is] recommend that the Messieurs Comte employ so far as they are able in the execution of this Great Work, as Foremen, Mechanicks or Labourers that part of the population for whose use the Church is intended,” this was not the case.¹⁰⁴ Bitter stories about the lack of community participation in the works, as well as a lack of consultation with

¹⁰⁰ Leitch, “Community and Identity in Nineteenth Century Montreal: The Founding of Saint Patrick’s Church,” 105-106.

¹⁰¹ St. Patrick’s Church Committee, *Minute Book*, February 1843. SPBA

¹⁰² St. Patrick’s Church Committee, *Minute Book*, June 1843. SPBA

¹⁰³ Leitch, “Community and Identity in Nineteenth Century Montreal: The Founding of Saint Patrick’s Church,” 143.

¹⁰⁴ Donna Eleanor McGee, “St. Patrick’s Roman Catholic Church, Montréal: an architectural analysis and history of its early years” (M.A. Thesis, Concordia University, 1991), 61.

the Irish Catholics about the plan, size, and cost of the site, have been memorialized and will be later discussed.¹⁰⁵

Nevertheless, it was a proud Irish Catholic community that consecrated the new building on the morning of March 17, 1847. Although unfinished, the new church could definitively accommodate the whole of the Irish Catholic community.¹⁰⁶ Made from Montréal greystone, the final building is 233 feet (71 meters) long by 105 feet (32 meters) wide with a steeple standing at just over 228 feet (69 meters). In 1847, the edifice towered over its surroundings, Figure 2.1 shows a view of St. Patrick's Church taken in 1872 from Notre-Dame Church. It clearly illustrates the Church's prominence. Twenty-five years earlier, St. Patrick's would have stood quite apart from its environs and been a beacon for its congregation.



Fig. 2.1 View from Notre-Dame Church, looking north-west, Montreal, Qc.
© McCord Museum Archives

¹⁰⁵ Alan Hustak, *Saint Patrick's of Montreal: The Biography of a Basilica* (Montréal: Véhicule Press, 1998), 25-29; Trigger, "The Role of the Parish in Fostering Irish-Catholic Identity in Nineteenth Century Montreal", 33.

¹⁰⁶ *Newspaper article on the consecration of St. Patrick's Church in Montreal*, newspaper title unknown, possibly *Montreal Transcript*, 1847. JLF

Designed by architects Pierre Louis Morin and French Jesuit Félix Martin, St. Patrick's Church was influenced by the Gothic Revival movement, which was slowly gaining ground in Canada in the nineteenth century. As its name clearly indicates, this style of architecture proposed a return to the architectural and stylistic forms of the Middle Ages, those of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries specifically.¹⁰⁷ Notre-Dame de Montréal, erected in 1823, is widely accepted as an early North American example of this revival that shaped European architecture in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century.¹⁰⁸ Imported and adapted to Canada, the principles of the Gothic Revival helped determine the outlook of St. Patrick's. This had a strong spiritual and political component. It was not simply the aesthetic qualities of the Middle Ages that St. Patrick's architects were emulating, but as Alan Gowans suggests it for Notre-Dame, the "architecture in Montréal [had to] bear witness to a strong Catholic faith in the face of the English Protestant challenge."¹⁰⁹ Gothic, with its evocation of medieval Catholicism, became the vehicle by which the Sulpicians, the pastors of Montréal, articulated their faith in the built environment. In fact, an exposé on architecture in *La Minerve*, on April 27, 1866, highlights how Gothic architecture came to be so easily accepted in Montréal:

Il y a quarante ans, on se ressentait encore du XVIIIe siècle, et l'on sait qu'il n'avait pas été seulement une époque d'impiété et d'immoralité, mais aussi une époque de vraie décadence pour l'art religieux. Suivant les principaux archéologues, au XVIIIe siècle, on avait renoncé à tout ce qui impliquait quelque principe et quelque régularité; on ne voulait plus de la pure architecture grecque, si noble et si belle, et on ne comprenait pas la grandeur de l'architecture ogivale, non moins pure et non moins admirable, mais on y avait substitué un nouveau style qui était la négation de tout principe raisonnable, et qui était surtout souverainement inconvenant pour le sanctuaire et pour l'asile de la prière.¹¹⁰

The adoption of the Gothic style in the 1840s was therefore seen as a return to purer religious forms; a revival of a type of architecture that would elevate minds and souls.

¹⁰⁷ Mathilde Brosseau, *Gothic Revival in Canadian Architecture* (Ottawa: Canada Historic Sites Occasional Papers in Archaeology and History No. 25, 1980), 7.

¹⁰⁸ Alan Gowans, "Notre-Dame de Montreal," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* Vol. 11, No. 1 (1952): 20.

¹⁰⁹ Gowans, "Notre-Dame de Montreal," 25

¹¹⁰ *La Minerve*, April 27, 1866.

In England, Augustus Northmore Pugin was the great theorist of the Gothic Revival. Author of *Contrasts* (1836) and *True Principles of Christian Architecture* (1841), two books which shaped the Gothic Revival in the English-speaking world, Pugin was the architect Joseph Vincent Quiblier, from the Seminary, reached out to in 1842. He requested plans for the Irish Catholic church he was to erect: “Nous sommes sur le point de commencer une église de style gothique... Il serait à propos qu’elle puisse contenir huit ou dix mille personnes desquelles près de la moitié dans les bancs. La sévérité du climat et l’abondance de neige de nos longs hivers ne permettent pas d’ornements extérieurs à l’exception de quelques cordons peu saillants. Auriez-vous, Monsieur, le plan d’une telle église que vous pourriez nous soumettre sans délai?”¹¹¹ Nothing is known of Pugin’s response, but Quiblier’s letter proves the Seminary’s knowledge and interest in the Gothic Revival happening in England in the nineteenth century. In fact Pugin’s and the Cambridge Camden Society’s, the organization responsible for the dissemination of Gothic Revival concepts, influence were clearly felt in Canadian religious architecture by the time the Seminary constructed St. Patrick’s Church.¹¹²

Surprisingly then, it is the French Gothic Revival which has been credited with influencing the Church’s plan. Chartres Cathedral and Notre-Dame de Paris are often cited as influence on Morin and Martin who were proponent of the French Gothic Revival style.¹¹³ The building erected in 1847 is, in any case, a product of the Revival but a Québec adaptation that takes into account the climatic conditions of Montréal. Figure 2.2 shows an aerial view of St. Patrick’s. The church lacks the grandeur and intricacy of the churches it purports to emulate, especially the flying buttresses

¹¹¹ Archives du Vieux Séminaire, Church of St. Patrick, Joseph Vincent Quiblier to Augustus Northmore Pugin, May 28, 1842 in Brosseau, *Gothic Revival in Canadian Architecture*, 15.

¹¹² Brosseau, *Gothic Revival in Canadian Architecture*, 13.

¹¹³ Both the podcast tour produced by St. Patrick’s Basilica in 2014 and the webpage dedicated to St. Patrick’s Basilica’s status as a National Historic Site of Canada credit the French Gothic Revival for the appearance of St. Patrick’s. Both stress the fact that Pierre Louis Morin and Félix Martin would have been quite familiar with French Gothic architecture. See Parks Canada, *Canada’s Historic Places*, “St. Patrick’s Basilica National Historic Site of Canada,” <http://www.historicplaces.ca/en/rep-reg/place-lieu.aspx?id=12104>

characteristic of Notre-Dame and Chartres Cathedral. With its single-story elevation, and its rather high-pitched roof, the Church is very suited to weather Montréal winters and the accumulation of snow. The Church's facade, its most elaborate exterior side, is the one to follow the principles of verticality, central tower and rose window that characterise so many Gothic buildings. Morin and Martin probably recognized the necessity to keep the exterior ornamentation of St. Patrick's to a minimum, if the building was to survive the changing climatic conditions of the city, but they still incorporated unmistakably Gothic elements into the construction. Figure 2.3 shows the lancet windows, pointed-arched doors and tympana, the portico as well as the turrets, which give St. Patrick's its distinctive Gothic appearance. The addition of trefoil to the facade's decoration is a common Gothic motif, but also hints that this Church was to be the home of *Irish Catholics*.

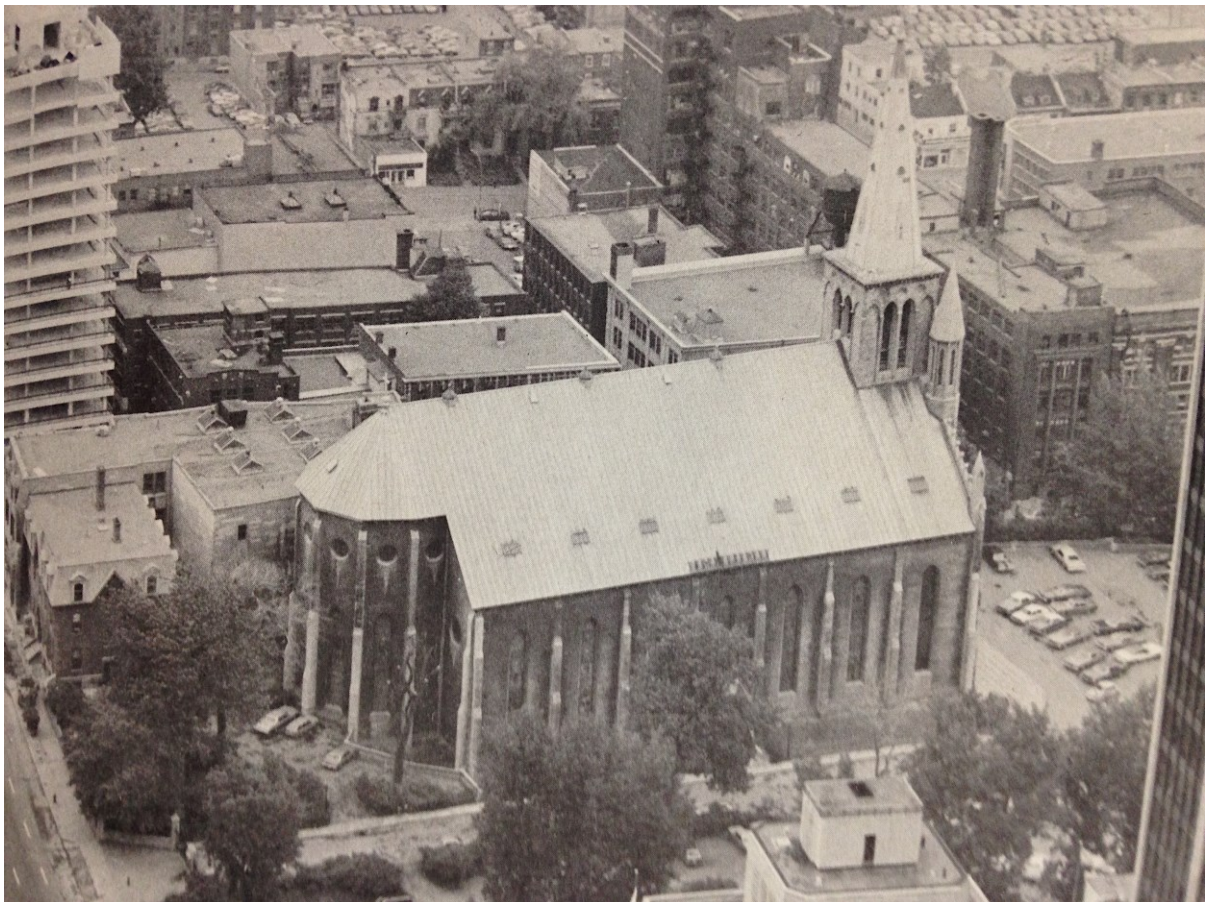
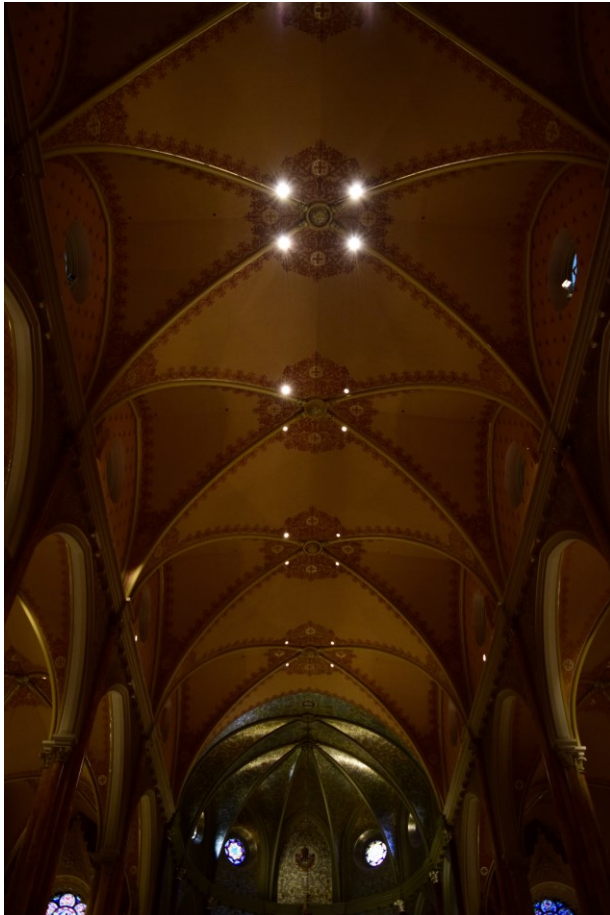


Fig. 2.2 Aerial view of St. Patrick's Church, 1980. © Mathilde Brosseau



Fig. 2.3 Front facade of St. Patrick's Basilica, 2016. © Camille Harrigan

The Church's interior was also to reflect its architects' understanding of Gothic Revival principles. Although it was at first unadorned, St. Patrick's interior adheres to the principles of symmetry and verticality that were the keystone of Gothic buildings. The vaulted ceiling (Fig. 2.4) recalls the structure of medieval cathedrals, as do the high side aisles, which lend a magnificent airiness to the building. The twelve pillars supporting the roof are each made with a single 80 feet tall pine tree, and they contribute to the radiance and openness of the interior at St. Patrick's. Figure 2.5 shows that, even in its barest form, St. Patrick's was a superb building. The Grey Nuns produced the rose windows adorning the sanctuary and the nave in 1861 to replace the painted glass installed at the opening in 1847. Their jewel-like colors can still be seen to this day (Fig. 2.6). The initial decoration of the Church that took place between 1845 and 1851 was supervised by Victor Bourgeau, who designed the pulpit which can be seen in Figure 2.5. It is decorated with painted apostles and is heavily adorned by gothic elements. The addition of a copy of Eustache Lesieur's



“Annonciation” and a painting of the “Death of St. Joseph” (Fig. 2.7) influenced by Gianantonio Guardi's “La Morte di San Giuseppe” to the walls behind the altars of St. Ann's and St. Joseph in 1865 continued the trend of interior decoration at St. Patrick's heralded by Bourgeau and confirmed its Gothic nature. The decoration's second and most extensive phase, which took place in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, will be discussed later in this thesis.

Fig. 2.4 Vaulted ceiling of St. Patrick's Basilica.
© Camille Harrigan

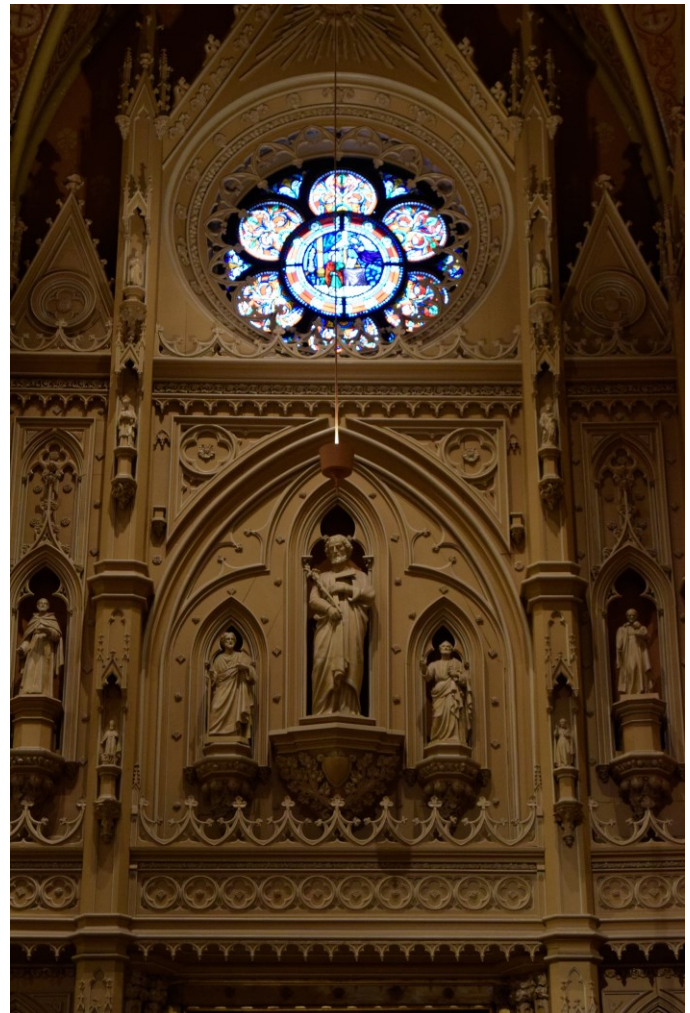


Fig. 2.5 Interior of St. Patrick's Church, 1873. © McCord Museum Archives



Fig. 2.6 “Death of St. Joseph” painting on the wall above the altar dedicated to St. Joseph.
© Camille Harrigan

Fig. 2.7 Example of rose window produced by the Grey Nuns.
© Camille Harrigan



On that first Sunday in March 1847, the Irish formed a procession from the Recollet and marched to St. Patrick's. Entering the building to the sound of "God Save the Queen," the Bishop and the clergy were followed by the Presidents, Office-bearers, and the Banner of the St. Patrick's Society.¹¹⁴ The *Mélanges Religieux* relates that Father Connolly took the pulpit to deliver an hour-long sermon. In a first reimagining of the history of the building of St. Patrick's, the *Mélanges* reports:

Ce jour sera certainement une époque mémorable pour les Irlandais de cette ville; la grandeur et la magnificence de leur temple témoignent de leur zèle et de leur religion. Cette église est, après l'église paroissiale qu'elle surpasse en beauté, la plus grande de la ville. L'intérieur est d'un style noble et élégant, et quoi qu'elle ne soit pas encore décorée, elle a une apparence agréable; ses vitraux étroits mais élevés, dont les vitres sont peintes de manière à ne point obscurcir le jour, donnent une clarté qui réjouit l'œil, etc.¹¹⁵

The early Irish Catholic congregation of Montréal had thus been successful at erecting a church of its own, reflecting its own religious identity, as well as its political and demographic strength. In this first effort at community building, in this church-building operation, Sherry Olson has seen the "evidence of a community of identity and mutual assistance" that would facilitate the integration of Famine migrants into the fabric of the city.¹¹⁶ "Through [their] abilities to mobilize resources, muster solidarity, and exercise political finesse," these Irish Montrealers created a separate parish, which replaced what an urban neighbourhood could have done.¹¹⁷ The parish, which effectively institutionalised "national differences," reinforced linguistic, religious and ethnic boundaries, becoming one of the sites where Irish Catholics created, established and fostered a cohesive ethnic

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁵ *Mélanges Religieux* Vol. X in Olivier Maurault, "La congrégation irlandaise de Montréal," *Revue trimestrielle canadienne* Vol. 8, No. 31 (September 1922): 274. [Handwritten and annotated copy is to be found in the St. Patrick's Basilica Archives]

¹¹⁶ Olson and Thornton, "The Challenge of the Irish Catholic Community in Nineteenth-Century Montreal," 336.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

and socio-economic identity.¹¹⁸ The evolution of St. Patrick's parish, as well as those identities it nurtured for the rest of the century, will be explored further in the next chapter.

¹¹⁸ Sherry Olson, "St. Patrick's and the Irish Catholics," in *The Sulpicians of Montreal: a history of power and discretion, 1657-2007*, ed. Dominique Deslandres, John A. Dickinson, and Ollivier Hubert (Montreal: Wilson & Lafleur, 2013), 304; Trigger, "The geopolitics of the Irish-Catholic parish in nineteenth-century Montreal," 555.

Chapter 3

The Defining Years: The Evolution of St. Patrick's Church to the Turn of the Century

3.1 Fostering an Associational Network, 1840s to the End of the Century

The Irish of Montréal, who started to congregate together in the 1820s, used a key institution, the parish, to foster an associational network that provided them with a sense of place and community. In fact, the Church positioned itself at the core of an “institutional complex that placed the parish at the heart of Irish Catholic activities in the city.”¹ After 1847, St. Patrick's parish fostered the creation of numerous other societies and associations, heralding what were later remembered as the “halcyon days of St. Patrick's Parish.”² As these “societies [and] organizations had explicit social, recreational, charitable, and educational goals,” the parish became the hub of an incredibly active social life that fostered and safeguarded a sense of Irishness in the Montréal diaspora.³ Sherry Olson has proposed that the persistence of Irish identities in the city required “continual maintenance and grooming of the network.”⁴ This reinforcement, via an almost literal application of institutional completeness, enabled a reiteration of groupness via boundary maintenance which this chapter will explore. First, it will present an analysis of the associational network surrounding the Church, and then it will explore the notions of Irishness fostered during the St. Patrick's Society split in the 1850s. An exploration of the dismemberment episode a decade later, in which St. Patrick's boundaries were redefined by Bishop Ignace Bourget against the wish of the congregation, will help underline how the community defined itself during moments of resistance. Finally, an analysis of identity politics to the end of the century will help one understand the specificity of the Irish identity put forward at St. Patrick's.

In the wake of the parish's opening, the community harnessed the resources of its wealthier

¹ Olson, “St. Patrick's and the Irish Catholics,” 306; Sherry Olson, “Silver and Hotcakes and Beer: Irish Montreal in the 1840s,” *Canadian Ethnic Studies* Vol. 45, No. 1-2 (2013): 187.

² *St. Patrick's Message*, March 1939. SPBA

³ Dolan, “The Irish Parish,” 18.

⁴ Olson, “Silver and Hotcakes and Beer: Irish Montreal in the 1840s,” 185.

constituents, to enable them to open a refuge for the poor in the late 1840s.⁵ Promoting an internal recirculation of means, the community maintained boundaries while fostering a sense of leadership for a portion of its population.⁶ The Asylum was the brainchild of Father Patrick Dowd who, upon his arrival in Montréal in 1848, recognized the multifarious needs of his community. A legacy from Bartholomew O'Brien, a prominent parishioner of St. Patrick's, enabled Dowd and other community leaders to buy land adjacent to the church.⁷ In 1851, the children of the Asylum finally moved into their new St. Patrick's Orphan Asylum on Dorchester Street.⁸ In this endeavour Dowd was assisted by a segment of the Irish population that clearly subscribed to the notion of *noblesse oblige*. The *True Witness and Catholic Chronicle*, in October 1850, reported on the benevolent Ladies of the St. Patrick's Congregation and their Irish Bazaars, "procuring funds 'to clothe orphan and destitute children' to enable them to attend school during the approaching winter."⁹ The Ladies would be instrumental in raising money for charity and Father Dowd's endeavours throughout the rest of his pastorate. As for the Asylum, its success was never in question and the clergy of St. Patrick's remained at the helm of the institution throughout its existence. In 1857, when the Asylum was incorporated, its Act of Incorporation clearly stated that the pastor of St. Patrick's retained the power to appoint and removed the Asylum's Director.¹⁰ Clearly, the institution orbited around St. Patrick's and helped to foster a distinct community focused around the Church.

St. Patrick's was also the house of the St. Patrick's Total Abstinence and Benefit Society, mentioned in the last chapter. If the impetus provided by Father Phelan's Temperance Society

⁵ J. J. Curran, ed., *Golden Jubilee of St. Patrick's Orphan Asylum – The Work of Fathers Dowd, O'Brien and Quinlivan* (Montreal: Printed by the Catholic Institution for Deaf Mutes, 1902).

⁶ Olson, "Silver and Hotcakes and Beer: Irish Montreal in the 1840s," 195.

⁷ O'Brien bequeathed an annuity of fifty pounds and a large sum of a thousand pounds for the express purpose of building a charitable institution for the "Irish Catholic poor" in 1849.

See Bartholomew O'Brien, *Copy of Original Will*, February 26, 1849. SPBA

⁸ Trigger, "The Role of the Parish in Fostering Irish-Catholic Identity in Nineteenth Century Montreal," 35.

⁹ *True Witness and Catholic Chronicle*, October 11, 1850.

¹⁰ Mr. Holton, *An Act to amend the Act incorporating the Montreal St. Patrick's Orphan Asylum. Received and read, first time, Friday, 27th March, 1857* (Toronto: Printed by John Lovell, Yonge Street, 1857).

helped fostered a climate of community building in the 1840s, in the later part of the century the Society continued to provide an environment in which members of the congregation could reiterate their own sense of ethnic identity. The meetings of the Society were held after Vespers on Sundays, in the Church's grounds, with pastors from St. Patrick's presiding over the proceedings.¹¹ The Constitution of the Society was also under the proviso of the Pastor of St. Patrick's, who had the final say on laws governing the temperance association.¹² In 1884, St. Patrick's and its pastor were also instrumental in forming a pan-Irish parish organization. The Irish Catholic Temperance Convention of Montreal was formed in St. Patrick's Presbytery on June 12th, 1884, under the presidency of Father Dowd.¹³ Assembled with the temperancers of St. Gabriels's and St. Ann's, the members of the St. Patrick's branch were, once again, at the heart of Irish activities in the city. By reaching out to other congregations, the Irish of St. Patrick's were positioning themselves as leaders of the Irish community whilst they reinforced ethnic boundaries vis-à-vis other Catholics in the city. By heading a temperance association, the Irish of St. Patrick's were also underscoring their congregation's respectability and moral leadership, a position they were keen to showcase.

In the late 1840s, with the influx from the Famine and the widening of the Lachine Canal, the Irish population of Montréal became significant enough to require a place of worship geared towards the working-class Irish. In 1848, a chapel (St. Ann's Mission), under the charge of St. Patrick's, was erected on the corner of Ottawa Street. In the early 1850s, the Mission became insufficient and the Sulpicians decided to erect a new church for the Irish congregating in

¹¹ St. Patrick's Total Abstinence and Benefit Society, *Proceedings of the Montreal St. Patrick's Total Abstinence Society, Volume 1, 1868-1871*. TABSA; St. Patrick's Total Abstinence and Benefit Society, *Proceedings of the Montreal St. Patrick's Total Abstinence Society, Volume 2, 1879-1889*. TABSA

¹² St. Patrick's Total Abstinence and Benefit Society, *Proceedings of the Montreal St. Patrick's Total Abstinence Society, Volume 4, 1896-1900*. TABSA

¹³ St. Patrick's Total Abstinence and Benevolent Society, *Souvenir of the Golden Jubilee of St. Patrick's T. A. & B. Society 1840-1890*, 25; St. Patrick's Total Abstinence and Benefit Society, *Proceedings of the Montreal St. Patrick's Total Abstinence Society. Minutes of the Irish-Catholic Temperance Convention, Volume 3, 1883-1886*. TABSA

Griffintown.¹⁴ A “modest greystone building” (Fig. 3.1) at the corner of McCord and Wellington Streets, St. Ann’s Church opened on December 8, 1854.¹⁵ The annals of St. Ann’s parish record the 1850s as the “brightest days of Griffintown’s history,” when its people had become: “self-conscious and independent and began to make themselves a power of influence to be felt in the general community at large. In a parochial sense too, their aspirations took flower, and ere long they could boast themselves to be on par with St. Patrick’s and some went so far as to declare St. Ann’s to be even superior to the proud and dominating edifice that crowned De Rochebleve Hill.”¹⁶ If some in the community did the comparison, it remains that St. Ann’s was not, architecturally and stylistically, on par with the Church “above the hill.” Few records of the appearance of St. Ann’s have been preserved, but photographs of its interior reveal a pleasing sanctuary, one which nevertheless lacks the grandeur of its patrician counterpart (Fig. 3.2). Smaller in stature, with lower ceilings lacking the elegant vaulted design that characterized St. Patrick’s, St. Ann’s was less ornamented, and its sanctuary could not rival the beauty of St. Patrick’s. St. Ann’s, in short, lacked the airiness and magnificence that characterized the Church on the hill.

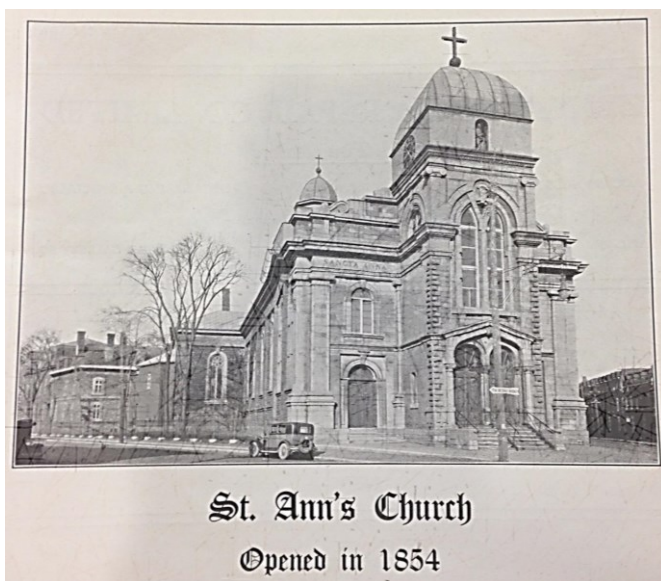


Fig. 3.1 Exterior of St. Ann’s Church, Montréal, 1934.
© *Golden Jubilee Number – Redemptorists Fathers at St. Ann’s*

¹⁴ Dorothy Suzanne Cross, “The Irish in Montreal, 1867-1896” (M.A. Thesis, McGill University, 1969), 101.

¹⁵ St. Ann’s Church, *Golden Jubilee Number – Redemptorists Fathers at St. Ann’s*, Montreal, 1934.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

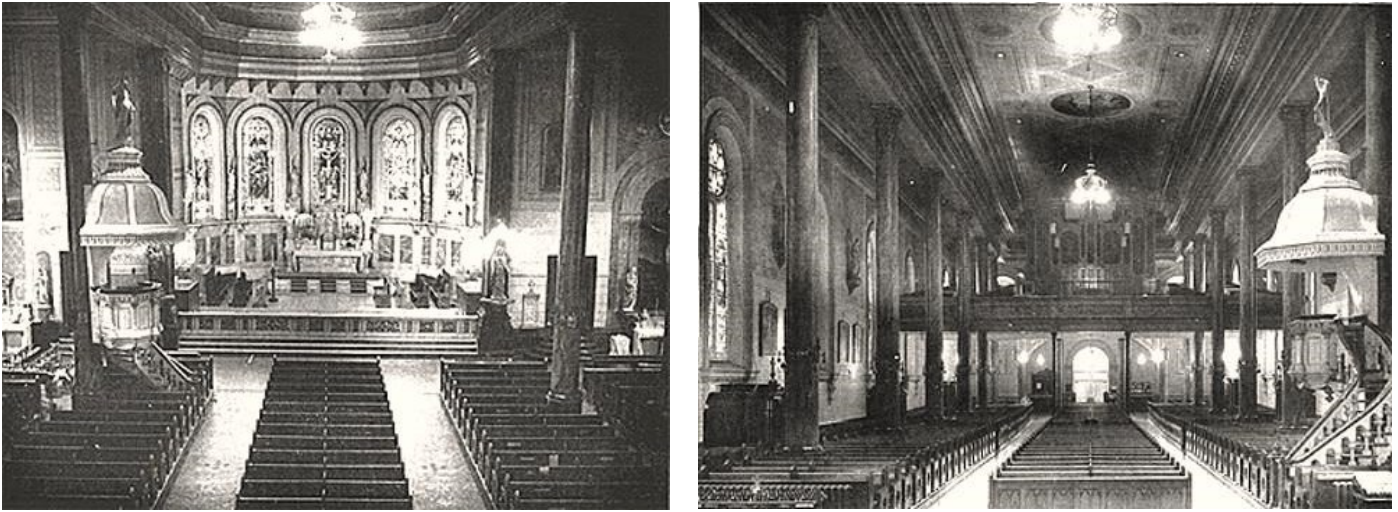


Fig. 3.2 Interior of St. Ann's Church, Montréal, undated. © Montreal AOH

Clearly, St. Patrick's Church stood for a different Irish community. As J.I. Cooper noted in 1956, the Irish of St. Patrick's and St. Ann's formed two 'communities,' "separated initially by the psychological experience of the Famine, and latterly by a struggle to control community organizations."¹⁷ Residing and working in different areas, the two communities differed in socio-economic status. If their evolution was mirrored, in that both communities created similar institutions, the two parishes nevertheless nourished their own brand of Irishness in Montréal.

In these moments of parish-building, the Irish of Montréal were precursors in trends historians have observed later in the century. St. Patrick's, as well as St. Ann's Church, came to fashion the private identities of their constituents.¹⁸ With their constellation of institutions, both parishes were redefining what it meant to be Catholic in Montréal. Expanding the definition, from one where religious practice was limited to rituals and prayers, to one in which the engagement was a charitable and communal one, both parishes heralded trends that flourished much later in other communities, both Catholic and Protestant.¹⁹

¹⁷ J. I. Cooper, "The Social Structure of Montreal in the 1850s," *Report of the Annual Meeting of the Canadian Historical Association* Vol. 35, No. 1 (1956): 69.

¹⁸ Nancy Christie, and Michael Gauvreau, *Christian Churches and Their Peoples, 1840-1865: A Social History of Religion in Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010), 6.

¹⁹ Christie, and Gauvreau, "Secularisation or Resacralisation? The Canadian Case, 1760-2000," 100.

3.2 The St. Patrick's Society Split: Refining Notions of Irishness in the 1850s

In the mediation of their Catholicism through the parish, the Irish Catholics of Montréal also anticipated what Emmet Larkin has labelled the “devotional revolution.” Until the 1840s, Irish Catholics in Ireland had very little occasion to experience the formal trappings of Catholicism because the ratio between lay people and the clergy were very low.²⁰ The lack of priests and/or sufficient space in existing churches led a majority of Irish Catholics to miss on the rituals of Catholicism. In fact, in pre-Famine Ireland, only thirty-three per cent of the Catholic population actually went to mass.²¹ The majority of Irish Catholics had limited opportunities to experience the sacraments, or indeed attend religious services in consecrated buildings.²² It is not before the 1840s, and under the leadership of Paul Cardinal Cullen that the Catholic Church in Ireland experienced major transformations that heralded a devotional revolution in the post-Famine population.²³ In the meanwhile, the Irish of Montréal arrived in a province with an established Catholic Church that welcome them. Irish Catholics were therefore eager to embrace the formal trappings of Catholicism, and the parish – this ethnic enclave – became the harbinger of a new sense of self in the new world, especially as ultramontanist came to be adopted in Montréal.²⁴

As a new influx of Irish Catholics arrived in Montréal in the 1840s, the established community - those that had petitioned for a national church - came to prominence. This was reflected in their changing status within the St. Patrick's Society. In the period, positions on the Charitable Committee, as well the offices of treasurer, secretary, and vice-president came to be occupied solely by Catholics.²⁵ With the proliferation of Irish Catholic institutions in the late 1840s

²⁰ Emmet Larkin, “The Devotional Revolution in Ireland, 1850-75,” *The American Historical Review* Vol. 77, No. 3 (1972): 627.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 636.

²² *Ibid.*, 638.

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ Desmond Bowen, “Ultramontanist in Quebec and the Irish Connection,” in *The Untold Story: The Irish in Canada*, eds. Robert O’Driscoll and Lorna Reynolds (Toronto: Celtic Arts of Canada, 1988), 295.

²⁵ Timbers, “Britannique et irlandaise,” 54; Cooper, “The Social Structure of Montreal in the 1850s,” 70.

and 1850s, the Irish Catholic clergy was well placed to extend its authority over every sections of the community.²⁶ Simultaneously, the rising Catholic middle class adhered to new religious trends, amongst them ultramontanism. Infused with conservative impulses, ultramontanism offered a vision of civil society in which the Catholic *bourgeoisie* could play a significant role, but it did so at the expense of the rapport between Irish Catholics and their Protestants counterparts.²⁷ The Catholic contingent in the St. Patrick's Society, led by the formidable Father Dowd, therefore redefined notions of Irishness and ethnicity in the 1850s, equating it quite clearly with Catholicism.²⁸

Catholics within the Society came to embrace Dowd's ideals of creating independent institutions dedicated to promoting Irish *Catholic* identities.²⁹ Dowd believed that the St. Patrick's Society should be independent and promote a national and religious – meaning Catholic – form of ethnicity. He thus supported the dissolution of the existing non-denominational St. Patrick's Society.³⁰ Its members “heard the wish of the Catholic Clergy expressed, that another Society should be formed which would embrace elements now divided in which jealous feelings would be extinguished.”³¹ The dissolution of the original Society into two new confessionalized bodies reflects the way in which institutions, in mid-nineteenth century Montréal, experienced the changing trends in religion. Those institutions were also witness to the fluctuation in identities that took place in the Irish diaspora of Montréal.³²

In February 1856, the St. Patrick's Society ceased to exist, and became reorganized under the same name with a new confessional ethos excluding Protestants. Although the Church of Ireland had always made claims to St. Patrick's, the new ethnic understanding in Montréal was that:

²⁶ James, “The Saint Patrick's Society of Montreal,” 68.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 56.

²⁸ Jason King, “L’historiographie irlando-québécoise. Conflits et conciliations entre Canadiens français et Irlandais,” *Bulletin d’histoire politique* Vol.18, No. 3 (Printemps 2010), web version.

²⁹ Timbers, “Britannique et irlandaise,” 58.

³⁰ *Transcript*, February 16, 1856.

³¹ James, “The Saint Patrick's Society of Montreal,” 73.

³² Timbers, “Britannique et irlandaise,” 59.

A “St. Patrick’s Society” is not only a national, but a religious Society – or why the name of “*St. Patrick?*” Of an “Irish” or “Hibernian Society,” Catholics and Protestants might indifferently be members; but the latter would be as much out of their element in a “St. Patrick’s Society,” as a Turk in the “Society of Jesus.” No! If Irish Protestants want to form themselves into a Society, they are welcome to do so; but then let it be under a proper designation. [...] No! No! It is impossible to serve God and mammon; to be at one and the same time a member of a St. Patrick’s Society, and a Protestant.³³

The new Society was to draft a different Constitution, which would be presented and approved by the priests of St. Patrick’s.³⁴ Under direct clerical patronage, the St. Patrick’s Society now upheld a version of Irishness that, by its exclusive nature, angered Irish Protestants who felt that their national and ethnic identities had been removed from them. In the *Witness* of April 1856, an observer remarked that: “Other national societies, such the Saint George’s and Saint Andrew’s, admit natives of the countries they represent, without questions to creed, and the Saint Patrick’s Society, in taking its present narrow sectarian stand, must either intend to affirm that none but Catholics are Irishmen, or that it is no longer a national society.”³⁵

Dejected, Irish Protestants moved in May 1856 to create a new entity for their own ethnic identity, the Irish Protestant Benevolent Society. Conflicting ideas about Irish ethnic and religious identities therefore clashed “above the hill,” among the Irish middle classes.³⁶ An observer from the Protestant community summarized the issue by asking “if because we [Irish Protestants] cannot go to St. Patrick’s Church, we are to be deprived of the privileges of Irishmen! [Adding that] though he lived here he looked with pride and satisfaction to his native land.”³⁷ In the late 1850s then, the politics of identity and Irishness “above the hill” had inevitably been linked with religion. This was

³³ *True Witness and Catholic Chronicle*, March 28, 1856.

³⁴ James, “Dynamics of Ethnic Associational Culture in a Nineteenth-Century City,” 60.

An examination of a later - revised - constitution of the St. Patrick’s Society in 1881 still clearly states that no amendments could be made to the Society’s mandate and by-laws without the approval of St. Patrick’s clergy. St. Patrick’s Society of Montreal, *Constitution & By-Laws of the St. Patrick’s Society of Montreal. Established 6th March, 1856. Incorporated 1863. Revised 1879. Sanctioned by His Lordship the Coadjutor Bishop of Montreal, and the Irish Clergy of St. Patrick’s Church* (Montreal: Printed by Callahan & Co., 1881), 28. SPSA

³⁵ *Witness*, April 16, 1856.

³⁶ The emblems adopted in 1856 by the two new societies clearly illustrate how Catholics harnessed the emblematic power of St. Patrick’s. The Irish Protestants had to adopt other cultural symbols to mark their Irishness. See Appendix 2 for a clear illustration of this phenomenon.

³⁷ *Transcript*, April 12, 1856.

made quite clear in the sermon preached on the occasion of St. Patrick's Day, in 1857. The Reverend Michael O'Brien took the pulpit and, once again, underscored the fact that Catholicism was the only vehicle for Irishness: "Would Irishmen only think of this – of what they have done and have yet to do, in spreading the faith of Christ – the faith which Patrick gave them – over all the earth [...] We would wish to see the word *Irishman* synonymous with good *Christian* and good *citizen*, as it now is, and has for ages been almost synonymous with *Catholic*."³⁸ As a body assembled, the St. Patrick's Society maintained what they saw as the true Irish identity in Montréal. This was reflected in their organization of the St. Patrick's Day festivities. Not only was the procession to assemble at St. Patrick's Church, but no clear invitation was made to the Irish Protestant Benevolent Society to join them in the festivities.³⁹ If the Society's continued and undisputed running of the procession is explained by the lack of resistance Irish Catholics encountered for their national and religious festival, according to Rosalyn Trigger, it might be that the Society constructed a version of St. Patrick's Day that simply became anathema to those who could not partake in the identity it put forward, a thoroughly Catholic identity.⁴⁰

The *Minutes* of the St. Patrick's Society also reveal that, at least officially, the Society served as a vehicle for a conservative and middle-class portion of the Irish in Montréal. An address to Bishop Bourget by the Society, the year Rome resolved a quarrel between the Bishop and the Irish Catholic leadership, points to the political nous that animated the members of the Society.⁴¹ This is the association's class narrative, one intrinsically linked with St. Patrick's Church, which would be

³⁸ Michael O'Brien, *Report of the Sermon Preached by the Rev. M. O'Brien, in St. Patrick's Church, March 17, 1857* (Montreal: Printed for James Flynn, at The True Witness Office, 1857), 4. BANQ

³⁹ St. Patrick's Society, *Minutes of Meeting*, March 3, 1865. SPSA

⁴⁰ Trigger, "Irish Politics on Parade," 174.

⁴¹ The letter sent by the St. Patrick's Society to the Bishop to celebrate his golden jubilee was accompanied by a donation of 200.00\$ for his new cathedral. By such a gesture, the leadership of the Irish Catholic community proved its political understanding of the workings of the Québec Catholic Church. In the midst of a confrontation with Bourget about the dismemberment of the parish (an episode explored in the next section) the Society still chose to address the Bishop's anniversary; illustrating not only their understanding of the political clout yielded by Bourget but also highlighting the respectability to which the Society's members aspired.

The address can be found in Appendix 3, *Address presented to Bishop Bourget on his Golden Jubilee, 1872*. SPSA

celebrated over the years. In 1934, John Loye, the Society's historian, concluded its *Centennial History* with a clear positioning of the Society's social standing: "In its century of existence it has numbered on its membership role all the leading Irishmen of Montreal, and has stood as host to men of the highest rank in Canada, the British Empire, and the United States of America. Its position from the day of its inception has never lowered from the height of honor and influence it has occupied in the life of our city, and throughout the Dominion of Canada."⁴² These men from the St. Patrick's Society had political and legal expertise and, in the 1860s, they used both to safeguard the Church they held so dear.

3.3 An Irish Community Resists: The Dismemberment Episode, 1866-1874

As the century progressed, notions of Irish identity in Montréal became increasingly associated with Catholicism. The Irish Protestant Benevolent Society did not seem to attract the membership its sister society did. This reveals how Irish Protestants in the city moved to construct new identities less dedicated to ethnicity, but instead underscoring the common religion and imperial ethos they shared with other British groups.⁴³ Cecil J. Houston and William J. Smyth surmises that "through their pastoral activities, the churches served to consolidate and develop communities. Significantly however, they played a much wider role as ethnic agents."⁴⁴ In Montréal's Protestant churches, a certain degree of ethnic fusion took place as the Irish worshiped alongside Scots, English, and American settlers. This might explain why battles over notions of Irishness between Catholics and Protestants seem to disappear after the creation of the two new benevolent societies. However, this does not mean that the significance of an "Irish Catholic culture" to the politics of identity in Irish Montréal faded away.

⁴² John Loye, *Centennial History*, St. Patrick's Society of Montreal, March 5th, 1934. SPSA

⁴³ Timbers, "Britannique et irlandaise," 66.

⁴⁴ Houston, and Smyth, *Irish Emigration and Canadian Settlement : Patterns, Links, and Letters*, 169.

In the 1860s, dissatisfied with the Sulpicians' system of branch churches for the enormous parish of Notre-Dame, Bishop Ignace Bourget advocated for the "creation of a number of less populous parishes with well-defined boundaries, where pastors could get to know their parishioners, as was the case in rural parishes."⁴⁵ These were the premises of a confrontation between the congregation and leadership of St. Patrick's and the French-Canadian ecclesiastical authorities represented by Bishop Bourget, an incident that became known as the dismemberment episode. For St. Patrick's Church, this would literally be the end of an era. No longer would it serve the needs of most Irish Catholics "above the hill," it would also no longer be an anchor for the identity of Irish Catholics in the city.⁴⁶ The "parish nuclei" would no longer be able to provide the Irish, from cradle to grave, with "most of the social, religious, educational and emotional needs" they required for the church to remain a vessel of ethno-religious persistence.⁴⁷

The boundaries of the new parish of St. Patrick's would be redefined, and an integrated congregation mixing both Irish Catholics and French Canadians would now call the Church their home. This was something the pastor of St. Patrick's plainly deplored: "Has His Lordship made this calculation? Surely our Bishop does not wish to reduce St. Patrick's to the solitude of a Protestant cathedral, and to give to our English speaking Catholics, the too painful spectacle of their dear old church deserted, and weeping over the forced dispersion of its pious children."⁴⁸ Rapidly, Bourget's plan was opposed by the congregation and the leadership of St. Patrick's Church who argued to the Vicar General that, to "oblige the Irish and Canadians to attend in the same church for religious worship and instruction, and immediately you bring into collision all the susceptibilities and

⁴⁵ Trigger, "The geopolitics of the Irish-Catholic parish in nineteenth-century Montreal," 559.

⁴⁶ Gerald Berry, "A Critical Period in St. Patrick's Parish, Montreal – 1866-74," *CCHA Report* Vol. 11 (1943-44): 117.

⁴⁷ Murray W. Nicolson, "Irish Tridentine Catholicism in Victorian Toronto: Vessel for Ethno-religious Persistence," *Sessions d'étude – Société canadienne d'histoire de l'Église catholique* Vol. 50, No. 2 (1983): 417.

⁴⁸ St. Patrick's Congregation, *Objections and Remonstrances Against the Dismemberment of the Ancient Parish of Montreal and the Proposed Erection of the Parishes of St. James and St. Patrick's, Made at Meetings Held in September and November, 1866* (Montreal: Printed by John Lovell, St. Nicholas Street, 1867), 18. BANQ

jealousies... [and] scandal will soon be the result.”⁴⁹ If somewhat alarmist, this excerpt, from a letter written by Father Dowd, illustrates how faith was not enough to bind together two communities with different identities. As Sherry Olson and Patricia Thornton remark, in Catholic Montréal, “Sunday after Sunday, emotions were orchestrated in words, music, and gesture, with the help of beeswax, incense, and lilies. Despite the synchrony of the great liturgical cycles and a common core of litany, Montrealers were not all singing out of the same hymnbook.”⁵⁰

The Irish community sent to Rome a delegation to exhort Pope Pius IX to reverse Bourget’s plan. In 1867, Thomas Ryan and Thomas D’Arcy McGee travelled to Rome with the sanction of the Archdiocese of Québec. They argued successfully that St. Patrick’s was built for the exclusive use of English-speaking Catholics, becoming “an ornament and an honour to religion and a point of unity and concentration for the English-speaking Catholics of Montreal.”⁵¹ The intervention of Paul Cullen, who had been made a Cardinal in June 1866, most certainly helped the Irish-Canadian representatives to have their petition considered by the Holy See.⁵² The Pope came to a decision in July 1872, and a final decree in 1874 determined that St. Patrick’s and St. Ann’s churches were to be given for the exclusive use of English-speaking Catholics – at this point mostly ethnically Irish – and that the St. Patrick’s parish boundaries were to be expanded to encompass those of Notre

⁴⁹ St. Patrick’s Congregation, *Objections and Remonstrances*, 4.

⁵⁰ Olson, and Thornton, *Peopling the North American City: Montreal 1840-1900*, 321.

⁵¹ Thomas D’Arcy McGee, and Thomas Ryan, *Supplique de Ryan and McGee, 5 avril, 1867*, in Gillian I. Leitch, “Community and Identity in Nineteenth Century Montreal: The Founding of Saint Patrick’s Church,” 130.

⁵² Early in his Roman career Paul Cullen was appointed to Propaganda Fide. He used this position to carve out an impressive career. Already in the 1830s, Cullen’s star in Rome was on the rise. He effectively became the unofficial representative of an Irish faction in the American Catholic hierarchy. As the rector of the Irish College in Rome, Cullen also served as liaison between the Irish bishops and the Pope, explaining Irish affairs to the Holy See. His interest in the concerns of the North American church was such that he used his influence at Propaganda to “ensure Irish episcopal domination throughout the British Empire,” according to Colin Barr. It is his mastery of the Italian language that explains Cullen’s career in Rome. As Italian was the daily language of the Vatican, Cullen was called upon to “translate and explain important English documents” to Propaganda Fide and the Pope. This role as translator and intermediary was, according to Anne O’Connor, something Cullen would do for Irish priests working in all parts of the world throughout his career. It is therefore a reasonable supposition to think that Ryan and McGee’s petition would have been championed by the newly appointed cardinal.

See Colin Barr, “Cullen, Paul,” In *Dictionary of Irish Biography*, Cambridge University Press/Royal Irish Academy, accessed February 17, 2018. <http://0dib.cambridge.org.mercury.concordia.ca/viewReadPage.do?articleId=a2281&searchClicked=clicked&quickadvsearch=yes>; Anne O’Connor, “Translating the Vatican: Paul Cullen, power and language in nineteenth-century Ireland,” *Irish Studies Review* Vol. 22, No. 4 (2014): 450-465.

Dame.⁵³ St. Patrick's Church was therefore to remain the church of the Irish Catholics "above the hill," and officially became the Mother Church of English Montréal.

Having successfully ascertained that their identities as *Irish Catholics* precluded them from joining ranks with other Montréal Catholics, the Irish community congregating at St. Patrick's moved forward to rectify what they saw as ill-conceived notions about their history. Once again, class was the issue. Having been condemned for his attack on Irish Catholics, Bishop Bourget retaliated by pointing out the ingratitude of this unfortunate people, who had been cherished and welcomed by the French Canadians during the Famine.⁵⁴ In a re-working of history, Bourget made the destitute Famine Irish central to the history of St. Patrick's Church.⁵⁵ Members of the 1866 congregation took exception to this interpretation of their history, and this particular portrayal of their community.⁵⁶ They reacted, stating:

Your Lordship, referring to the sad events of 1847, is pleased to call us an 'unfortunate' people; we admit it, we were 'unfortunate' – in 1847 through the inscrutable ways of God, who, however, often chastises in love. In 1866 we are still 'unfortunate' – for your Lordship will not allow us to forget our sad destinies. The memory of all past afflictions must be kept fresh; and all the charities of which we have been the sad recipients, must be turned into an argument to force us to surrender, in silence, all the advantages of our present altered condition which we owe to our own efforts, under the blessing of God, and the generous sympathy of our immediate Pastors. Certainly we are a peculiar 'unfortunate' people.⁵⁷

As Jason King argues, the St. Patrick's congregation refused the mantle put upon them by the history of the Famine, and opted for an understanding of their community's history that was closely linked with their present situation and identity. Resilience and independence were the qualities the

⁵³ Berry, "A Critical Period in St. Patrick's Parish, Montreal – 1866-74," 124.

⁵⁴ St. Patrick's Congregation, *The Case of St. Patrick's Congregation As to the Erection of the New Canonical Parish of St. Patrick's Parish, Montreal. Published by order of the Committee of the Congregation* (Montreal: Printed by John Lovell, St. Nicholas Street, 1866), 11-12. SPBA

⁵⁵ King, "L'historiographie irlandaise-québécoise," web version.

⁵⁶ Jean-Marc Leduc, "La figure de l'Irlandais au Québec: perspectives historiques et littéraires (1815-1922)" (M.A. Thesis, Concordia University, Département d'Études françaises, 2014), 74.

⁵⁷ St. Patrick's Congregation, *The Case of St. Patrick's Congregation*, 19. SPBA

congregation was celebrating, and it reflects their contemporary middle-class aspirations.⁵⁸ As the first community-published document, *The Case of St. Patrick's Congregation* clearly illustrates the narrative the community wanted put forward.⁵⁹ In subsequent publications, amongst them one for the Golden Jubilee of Father Dowd, the community continued to reflect on their advancement. Their sense of identity was more than ever influenced by ideas of class, success, and prestige:

To-day the position of the Irish Catholic community of Montreal and its vicinity is one of influence, power and prestige. The assessment rolls are evidence of the interest they command to the extent of millions of dollars. They hold on commerce and manufactures, their representation in the Judiciary, in the Senate and Commons of the Dominion, in the Local Legislature, at the Aldermanic board, in the various offices of trust and emolument connected with public affairs and their place in the learned professions, by men of their race and creed, leave no room for cavil.⁶⁰

Putting forward the idea of Irish Catholic achievement in the city, the congregation provides insight into the perceived, constructed, and promoted notions of identity purported by the Irish diaspora “above the hill.” St. Patrick’s Church thus stood as a monument to the accomplishments of the Irish in Montréal, especially its “lace-curtain” population. Using the place of worship as their stage, this portion of the community established and reiterated their sense of historical truth to the exclusion of other narratives. Kerby A. Miller has explored these types of narratives, in his seminal exploration of the exile motif in Irish America.⁶¹ He explores how Irish American nationalists, politicians, and clerical leaders “never tired of ‘reminding’ their audience that the Irish were being ‘driven out of Erin’.”⁶² At St. Patrick’s however, leaders preferred to celebrate the history of a community that fully participated in the life of the city. Fostering a sense of agency in the Irish community congregating at St. Patrick’s, the Church’s publications thus offer a window for diaspora scholars

⁵⁸ King, “L’historiographie irlando-québécoise,” web version.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Curran, ed., *Golden Jubilee of the Reverend Fathers Dowd and Toupin*, 10.

⁶¹ Kerby A. Miller, *Emigrants and Exiles: Ireland and the Irish Exodus to North America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), 6.

⁶² Kerby A. Miller, “Emigrants and Exiles: Irish Cultures and Irish Emigration in North America, 1790-1922,” *Irish Historical Studies* Vol. 22, No. 86 (September 1980): 99.

interested in the complexities of the experiences of Irish migrants, which have, in the past, most often been characterised as powerless.⁶³

Interpretations of the past were, once again, at the core of another confrontation between the community and French Catholic ecclesiastical authorities when, in late 1883, the debt of St. Patrick's was transferred from the Fabrique of Notre-Dame to the congregation.⁶⁴ The Fabrique felt quite comfortable transferring the economic responsibility of the Church's debt to its own congregation: "Les paroissiens de St Patrice peuvent aisément rencontrer cette dette, et s'il était nécessaire de le prouver, il suffirait d'indiquer les œuvres qu'ils ont faites pour venir au secours de leurs membres. [...] D'ailleurs la proposition de la Fabrique ne peut manquer de leur être agréable, puisqu'ils ont toujours aimé à gérer eux-mêmes leurs propres affaires."⁶⁵ Father Patrick Dowd, in a brilliant effort at political manoeuvring, downplayed his community's prosperity this time, citing their generosity and charity, instead of their wealth for their success in establishing numerous charitable institutions.⁶⁶ In their interpretations of how St. Patrick's came into existence, their interpretations of the past, the two communities clashed once more. For the Fabrique, the debt incurred by the erection of St. Patrick's was directly linked to its size and grandeur: "Or c'est ce comité [St. Patrick's Church Committee] qui a demandé officiellement à l'évêque l'érection de l'église St. Patrice. C'est ce comité qui a désigné à l'évêque les dimensions que devait avoir l'église projetée."⁶⁷

⁶³ Enda Delaney, and Donald M. MacRaild, "Irish Migration, Networks and Ethnic Identities Since 1750: An Introduction," *Immigrants & Minorities: Historical Studies in Ethnicity, Migration and Diaspora* Vol. 23, No. 2-3 (2005): 127, 130 & 139.

⁶⁴ Leitch, "Community and Identity in Nineteenth Century Montreal: The Founding of Saint Patrick's Church," 145.

⁶⁵ Curé et Marguilliers de la Fabrique de Notre Dame de Montréal, *Lettre à Sa Grandeur Monseigneur Edouard Fabre concernant le transfert de la dette de St. Patrice de la Fabrique de Notre Dame vers la paroisse de St. Patrice*, 1883. SPBA

⁶⁶ Patrick Dowd, *REMARQUES – Sur la requête de la Fabrique de Notre-Dame, à Sa Grandeur l'Evêque de Montréal, demandant que le coût de la construction de l'église St. Patrice soit transféré de la Fabrique aux paroissiens de St. Patrice: ces remarques sont adressées à Sa Grandeur l'Evêque de Montréal et à la Fabrique de Notre-Dame* (Montréal, 1884), 7. BANQ

⁶⁷ Fabrique de la paroisse Notre-Dame, *Réplique au mémoire en réponse à une requête de la Fabrique adressée à Mgr. de Montréal, touchant la cession de l'église St. Patrice* (Montréal, 4 février 1884), 6. BANQ

The Irish congregation retorted with their own official history, which was quite clear on the low level of involvement the Irish Catholics had been able to achieve in the actual building of St. Patrick's: "les Irlandais catholiques de la ville ne furent aucunement consultés sur le plan, les dimensions et le prix de l'église St. Patrice. Tout fut décidé indépendamment d'eux par la Fabrique et par les Autorités ecclésiastiques. [...] Comment alors blâmer les Irlandais d'une dette que la Fabrique a elle-même contractée en suivant ses propres traditions?"⁶⁸ Father Dowd's interpretation of the events was based on the knowledge he gathered from prominent members of the congregation. In fact, in 1884, the community's leadership, Father Dowd and Senator Edward Murphy amongst them, began the process of remembering the early history of St. Patrick's Church. Murphy established a list of question to put to members of the community who might remember the circumstances in which the Church was constructed. The archives of St. Patrick's Basilica contain both the questions drafted by Senator Murphy, and the response of two parishioners, John Kelly and Thomas Hewitt.⁶⁹ Both have their own account of the inception of St. Patrick's Church, but, quite clearly, their narratives highlight the difficulties experienced by the Irish Catholics to be included in the decisions concerning the location, size and grandeur, as well as the actual construction of what was to become their parish church. John Kelly, himself a contractor, is quite critical of the way Comte directed the work: "I frequently visited the building during its construction and from close observation I made up my mind that the work must have cost double as much, done as it was by the day, as the same kind of work could have been done by contract [...] I consider that the building of the St. Patrick's church must have at least cost from sixty to seventy percent more than its real value."⁷⁰

⁶⁸ Dowd, *REMARQUES*, 2. BANQ

⁶⁹ John Kelly, *Answers of Mr John Kelly to the Questions submitted to him on the inception and building of St. Patrick's Church of Montreal. His Answers on No. 1 to 15 inclusive*. SPBA; Edward Murphy, *Questions submitted to John Kelly, a resident of Montreal since 1830, in reference to the inception and building of St. Patrick's Church of Montreal*, March 1884. SPBA

⁷⁰ Kelly, *Answers of Mr John Kelly*. SPBA

What is fascinating about this episode in the life of St. Patrick's Church is the shrewd use of narratives Father Dowd and his contemporaries made. In the dismemberment episode, Dowd had harnessed the memories of a community coming together to build and foster institutions, but faced with the remittance of St. Patrick's debt, Dowd – and Murphy – made use of a certain victim narrative that was exceptional in the subsequent readings the community made of its history. Edward Murphy's questionnaire therefore had a clear agenda, its seventh question "Were the Irish Catholics consulted in any way as to the plan, size or cost of the proposed building, or in the choice of the site that was to be selected? Was not all done without asking their opinion?" is hardly subjective, and it reflects the leadership's views on the transfer of St. Patrick's debt.⁷¹ Responses to the questionnaire could only reinforce Father Dowd's argument vis-à-vis the Fabrique of Notre-Dame.⁷² Hence, the construction of St. Patrick's Church came to be a contested site of memory, one that reinforced, once again, the divide between co-religionists. In the end, in April 1884, both parties reached an agreement, and the dispute, which had almost reached the legislative assembly, was resolved. The debt was transferred under circumstances acceptable to the Fabrique of St. Patrick's. It finally obtained the full propriety of St. Patrick's in May 1903, after having discharged their debt to the Fabrique of Notre-Dame and the Seminary. In 1906, the first Irish Catholic church in Montréal could therefore be consecrated.⁷³ The occasion was marked by the addition of consecration crosses, with accompanying candles, to each Stations of the Cross gracing the walls of the nave (Fig. 3.3). In five generations then, the Irish Catholics "above the hill" had taken responsibility for the great and splendid edifice erected for their use in 1847. In episodes of community resistance and affirmation, from the 1860s onward, St. Patrick's congregation clearly defined its community's boundaries, and it refined its notion of Irishness in the metropolis.

⁷¹ Murphy, *Questions submitted to John Kelly*. SPBA

⁷² Senator Murphy's full questionnaire is attached here as Appendix 4.

⁷³ Maurault, "La congrégation irlandaise de Montréal," 283.



Fig. 3.3 Consecration cross underneath the Thirteenth station. © Camille Harrigan

3.4 Identity Politics to the End of the Century

For most of the nineteenth century, St. Patrick's stood as a bastion of Irish identity in Montréal, particularly its more successful and politically conservative segment. If the notion that this community and the one that saw its genesis during the Famine formed two *totally separate* communities - as J.I. Cooper suggests it - presumes on the permeability of community boundaries, one can nevertheless reflect on the unique experiences of the Irish "above the hill."⁷⁴ Maintaining shifting identities via ethno-religious institutions, this Irish community became, over time, generally preoccupied with notions of class and religion.

⁷⁴ Cooper, "The Social Structure of Montreal in the 1850s," 69.

In 1853, St. Patrick's Church was at the epicentre of the Gavazzi episode. Alessandro Gavazzi, a defrocked Italian priest touring North America, came to Montréal to give a lecture on Catholicism. Father Connolly, the parish priest of St. Patrick's, at this point the only Irish Catholic church in the city, advocated against any reactions to the visit. Still, a contingent of Irish Catholics took offence to Gavazzi's presence, with eleven people killed during the ensuing riot. The *Gazette* was swift to condemn the rioters, and ascribe blame to the St. Patrick's congregation: "There were all Irishmen, for the French Canadians, to their honour be it said, have never shown any wish to interfere in matters of religion."⁷⁵ A meeting of Irish Catholics from St. Patrick's rapidly responded that "as Irish Catholics fond of freedom themselves they would not, because they happened to be the majority, think of molesting their Protestant fellow-citizens."⁷⁶ The St. Patrick's congregation, and the Irish "above the hill" then, were quite vocal in defending their own standing as early as the 1850s. Interestingly, in the only lengthy biography of St. Patrick's, published in 1998, journalist Alan Hustak contends that the rioters were a contingent of working-class Irish Catholics from Griffintown, thus memorializing fundamental differences between the communities "above the hill" and "below the hill."⁷⁷

Identity politics were at the heart of the experience of Irish Catholics congregating at St. Patrick's to the turn of the century. Early on, its clergy adopted a form of "Canadian nationalism" which became its hallmark for most of its history. A dual allegiance to Canada and the land of their forefathers was not a contradiction for most members of the congregation, as an identity as *Irish Canadian* actually helped promote their respectability. Unsurprisingly, in 1857, the guest speaker at the St. Patrick's Day Mass, Reverend O'Brien, took to the pulpit to promote the retention of an Irish ethnic identity whilst embracing Canadian Catholicism:

⁷⁵ *The Gazette* in Hustak, *Saint Patrick's of Montreal: The Biography of a Basilica*, 42.

⁷⁶ Keep, "The Irish Migration to Montreal, 1847-1867," 93.

⁷⁷ Hustak, *Saint Patrick's of Montreal: The Biography of a Basilica*, 42.

We believe indeed that the Irish and Canadian Catholics should unite, and unite as one man, in support of our common faith; but to unite, it is not necessary for either the one or the other to lay aside their feelings of nationality; on the contrary, union requires that those nationalities should be preserved distinct; if you put the two people into one body, you do not *unite*, you only fuse, and amalgamate them, and their very nationalities are jarring elements that will not amalgamate, that will not bear the fusion, and hence would result confusion, weakness and defeat.⁷⁸

Strong in their attachment to Mother Ireland whilst they also immersed themselves in the affairs of their new country, the Irish of St. Patrick's were under the leadership of lay leaders who had arrived before the Famine. Their sense of self might have been influenced by the episode, but it did not form the core of their identity, as it did in locations such as Boston and New York.⁷⁹ This meant that they could promote a less ethnically aggressive version of Irishness. Father Dowd, being a fervent supporter of Thomas D'Arcy McGee's ideas on Canadian nationalism and Irishness, advocated a similar sense of Irish identity for his parishioners. In a speech in March 1861, McGee declared, "I hold we have no right to intrude our Irish patriotism on this soil; for our first duty is to the land where we live and have fixed our homes, and where, while we live, we must find the true sphere of our duties. While always ready therefore to say the right word, and to do the right act for the land of my forefathers, I am bound above all to the land where I reside."⁸⁰ An attachment to Ireland mitigated by a desire to fulfill the responsibilities of a true Canadian citizen is what McGee and, in turn, Father Dowd promoted. They anchored Irishness in the lived reality of Montréal (and Canada) and that, for them, precluded involvement in extreme form of political Irishness.⁸¹ Both men stressed that the vast majority of Irish Canadians were "religious, industrious, law-abiding and loyal

⁷⁸ O'Brien, *Report of the Sermon Preached by the Rev. M. O'Brien*, 20. BANQ

⁷⁹ Moir, "The Problem of a Double Minority," 63.

⁸⁰ Thomas D'Arcy McGee, *1825 – D'Arcy McGee- 1925: A Collection of Speeches and Addresses, Together With a Complete Report of the Centennial Celebration of the Birth of The Honourable Thomas D'Arcy McGee at Ottawa, April 13th 1925. Selected and Arranged by the Honourable Charles Murphy, K.C. LL.D* (Toronto: The Macmillan Company of Canada Limited, 1937), 167.

⁸¹ Robin B. Burns, "D'Arcy McGee and the Fenians: A Study of the Interaction between Irish Nationalism and the American Environment," *University Review* Vol. 4, No. 3 (1967): 268.

subjects of the Crown,” and that the community should take action against any treasonous activities within its ranks.⁸²

Radical movements such as Fenianism therefore encountered difficulties in spreading to certain corners of the city. The clergy of St. Patrick’s did not prevent sections of the Irish population – amongst them members of the St. Patrick’s Society – from joining such causes, but they continued to foster a more conservative environment, which made the dissemination of radical political beliefs more difficult. The bulk of the Irish population of Montréal agreed with the goal of an independent Ireland, but they advocated against violent means to achieve separation from Britain.⁸³ In his efforts to battle radicalism, Dowd was supported by Bishop Bourget who, in 1863, issued a pastoral letter clearly condemning secret societies.⁸⁴ From St. Patrick’s pulpit, Father Dowd warned his parishioners against the Hibernian Society, a known Fenian organization.⁸⁵ Nevertheless, historian David A. Wilson contends that, by the winter of 1865-66, the Fenians in Montréal had made a significant advance into the St. Patrick’s Society, and that they had become a majority within the Society by 1867.⁸⁶ A year earlier, McGee had celebrated the leadership of Father Dowd in a discourse on the Irish position in North America: “There is no stigma of sedition in our ranks, and just as jealously and zealously as Father Phelan, (God be merciful to him,) guarded the character and conduct of his flock, in the last great crisis of this country, just as watchful as Father Dowd and his *confrères* watch over they much larger flock at this moment.”⁸⁷ As Dowd was still the *de facto* spiritual advisor to the St. Patrick’s Society, he clearly expressed his disapproval of radical elements within the association. In 1866, he invited Father O’Farrell to deliver, from the pulpit of St. Patrick’s

⁸² David A. Wilson, “A Rooted Horror: Thomas D’Arcy McGee and Secret Societies, 1845-68,” *The Canadian Journal of Irish Studies* Vol. 31, No. 1 (2005): 47.

⁸³ David A. Wilson, “The Fenians in Montreal, 1862-68: invasion, intrigue, and assassination,” *Eire-Ireland: A Journal of Irish Studies* Vol. 38, No. 3-4 (Fall-Winter 2003), online edition.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

⁸⁵ Trigger, “Irish Politics on Parade,” 186.

⁸⁶ Wilson, “The Fenians in Montreal, 1862-68: invasion, intrigue, and assassination,” online edition.

⁸⁷ Thomas D’Arcy McGee, *The Irish Position in British and in Republican North America – A Letter to the Editors of the Irish Press Irrespective of Party* (Montreal: M. Longmoore & Co., Printing House, 1866), 43. SPBA

on the occasion of March 17, a sermon on allegiance: “Loyalty was ever characteristic of the Irish people. It was for clinging to their chiefs, in days gone by, that Ireland had been most celebrated, and they must cling to their adopted country now, where their faith was protected, where they enjoyed the fullest civil and religious liberty – under whose laws they were safe and rested secure.”⁸⁸

In February of 1867, the *Minutes* of the St. Patrick’s Society recorded the delivery of a letter by their Chaplain expressing his concerns on the state of the Society. The members assembled made every effort to reassure Father Dowd of their standing: “This Society though debarred in a stringent manner by the very provisions of its Constitution from taking part or cognizance of the agitation of personal or rather political questions of any kind, will always rejoice to hear that harmony of sentiment and unity of action exists amongst all classes of Irishmen in this City.”⁸⁹ At least outwardly then, the Society tried to reassert its middle-class, conservative identity under the aegis of Father Patrick Dowd. The pastor of St. Patrick’s would, in the end, weather the Fenian episode of the 1860s, and quite clearly mark the occasion of their defeat when he lent the pulpit in 1869. On St. Patrick’s Day, Rev. Father Frederick Bakewell went to the lectern and delivered a sermon on Ireland’s mission to remind his Irish Catholic brethren that in foreign lands, they should emulate their patron Saint, tying once again notions of Irishness and Catholicism. Bakewell delivered a sermon meant to arouse religious ardor and not political fervor: “As the heavenly Father willed to expatriate St. Patrick [...] that he might become the apostle of his cross, so has he seemed to will it for his children. They are to plant the church [...] They are to show clearly to the world that in

⁸⁸ O’Farrell in Keep, “The Irish Migration to Montreal, 1847-1867,” 121.

⁸⁹ For the complete *Minutes* of this meeting see Appendix 5.

Catholicism is to be found every virtue; that patriotism, that benevolence, that love for religion for which the Irish are so renowned.”⁹⁰

Clearly the clergy of St. Patrick’s thought it possible for the congregation to retain a deep sense of Irishness whilst engaging loyally with their new homeland. In the decade following the Fenian scare, the Irish “above the hill” came to project an attitude reflected in this editorial from the *True Witness and Catholic Chronicle* of May 16, 1877: “Yes we will be Canadians in obedience to the laws, Canadians in defending the constitution, Canadians in everything that effects Canadian interests, Canadian in our social relations, and in our admiration of the land we live in, Canadians too when *mere* political issues are at stake, but WHEN WANTED, WE SHALL BE CATHOLIC AND IRISHMEN ABOVE ALL.”⁹¹ The sermon preached by Martin Callaghan, on St. Patrick’s Day March 1877, reflected this ethos but also reinforced, once again, the links between Irishness and Catholicism: “O Rome! O Rome of Christ! O Eternal City! At thy feet we lay all the chivalry of Erin’s sons – all the tender and generous sympathy of Erin’s daughters – all the talents and munificence of Erin’s devoted children throughout the world.”⁹² The leadership of the Irish “above the hill” therefore considered that the mediation of an Irish identity in the city of Montréal was to be done, quite clearly, through religious observance first and foremost above politics.

By the late 1860s, St. Patrick’s Church had become a bastion for middle-class respectability, specifically because portions of the Irish population in Montréal had experienced a rise in circumstances. They might not lend their names to the leading enterprises in the city yet, but they now had a solid establishment of merchants and professionals.⁹³ As the decades passed, an intergenerational rise in socio-economic conditions allowed the Irish to move steadily up the social

⁹⁰ Frederick Bakewell, *Ireland’s Mission: A Sermon Preached by the Rev. Father Bakewell, in St. Patrick’s Church, Montreal, on St. Patrick’s Day, 1869* (Montreal: Printed by John Lovell, St. Nicholas Street, 1869), 18. BANQ

⁹¹ *True Witness and Catholic Chronicle*, March 24, 1876.

⁹² Martin Callaghan, *The Shamrock or Ireland’s Threefold Love – A Beautiful Sermon Preached by the Rev. Martin Callaghan, on St. Patrick’s Day, in St. Patrick’s Church, Montreal, March 17th, 1877* (Montreal, 1877), 20-21. BANQ

⁹³ Keep, “The Irish Migration to Montreal, 1847-1867,” 49.

ladder.⁹⁴ In Montréal, Irish Catholics did not face the discrimination they did in other locales, and within the local political economy they could forge a place for themselves.⁹⁵ Educated and eager, new generations of Irish Montrealers redefined the work and class identity of a portion of the Irish population.⁹⁶ This was reflected in Irish Catholics' political outlook and residential concentration. In 1881, the Irish showed their political weight by having eight representatives on the Municipal Council compared to twelve for the far more numerous French Canadians.⁹⁷ However, it is in their residential patterns that the community best illustrated its upward mobility. If Griffintown continued to be considered *the* Irish neighbourhood, research proves that, by the turn of the century, a large majority of Irish Catholics were actually living elsewhere in much better circumstances.⁹⁸ From the 1860s to the early 1900s, the Irish experience in St. Ann's ward - and Griffintown specifically - did not reflect the experiences of a majority of Irish Montrealers. Griffintown might have been memorialized as the quintessential Irish Montréal enclave, but most Irish Catholics had a very different experience of the city.⁹⁹

Unsurprisingly, upwardly mobile Irish Catholics did not want to jeopardise their position by engaging in subversive activities, especially after the failed Fenian invasions of the 1860s. This was apparent in their discourse in newspapers from 1876: "We stand well. The Irish people of Montreal are rich and growing richer. They are prosperous and are becoming more prosperous; they are an

⁹⁴ Olson, "Research Note: Ethnic Partition of the Work Force in 1840s Montréal," 191.

⁹⁵ Gordon A. Darroch, and Michael D. Ornstein, "Ethnicity and Occupational Structure in Canada in 1871: The Vertical Mosaic in Historical Perspective," *Canadian Historical Review* Vol. 61, No. 3 (1980): 330.

⁹⁶ Cross, "The Irish in Montreal, 1867-1896," 47 & 83-84; Olson, and Thornton, "The Challenge of the Irish Catholic Community in Nineteenth-Century Montreal," 354.

⁹⁷ Paul-André Linteau, "Le personnel politique de Montréal, 1880-1914: évolution d'une élite municipale," *Revue d'histoire de l'Amérique française* Vol. 52, No. 2 (1998): 7.

⁹⁸ Olson, and Thornton, "The Challenge of the Irish Catholic Community in Nineteenth-Century Montreal," 351; Olson, and Thornton, *Peopling the North American City: Montreal 1840-1900*, 80.

For a clear and illustrated understanding of the Irish Catholics' dispersion in Montréal at the turn of the century see Sherry H. Olson, Jason A. Gilliland, and Danielle Gauvreau, "Did Segregation Increase as the City Expanded? The Case of Montreal, 1881-1901," *Social Science History* Vol. 35, No. 4 (2011): 478. In Appendix 6.

⁹⁹ Quoc Thuy Thach, "Social Class and Residential Mobility, the case of the Irish in Montreal, 1851 to 1871," *Shared Spaces/Partage de l'espace* No. 1 McGill University Department of Geography (1985), 23; Rondeau, "Les irlandais du quartier Sainte-Anne à Montréal, sources et institutions: 1825-1914," 44.

educated people. We have reason to feel proud of the position we have attained in Montreal and elsewhere, and it depends upon ourselves to hold that position and to command the respect of our fellow citizens.”¹⁰⁰ This community, eager to display outward signs of respectability and loyalty to Canada, is the one writer Nicholas Flood Davin encountered a year later. He celebrated a country where the Irishman was a “controlling part of the present,” an “architect of the future,” and more importantly, “he has nothing to do with disasters of the past, only so far as they teach him lessons for the present.”¹⁰¹ Davin’s description fits the Irish community that sent a delegation of pilgrims to Rome that same year, bearing gifts for Pius IX to the tune of \$7,416.41, more than \$6,000 of it coming from St. Patrick’s.¹⁰²

By the 1880s, from the pulpit of St. Patrick’s, Father Dowd promoted a version of Irish identity that was conservative in its outlook. At odds with the politics of certain members of his own congregation, Dowd was a clear advocate for a form of Irish identity firmly rooted in Montréal, one that did not share in the diasporic politics that swept North America in the last decade of his pastorate. In 1883, Dowd opposed the affiliation of a Canadian society to the Irish National League of America.¹⁰³ According to Rosalyn Trigger, he was preoccupied that adherence to an “alien [meaning here an American] organization that was distasteful to those with whom they did business on a daily basis” would impact his community’s standing in the city; especially as they had finally achieved peace with both the French Canadians and the Protestants, by that point.¹⁰⁴ Respectability, and the rule of order were Dowd’s watchwords. He remained suspicious of Irish nationalist

¹⁰⁰ *True Witness and Catholic Chronicle*, March 24, 1876.

¹⁰¹ Nicholas Flood Davin, *The Irishman in Canada* (Shannon: Irish University Press, 1969), 6. First published in 1877.

¹⁰² The remainder of this gift was collected at St. Ann’s, further illustrating the difference in circumstances between the two parishes. See *True Witness and Catholic Chronicle*, April 27, 1877; Curran, *Golden Jubilee of the Reverend Fathers Dowd and Toupin*, 13.

For an illustration of the pilgrims’ departure, and their return, see Appendix 7.

¹⁰³ Cross, “The Irish in Montreal, 1867-1896,” 185.

¹⁰⁴ In fact, Father Patrick Dowd remained quite suspicious of any American-inspired or American-based associations which could lead his parishioners away from the respectable path he was leading them on. Rosalyn Trigger, “Clerical Containment of Diasporic Irish Nationalism: A Canadian Example from the Parnell Era,” in *Irish Nationalism in Canada*, ed. David A. Wilson (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen’s, 2009), 88.

organizations to the end of the decade.¹⁰⁵ Hence, he also categorically opposed the involvement of the Knights of Labor in the 1886 election. On October 15, in the *Montreal Daily Star*, William Keys, one of Knights' organizers, lamented: "I lost many votes through Father Dowd reading the mandement from the pulpit lately against the Knights of Labor organization."¹⁰⁶

By the end of the 1880s, St. Patrick's pastor had clearly established his position on diasporic nationalism. He confronted those who adhered to the movement because they opposed clerical involvement in Irish political affairs.¹⁰⁷ Clearly a proponent of an Irish Catholic identity firmly grounded in the Canadian experience, Dowd joined Archbishop John Joseph Lynch of Toronto, in 1887, to oppose the visit of MP William O'Brien, the land reformer and agitator. The visit had been intended as a shaming exercise for "Canada's governor general, the Marquess of Lansdowne, for this treatment of his Irish tenants," according to Trigger.¹⁰⁸ St. Patrick's leading curate was to be a vocal opponent to the visit, and his opinion held sway. Reports that no prominent citizens, Dowd's congregation amongst them, were present at the station to greet MP O'Brien tend to prove that in the adoption of diasporic politics an element of class was at play. By their conspicuous absence, the supporters of St. Patrick's proved that Dowd did not preach to an unresponsive congregation.¹⁰⁹ Their pastor's unrelenting commitment to patriotism, in this case Canadian patriotism, is what the community chose to celebrate during Dowd's Jubilee in 1887. A celebratory booklet, published after the festivities, recalls the address of the Hon. J.S.D. Thompson, Minister of Justice, representing the Dominion Government:

I am forcibly reminded that I am bound to do honor not only to the great priest, but to the great patriot as well. You in Montreal have been more familiarly acquainted with Father Dowd as a priest. Permit me to say, as one coming from a distant part of Canada, that we

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ William Keys in Peter Bischoff, "Les Irlandais et les Chevaliers du travail à Montréal, 1882-1890," in *Le Québec et l'Irlande: Culture, Histoire, Identité*, eds. Simon Jolivet, Linda Cardinal, and Isabelle Matte (Québec: Septentrion, 2014), 43.

¹⁰⁷ Trigger, "Clerical Containment of Diasporic Irish Nationalism," 91.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 92.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

have known Father Dowd as a priest whose patriotism was too large for any one parish and too wide for any city. We have known him as a patriot, who, while holding the warmest love for his fatherland and the warmest love for the country in which he has spent so many long years, has never been afraid to speak his opinion on any public occasion demanding such expression – never afraid to speak the truth, and to speak it in trumpet tones which sounded from one end of the country to the other.¹¹⁰

A clear picture of the Irish-Canadian identity celebrated from the pulpit of St. Patrick’s emerges here. As proud Canadians, the Irish “above the hill” celebrated their own success by the turn of the century. In the *True Witness and Catholic Chronicle* of March 21, 1894, an editorial reiterates that “it is not out of place to take a glance at the important position that [their] fellow-countrymen and co-religionists occupy to-day.”¹¹¹ The congregation of St. Patrick’s and the community residing “above the hill” were the Irish Canadians encountered by another observer of the Irish condition in North America. In *The Irish in America*, republished in Montréal in 1887, John Francis Maguire extolled the privileged conditions of the Irish in Montréal: “In no part of the British Provinces of North America does the Catholic Irishman feel himself so thoroughly at home as in the beautiful and flourishing city of Montreal. [...] He finds himself at home in the thriving Commercial Capital of Lower Canada. In no part of the world is he more perfectly free and independent than in this prosperous seat of industry and enterprise.”¹¹² Maguire not only noted the specific religious environment in which the Irish Canadians flourished, but he examined, at length, how in these circumstances they could thrive. The community – whose position Maguire finds in “every way excellent” – would, by the end of the century, be *one* of the iterations of Irishness in the city.¹¹³ This is the community that marked the Golden Jubilee of its beloved Father Dowd by publishing a pamphlet celebrating and reiterating their achievements. In both the congregation’s discourse and Dowd’s address to them, one can quite clearly observe a different sense of historical narrative than

¹¹⁰ Curran, *Golden Jubilee of the Reverend Fathers Dowd and Toupin*, 39.

¹¹¹ *True Witness and Catholic Chronicle*, March 21, 1894.

¹¹² John Francis Maguire, *The Irish in America* (New York and Montreal: D. & J. Sadlier & Co., 1887), 96-97.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, 97.

the one used during the remittance episode. In 1887, St. Patrick's congregation chose to celebrate its advancement, rejecting the victim status it had invoked three years earlier. Refusing to dwell on their humble debut in Montréal, the Irish of St. Patrick's chose instead to mark the anniversary by revelling in all they had accomplished, and they congratulated themselves by making an inventory of their now prosperous institutions.¹¹⁴

Different Irish communities called Montréal their home in the nineteenth century. Beyond their residential differences, the Irish "above the hill" and "below the hill," represented respectively by St. Patrick's and St. Ann's parishes, shared in their love for the motherland. Nevertheless, their social circumstances differed, and this sometimes led to fractures within the pan-parish Irish community. The booklet published in celebration of the Golden Jubilee of the St. Patrick's Total Abstinence and Benefit Society, in 1890, therefore establishes quite clearly the cleavage between the two Irish communities in Montréal. Rev. J. A. McCallen, S.S. writes:

We maintain that we are as a body, as intelligent, as prudent, as just, as patriotic, as are the honourable gentlemen who make the law. We have with us the intelligence and justice and patriotism of the most respectable and law-abiding citizens of this city. [...] [But] it is an acknowledged fact that our labouring class cannot reach their homes each evening as they quit work, without meeting twenty, fifty, one hundred temptations in the way, and alas! we know with what sad results.¹¹⁵

This discourse, which highlights the division between the "lace-curtain" Irish of St. Patrick's and those of the tavern-ridden St. Ann's ward, memorialized the distinctions between the two populations.

These differences were exacerbated by episodes in which the clergy and congregation of the two national parishes quarrelled.¹¹⁶ Clearly, those quarrels between St. Patrick's and St. Ann's were

¹¹⁴ Curran, *Golden Jubilee of the Reverend Fathers Dowd and Toupin*, 34-35 & 62.

¹¹⁵ St. Patrick's Total Abstinence and Benevolent Society, *Souvenir of the Golden Jubilee*, 16-17.

¹¹⁶ Early in 1880, Father Dowd and his congregation had already clashed with the Irish residents of the Québec faubourg. The residents had petitioned the ecclesiastical authorities to establish their own church and funds had been raised for that expressed purpose. When the authorities first declined to open a new 'Irish' church, the funds amassed were transferred to the St. Patrick's Asylum. This led to a political and religious confrontation between the pastor of St.

those of two different socio-economic groups. Before the 1884 transfer of St. Ann's from the Sulpicians to the Redemptorists - a Belgian religious order - the two parishes had been able to function mostly in *good entente*; after 1884, the relationship between the congregations became more fraught.¹¹⁷ Their issues came to a head in 1885, when Father Catulle of St. Ann's suggested that St. Patrick's owed a debt to St. Ann's for their participation in the bazaar financing the St. Patrick's Asylum. In fact, the more prosperous St. Patrick's was financing St. Ann's in letting the working-class parish fill half of the Asylum and the St. Bridget's Refuge. In a scathing letter to the Bishop, Father Dowd took Father Catulle to task over his miscomprehension of the social and economic order that bounded the two parishes.¹¹⁸ Highlighting the understanding the Irish priests from both congregations had been able to achieve in the past – a pointed barb to the new Belgian priest – Dowd expounded on the vastly different circumstances of the two parishes, reinforcing the position of St. Patrick's as the bastion of successful Irishness:

As already stated, St. Ann's, in the good old days of Fathers Hogan and O'Brien, contributed on an average twelve hundred dollars to the Orphans' funds each year whilst the support of St. Ann's Orphans cost yearly four thousand eight hundred. That is St. Patrick's made a present every year to St. Ann's of three thousand six hundred dollars: in other words, for each dollar received from St. Ann's, St. Patrick's returned four dollars back, to St. Ann's in support of its Orphan children. And in face of all these facts Father Catulle says that St. Patrick's is in debt to St. Ann's. Shame!!¹¹⁹

Such disputes with St. Ann's shed light on the congregation's sense of self, on which was reinforced by the parish's publications. One can only conclude that, by the end of the nineteenth century, St. Patrick's Church was very much the parish of a privileged and self-aware community.

Born before the Famine, and anchored by their middle-class desire for respectability, the Irish Catholics of St. Patrick's perpetuated a specific sense of Irishness. Shepherded by the

Patrick's, the pastor of the new St. Bridget's, the Seminary and the Bishop when the ecclesiastical authorities finally gave in to the demand for a new church and requested the funds be returned to the new St. Bridget's congregation. For a complete account of this dispute see Curran, ed., *Golden Jubilee of St. Patrick's Orphan Asylum*, 33-36.

¹¹⁷ Trigger, "The Role of the Parish in Fostering Irish-Catholic Identity in Nineteenth Century Montreal," 107.

¹¹⁸ Patrick Dowd, *Letter from Father Patrick Dowd to the Bishop concerning a dispute with Father Catulle from St. Ann's Parish*, 1885. SPBA

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*

formidable Father Dowd, by the end of the century, they were mostly preoccupied with their present and future. This might explain why St. Ann's Church became the heart of the commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the Famine.¹²⁰ At the splendid memorial event held on September 19, 1897, Irish Catholics walked from St. Ann's – not St. Patrick's – to the burial site situated near the Victoria Bridge.¹²¹ Moreover, the procession of religious and lay leaders was led by Father Strubble, the pastor of St. Ann's parish, and not by Father Quinlivan, from the Mother Church of the Irish in Montréal.¹²² The outlook of St. Patrick's congregation precluded its dwelling in the past, and what its members celebrated were not the “unfortunates” that came before them but the pioneering community, which had been instrumental in creating their beloved institutions. As the remembrance of the Famine during the era, both in Ireland and in the diaspora, was coloured by radical nationalists' reading of the events, it is unsurprising that the Irish of St. Patrick's, with their political identity anchored firmly in Montréal, were not nearly as inclined as their Griffintown counterparts to mark the event of the Great Famine and thus subscribe to forms of diasporic Irish nationalism that called for radical actions.¹²³ The Famine remembrance of 1897 was thus indicative of the divisions, along class lines and between ideologies, which were the hallmark of the Montréal Irish communities at the turn of the century.¹²⁴

¹²⁰ McMahan, “Montreal's Ship Fever Monument: An Irish Famine Memorial in the Making,” 50.

¹²¹ McMahan, “Recrimination and reconciliation,” 353.

¹²² McMahan, “Montreal's Ship Fever Monument: An Irish Famine Memorial in the Making,” 50.

¹²³ For a complete account of the evolution of the construction of Famine memory in Ireland and its diaspora to the end of the century, see James S. Donnelly Jr., “The Construction of the Memory of the Famine in Ireland and the Irish Diaspora, 1850-1900,” *Éire-Ireland* Vol. 31, No. 1&2 (Spring/Summer 1996): 26-61.

¹²⁴ McMahan, “Recrimination and reconciliation,” 355.

Chapter 4

The Last Golden Era?: St. Patrick's Church from 1891 to the 1950s

The decades following the erection of St. Patrick's Church were, and have been remembered, as the golden era of the parish. Academic scholarship has been mostly interested in this particular period. The heyday of Father Dowd's pastorate have been the fulcrum of Sherry Olson's, Rosalyn Trigger's and Gillian I. Leitch's explorations of St. Patrick's. As an era of identity formation and institutional growth, the 1840s onwards were undeniably the determinative years of the Irish communities in Montréal. Indeed, St. Patrick's participated in establishing an institutional network that was quite successful at positioning the Church at the center of a social, educational, and welfare system, which rendered state involvement in the life of Irish Catholics almost redundant.¹ For French Canadian Catholics, the presence of such a system – a network that permitted them to insulate themselves – was appealing because it helped foster their sense of Catholic identity in a way that could supersede the identity advanced by the nascent Canadian state.² For Irish Catholics, the same system helped to preserve a distinct sense of ethnic identity. Any examination of the era is therefore one in which the historian can trace the trajectories of Irish identities in the city.

The era heralded by the death of Father Patrick Dowd in 1891 should be of no less interest to those concerned with the history of Montréal Irishness. Dowd's demise signalled the dawn of a new era. St. Patrick's, which had spent the previous decades fostering and reiterating a very particular brand of Irishness, continued to be the custodian of such an identity. However, the Church was also the site of a renewed effort at text-based memorialization. Thus, it is the significance of St. Patrick's Church as an ethnically encoded memorial space – one that stands not only as a monument to the Irish presence in the city but also a repository for Irish Montrealers' memories – that will be

¹ Jean-Marie Fecteau, and Éric Vaillancourt, "The Saint Vincent de Paul Society and the Catholic Charitable System in Quebec," in *The Churches and Social Order in Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century Canada*, eds. Michael Gauvreau, and Ollivier Hubert (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2006), 204.

² *Ibid.*, 205.

examined here. Through its publications, St. Patrick's reveals itself as a mutable *locus* during the first half of the twentieth century. As its stones seem to speak, they reveal an evolving discourse, which is at the core of the analysis in the following chapter. By examining the events of the last decade of the nineteenth century, and then through a chronological examination of the numerous publications and commemorative booklets published during the last golden era of St. Patrick's, one can fully understand the processes of identity reification and memorialization, which were taking place in the community "above the hill." An exploration of *The St. Patrick's Message*, a monthly pamphlet published directly by St. Patrick's, and previously unexplored by academics, will help substantially in tracing the trajectories of the identities and memories promoted at the St. Patrick's from the 1900s onward.

4.1 Dawn of a New Era: Expansion and Memorialization, 1891-1907

Father Patrick Dowd died on December 12, 1891. After a short illness, the "Irish Bishop" of Montréal, remembered by all as the Father of the Irish community, passed away from pneumonia in the Seminary's infirmary, where he had retired the week previous.³ As with his life, his death became an occasion for his community to reflect on his leadership, and the place their community had achieved within the city. Already, on the occasion of his Golden Jubilee in 1887, Dowd had been equated with the very stones of St. Patrick's. A poem by Miss B. Guering, makes the connection between the two quite clear: "Thy virtues we hold up to-day to the nation;/Thy name through our land a glad echo has stirr'd;/It falls from all lips with a deep veneration,/By the next generation it still will be heard,/It will speak in each stone of St. Patrick's forever,/The temple that thou hast made for us a home-/A monument telling that nothing could sever/Thy love for thy

³ Bruno Harel, "Dowd, Patrick," in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, Vol. 12, University of Toronto/Université Laval, 2003, accessed February 17, 2018, http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/dowd_patrick_12E.html.

children, for Erin and Rome!”⁴ In 1891, commentators remembered his leadership position during the 1860s, and celebrated the counsel of this pastor who defended a very Canadian position for his Irish flock, strategically positioning them to engage fully with their new home. In the *Toronto Empire*, Dowd was commemorated as “a great Irishman, but a greater Canadian, [as he] loved at all times to talk of our rising young nation and to dwell upon the temporal and spiritual blessings which the good man held were in store for the new Dominion.”⁵ His position, explored in chapter 3, was one that suited the “lace-curtain” Irish of his congregation, those Irish “above the hill” who wanted to share in the rewards accessible in the new country. With Dowd’s death St. Patrick’s began a new period, as his passing “closed the most notable period of [the] parochial life, covering as it did forty-three years [it] brought [the] community from the days of early venture to those of secure prosperity.”⁶ This was the attitude Dowd himself promoted when, in March of 1891, he had announced that the decoration of the interior of St. Patrick’s would be his next undertaking.⁷

The task of overseeing this transformation unfortunately fell to Dowd’s successor, Father John Quinlivan. Undertaken in the autumn of 1893, under the aegis of artist Alexander S. Locke from Brooklyn and architect William. E. Doran, the improvements to the Church were celebrated on April 4, 1894, in the *True Witness and Catholic Chronicle*:

There is no doubt that the interior of St. Patrick’s is now in every sense worthy of the parish, the clergy in charge, and the grand and all-important services that are held therein. There are sacred memories that cling to that temple which are only the more vividly brought out in the improved and attractive appearance of its interior. [...] For the Irish people of Montreal it is an historical temple, and every addition to its beauty is an act of gratitude to the past and of promise for the future.⁸

This extract from a widely circulated Irish Catholic newspaper clearly illustrates what Neil Leach theorizes, that “symbolic attachments may be grafted onto physical form,” and that “belonging

⁴ Curran, ed., *Golden Jubilee of the Reverend Fathers Dowd and Toupin*, 88.

⁵ Curran, ed., *Golden Jubilee of St. Patrick’s Orphan Asylum*, 79.

⁶ *St. Patrick’s Message*, December 1941, 10. SPBA

⁷ Hustak, *Saint Patrick’s of Montreal: The Biography of a Basilica*, 70.

⁸ *True Witness and Catholic Chronicle*, April 4, 1894.

might be perceived as an identification with a certain place.”⁹ In the excerpt from the *True Witness*, the Irish congregation of St. Patrick’s clearly identifies with its building, and they are proud that its new interior reflects their own position in Montréal. The Golden Jubilee of St. Patrick’s Church was thus an occasion for the congregation to express their sense of achievement. Doreen Massey makes quite clear that the identity of places is firmly linked with the history attached to them and the fashion in which those histories are told.¹⁰ In 1897, a triumphalist narrative was dominant “above the hill.” In a typed copy of an article published during the year, which can be found in the archives of St. Patrick’s Basilica, the author lists what had been affected by the renovation. The details give a clear understanding of a community that wanted to display its success, and embodied it within their sanctuary.

The renovation of St. Patrick’s interior confirmed its Gothic appearance. Both Doran and Locke supervised a transformation that was heavily guided by the principles of symmetry and “spiritual verticality” that are the hallmarks of Gothic architecture.¹¹ In fact, both artists illustrate Chris Brooks’ point about the Gothic Revival, that “decoration and structure are reciprocal.”¹² As Brooks also highlights, ornaments in a Gothic Revival building “consist of the essential construction of the building.”¹³ Locke and Doran’s renovations followed such principles, and they did not conceal the initial construction of the Gothic church but emphasized and beautified its original design, making the purpose for which the Church was designed quite clear. Elevating minds and souls, St. Patrick’s Church’s renovated interior was to display the community’s wealth, but also to serve as a vehicle of religious symbolism and a testament to the faith of the congregation.

Hence, Gothic elements were added throughout the Church, from 1893 to the late 1910s,

⁹ Neil Leach, “Belonging,” *AA Files* No. 49 (Spring 2003): 79.

¹⁰ Massey, “Places and Their Pasts,” 186.

¹¹ Fay, *A History of Canadian Catholics*, 77.

¹² Chris Brooks, *The Gothic Revival* (London: Phaidon Press, 1999), 238.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 239.

when Locke completed his commission at St. Patrick's. The result is a breathtakingly light and luminous interior, which cannot fail to lift the spirit. Figures 4.1, 4.2 and 4.3, which show the interior of the Church in 1885 and 1896, highlight both the changed appearance of the Gothic church but also the retention of its most striking elements. Locke and Doran's renovation accentuated the verticality, luminousness, and beautifully arched ceiling that characterised St. Patrick's from its inception. In 1893, the pulpit designed by Victor Bourgeau was moved to its current location and received a new abat-voix, this one much more ornate (see comparison between Fig. 4.1 and 4.2), which adds to the pulpit's Gothic outlook. Today, the abat-voix (Fig. 4.4) is decorated with a painted glass dove, which hints at the guidance offered by the Holy Spirit to the preaching pastor. The benches were the next element to be updated during the 1890s refurbishment. In 1894, the current Indiana oak benches replaced the more boxy benches from 1847 (see comparison between Fig. 4.1 and 4.3). Their carved ornaments and Gothic motif (Fig. 4.5 and 4.6) enhance further the intricacy and sustained Gothic nature of the renovated St. Patrick's. The main entrance, the side doors of the Church (Fig. 4.7), as well as its confessionals (Fig. 4.8 and 4.9) complete this tradition of Gothic motif that created such a distinctive outlook in the renovated interior of St. Patrick's Church. In all these elements, one needs to appreciate the verticality of the construction, one that leads worshippers to elevate their gaze towards the splendid glass windows of the nave and the sanctuary.

Alexander Locke is credited with the colour scheme that came to characterize the edifice in the early 1890s. The deep crème and terracotta colours he choose, as well as the imitation marble he painted on the columns he decorated (Fig. 4.10), lend buoyancy to the nave that cannot fail to elevate the visitors' gaze towards the sanctuary. The use of the fleur-de-lys and the shamrock alternatively on the walls of St. Patrick's also hints at Locke's understanding of the unique place the Irish Catholics occupied in Montréal. Under the guidance of the Seminary of St. Sulpice, a French

order, the Irish still maintained their own ethnic identities, and this duality is displayed in the built-environment of St. Patrick's Church.



Fig. 4.1 Interior of St. Patrick's Church, Montreal, Qc, about 1885. © McCord Museum Archives



Fig. 4.2 Interior (facing the sanctuary), St. Patrick's Church, Montreal, Qc, about 1896.
© McCord Museum Archives



Fig. 4.3 Interior (facing the main entrance), St. Patrick's Church, Montreal, Qc, about 1896.
© McCord Museum Archives



Fig. 4.4 Pulpit and abat-voix installed in 1893, St. Patrick's Church.
© Camille Harrigan

Fig. 4.5 Back of the Indiana oak benches installed in 1894, with quatrefoil and pointed-arch motif.
© Camille Harrigan



Fig. 4.6 1894 bench ornamentation,
which the Gothic finials.
© Camille Harrigan



Fig. 4.7 West side entrance with detailed
carved pointed arches. Note the alternate use
of fleur-de-lys and shamrock on the
surrounding walls.
© Camille Harrigan



Fig. 4. 8 Exquisitely carved confessional. Note the repetition in the pointed arch motif, the structure's seamless integration into the Church's wainscot and the incorporation of paintings of saints within the design. © Camille Harrigan



Fig. 4.9 Example of carved confessionals. The recurrence of the trefoil and quatrefoil motif recalls the exterior of the Basilica while the confessionals' turret and finials elevate the gaze towards Locke's stained glass windows.

© Camille Harrigan



Fig. 4.10 Painted columns and ceiling, illustrating Alexander Locke's colour choices for St. Patrick's decoration.

© Camille Harrigan

New oil paintings for the Way of the Cross – all paid through donations from parishioners – were also added during the 1890s. Painted by the Italian artist Patriglia, who was commissioned in Rome by Father Leclair, a former pastor at St. Patrick’s, the 6.5 ft by 3.25 ft paintings replaced the work of Antoine Plamondon. Locke also supervised the addition of one hundred and fifty panels representing saints placed on the oak wainscot all around the Church (Fig. 4.11). A portion of these had already, in 1897, been paid for by members of the congregation eager to immortalize their own presence in the city, and in St. Patrick’s.¹⁴ Two large canvases were also added to the walls of the sanctuary after 1895. One represents the “Sacred Heart Pleading” (Fig. 4.12) and another is a copy of Titian’s “Assumption of the Blessed Virgin” (Fig. 4.13).¹⁵ Purchased for the sum of \$500.00, both paintings add to the grandeur of the sanctuary and illustrates the congregation’s wealth at the turn of the century.

Fig. 4.11 Example of panel representing the saints in the wainscot.
© St. Patrick’s Basilica



¹⁴ Anonymous, *Typed copy of an article published in 1897 on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the official opening of St. Patrick’s Church*, 6. SPBA

¹⁵ John Quinlivan, *Pamphlet. A word about the renovation of St. Patrick’s, Montréal and what yet remains to be done* (Montreal: Callahan & Co. Print, Nov. 10th, 1895).



Fig. 4.12 “Sacred Heart Pleading” painting situated on the side of the sanctuary.
© St. Patrick’s Basilica



Fig. 4.13 “Assumption of the Blessed Virgin” painting situated on the side of the sanctuary.
© St. Patrick’s Basilica

Father Quinlivan's contribution to St. Patrick's also extended to his own efforts at furthering institutional completeness for the parish. He saw a need for a Catholic high school for English-speaking students, and he was, as historian Clarence McCaffrey wrote in 1950, "determined that this dream of his and of other leading Catholics of Montreal, should no longer live in the realm of fantasy, but should become a material fact."¹⁶ This preoccupation with education, which was a thoroughly Irish import, had already led Father Patrick Dowd to established schools for girls and boys in the nineteenth century.¹⁷ A desire to foster higher education was thus bequeathed to the next pastor of the parish. To achieve his aim, Quinlivan "marshalled the doctors, lawyers, professional and business men," as well as the general population to donate for the first English-speaking Catholic high school in the province.¹⁸ The new school's corner stone was laid on September 18, 1898 under Father Quinlivan's auspices.¹⁹ With the pastor of St. Patrick's as chairman, the new corporation was later sanctioned by the Lieutenant-Governor on March 10, 1899. Once again, the Irish "above the hill," led by an Irish middle class, made St. Patrick's central to the lives of Irish Montrealers.

The corner-stone ceremony was a perfect illustration of the trajectories of Irishness fostered at St. Patrick's. It highlighted their independence as well as their sense of ethnic identity. The Hon. Doctor Guerin, mayor of Montréal, representing English-speaking Catholics in the Provincial Administration, addressed his brethren on the occasion: "This, indeed, is a proud day for the Irish Catholic citizens of Montreal. For a long time we have felt there was something we required; and

¹⁶ Clarence McCaffrey, "The Catholic High School, Montreal," *CCHA, Report No. 17* (1950): 54.

¹⁷ Ireland had acquired a state system of mass education well before its neighbours, Scotland and England. Decades before the Famine, the "Irish peasantry showed a striking desire for their children to be schooled, and thus a willingness to support any reasonable educational arrangement the central government might provide," according to Donald H. Akenson. Under the Penal Laws, Catholics had supported the "hedge school" system and thus created a readiness in its lower classes to embrace education. This feeling towards instruction was obviously something Irish migrants brought to Montréal as part of their identity and they concretize these feelings by creating their own educational institutions. See Donald H. Akenson, *The Irish Education Experiment: The National System of Education in the Nineteenth Century* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1970), 15-40.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ Curran, ed., *Golden Jubilee of St. Patrick's Orphan Asylum*, 134 & 136.

the establishment of this institution today is going to create a boon amongst us, the want of which has been felt for very many years past.”²⁰ Once again the community could boast of having created its own institution, in which they could further their own sense of identity. The validity of this distinctiveness was corroborated during the ceremony, as His Grace Archbishop Bruchesi validated the different trajectories of his flock:

But if I did not make any distinction between French, English and Irish, I will not do anything to destroy nationality. On the contrary I will do all that is in my power to sympathize with all nationalities and to strengthen them because I know that if we French Canadians are proud of our language and attached to our dear traditions, the English and Irish are also proud of their language and also attached to the traditions of their ancestors. Let the Irish be Irish, let the English be English and let the French Canadians be French Canadians.²¹

At the turn of the century, the Irish Catholics of St. Patrick’s promoted a distinct form of Irishness and class-consciousness that was endorsed by ecclesiastical and secular authorities. In the next decades, the clergy and congregation became quite adept at fostering these attitudes via commemorative and religious publications. Undoubtedly proving that J.J. Curran was right, in 1887, when he posited: “the Irish Catholics of Montreal will ever look to St. Patrick’s as the great centre towards which all their general interests converge.”²²

With a newly renovated Church, a confirmed sense of ethnic identity and class consciousness, the congregation of St. Patrick’s opened a new period of memorialization. With the publication of a pamphlet at the very beginning of the century – 1902 – commemorating the Golden Jubilee of St. Patrick’s Orphan Asylum, the community “above the hill” set the tone for the next half century. Celebrating the achievements, while still reckoning with the past of the community, this first publication was used to remind its readership of the history of St. Patrick’s, as well as its place at the center of Irish communal life: “As St. Patrick’s was the first church which they could call their

²⁰ McCaffrey, “The Catholic High School, Montreal,” 55.

²¹ Curran, ed., *Golden Jubilee of St. Patrick’s Orphan Asylum*, 142.

²² Curran, ed., *Golden Jubilee of the Reverend Fathers Dowd and Toupin*, 14.

own in this city, its history, for the last half century, is substantially their history. Being their mother-church, all the notable events that concerned them during that period naturally cluster around it.”²³ Prominent in the community’s memory, St. Patrick’s parish was defined as the *locus* of identity formation for the Irish “above the hill.” Curran’s history, as an act of commemoration, gives us new insight into how the 1902 community perceived itself, and its past. Especially since the booklet participates in creating a social memory that the community could use to “legitimate a present social order.”²⁴ In turn, this social order needed to be buttressed by a common memory, and this is why the introduction of Curran’s work is so significant: “Apart, altogether, from the pleasure to be derived from reading an account of the rise and development, of one of our most successful institutions, the compilers trust that this little book [...] may prove an incentive to the present generation to rally around their Church and its pastors, and by generously and courageously lending a helping hand to every worthy enterprise, prove that the race is not degenerating.”²⁵ Reckoning with the events of 1847, this particular publication celebrates the history of the Famine, and acknowledges the role of French Canadians during that tragic time. This change in attitudes, compared with those of the 1860s and 1880s, can be explained by the prominence the community had achieved, and their own sense of identity at the beginning of the century.²⁶

In reviewing the newly renovated built environment of the church, editor J.J. Curran also used his booklet to give credence to what Oona Frawley has remarked on in the context of the Irish diaspora, that Irishness is “something to be made plain, made *present* in the diaspora: when Ireland is not a geographical possibility or a physical actuality, there seems often to be a need to convert that absence—the lost object—into a tangible presence.”²⁷ A very lush description of memorial windows

²³ Curran, ed., *Golden Jubilee of St. Patrick’s Orphan Asylum*, 102.

²⁴ Connerton, *How societies remember*, 3.

²⁵ Curran, ed., *Golden Jubilee of St. Patrick’s Orphan Asylum*, 2.

²⁶ King, “L’historiographie irlando-québécoise,” web version.

²⁷ Oona Frawley, *Memory Ireland – Volume 2: Diaspora and Memory Practices* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2012), 6.

imported from Innsbruck, therefore takes on a double significance: “The two new windows of St. Patrick and St. Bridget on the Epistle side of the church are works of rare beauty. One never tires of admiring them. [...] In the upper panel of the first window we have a colossal figure of Ireland's Apostle in the act of driving into the sea the traditional snakes and toads. Nothing could be more dignified than the face and figure of the Saint.”²⁸ The description not only illustrates the fact that St. Patrick's was still an evolving monument in the late nineteenth century, but also that it served as an embodiment of Irishness for the parishioners that graced its hallowed halls.

The St. Patrick's window (Fig. 4.14), which was designed by the Tiroler Glasmalerei glassworks in Austria, came to St. Patrick's in the late 1890s.²⁹ Now situated at the back of the church, it is a fine example of the Arts and Craft movement in vogue at the time. Hand-painted, the magnificent stained-glass window is thoroughly luminous. Its soft yet vibrant colours and attention to details cannot fail to impress. This rendition of St. Patrick at Tara, preaching the Gospel to Ireland's monarch, and holding in his hand a shamrock, emblem of the Most Holy Trinity is a jewel in the St. Patrick's collection of ornamented windows. Surrounded by guards and druids, the King and his entourage depicted in the artwork seem transfixed by the new doctrine imparted by St. Patrick, the original “Soggarth Aroon” commemorated in the Innsbruck window. One can now compare this European rendition of St. Patrick's with the work of Alexander Locke, who replaced the painted glass present in the church during the 1910s and 1920s (Fig. 4.15). In addition to the rose window nestled in the choir loft, Locke is responsible for the design of most of the windows that grace the nave and sanctuary of St. Patrick's. Figure 4.16 shows the four sanctuary windows, each depicting one of the Evangelists. Locke's attention to details, sense of the dramatic, and grasp of the Art nouveau movement are exposed in the highly contrasted windows he incorporated to the sanctuary. In the nave, Locke depicted significant Celtic saints and appropriate Bible passages in his

²⁸ Curran, ed., *Golden Jubilee of St. Patrick's Orphan Asylum*, 116.

²⁹ Fabrique of St. Patrick's Parish, *St. Patrick's Now Vol. 1, No. 1* (Montreal, Fall 1997), 1. BANQ

distinct style. As a student of John La Farge - a collaborator and competitor of Louis Comfort Tiffany – Locke understood the appeal of highly contrasting, saturated, and opalescent colours in church windows. Figures 4.17 and 4.18 illustrates his use of deep purple, yellow, blue and green to render highly dramatic stained-glass windows that complemented the rest of his interior decoration at St. Patrick’s.

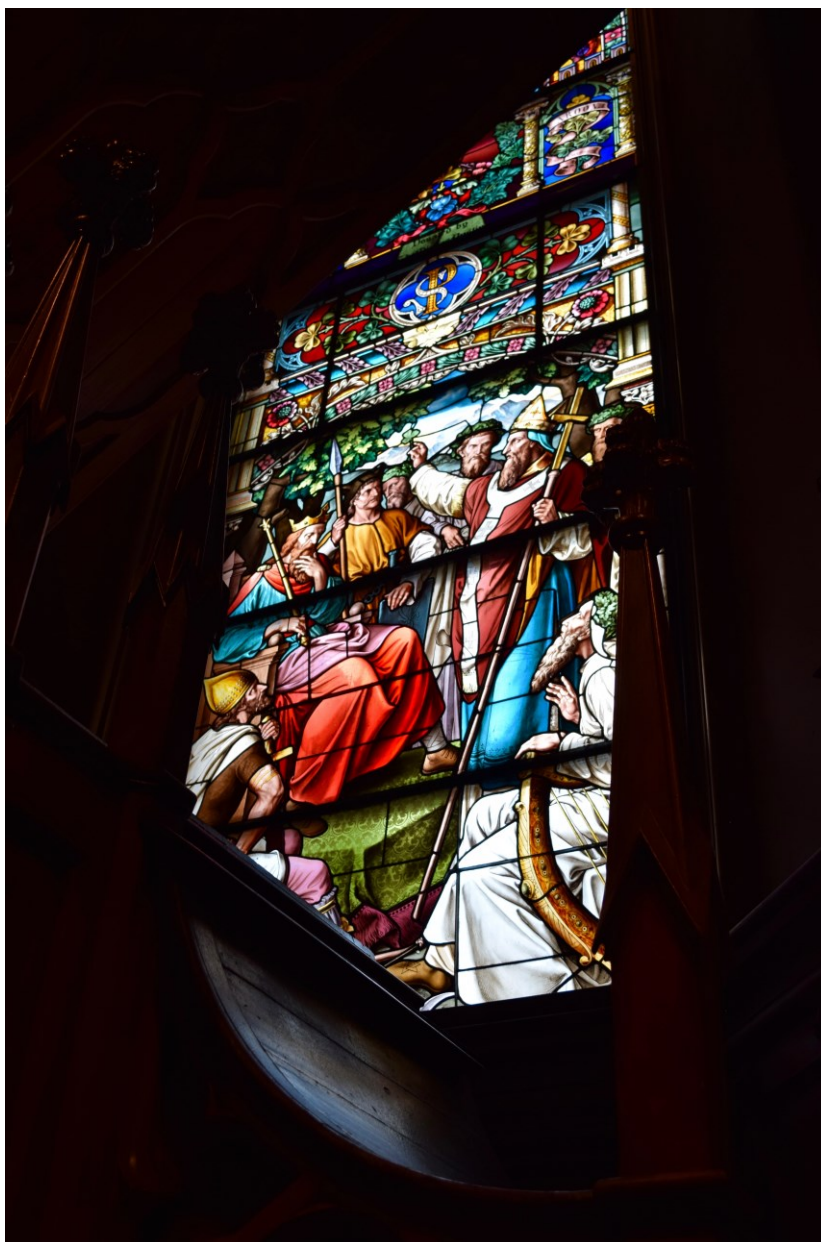


Fig. 4.14 Stained-glass window depicting St. Patrick at Tara, imported from Innsbruck, Austria.
© Camille Harrigan



Fig. 4.15 Renovated interior of St. Patrick's Church, in 1913. Note the absence of Alexander Locke's windows in the nave. They were one of the last features of the twentieth century refurbishment to be put into place.
© McCord Museum Archives



Fig. 4.16 Locke windows dedicated to the Evangelists, in the sanctuary. © Camille Harrigan

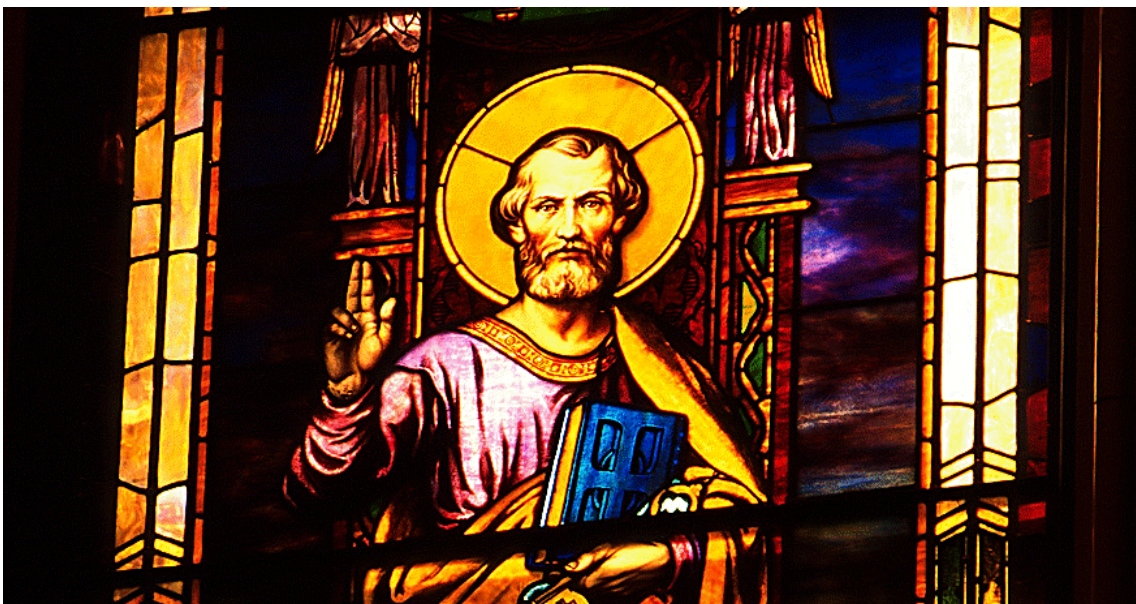


Fig. 4.17
Example of
stained-glass
window
designed by
Alexander
Locke.
© St. Patrick's
Basilica



Fig. 4.18 Stained-glass window designed by Alexander Locke, donated by Mr. Eagan.
© Camille Harrigan

Some parishioners contributed to the acquisitions of these windows (Fig. 4.18) as well as the paintings, statues and altars in St. Patrick's Church. In these particular efforts, they were guided by Father Quinlivan who assured them that any addition to the Church in the memory of a dearly departed would "ensure a constant remembrance for him from all who should come to the church, and that, in the place and at the time, when such remembrance would be most beneficial to him."³⁰ Moreover, the family member "would have the prayers of generations yet unborn, and not only he but those who would have erected it. Their memory would be in benediction, and their example would work good in many ways."³¹ In contributing to the new St. Patrick's, parishioners literally became a part of the religious temple they perceived as the core monument to the Irish presence in Montréal. Senator Edward Murphy, for example, was immortalized at St. Patrick's with the erection of St. Ann's altar, which his family dedicated in his memory.³²

The first decade of the new century also marked the consecration of St. Patrick's. In 1906, the "temple, erected to the glory of the Most High and to the honor of Erin's national Apostle, [was] at last stamped with the official seal of Consecration."³³ The ceremony offered the community another occasion to reaffirm their history: "It behoves us on this auspicious occasion to revive the memory of the saintly fathers whose names and deeds are enshrined in our hearts, who laboured in our midst with Apostolic zeal and fervor, to convey to us the Master's message. From their thrones above where, we trust, they enjoy the reward of well spent lives, they have been and still are watching over the destinies of dear old Saint Patrick's."³⁴ As they had done in 1902, the community choose to celebrate their *entente* with the French Canadians. Having lived peaceably with them for twenty years, the Irish community "above the hill" could be magnanimous: "When the pioneers of

³⁰ Quinlivan, *Pamphlet. A word about the renovation of St. Patrick's, Montréal and what yet remains to be done*. SPBA

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² Curran, ed., *Golden Jubilee of St. Patrick's Orphan Asylum*, 126.

³³ Wardens of St. Patrick's, *Address to The Most Reverend Paul Bruchesi D.D. Archbishop of Montreal*, June 26, 1906.

SPBA

³⁴ *Ibid.*

the English-speaking Catholic Colony landed on these hospitable shores, they met with a most cordial reception from the French Canadians of Ville Marie. Never shall we of this generation forget their heroic deeds in behalf of the destitute and the fever-stricken Irish refugees. They are written in letters of gold and they will be treasured in our hearts in everlasting remembrance.”³⁵ This *entente cordiale* had been reinforced in the late nineteenth century, when the French Canadians supported Ireland’s plight. Unfortunately, the relationship became strained in 1910 during the Eucharistic Congress held in Montréal.³⁶ In Québec, the Irish had to contend with French Canadian messianism and a nascent nationalism. The Congress, then, became a moment of class reaffirmation for a segment of the Irish Catholic population, who decried their lack of leadership roles in Québec’s Catholic Church.³⁷ This Irish Catholic leadership was thus keen to use the memorialization of St. Patrick’s history as an act of cultural recall. As Bal, Crewe and Spitzer posit, these acts “occurring in the present, in which the past is continuously modified and redescribed even as it continues to shape the future,” were instrumental in reinforcing the ethno-cultural distinctiveness of the community. This particularity celebrated the triumphs of a community that was in the process of reaffirming itself.³⁸

4.2 A New Pastor for the New Era, 1907-1922

Memorialization became even more commonplace during Father Gerald McShane’s pastorate at St. Patrick’s. Father Quinlivan died at the very beginning of the new century, and was replaced by Father Martin Callaghan. He lacked, as memory recalls, “the social graces and sophistication many of his well-heeled parishioners expected and he was never totally at ease in the

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Linda Cardinal, and Simon Jolivet, “Nationalisme, langue et éducation: les relations entre Irlandais catholiques et Canadiens-français du Québec et de l’Ontario aux XIXe et XXe siècles,” in *Le Québec et l’Irlande: Culture, Histoire, Identité*, eds. Simon Jolivet, Linda Cardinal, and Isabelle Matte (Québec: Septentrion, 2014), 90.

³⁷ Ibid., 91.

³⁸ Bal, Crewe, and Spitzer, eds., *Acts of memory : cultural recall in the present*, vii.

wood-panelled drawing rooms of the Square Mile.”³⁹ And so, another young man from St. Patrick’s, born in 1872 to a prominent Irish Catholic family, came to St. Patrick’s to usher in a new era. Educated by his uncle, James McShane, a prominent politician, former mayor and the city’s harbour master, Gerald McShane had been at Notre-Dame since 1900. In 1907, he was appointed pastor of St. Patrick’s, the last of the Sulpician priest who catered to the Irish Catholics “above the hill.”⁴⁰

McShane’s inaugural address to his congregation is of particular interest, as he acknowledged the role of St. Patrick’s beyond its function as a religious building, and made clear its function as an identity *locus*: “The direction of your parish of St. Patrick’s carries with it more than ordinary responsibilities. You know full well what ‘St. Patrick’s’ means to most of us! To some perhaps, to very few, it may perhaps mean merely a place of worship, a church in which to attend Mass on Sundays. But to you and to me, “St. Patrick’s” means much more than this, more than a mere structure of stone, an assemblage of Catholic families.”⁴¹ Equally significant was McShane’s understanding of the importance of the Church as a *lieu de mémoire*: “These memories, the annals of St. Patrick’s that are so dear to all of us, are written and engraved in the very stones of your beautiful church.”⁴² Father McShane, from the start of his pastorate, was deeply involved in inscribing St. Patrick’s into the very fabric of Irish Montréal’s history. In 1914, under his new leadership, the parish published a small booklet to celebrate the year’s Lenten season. With this publication, McShane heralded a new period of Church historiography, and laid the basis for what was to become his most successful tool at fostering St. Patrick’s brand of Irishness in the city, *The St. Patrick’s Message* - a monthly publication reporting on religious and communal activities.

³⁹ Hustak, *Saint Patrick’s of Montreal: The Biography of a Basilica*, 87.

⁴⁰ Gérard Aumont, “McShane, Gerald Joseph,” in *Les Prêtres de Saint-Sulpice au Canada: Grandes figures de leur histoire* (Sainte-Foy: Les Presses de l’Université Laval, 1992), 376.

⁴¹ Gerald McShane, *Annotated Inaugural Sermon*, 1907. SPBA

⁴² Ibid.

The 1914 booklet is particularly relevant because it offers a glimpse into the Irish community of St. Patrick's at the beginning of the twentieth century. Even if the parish was undergoing demographic changes, St. Patrick's was still very much an *Irish* Catholic parish. The list of St. Patrick's wardens, found in the 1914 publication, as well as those of the St. Patrick's Orphan Asylum, the St. Bridget's Refuge, and the governors of the Catholic High School, clearly illustrates that an ethnically Irish community continued to flourish around the Church.⁴³ Thus, St. Patrick's, run by and for Irish Montrealers, stood as a bastion to their particular understanding of Irish-Canadian identity; one firmly anchored in the Canadian experience, but profoundly shaped by the understanding of their Irishness.⁴⁴

The Irish identity developed at St. Patrick's was, as seen previously, heavily influenced by somewhat bourgeois attitudes. To the Irish of St. Patrick's, the publication of a Golden Book of the Canadian Irishmen, sponsored by His Royal Highness the Governor General of Canada, Duke of Connaught, and celebrating Home Rule would not have been a contradiction.⁴⁵ Advertisements such as ““OLD ENGLAND – *Old England* have always been friends with *Old Ireland*; that's the reason that OLD ENGLAND MILLINERY [...] extend a cordial invitation to its friends to visit the SPRING MILLINERY OPENING,” would not have been problematic.⁴⁶ After all, this was a congregation that certainly agreed with William Redmond's - the Irish nationalist politician and brother of Home Ruler John Redmond - speech to the St. Patrick's Society in 1914. Held in the Windsor Hotel, he expounded on “Ireland's Saddest Chapter,” but catered to a very particular audience:

⁴³ *St. Patrick's Church, Montreal. Announcements – Lenten Season, 1914* (Montreal: Printers Limited, 1914), 27. BANQ For the full lists see Appendix 8. The names of the trustees and wardens clearly indicate the presence of a still ethnically strong Irish community involved in the running of the institutions.

⁴⁴ Simon Jolivet, *Le vert et le bleu: identité québécoise et identité irlandaise au tournant du XXe siècle* (Montréal: Presses de l'Université de Montréal, 2011), 108.

⁴⁵ *The Golden book of the Canadian Irishmen, St. Patrick's Day celebration, March 17th 1913* (Montreal: The Irish Publishing Company, 1913). BANQ

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

On this St. Patrick's Day when we are anxious to banish all trace of bitterness, it is not for me to refer to the causes why Ireland is the only country in this Empire in which men and women have been forced to leave their homes, it is sufficient for us to know that our people have gone, and surely, it is no sign of good government that they have gone. Our consolation is in the fact that they have prospered wherever they have gone. Some races would have been exterminated long ago had they had the experience which has been ours, but not so with our people. In every part of this Empire the Irish are influential and strong.⁴⁷

This was the Irish community Elliot O'Donnell, in *The Irish Abroad* published in 1915, had described as having successfully established itself socially and economically.⁴⁸ This audience held moderate political views, and did not support radical political opinions that could undermine their Canadian positions. After all, this was a congregation whose priest toured his parish in a limousine during the 1918 influenza epidemic!⁴⁹ Unsurprisingly then, at the onset of World War I, the Irish "above the hill" were well aware of their position in the Dominion, and they reacted as honourable Irish *Canadians* by joining in the war effort.

A committee formed by the leadership of the Irish community, amongst them Father McShane and H. J. Trihey, a successful lawyer, organized an Irish regiment for the Canadian militia: the Irish Canadian Rangers. If, at first, the regiment had been raised to serve domestic purposes, a battalion formed in 1916, the 199th Irish Canadian Rangers, would, in the end, be deployed on the old continent.⁵⁰ The attitudes of Irish Catholics at St. Patrick's, once the war started, confirmed the cleavage existing in the larger Irish community along ideological and socio-economic differences. At the onset of the conflict, Father McShane had counselled patience: "Brethren, if our leaders could speak to us here, they would urge us to remain quiet and prove our patriotism by the calm and

⁴⁷ William Redmond, *Speech Delivered by Mr. William Redmond to Members of St. Patrick's Society at the Annual Banquet in the Windsor Hotel. St. Patrick's Day, March 17th, 1914* (Montreal: Printers limited, 1914), 2-3. BANQ

⁴⁸ Elliot O'Donnell, *The Irish Abroad: A Record of the Achievements of Wonderers from Ireland* (London, Bath, New York and Melbourne: Sir Isaac Pitman & Sons, Ltd., 1915), 329-330.

⁴⁹ *The Gazette*, October 21, 1918.

⁵⁰ The Rangers, who were woefully unprepared to face battle, were at first used as a "touring" battalion to drum up support for enlistment in Ireland. From January 25 to February 2, 1917, the mixed Catholic/Protestant battalion toured Dublin, Belfast, Armagh, Cork and Limerick, portraying the loyalty and unity which the Irish had achieved in Canada. Used as a symbol for Ireland united, the Rangers were afterwards disbanded and used as reinforcements. Still existing as a unit after the war, albeit on paper only, the Rangers were officially disbanded in 1936. Efforts made to revive the Irish regiment failed to attract interest because, by that point, the outlook of Irish Montrealers was distinctively Canadian. Robin B. Burns, "The Montreal Irish and the Great War," *CCHA Historical Studies* Vol. 52 (1985): 75-76.

undisturbed performance of our every day duties.”⁵¹ The pastor of St. Patrick’s was, in fact, adopting John Redmond’s position on the war: that Irishmen should enrol in the army as an act of good faith that might help the cause of Home Rule.⁵² For Irish Montrealers, enlistment would be a way of demonstrating their citizenship and their attachment to the land – Canada – that had seen them prosper. McShane defended this very rhetoric: “There is no feeling of the human soul so pure and as sublime as love of country as there is no act of man so noble as that of dying for his country, as there is no profession so grand and so worthy of admiration as the mission of the soldier who fights for his country.”⁵³

Recruitment for the Rangers was nevertheless done during a particularly fraught moment in Irish history. After the Easter Rising of April 1916, the presence of the battalion’s colors and a British flag inside the Church became anathema to those in the parish who were sympathetic to Irish revolutionaries.⁵⁴ The division in Irish Montréal became more acute. As Alan Hustak reports it, “the more militant quit St. Patrick’s in protest against the battle flags and went to worship at St. Ann’s.”⁵⁵ Once more the socio-political separation between St. Patrick’s and St. Ann’s was made evident. St. Patrick’s involvement during the First World War was later commemorated within its walls. Two rolls of honour remembering the men of St. Patrick’s who fell on the battlefields of Europe were proudly installed just after the War (Fig. 4.19):

Near to the altar of the Holy Souls, on the west side, is the simple unadorned Tablet which keeps green the memory of the “War Heroes,” the brave young soldier-parishioners who died in the World War. The names on the long two-column list are for the most part familiar to

⁵¹ Robin B. Burns, “Who Shall Separate Us? The Montreal Irish and the Great War,” in *The Untold Story: The Irish in Canada*, eds. Robert O’Driscoll and Lorna Reynolds (Toronto: Celtic Arts of Canada, 1988), 571.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 572.

⁵³ Hustak, *Saint Patrick’s of Montreal: The Biography of a Basilica*, 102.

⁵⁴ The actual nature of this flag is ambiguous, as the newspaper report which described the actions of that “more militant” faction describes it as the “British flag,” the “Union Jack,” “England’s cruel red,” and the “King’s battle flag.” In any case, be it that Father McShane displayed the Union Jack or the Red Ensign, which served as the Canadian flag at that point, the fact remains that this demonstrative gesture towards Britain angered the more radical portion of St. Patrick’s parishioners. “St. Patrick’s Day – Two Interesting Episodes Recorded for the First Time,” *The Gazette*, March 26, 1917.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 103.

Montrealers, some of the number were former altar boys at St. Patrick's; all were worshippers at the church. As the throngs pass to and fro especially at the five Masses that are offered each Sunday in the church, the Tablet, secure in its holy peaceful place, invites in an appealing way a prayerful remembrance for those who gallantly gave their lives in the great historic conflict.⁵⁶

Stained-glass windows were also installed in the nave commemorating the seventy-five members of St. Patrick's who perished in the Great War (Fig. 4.20), further illustrating St. Patrick's involvement in the Great War and the willingness of its congregation to display their participation in the conflict.⁵⁷



Fig. 4.19 Two rolls of honor flanking the Holy Souls altar, situated on the west side of the Basilica.

© Camille Harrigan



⁵⁶ *A Story of Seventy-five Years – St. Patrick's Church Montreal 1847-1922*, 30.

⁵⁷ *St. Patrick's Message*, December 1919, 14.



Fig. 4.20 Stained-glass window dedicated to the seventy-five members of St. Patrick's who died in the First World War, situated on the east side of the Basilica.

© Camille Harrigan

The establishment of an *Irish* battalion in the Canadian militia underscores the strong presence of distinct ethnic identities in Montréal, along ethno-linguistic lines.⁵⁸ National parishes, amongst them St. Patrick's, had always been successful in safeguarding ethnic identities even if class divides meant that Irishness in Montréal evolved into different iterations. The identity fostered at St. Patrick's revealed itself even more fully in the pages of the *St. Patrick's Message*. Published from December 1915 to May 1965, the *Message* was the brainchild of Father McShane. The pastor was presiding over an evolving Irish Catholic community, which was still ethnically Irish, but increasingly detached from the motherland and involved in the construction of their own type of Canadian community. This is something that William Jenkins has observed in Irish communities elsewhere. He remarks that the *local* conditions experienced by Irish immigrants and their descendants in cities such as Toronto and Buffalo had "crucial implications for the structure and character of the networks they formed," and the forms of Irishness they retained over time in these urban environments.⁵⁹ In Montréal's St. Patrick parish, Irish Canadians adopted a middle-class, somewhat privileged identity that was reflected in the *Message*. The publication purported to be an "echo of parish events just passed and a herald of the future ones, [it would] maintain and fortify interest in things "Patrician" and has forged an unbreakable link in the chain that unites Church and people."⁶⁰ In the vignettes, activities and episodes it chose to record, the *Message* became a site of memory where St. Patrick's parishioners' identity could be navigated. After all, as Bal & al. succinctly posit "cultural memory can be located in literary texts because the latter are continuous with the communal fictionalizing, idealizing, monumentalizing impulses thriving in a conflicted

⁵⁸ Burns, "The Montreal Irish and the Great War," 80.

⁵⁹ William Jenkins, "Deconstructing Diasporas: Networks and Identities among the Irish in Buffalo and Toronto, 1870-1910," *Immigrants & Minorities* Vol. 23, No. 2-3 (July-November 2005): 390.

⁶⁰ *A Story of Seventy-five Years – St. Patrick's Church Montreal 1847-1922* (Montreal: Gazette, 1922), 27.

culture.”⁶¹ St. Patrick’s congregation was not conflicted *per se*, but as early as the 1910s, it was evolving and quite in need of acts of recall that could foster their sense of community.

This sense was also promoted in the 1920s, with the publications of two celebratory booklets. The first celebrates the achievements of the Catholic High School; with Father McShane very much involved, the community had rallied once again to create an establishment tailored to the needs of their community: “If we wish to have our future men, the pupils of the present, prominent in the callings to which they will devote themselves, we must train them along higher lines than lie within the province of the elementary schools.”⁶² As the heart of this community, St. Patrick’s ensured the success of the venture by providing support and money for the endeavour.⁶³ The Church also published a commemorative pamphlet on the occasion of its seventy-fifth anniversary. The booklet was quite clear: the Irish Montrealers congregating at St. Patrick’s had overcome their less than prosperous beginning, and were now proud and prosperous Canadians with a distinctive identity. The booklet remembered that: “Away from the welter of the old land’s enforced miseries, restraints and discouragements, the newly-made Canadians found themselves prospering materially and socially in a growing city that even then promised to be what it is at present, the head and heart of the Dominion.”⁶⁴ Reinforcing class identity in the 1920s, the pamphlet is very adept at preserving a “store of knowledge from which a group derives an awareness of its unity and peculiarity.”⁶⁵ The ethno-cultural memory, found within the pages of the *Message*, is not only an effort at memorialization, but also at class identification. Therefore, celebratory passages such as those presented in the next section highlight the Church’s role as repository for Irish memory in the city and how it became so central to identity formation for *middle-class* Irish Montrealers: “The role that

⁶¹ Bal, Crewe and Spitzer, eds., *Acts of memory : cultural recall in the present*, xiii.

⁶² Building Campaign Committee, *Commemorative Booklet - The Catholic High School of Montreal*, November 22nd-29th, 1920. SPBA

⁶³ McCaffrey, “The Catholic High School, Montreal,” 62.

⁶⁴ *A Story of Seventy-five Years – St. Patrick’s Church Montreal 1847-1922*, 8.

⁶⁵ Assman, “Collective Memory and Cultural Identity,” 130.

St. Patrick's has played in the drama of life for Montreal's English-speaking Catholic population invests the hallowed building with a character distinct, dissimilar to any other church, and quite incomparable. Its history is substantially the history of the community itself."⁶⁶

The 1922 publication also reckoned with the fundamental changes the parish was undergoing whilst celebrating its continued place in the heart of Irish Montrealers:

St. Patrick Church in 1847 was built on the outskirts of the little city; to-day it is downtown. The parish limits are becoming less and less residential; there is an emigration of the younger parishioners to the north, south, east and west of the Island, but the glamor of St. Patrick's remains a potent source of influence to its pew-owners. Its Sunday services are very well attended; its mighty throngs are still there when the call is sent out [...] The glory of St. Patrick's would seem never so undiminished."⁶⁷

This description – included in the *Story of Seventy-five Years* - was taken from a letter written in the early 1920s. The writer had been acquainted with St. Patrick's since 1908, and while he acknowledged the changes happening to the congregation, he also reiterated the Church's "position as the centre of [an] alive Irish population; moreover he realised that it stood for the Irish contribution to the citizenship of Canada, in fact, he found that it was recognized as the Irish Canadian [fane] and around it were loving traditions of noble men and women who had struggled through the difficulties of the pioneering days of the colony, and had become leaders in the Community of Montreal."⁶⁸ He also "found that the present generation, inheritors of the spirit of their forbears looked forward to the maintenance of the Irish prestige of the past."⁶⁹ Clearly, as Sara Brady illustrates for Irish spaces in the United States, Irish spaces in Montréal, St. Patrick's amongst

⁶⁶ *A Story of Seventy-five Years – St. Patrick's Church Montreal 1847-1922*, 8.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 21.

Appendix 9 shows the evolution of the urban landscape surrounding St. Patrick's from the 1870s to the 1920s. There is a marked contrast between the Church's urban environment during the nineteenth century and its outlook during the twentieth. St. Patrick's Church, which in 1847 could be "seen by all," has slowly been dwarfed by its encroaching urban surroundings. In 1917, the *Message* had recorded that "Tall buildings rising around her have masked her once outstanding position. She is not so picturesque as when she rose all lonely and majestic on de Rochblave hill in 1847." A photograph taken in 1926-27, from a building adjacent to St. Patrick's, illustrates the building's diminished position in the urban landscape. It is clearly this phenomenon that the 1922 publication had started to observe. Photographs of the modern Basilica serve here as further evidence of the church's contemporary position in a thoroughly urban landscape.

⁶⁸ Anonymous, *Draft of letter from a frequent visitor to the Church*, circa 1920s. SPBA

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

them, helped in the constructions of identity, the maintenance of tradition, but also had memories incarnated within their physical and emotional realms.⁷⁰

4.3 The *St. Patrick's Message*: Change and Identity, 1915 to the 1950s

The evolution of St. Patrick's parish can be traced in the pages of the *St. Patrick's Message*. Father McShane's publication is invaluable for any researcher interested in the identity of St. Patrick's in the first half of the twentieth century. A close examination of the massive amount of material produced over five decades yields remarkable conclusions on the trajectories of those identities and memories fostered "above the hill." In 1918, some in the St. Patrick's Society started to comment on the scattering of the English-speaking Catholic element in the city.⁷¹ In fact, as early as the 1910s, the relative, and absolute, number of Irish Catholics in Québec had started to decline. With almost no direct migration from Ireland, and out migration to the United States and other provinces reducing their numbers, the Irish Catholics in the province were starting to decline at the end of the Laurier era (1896-1911).⁷² In 1937, the *Message* sadly reported that St. Patrick's was "growing old like a vesture; like a vesture does [it] change [and] the great community of fifty years ago is but a golden memory."⁷³ For those remaining however, continued efforts were made to preserve and foster an Irish community in Montréal. Since said community was becoming increasingly scattered, and estranged from its own history, the role of St. Patrick's in a renewal effort was especially significant.⁷⁴ As it stood in the center of parish-based and pan-parish activities, St. Patrick's had to continue to foster an environment in which Irish Catholics in the city could, from cradle to grave, foster their own sense of identity:

⁷⁰ Sara Brady, "Gaelic Games and the Construction of Memory and Identity," in *Memory Ireland Vol. 2 Diaspora and Memory Practices*, ed. Oona Frawley (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2012), 197.

⁷¹ Saint Patrick's Society of Montreal, *Annual Report. St. Patrick's Society for the year ending March 31st, 1918*, 4-5. SPSA

⁷² Garth Stevenson, "Irish Canadians and the National Question in Canada," in *Irish Nationalism in Canada*, ed. David A. Wilson (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's, 2009), 166.

⁷³ *St. Patrick's Message*, January 1937, 15. SPBA

⁷⁴ *St. Patrick's Message*, November 1917, 14. SPBA

For well nigh ninety-five years St. Patrick's Church has mothered the English-Catholic community of Montreal. Our fathers passed through her portals for the first time in the month of March, 1847. Since that day she has cradled the infant that came to her for baptism, she has embraced the young bride and groom on the threshold of a new life and she has shrouded those still in death that were carried to her for a last time. She has been witness then to the history of our race in Montreal for nearly a century.⁷⁵

Father Gerald McShane was instrumental in bolstering this encompassing approach as he tried to counteract the changes wrought on his parish, and his community, by reinforcing an Irish Catholic socio-religious network. After all, since they had their religion in common with the French Canadians, and their language with Protestants from the British Isles, Irish Catholics needed strong institutions of their own, if they were to retain a strong ethno-cultural identity.⁷⁶

In 1919, the *Message* also underlined that some in the parish of St. Patrick's were derelict in their *Catholic* duties. They either congregated at French-speaking churches, or they simply did not measure up to strict patrician expectations. The *Message* reminded its readership that a "Catholic parish resembles nothing so much as one large family. Besides its own particular members, it has its own affairs to arrange, its own problems to solve, its own special interests to deal with. These are the business of every parishioner, for each man and woman within the parish limits is a unit of the big parochial chain. We want all our people to bear this in mind."⁷⁷ Father McShane clearly desired to assemble his Irish Catholic flock at St. Patrick's. The Church, once again, became the beacon leading an expanding institutional network designed to foster a resilient Irish Catholic identity.

A new hospital, for Irish Catholics, became one of those ventures sponsored by St. Patrick's. In May 1924, the residence of the late Lord Shaughnessy was thus turned into the new St. Mary's

⁷⁵ *St. Patrick's Message*, October 1941, 9. SPBA

⁷⁶ This was especially necessary as, with no reinforcement through immigration, the overall Irish community in the province turned to exogamy. After all, they could choose their spouse from amongst the Catholic French Canadians and the English-speaking Protestants, and had been forced to do so since the 1880s.

Danielle Gauvreau, and Patricia Thornton, "Marrying 'the Other': Trends and Determinants of Culturally Mixed Marriages in Québec, 1880-1940," *Canadian Ethnic Studies* Vol. 47, No. 3 (2015): 137.

⁷⁷ *St. Patrick's Message*, December 1919, 9. SPBA

Memorial Hospital.⁷⁸ A decade later, the community inaugurated a new St. Mary's, and memorialized the occasion by stating that the "achievement [was] one of the greatest successful efforts in the history of our people. [...] Thus, with justifiable pride it is our task to record the passing of this great milestone, and to express the ardent hope that St. Mary's may play an important part in the history of our English-speaking Catholics."⁷⁹ By creating a institution to suit their own needs, the Irish Catholics of Montréal were, once again, reinforcing the boundaries that maintained their unique status in the city. The Newman Club, another brainchild of Father McShane, also insured the buttressing of Catholic values for the Irish cohort "above the hill." McShane had designed the club, who extended an invitation to all Catholic students of McGill University, in order to safeguard the ethno-religious identity of the lay leadership of his community: "Our university students graduate with high intellectual standards. It is the aim of the Newman Club to have them also excellent Catholics, proud of their Faith and a credit to the Church."⁸⁰

In fact, Father McShane presided over a concerted effort to create organizations and institutions that could continue to insulate Irish Catholics "above the hill." A Catholic Library opened in 1936, a Friendship House for underprivileged children in the district was inaugurated in May 1938 and Congress Hall – a classic auditorium for lectures, conventions and plays – had already been erected in 1915.⁸¹ All of these ventures ensured the continued status of St. Patrick's as the Mother Church of Erin's children in Canada. The parish supported the efforts of Loyola College, the only English-speaking College for Catholics in the province, and likewise advertised for the Father Dowd Memorial Home, a retirement home adjoining St. Patrick's Church.⁸² Added to the Unity Club, the Holy Name Society, the St. Patrick's Choristers for men, the League of the Sacred

⁷⁸ *St. Patrick's Message*, May-June 1924, 16. SPBA

⁷⁹ *St. Patrick's Message*, December 1934, 20; *St. Patrick's Message*, January 1935, 14. SPBA

⁸⁰ *St. Patrick's Message*, February 1942, 15-16. SPBA

⁸¹ *St. Patrick's Message*, November 1936, 18; *St. Patrick's Message*, April 1938, 11. SPBA; *A Story of Seventy-five Years – St. Patrick's Church Montreal 1847-1922*, 21.

⁸² *St. Patrick's Message*, May-June 1933, 24. SPBA

Heart, Our Lady's Sodality and the Legion of Mary for women, the parish covered both religious and recreational activities for the Irish congregating "above the hill."⁸³

Father McShane also sought to strengthen the Church's hold on the community at the most basic level, its children. In a world with new values, the leadership of St. Patrick's, concerned with its youth, opened a boys' camp to "to instil a healthy mind in a healthy body and so make our youth impregnable against the attacks of the enemy in whatever form they come."⁸⁴ In that, McShane participated in a North American and European movement concerned with youth, boys and masculinity. The solution offered by most reformers of the era, preoccupied with the fate of urban males, was a return to nature, which could be instilled in the settings of summer camps and through movements such as the Scouts.⁸⁵ The addition, in 1925, of a boys' camp to the roll of parish achievements, Camp Kinkora, is a marker of the level of institutional completeness achieved at St. Patrick's, and an indication of the spirit of institution building the congregation had inherited from its forefathers. Nestled in the lush Laurentides (Fig. 4.18), and hailed as the finest boys' camp in the province and perhaps the Dominion, Kinkora is a clear indicator of Father McShane's understanding of a new world order, one in which most religious denominations wrestled with a solution to what came to be known as the "boy problem."⁸⁶

⁸³ *St. Patrick's Message*, March 1945, 26. SPBA

⁸⁴ *St. Patrick's Message*, May-June 1934, 14. SPBA

⁸⁵ Abigail A. Van Slyck, "Housing the Happy Camper," *Minnesota History* Vol. 58, No. 2 (Summer 2002): 69-70. For more on the Scouting (and Guide) movement and its links to the reformation of youth, see Tammy M. Proctor, "*On My Honour*": *Guides and Scouts in Interwar Britain* (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 2002), especially chapter 4; Kristine Alexander, "The Girl Guide Movement and Imperial Internationalism During the 1920s and 1930s," *The Journal of the History of Childhood and Youth* Vol. 2, No. 1 (Winter 2009): 37-63.

⁸⁶ *St. Patrick's Message*, May-June 1937, 18. SPBA; For a better understanding of the early twentieth century "boy problem" and the religious response to it, see David P. Setran, "Developing the "Christian Gentleman": The Medieval Impulse in Protestant Ministry to Adolescent Boys, 1890-1920," *Religion and American Culture: A Journal of Interpretation* Vol. 20, No. 2 (Summer 2010): 165-204; Thomas E. Bergler, "Youth, Christianity, and the Crisis of Civilization, 1930-1945," *Religion and American Culture: A Journal of Interpretation* Vol. 24, No. 2 (Summer 2014): 259-296.



Fig. 4.21 Chapel of Camp Kinkora. © Jocelyn Roy – Camp Kinkora

From 1925 onward, the *Message* continued to faithfully record the happenings of the camp. The descriptions encapsulated what the parishioners came to think about the camp itself, but also how they perceived it as a reflection of their middle-class Catholic identity. The Hon. T. J. Coonan, K.C., M.L.A., testified to the worth of Camp Kinkora: “In my opinion, the work you have accomplished for our English-speaking youth, by maintaining the camp in its present state of efficiency is evidence of what can be done by a determined group of men under the leadership of those whose duty it is to lead.”⁸⁷ Incorporated in February 1932, Kinkora’s list of directors included some of the community’s most prominent businessmen and professionals. Concerned with a certain notion of *noblesse oblige*, the congregation of St. Patrick’s subsidized the stay of numerous children

⁸⁷ *St. Patrick’s Message*, May-June 1939, 22. SPBA

who attended at lower rates or for free.⁸⁸ The built-environment of the camp itself was also a reflection of the parish's prosperity. In 1938, it acquired its own sound-picture projector for the "evening's entertainment with the finest of talking pictures."⁸⁹ In 1938, the *Message* made quite clear what type of camp Kinkora really was:

The reason Kinkora delights so many of "the gang" is that it is different from most camps. It does not mean meals of canned goods, nor bunks of boards covered with straw, not tents that collapse at the height of a rainstorm. No, Kinkora offers an excellent cuisine, spring beds with fine mattresses, and well built huts that remain dry in all kinds of weather. In addition there are camp fires, entertainments, hikes, soft ball, baseball, tennis, basketball, fishing, boating, swimming and diving.⁹⁰

Such a well-appointed haven for boys appealed to the sons of St. Patrick's most influential families, but also brought in Catholic boys from the rest of Canada and the United States; something the *Message* took tremendous pride in.⁹¹ But Kinkora was only one small part of St. Patrick's roster of clubs, activities, and organizations. All helped to further the leadership of St. Patrick's agenda in bolstering a particular sense of Irishness "above the hill." This identity was particularly informed by a movement in Roman Catholicism, which continued to redefine the individual as a social being within a Church that fused the secular and the sacred. Said Church was, in fact, remaking itself into a part of the "modern nation itself," according to Nancy Christie and Michael Gauvreau.⁹²

From 1915, the *Message* recorded the development of the identity of Irish Catholics at St. Patrick's. This was an identity profoundly influenced by Catholicism, and the negotiation of the place of the Irish community in the city of Montréal. Removed from direct influence from Ireland, the congregation of St. Patrick's was most concerned by the trajectories of their experience in

⁸⁸ *St. Patrick's Message*, February 1934, 16. SPBA

⁸⁹ *St. Patrick's Message*, April 1938, 19. SPBA

⁹⁰ *St. Patrick's Message*, May-June 1938, 15. SPBA; The built-environment of Kinkora seems to have been heavily influenced by trends in the summer camp movement. McShane might have been aware of the literature coming from the East Coast of the United States about the best summer camp practices. For an understanding of these practices and what underpinned them, see Van Slyck, "Housing the Happy Camper," 72.

⁹¹ *St. Patrick's Message*, May-June 1945, 14. SPBA

⁹² Christie and Gauvreau, "Secularisation or Resacralisation? The Canadian Case, 1760-2000," 106.

Canada. This was encapsulated in a speech by John Boyd, on the occasion of St. Patrick's Day, in 1920:

Diversity of race and of creed is an advantage rather than a misfortune, as the contact of different elements tends to produce a happy spirit of emulation which is beneficial to our national welfare. True national unity consists of Canadians of different races and creeds respecting the rights, feelings and sentiments each of the other and all being united in devotion to their common country.⁹³

Unlike Irish communities in other cities, the Irish Catholics in Montréal, because of their double minority status, did not completely undergo what Mark McGowan aptly terms the “de-greening of the Irish.”⁹⁴ Irish Montrealers might, in common with their Toronto counterparts, have become more interested in the affairs of Canada than Ireland, but they still retained a distinct sense of ethnic identity, which was made possible by their unique geo-political situation of the city, even in the twentieth century. The *Message* clearly painted the picture of this distinct community, which was very conscious of its ethnic origin. On the occasion of the anniversary of the Easter Rising in 1920, a Solemn High Mass of Requiem was sung in St. Patrick's for the repose of those who fought that April. The *Message* reported that a vast number of communicants attended the Mass and “a cable received from Dublin proved that the Associated Press had lost no time in flashing the news beyond the seas.”⁹⁵ The *Message* continued and added, “It must have been indeed a source of real solace to the afflicted ones over there to learn that in distant Canada hearts were beating in unison with theirs, and ardent prayers were being uttered for the eternal rest of their martyred dead.”⁹⁶ Held after the end of the First World War, four years after the actual Rising, this High Mass reflects a thoroughly ethnic stance but hints at the fact that the community was first and foremost loyal to the Dominion. Rallying events such as these were, in fact, not commonplace. The Irish of Montréal, especially

⁹³ John Boyd, *Canada: An Appeal for Racial Concord and National Unity – Speech delivered in proposing the toast of “Canada” at the annual banquet of the St. Patrick's Society, Windsor Hotel, Montreal, March 17th, 1920* (Montreal: Issued for distribution by the Canadian National League, 1920), 12-13. BANQ

⁹⁴ Mark McGowan, “The De-Greening of the Irish: Toronto's Irish-Catholic Press, Imperialism, and the Forging of a New Identity, 1887-1914,” *Historical Papers/Communications historiques* Vol. 24, No. 1 (1989): 120-122.

⁹⁵ *St. Patrick's Message*, June 1920, 13. SPBA

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

those “above the hill,” were mostly preoccupied with the running of their North American lives, and embroiling themselves into Irish affairs could affect their Canadian standing.

The March edition of the *Message* remained, however, the site of intense ethnic remembering, and these publications offer a window into how the community celebrated its Irishness. The St. Patrick’s Day parade was obviously one site of community celebration, but its popularity waxed and waned.⁹⁷ Other activities were instituted, amongst them an “Irish night,” consisting of renditions of musical pieces and songs recalling the national music of Ireland.⁹⁸ These efforts, part of an ongoing acculturation strategy that Tanja Buelmann has also observed in the Irish of New Zealand, helped the Irish of Montréal to nurture their sense of ethnic distinctiveness.⁹⁹ But this singularity was unremittingly fashioned by their situation in Montréal, in Canada, and in North America. The festive March season was therefore an opportunity to remember why the community had such a distinct sense of self, but it also proved that the links between the Irish Catholics of Montréal and Ireland itself were becoming more tenuous.

Excerpts from the *Message* from 1935, 1940, and 1941, tend to prove that although the emotional link to Ireland remained, the relationship was one of memory and nostalgia more than an ongoing connection:

The advent of St. Patrick’s Day never fails to make Irishmen race-conscious, and they instinctively turn to the past and recall and review what Irishmen have done to shed lustre on their race and make their names immortal. [...] How readily then we turn to memory’s secrets in this month of March to summon the glory that is Ireland’s. Reverently we gaze at the inheritance that for centuries has been hers. Fondly we handle the treasures carried from her shores by our forefathers as they came to a new land seeking homes and freedom. In ourselves still fresh and green, we trust, is the legacy bequeathed us by the Celts of Erin’s Isle. [...] When March 17th arrives, we of the Irish strain become thrilled with the songs of

⁹⁷ *St. Patrick’s Message*, March 1921, 14. SPBA

⁹⁸ *St. Patrick’s Message*, March 1934, 11. SPBA

⁹⁹ Tanja Buelmann, “Remembering the Homeland: St. Patrick’s Day Celebrations in New Zealand to 1910,” in *Memory Ireland – Volume 2: Diaspora and Memory Practices*, ed. Oona Frawley (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2012), 113.

Erin. We loved them in our childhood, our grandparents sang them, and so they live on.¹⁰⁰

This, by no means, meant that the congregation of St. Patrick's, as late as the 1940s, was not still ethnically Irish. The whole clergy attached to St. Patrick's appears to have been of Irish ethnic origin. Reverends Cooney, Moyle, Ryan, and Brennan assisted Father McShane in tending to a community that was still very homogeneous. Moreover, as the *St. Patrick's Message* also published advertisements within its pages, an examination of the ethnically homogenous nature of those adverts reveals the existence of a still very significant Irish community to which merchants could appeal. The end of each *Message* was also filled with the names of departed members of the congregation, or their families, and this *In Memoriam* roll call proves that, in the first half of the century, St. Patrick's Church was still very much the house of the Irish.¹⁰¹

These were Irish Canadians whose Irishness was not, as Peter Murphy describes it for their Australian brethren, "bound up with Ireland *per se*."¹⁰² It was bound with Irish Catholics around North America however, and St. Patrick's participated in exchanges of ideas, preachers, and traditions with parishes from New York, Philadelphia, and the rest of Canada. In this regard, the Irish "above the hill" participated in a very particular form of diasporic identity associated with the Irish Catholic experience on the North American continent. Nevertheless, their identity was still firmly anchored in the experiences of being a *Montréal* community.¹⁰³

During the Second World War, the Irish Catholics – led by Father McShane – reacted as Canadians first. As their priest remarked: "We may love Ireland, but we love freedom even

¹⁰⁰ *St. Patrick's Message*, March 1935, 12; *St. Patrick's Message*, March 1940, 9; *St. Patrick's Message*, March 1941, 12. SPBA

¹⁰¹ Appendix 10 provides an example of these advertisements as well as an example of the *In Memoriam* section and its roll call of Irish names.

¹⁰² Peter Murphy, and Candice Ward, "'The Irish Thing': A Conversation on the Australian and American Irish Diaspora," *The South Atlantic Quarterly* Vol. 98, No. 1-2 (Winter-Spring 1999): 127.

¹⁰³ For example of such exchanges with other locales of the Irish diaspora, see *The Message* from February 1934 to 1938. SPBA

more.”¹⁰⁴ On February 18, 1942, McShane introduced a mass “so prayers appropriate for wartime” could be said at St. Patrick’s.¹⁰⁵ In 1940, the Church had already been the scene of a parade of the Royal Canadian Air Force, and St. Patrick’s had resonated with “Rule Britannia,” “whilst the officers filled the seats in the sanctuary and the men occupied the special places reserved for them in the centre aisle.”¹⁰⁶ The Irish Catholics of Montréal did not adhere to the Irish State’s neutrality. They embraced their identity as citizens of the Dominion, and thus completed their evolution from Irish Canadians to Canadian Irish.

The *St. Patrick’s Message* also memorialized another component of the identity of the specific section of Irish Montréal that congregated at St. Patrick’s. The Irishness promoted “above the hill” was one which was profoundly Catholic, socially conservative, and bourgeois in attitude.¹⁰⁷ This was reflected in their reading of the new Irish Constitution of 1937: “In a world that is attempting to destroy individuality and rest all power in the State it aims at safeguarding true liberty for the people. It is the expression of a conscientious government, wide awake to the common good of the Irish.”¹⁰⁸ At this point Ireland was still of interest to parishioners, but only so far as it permitted them to express their own political and social views.

Still an ethnically Irish parish for an Irish congregation, in the late 1930s and early 1940s, St. Patrick’s catered to a very specific demographic of Canadian-Irish Catholics, mostly affluent ones. Vignettes from the *Message* attests to the middle-class and bourgeois values that were promoted, not only from the pulpit, but also within the built environment of the Church. In November 1933, a new car park was inaugurated to accommodate the rising numbers of families attending church by

¹⁰⁴ Hustak, *Saint Patrick’s of Montreal: The Biography of a Basilica*, 113.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁶ *St. Patrick’s Message*, January 1941, 11. SPBA

¹⁰⁷ In the 1990s, Patricia Mullally, one of the founders of the St. Patrick’s Women’s Club, would remember that during Father McShane’s pastorate the role of women was conservatively circumscribed to religious activities only; as opposed to men, for whom St. Patrick’s organized an array of social activities.

Mullally in Patricia Burns, *The Shamrock and the shield: an oral history of the Irish in Montreal* (Montréal: Véhicule Press, 1998), 110.

¹⁰⁸ *St. Patrick’s Message*, February 1938, 19. SPBA

motocar instead of on foot or in horse-drawn carriages, as they had done in the past.¹⁰⁹ After all, “the average owner of a car likes to be assured of two things when he motors to church on Sunday morning. First, he likes to feel that his car is safe during his attendance at Mass. Then, when the service is over, he wants to be able to drive away promptly and not be delayed by congestion of traffic.”¹¹⁰ The Church was able to resolve these two difficulties with “the presence on Sunday mornings of a police officer,” and the renovation of the parking lot under the direction of Mr. D. J. Spence.¹¹¹ These alterations permitted the “speedy exit [in] a very few minutes [of] over seventy cars [who would] managed to convey their passengers out on to Beaver Hall Hill without a hitch or a delay.”¹¹² These alterations made to the Church’s surroundings to accommodate the rising motorisation level of its congregation are a good indicator of the socio-economic position its members had risen to. In his study on the motorisation of Montréal, Denis Veilleux has established that motorisation, which measures the degree of adoption of the motorcar in a given population, was relatively low in Montréal as late as the 1930s.¹¹³ In 1931, it rose to only 7.98 per cent, and the profiles of automobile owners were distinctively elitist.¹¹⁴ The high prices of motorcars sold in Canada combined with the associated cost of registration, usage and maintenance all contributed to make the new mode of transport a “produit de luxe, que seuls les portefeuilles bien garnis rendaient

¹⁰⁹ The *St. Patrick’s Message* of January 1939 remembers this in an revealing vignette: “Driving to Grand Mass Long Ago – In the summer time, the story is, of course, somewhat different. Though many of the elderly “pillars of the Church” arrive in buggy or brougham and tether these smaller vehicles in the streets about the church, most of the parishioners, bedecked in Sunday finery, leisurely walk the distance to the church. Any carriages in charge of regular coachmen are walked around the neighbourhood until required after Mass. This affords the drivers an opportunity of renewing acquaintances and exchanging gossip with their confrères who are in like service for people attending services at St. Andrews and Christ Church Cathedral. What a picture they make in their top-hats and livery, with clean-shaven faces and side-whiskers. They all look alike and so very aristocratic – far more so, it seems, than do some of the people they serve. But let’s come back from these nineteenth century reflections to the less picturesque realities of the present. It is not the same world now as it was when the stiff-backed James with his high hat and side-burns brought his sedate master and mistress to the curbstone at the side-door of old St. Patrick’s in those days of long ago. The streamlined motor car steered by the daughter of the family bespeaks what changes venerable old St. Patrick’s has seen take place with the unrolling of the years.” J.L.

¹¹⁰ *St. Patrick’s Message*, November 1933, 15. SPBA

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹¹² *Ibid.*

¹¹³ Denis Veilleux, “La motorisation ou “La rançon du progrès”. Tramways, véhicules-moteurs et circulation (Montréal, 1900-1930).” (PhD Dissertation, McGill University, 1998), 29.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 27-38.

accessible,” according to Veilleux.¹¹⁵ The refurbishment of the St. Patrick’s car park, as early as 1933, highlights the middle-class prosperous nature of its congregation.

The excerpts above, which showed the supposed impatience of parishioners in the 1930s, combined with advertisements present throughout the *St. Patrick’s Message*, clearly show the prosperity enjoyed by a large segment of the congregation. Banks were particularly interested in advertising in the Church’s monthly publication, and the specificity of their message reveals how the St. Patrick’s congregation was perceived. In 1918, the Montreal City & District Savings Bank advertised “to the Parishioners of St. Patrick’s. YOU, who receive better salaries. YOU, who make better profits. Now is Your Opportunity.”¹¹⁶ The Royal Bank of Canada, which had a branch adjacent to St. Patrick’s Church, also tailored its advertisement to cater to the prosperous clientele of the Irish “above the hill.”¹¹⁷ This was a socially conservative and politically astute community. In February 1936, the *Message* recorded: “the King is dead. He whom we revered so profoundly has passed away. No more shall we hear his voice, always so paternal, speaking with such kindly affection to us, his willing subjects. [...] As Catholics we mourn also because of His Majesty’s constant concern, shown from the moment his accession, for the welfare of us his Catholic people.”¹¹⁸ Prominent, influential, and fully engaged in the Dominion at mid-century, the Irish Catholics presented and represented by the *St. Patrick’s Message* were, therefore, expressing a very distinct brand of Irishness marked by prosperity, loyalty, and allegiance to their new country.

4.4 Memories and the Last of the Golden Years, 1937-1955

This was the particular brand of Irishness, which – starting in the late 1930s – the *St. Patrick’s Message* sought to immortalize. As the community changed, the congregation of St.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 38.

¹¹⁶ *St. Patrick’s Message*, December 1918, 5. SPBA

¹¹⁷ For further examples of such advertisements, see Appendix 11.

¹¹⁸ *St. Patrick’s Message*, February 1936, 12-13. SPBA

Patrick's paused to remember its history. David Lowenthal posits that "the past gains further weight because we conceive of places not only as we ourselves see them but also as we have heard and read about them."¹¹⁹ At mid-century, the leadership of St. Patrick's needed this weighted past in order to bolster their evolving community. As group identities are often constructed around a core of "powerful symbols and ritual representations," the harnessing of St. Patrick's history became an imperative, if the community was to survive the social and ecclesiastical revolutions coming its way.¹²⁰ The ninetieth anniversary of St. Patrick's became an occasion to celebrate the achievements of the community: "Truly St. Patrick's in its ninety years of history has played an important part in the development of our city, province and nation, and always her sons and daughters have received their inspiration and strength on their knees before the altar of God."¹²¹ It was also a time to reflect on the central role of St. Patrick's Church in the lives of its past congregation, a role commemorated in verses included in the *Message* of March 1937.¹²²

Consequently, starting early in 1943, the congregation sought a historian to put to paper the history of the Church on the occasion of its Centenary. The Irish "above the hill" felt that "the story of those hundred years [would] be replete with events of keenest interest to [their] people," and asked "Who will tell the story and tell it well and accurately?"¹²³ Since the original founders of St. Patrick's had long since passed away, and the Church was facing changing demographics within its boundaries, there seems to have been an urgent preoccupation to memorialized the history of the parish, in order to preserve the sense of identity which accompanied the hallowed building. The parishioners of St. Patrick's felt invested with a very specific mission: "We have a debt that we owe to ourselves, to our predecessors and to those that will come after us. We are the possessors of an

¹¹⁹ Lowenthal, "Past Time, Present Place: Landscape and Memory," 6.

¹²⁰ Moss, "St. Patrick's Day Celebrations and the Formation of Irish-American Identity, 1845-1875," 140.

¹²¹ *St. Patrick's Message*, March 1937, 9. SPBA

¹²² For the full-length poem see Appendix 12.

¹²³ *St. Patrick's Message*, April 1943, 20. SPBA

institution whose fame and eminence have marked its name all over this continent and even beyond the seas: St. Patrick's Church of Montreal. It is fitting that we make our centennial worthy of the good name and dignity of our sacred inheritance."¹²⁴ The centenary served to call to its sacred stones all those that had been born "within the echo of her bells," but now resided elsewhere. As "One hundred years have come upon [the] venerable church and invested her walls with a wealth of profound and glorious memories," those memories were subjugated in the safeguarding of a mutating community.¹²⁵

In 1947, St. Patrick's Church celebrated its hundredth anniversary by publishing a booklet, quite similar to the 1922 publication, to mark the happenings of the centenary. This particular booklet was dedicated "To St. Patrick's Church – Venerated Witness of Our Fathers' Faith - Sacred Repository of Our Holiest Memories."¹²⁶ It illustrates how St. Patrick's past was used to bolster a particular narrative about the Irish Catholics of Montréal, and how their memories served their ongoing sense of self: "For one to go back through the shadows of a century cannot help but fire the mind and set the heart aglow. Memories of a glorious past come quietly out of the shades and the spirits of great men seem to hover about us."¹²⁷ Acknowledging the disaster of the Famine years and its repercussions, the booklet still reflects the rest of the era's publications. These dealt with a narrative about the Irish Catholics of Montréal in which St. Patrick's came to represent the successes and triumphs of the community: "The history of St. Patrick's is the story of its people, of greatness born of tribulation, of nobility nourished on sorrow."¹²⁸

What is particularly striking about this pamphlet is that it also continued to reflect on the state of the community, and illuminated how – by mid-twentieth century – it had come to change.

¹²⁴ *St. Patrick's Message*, October 1946, 9-10. SPBA

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*

¹²⁶ *A Story of One Hundred Years – St. Patrick's Church Montreal 1847-1947* (Montreal: Plow & Watters, 1947), 3.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, 5.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, 27.

Acknowledging the urban transformations taking place around the parish, the booklet nevertheless reinforced the hopeful outlook of its community:

St. Patrick's Church in 1847 was built on the outskirts of the little city; today it is downtown. The parish limits are becoming less and less residential [but the...] St. Patrick's Fabrique within and without stands for dignity, neatness and good taste; its administration for efficiency; its services for piety, enthusiasm and solemnity; and its spirit the Irish Canadian Catholicism of a people ever determined to cherish the traditions of the past, and to lead them on to further fruitions.¹²⁹

The celebrations surrounding the anniversary became instrumental in performing a collective memory, a stance repeated, reiterated and embodied, that had the power to “galvanize the ties that bind groups together.”¹³⁰ As Karin Tilmans, Frank van Vree, and Jay Winter posit, the “performative act of remembrance is an essential way in which collective identities are formed and reiterated.”¹³¹ Centenary celebrations took place in March 1947, and in a spectacular Centennial Service held on September 14, 1947. These can, indeed, be read as performative acts of remembrance of days gone by, days that defined the very nature of Irish identities in Montréal, and “above the hill” most particularly. The *St. Patrick's Message* of May-June of that year concurred with the evocative power held by such ceremonies: “September 14th will be specially epical because on that day we shall recall the glories of the past, the faith of our forefathers, and the richness of our inheritance. And our reminiscences will give birth to new hope as we recall the example of those heroic and truly Catholic men and women who have forever imprinted their character and the greatness of their faith upon ‘Old St. Patrick’s.’”¹³²

This new hope would unfortunately not hold. After 1947, as the parish became increasingly less residential, St. Patrick's truly started to become a site of memory, a repository for the *history* of the Irish Catholics of Montréal, but not the center of a vibrant Irish Catholic community any longer.

¹²⁹ Ibid., 37.

¹³⁰ Karin Tilmans, Frank van Vree, and Jay Winter, eds., *Performing the Past: Memory, History, and Identity in Modern Europe* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2010), 11.

¹³¹ Ibid., 15.

¹³² *St. Patrick's Message*, May-June 1947, 10-11. SPBA

With the death of Monsignor McShane, who had been made a Papal Prelate in 1943, the Church's last golden era effectively came to a close. October 1955 sounded the death knell of the last grand Irish Catholic period in St. Patrick's history. Paul Emile Cardinal Leger, the Archbishop of Montréal actually announced: "an era in the church has ended with the death of Msgr. Gerald J. McShane."¹³³ This son of St. Patrick's had been at its helm since 1907, and during his forty-eight years pastorate, he heralded what can only be described as the Church's second, and last, golden era. The *Gazette* announced that "it would be possible to produce statistics of all that he did at St. Patrick's," but that in the end, "these things, important as they all were, do not give the full record of his work. That record lies in the precious tangibles of human experience, in the memory of those who live, and in the destiny of many now dead."¹³⁴ Having put his stamp on St. Patrick's for half a century, Father Gerald McShane did not, in the end, "outlast the come and go of the great city."¹³⁵ His Church was also not impervious to the changes wrought on Montréal by the passage of time. From the 1950s onward, it would come to witness a very different incarnation of St. Patrick's.

¹³³ "Msgr. Mc Shane - Cardinal Officiates At Funeral," *The Montreal Star*, Thursday, October 20, 1955. SPBA

¹³⁴ "Obituaries – Msgr. McShane," *The Gazette*, October 18, 1955. SPBA

¹³⁵ Ibid.

Chapter 5

A Changing Reality: From St. Patrick's Church to a Modern Basilica, 1955-2017

With Father McShane's retirement and subsequent death, St. Patrick's Church lost one of its most vocal advocates, and was left to face what was to be the most challenging period of its history. McShane, who was remembered as the pastor who "made St. Patrick's the clearing house for religious activities in the North American Continent and known in all parts of the world," had clearly been a bulwark of St. Patrick's.¹ This was expressed in interviews conducted by Patricia Burns in the 1990s; James Mossey, for example, posited that "only for his influence [Father McShane's], at St. Patrick's Church wouldn't be there today. He keep it up so good that all the priests, well, you know... St. Patrick's will never die, you know."² Mossey's view on the immortality of St. Patrick's does not negate the fact that the parish, for the rest of the century, was to face the tumultuous realities that accompanied the entry of Québec society into modernity. Elsewhere in Canada, institutional churches "successfully negotiated the challenges of high immigration and the movement from inner-city neighbourhood to suburb" that had been occurring since 1945.³ The case of St. Patrick's was more complicated, as it not only faced a changing urban landscape but it witnessed the culmination of religious and linguistic trends underway after the Second World War; trends that would change it permanently.

In the draft of an article from 1958, found in the St. Patrick's Basilica archives, and entitled "The Glorious Mystery of Saint Patrick's Church," an anonymous writer summarized the changed circumstances of the parish at mid-century: "the Parish – once numbering 30,000, it now has only 832 families. Many business people drop in during the day for prayer and meditation, or to attend the popular 5:15 Mass, but they, for the most part pay their dues to the Parish near their homes, and

¹ Robert Lipscombe, *The Story of Old St. Patrick's* (Montreal: Helio gravure inc., 1967), 10. BANQ

² Patricia Burns, *Transcript of interview with James Mossey*, unpublished, 1992, 5. PBF

³ Christie, and Gauvreau, "Secularisation or Resacralisation?," 108.

thus are perhaps unaware of the crisis which now faces St. Patrick's 'family'."⁴ Altered urban settings, as well as the removal of its natural congregational basis, culminated in the second half of the century and created a new reality for St. Patrick's. These were trends that the *St. Patrick's Message* had acknowledged earlier in the century. In February 1925, for example, it had already exhorted families intending to move from the parish to find English-speaking Catholics to replace them, and "so help to keep the neighbourhood solid for St. Patrick's."⁵ The erosion of the English-speaking population of Montréal, a phenomenon underway since the 1920s, was especially troubling for the parish. Already faced with depleted demographics, St. Patrick's was also confronted by the political changes taking place in Québec by the 1960s and 1970s. These changes accelerated the migration of middle-class English-speaking Catholics, the population that had historically sustained the parish.

Already in 1939, the *Message* remarked on the diminished social and political circumstances of English-speaking Catholics in Québec.⁶ Their political situation had already started to change in the 1920s, but in the post-Second World War era the balance of power – both political and economic – started to shift from English to French-speaking Quebecers. For some in the English-speaking middle class, these altered circumstances encouraged a migratory movement to other Canadian cities, Toronto in particular.⁷ In the post-1960 era, Anglophone leadership in Québec businesses had been significantly reduced, and this naturally had an impact on St. Patrick's community, as those who had continued to congregate at the church in the wake of the *Révolution tranquille* started to

⁴ *The Glorious Mystery of Saint Patrick's Church*, draft of article, 1958. SPBA

⁵ *St. Patrick's Message*, February 1925, 12. SPBA

⁶ *St. Patrick's Message*, December 1939, 16. SPBA

In her interview with Patricia Burns, Patricia Mullally recalls that her father, who was amongst the leadership of the Irish Catholics "above the hill," was particularly preoccupied with the perceived diminished position of his community in the socio-economic fabric of Montréal.

See Burns, *The Shamrock and the shield: an oral history of the Irish in Montreal*, 106-107.

⁷ Rudin, *The Forgotten Quebecers: a history of English-speaking Quebec, 1759-1980*, 203.

move out of Montréal and Québec.⁸ As the parish simultaneously faced the “devastating evisceration of Quebec’s Catholic identity,” and witnessed the depletion of its demographic basis, it entered some of its most challenging years.⁹

The parish’s publications up to the new millennium, the newly available archives of the ninth pastor of St. Patrick’s, Russell Breen, as well as an investigation into the last ethnic event held at St. Patrick’s, and finally the church’s recent use of new medias will chronicle the events of those years. A last reflection on the ethnic and historical identity of St. Patrick’s, a most significant *lieu de mémoire* for Canadian-Irish Montrealers, is at the core of this last chapter. It is a fundamentally altered St. Patrick’s that faced the second half of the twentieth century, and this is the parish, congregation, and monument which will be investigated here.

5.1 Different Publications for a Different Era, 1967-1987

After the 1947 pamphlet celebrating the Church’s centennial, it took twenty years for St. Patrick’s to publish another piece of its history. Robert Lipscombe, with the cooperation of Reverend Leonard J. Crowley of St. Patrick’s, published *The Story of Old St. Patrick’s* for its one hundred and twentieth anniversary.¹⁰ It was prefaced by the Auxiliary Bishop of Montréal, Norman Gallagher: “Welcome to Our Church – If it is true that a Church is more than a building – more than an institution – then that other dimension must be people. [...] As you enter its Gothic Nave, our prayers and Christian greeting go out to you. So also do the echoes of the voices, the aspirations and the heroism of these people who founded, sustained and frequented this parish for more than a century.”¹¹ *The Story of Old St. Patrick’s* makes reference to the history of the people of St. Patrick’s, but it is the building itself that ultimately becomes the focus of Lipscombe’s interest.

⁸ Ibid., 215.

⁹ Gauvreau, “They Are Not of Our Generation: Youth, Gender, Catholicism, and Quebec’s Dechristianization, 1950-1970,” 62.

¹⁰ Lipscombe, *The Story of Old St. Patrick’s*, 1. BANQ

¹¹ Ibid., 2.

David Lowenthal has said that the past is incarnate in our built environment, it infuses with meaning the landscape we inhabit. One can argue that this is what Lipscombe proved by his vested interest in the *physical* environment of St. Patrick's.¹²

Faced with a congregation that was slowly evolving, from a majority of ethnic Irish to a diverse amalgamate, Lipscombe reinserted memories of St. Patrick's, and anchored them firmly into the physical building of the Church. Since the 1920s, the English-speaking population of Montréal, and especially its elite, had started to see an erosion of their congregational numbers. An exodus to the suburbs, as well as to other provinces, became decidedly marked in the 1960s and 1970s. Economic opportunities, and the tumultuous political situation in Québec during the era, created a nexus for the departure of a large base of St. Patrick's traditional congregation. It was therefore the beginnings of a space of memory that Lipscombe celebrated in 1967.



Fig. 5.1 Plaque installed by the St. Patrick's Society of Montreal to commemorate Québec poet Émile Nelligan. © Camille Harrigan

¹² Lowenthal, "Past Time, Present Place: Landscape and Memory," 6.

That very same year, the St. Patrick's Society of Montreal actually furthered the role of St. Patrick's as a site of memory. Already, by installing a plaque to honour Québec national poet Emile Nelligan, a famous Irish Québécois, the Society had highlighted the Church's role as a repository for Irish memories in the city (Fig. 5.1).¹³ By inaugurating a bronze plaque commemorating Thomas D'Arcy McGee's burial at the church (Fig. 5.2), the Society cemented its role as a site of memory.¹⁴ During a Memorial Mass, Bishop Gallagher presided over the affixing of an identifying tablet in the pew McGee occupied at St. Patrick's.¹⁵ Today, pew 240 is marked by a Canadian flag to commemorate the politician's role in Canadian Confederation (Fig. 5.3).

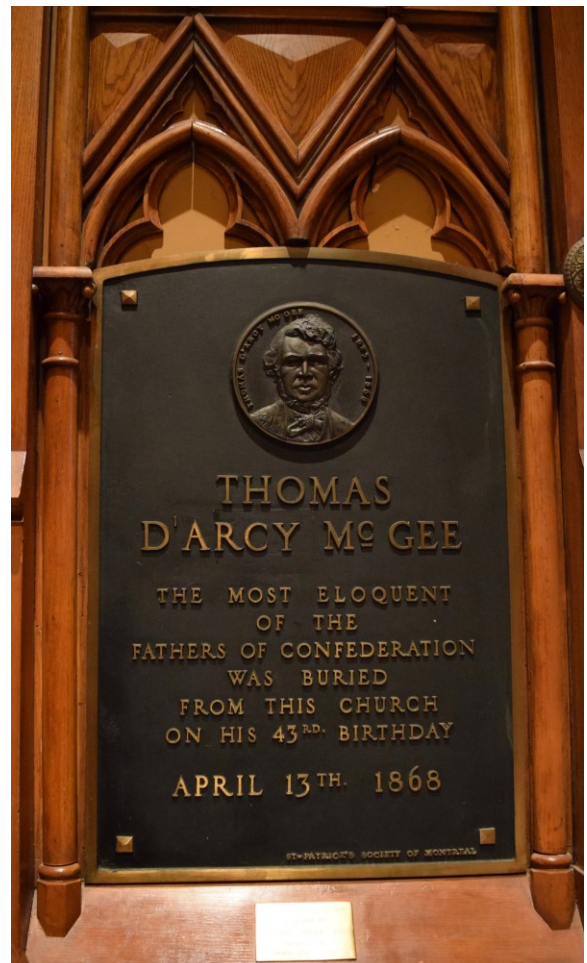


Fig. 5.2 Thomas D'Arcy McGee plaque installed by the St. Patrick's Society of Montreal.
© Camille Harrigan

¹³ St. Patrick's Society of Montreal, *Nuacht: Newsletter of St. Patrick's Society of Montreal Vol. 1, No. 3* (Montreal: May 1990), 7.

¹⁴ Ironically, at this point Thomas D'Arcy McGee had not yet been reinstated as a member of the St. Patrick's Society of Montréal.

¹⁵ Saint Patrick's Society of Montreal, *A Brief History of St. Patrick's Society of Montreal, March 1967*, Kenneth J. McKenna, President, 7. SPSA

It was fitting that St. Patrick's should become a repository for memories of the Irish-Canadian official. A journalist writing a sketch on the life of McGee in 1934 had already linked the two, when he wrote that "filled with the thoughts of the man of whom I am about to speak [McGee], I paid a visit to our venerable church of St. Patrick's. I tried to forget the present and to allow my thoughts to wander back to the dim past."¹⁶ In 1943, the *Message* had also highlighted the role of St. Patrick's as a store for memories of McGee. It noted that a "bound copy of 147 copies" of the tri-weekly *New Era*, the newspaper McGee edited when he first arrived in Montréal, was "preserved in the vaults of St. Patrick's Rectory, a veritable treasure and heirloom of a note-worthy past."¹⁷ As it catered to both McGee and his accused murderer, Patrick James Whelan, during their lives, St. Patrick's Church was an appropriate site in which Irish Montrealers could safeguard their memories of the colourful politician of St. Ann's ward. In 2018, the Basilica was, once again, the site of a commemoration celebrating the life of McGee. On April 7, 2018, on the anniversary of McGee's death, a new celebration sponsored by the St. Patrick's Society, featuring a celebratory Mass and a lecture by Mark O'Neill, President and Chief Executive Officer of the federal Crown Corporation that operates the Canadian Museum of History and the Canadian War Museum, and Mr. D'Arcy Quinn, great-great-great grandson of McGee, once again illustrated the central role played by St. Patrick's in safeguarding memories of the Irish Father of Confederation.¹⁸

¹⁶ Parishioner of St. Patrick's, *Sketch of the life of Thomas D'Arcy McGee*, March 11, 1934. SPBA

¹⁷ *St. Patrick's Message*, March 1943, 15. SPBA

¹⁸ St. Patrick's Society of Montreal, "Thomas D'Arcy McGee Commemoration," accessed April 11, 2018, <http://www.spsmtl.com/content/thomas-darcy-mcgee-commemoration>.



Fig. 5.3 Thomas D’Arcy
McGee’s pew.
© Camille Harrigan

At this point, one would be remiss not to discuss the materiality of the St. Patrick’s publications examined so far. Albeit utilitarian, the pamphlets related to the dismemberment and debt episodes, as well as the sermons preached at St. Patrick’s, were items members of the community could treasure. The booklets produced for Father Dowd’s Jubilee, the Golden Jubilee of the Orphan’s Asylum, the creation of the Catholic High School, as well as both published histories of St. Patrick’s became collectors’ item, as they were intended. Bound and lavishly illustrated, the publications provide a visual and tangible illustration of how the community had progressed

socially. As the majesty of St. Patrick's spoke from the page, its storied stones reminded the community of how far they had travelled since their departure from Ireland. The same can be said for Father McShane's *St. Patrick's Message*; on numerous occasions, the *Message* itself suggested its role to collectors as a valuable keepsake, reflecting the activities of the Irish community in Montréal. Robert Lipscombe's 1967 publication was, in contrast, not on par with its predecessors. It lacked the panache and level of details of previous publications. A pamphlet published in 1972, on the occasion of the one hundred and twenty-fifth anniversary of the Church, also lacked the flair of the preceding publications.¹⁹

This was, after all, a period of transition for St. Patrick's. If some commentators felt secure in its place in Montréal, the social and economic faces of Québec were still changing and St. Patrick's had to deal with new realities. In March 1974, the writer Brian Moore, in an article entitled "The Church with a heart of gold: Step into St. Patrick's world of Gothic beauty," reported:

Although the church's parish – bounded by Guy, Pine, Amherst and the St. Lawrence River – now is largely a commercial area, he [Rev. M. D. Dubee] has no worries about St. Patrick's future. "The Church is a symbol for the city's English-speaking Catholic community. Montreal wouldn't be the same without it." [...] While most of St. Patrick's parishioners may no longer be fresh from the Emerald Isle, its Irish luck seems to be holding up.²⁰

The Church still held a sacred place in the heart of Irish Montrealers during the 1970s and 1980s. But the changes wrought on the parish by urbanization, religious trends and demographic transformations might explain the sparse nature of St. Patrick's publications until the end of the century. The archives of Monsignor Russell Breen, the Pastor appointed in 1986, offers an alternative vantage point to reflect on the community's and the church's preoccupations during the last two decades of the twentieth century. These documents, released in 2016 and held by Concordia University, are a new source of information on the English-speaking Catholics of Montréal and the

¹⁹ Only a few pages long, this publication was completely devoid of illustrations or any mentions of the history of St. Patrick's. St. Patrick's Church, *St. Patrick's Montreal 125th Anniversary Year 1847-1972 Pamphlet*. RBF

²⁰ Brian Moore, "The Church with a heart of gold: Step into St. Patrick's world of Gothic beauty," *Montreal Scene and TV Listings. The Montreal Star*, March 16-22, 1974. SPBA

stewardship of St. Patrick's. Unexplored by other scholars, this archive offers an occasion to reflect on a more contemporary Irish community in the city.²¹

5.2 Breen's Archives: Language Issues, Religious Fervour and Diversity in a Changing Québec, 1980s-1990s

One of the most striking features of Monsignor Breen's personal documents is the window it offers on the preoccupations of English-speaking Catholics in the last quarter of the twentieth century.²² The election of the Parti Québécois, in 1976, radically changed the political and linguistic landscape of the province. Breen's papers reflect his community's preoccupation with the place of English-speaking Quebecers in Québec. Out-province migration increased after the election and, with the adoption of the Charter of the French Language (Bill 101) in 1977, the community's growth through assimilation of new immigrants was made impossible.²³ The years 1976-77 left the community, which had been a "pampered minority," forced to face the new realities of Québec society. Thousands decided to move west and settled in Ontario.²⁴ The Independence Referendum, in 1980, only accelerated this trend; young Anglophones, amongst them parishioners from "Irish" parishes, depleted the ranks of their communities by moving to other locales where economic opportunities seemed more favourable.²⁵

For those remaining a new world order had to be reckoned with. If the first half of the century had been characterised by the "apex of English-speaking dominance," with an English-speaking minority which identified "with the larger North American community and consider[ed] themselves part of a majority," the second half of the century witnessed a change in the socio-

²¹ The amount of documents collided into the Russell Breen Fonds warrant their own research so only a brief overview is possible here.

²² Russell Breen had been vice-rector of the newly formed Concordia University before being posted at St. Patrick's. His understanding of the position of the English-speaking community was shaped by his experience at Loyola and then Concordia University.

²³ John A. Dickinson, "The English-speaking minority of Quebec: a historical perspective," *International Journal of the Sociology of Language* Vol. 185 (2007): 15.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 19.

²⁵ Hal Winter, "The Montreal Irish," *Language and Society* Vol. 22 (Spring 1989): 19.

economic order.²⁶ In this new order, the once unchallenged minority of Anglophone Montrealers had to contend with an altered social position. They, indeed, remarked on their “victim” status in the new Québec. With limited access to English-speaking schools, and public service employment, as well as reduced control of Anglophone hospitals, English-speaking Quebecers decried their new status.²⁷ This sense of insecurity Anglophones felt during the period, Breen candidly exposed it: “In the past we were a minority, but we thought and we acted as though we were the majority, sustained as we were with our economic power. The change that is painfully being experienced by us is reflected in all the normal psychological reactions of a threatened minority.”²⁸

First in his position as an educator at Concordia University, and then as Pastor of St. Patrick’s, Monsignor Breen was instrumental in shaping the debate around the place of Anglophones in Québécois society. An address to the Montreal West Rotary Club in May 1981 reflects Breen’s principal arguments during his pastorate, and his defence of the rights of English-speaking Quebecers:

As Anglophones, we must be very conscious of one essential fact: we have always been part of a minority, and we will become a minority to an even greater extent as time progresses. There is nothing wrong with this; it is simply the way things are. This does not mean, however, that we are not as “Québécois” as our French-speaking compatriots. Québec is as much our home as anyone else’s. Of course, I need not repeat for you the various stereotypes which have always afflicted us in our status as a minority: that we controlled the money, that we were always the bosses, that our schools assimilated both immigrant and francophone alike. As with all stereotypes, these were partly true and largely false.²⁹

²⁶ Dickinson, “The English-speaking minority of Quebec: a historical perspective,” 17.

²⁷ Michael R. Smith, “Présentation: les Anglophones au Québec,” *Recherches sociographiques* Vol. 55, No. 3 (2014): 459.

²⁸ Russell Breen, *Talk Given at the Communion Breakfast of the Federation of English Speaking Catholic Teachers on March 28, 1989 by Msgr. Russell Breen, Pastor of St. Patrick’s Basilica*, 6. RBF

²⁹ Russell Breen, *Loyola and Anglophone Higher Education in Quebec. Talk to the Montreal West Rotary Club, Thursday, 28 May 1981*, 4. RBF

The right of Anglophone Quebecers to share in the history and future of Québec was something Breen was adamant about.³⁰ He proposed that, since Québec was the home of his constituents, they needed to assemble as a political body to preserve their rights, “In [this] transitional phase it is important that we have an active and articulate Alliance Québec which can serve as an effective and forceful spokesman expressing the legitimate aspirations of our minority group.”³¹

Of course, these aspirations had federalist overtones. Breen advocated for his community to “play a constructive role for the preservation and development of the greater unity of our Country.”³² Breen participated in the elaboration of the statement presented by the St. Patrick’s Society to the Bélanger and Campeau Commission in 1990. He was also instrumental in drafting the brief submitted by the English-speaking Catholic Council of Montreal.³³ The brief quite clearly reiterated the political position espoused by Breen and others: “our political position for a Quebec Society which is within the frame-work of Canada. This position respects the future of Quebec but reiterates our political position that Quebec remain within Canada, aware that the Quebec-Canada relationships may require change, culturally, economically and politically.”³⁴ Moreover, the Catholic Council advocated for the support of all cultural minorities residing in the province.³⁵ This echoed a brief submitted for review, by Don McNaughton and Sean Finn from the St. Patrick’s Society, to Monsignor Breen. The Society proposed that “Quebec should recognise the legitimacy of divergent opinions – An inward looking, overprotective Quebec with only one acceptable viewpoint

³⁰ Russell Breen, *Statement of Concern on issues of language rights*, 1988. RBF; English-Speaking Catholic Council of Montreal, *A Brief Submitted by the English-Speaking Catholic Council of Montreal to the Parliamentary Commission on the Political and Constitutional Future of Quebec*, November 2nd, 1990, 9. RBF

³¹ Russell Breen, *Talk Given by Russell Breen, P.H., Ph.D. Vice-Rector, Academic – Concordia University at the Concordia Annual Alumni Dinner, Toronto, Ontario, 13 May 1983*, 8. RBF

³² Russell Breen, *Talk Delivered at the St. Patrick’s Society Luncheon on 16 March 1990, at the Queen Elizabeth Hotel By Msgr. Russell Breen, Rector of St. Patrick’s Basilica, Montreal*, 3. RBF

³³ St. Patrick’s Society of Montreal, *Nuacht: Newsletter of St. Patrick’s Society of Montreal Vol. 3, No. 3* (Montreal: May 1991), 1. RBF

³⁴ English-Speaking Catholic Council of Montreal, *A Brief Submitted*, 3.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 4.

cannot flourish, either within confederation or as an independent state.”³⁶ Breen was, in fact, the spokesperson for an entire generation that felt alienated from the new incarnation of Québec society.³⁷ Becoming a language activist of sorts, Breen positioned himself as an advocate for Anglophone rights, in both secular and religious realms. Aware that the place of English-speaking Catholics in the archdiocese of Montréal was in decline, Breen received reports confirming this state of affairs: “very ominous signs within the social and demographic fabric that seem to indicate less and less “future” for most English parishes and institutions.”³⁸ The pastor wanted to insure English-speaking Catholic’s fair representation in the archdiocesan finances.³⁹ Hindered by diminished congregations, the English-speaking priests of Montréal were confronted with financial demands from the French-speaking archdiocese, which they believed to be unreasonable.⁴⁰ More than a bulwark against the financial problems of these congregations, Msgr. Breen also insured the place of the English language in the diocese of Montréal. In 1990, Archbishop Jean-Claude Turcotte wrote to apologize and reassure his friend that he “accept[ed] [his] remarks regarding the absence of English during the diocesan celebration of October 30th at the Cathedral. Unfortunately, it was an oversight and I hope that it will never happen again. I have every intention of remaining attentive to the bi-

³⁶ Don McNaughton, and Sean Finn, *Fax to Msgr. Russell Breen Concerning A Brief Submitted to the Bélanger et Campeau Commission by St. Patrick’s Society of Montreal*, February 14, 1991, 4. RBF

³⁷ One of Patricia Burns’s interviewee, Ron Fitzgibbon illustrated this position, when talking about the departure of his own children:

“Q. Why did he decide to leave Quebec?

A. He’s comfortable in Fr. He has no problem. A lot of his friends are Fr. but he felt that as a, to be honest, I think as an Anglophone he thought his future was somewhere else other than here.” (10)

“A. I feel it’s breaking up but I don’t feel I’m any stronger a Canadian. I’ve always felt this way... It’s sad what’s happening. You can either accept it or you can pull stakes up and go somewhere else because I spend a lot of my time whether it’s in Florida or whether it’s in Ontario. I go along Lancaster and Alexandria, Cornwall and these areas up there and it’s a different atmosphere and I don’t see why as a ... I don’t have any grudges against the French. I’m treated very well, that kind of a thing and why shouldn’t I be? I have as much right here as anybody else but I feel that the future of Quebec and Canada as we know it is drastically going to change. I have no doubt about that.”

Patricia Burns, *Transcript of interview with Ron Fitzgibbon*, unpublished, 1992, 12. PBF

³⁸ Gilles A. Surprenant, *Preliminary Report of the Coordinator for the English Parishes’ Participation in the 1990 Archdiocesan Financial Campaign, after a presentation at the Council of Priests Friday, January 19th, and consultations with the pastors and members of the executive*. RBF

³⁹ Gilles A. Surprenant, *Letter to Msgr. Breen*, February 8, 1990. RBF

⁴⁰ Barry A. Jones, *Letter to Msgr. Robert Reindeau, P.H. Executive Director, Financial Campaign 1990*, June 27, 1990. RBF

cultural dimension of the Church of Montreal.”⁴¹ Russell Breen obviously had at heart the preservation of the place of Anglophone Catholics in Montréal.

Nonetheless, even Mgrs. Breen had to contend with the fluctuation in religious fervour happening in Québec after the 1960s and 1970s. Not only did the politics of the *Révolution tranquille* disrupt the social fabric that had underpinned traditional Catholicism in the province, but the Catholic doctrine itself, especially after *Humanae vitae* (Pope Paul VI’s 1968 encyclical banning artificial contraception) transformed the Catholic landscape in Québec. Catholics liberated themselves from some of the formality of Mass and communion. As Michele Dillon posits, “as societies change, we should expect religion, too, to change; we should expect change in the religious institutions and traditions themselves and in individuals’ attitudes toward religion.”⁴² In the early 1970s, Catholic attendance diminished as some believers perceived the established Church as too rigid and out of sync with modern society. As the Church excluded them from full participation because of some of their actions, contraception amongst them, they rejected the Church but not their faith.⁴³ In the 1980s and 1990s, these trends had accelerated and Mgrs. Breen had to be a vocal advocate for a return to the Church.

In his sermons and homilies at St. Patrick’s, Breen made his position quite clear: “In Quebec there are so many people who do not find the need to have faith or to practice their faith. Mass attendance on Sunday in St. Patrick’s Basilica amounts to an average of 1,100 at all the masses. And there are many churches, Catholic and Protestant, where the attendance is so much lower.”⁴⁴ Godlessness was a recurrent theme in Breen’s discourse: “Many can find no room in their lives for God. The Christian message has not been the inspiration of their lives. They have replaced it with a

⁴¹ Jean-Claude Turcotte, *Letter to Mgrs. Breen*, November 14, 1990. RBF

⁴² Michele Dillon, “Decline and Continuity: Catholicism since 1950 in the United States, Ireland, and Quebec,” in *The Church Confronts Modernity: Catholicism since 1950 in the United States, Ireland, and Quebec*, ed. Leslie Woodcock Tentler (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2007), 263.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 244.

⁴⁴ Russell Breen, *Homily Preached on October 8th, 1989 in St. Patrick’s Basilica by Mgrs. Breen*, 2. RBF

concentration on and a preoccupation with the acquisition of comforts and the satisfaction of their inner drives.”⁴⁵ Promiscuity featured as well: “All of the surveys seem to confirm that there is much more open sexuality outside of marriage so that it is more and more difficult for a person to follow the true Christian ideals of sexual life in an atmosphere of the open sexual promiscuity which is the order of the day.”⁴⁶ Cognisant of the fact that a majority of Canadians were still believers, even in the 1990s, but chose not to attend church, Breen continued to espouse conservative social values, remarking on the lack of acceptance of the “ethical standards of Christianity,” which plagued modern society.⁴⁷ St. Patrick’s therefore continued to be a bastion of strict conservative Catholicism. A hundred years after Father Dowd’s pastorate, the ninth rector of St. Patrick’s fostered a similar ethos for the best-known English-speaking church in Montréal.

The face of his congregation had changed however, and Msgr. Breen encountered a new type of flock. Mark McGowan remarks that as Canadian society changes so does the face of its Catholic Church, and that “most individual parishes” will come to reflect Canadian diversity.⁴⁸ St. Patrick’s, as an urban parish, has been an early witness to the changing reality of Montréal’s Catholic Church. In a pluralistic world, the Church had “welcomed many brothers and sisters from all over the world and [has] been enriched by their presence,” according to a letter from Paul Grégoire to Breen.⁴⁹ The pastor himself recognized that his congregation had dramatically changed during his predecessor’s mandate.⁵⁰ He rejoiced in the multicultural nature of his flock: “Many of you have come from distant lands reflecting a variety of cultures and speaking a multiplicity of different languages to join us [...] We want you to know that we appreciate the very significant and valuable contribution which you are making to our Quebec and to our Canadian way of life and to the Catholicity of our

⁴⁵ Russell Breen, *Sermon Preached at St. Patrick’s Basilica – Christmas 1989 – By Msgr. Russell Breen*, 5. RBF

⁴⁶ Russell Breen, *Homily Preached by Msgr. Russell Breen on April 11th, 1993 – Easter*, 5. RBF

⁴⁷ Breen, *Homily Preached by Msgr. Russell Breen on April 11th, 1993 – Easter*, 5. RBF

⁴⁸ McGowan, “Roman Catholics (Anglophone and Allophone),” 92.

⁴⁹ Paul Grégoire, *Letter to Msgr. Breen*, December 14, 1989. RBF

⁵⁰ Mimi Belmonte, *Monsignor M. D. Dubee’s 50th. Jubilee – April 7th, 1991*, 3. RBF

local church.”⁵¹ Breen commented that their presence, in fact, made the Basilica more truly catholic and universal.⁵²

The fading of the historical Irish congregation of St. Patrick’s, which has been hinted at before, left the traditionally ethnic parish open to new Catholics who were making Montréal their home. In the early 1990s, Patricia Burns interviews Irish Montrealers who commented on this state of affairs. Tim Burke remarked that the Irish had “all fled to the suburbs,” while Father Michael Healy, from Pointe-St-Charles, explained that at St. Malachy’s the new congregation was mostly Filipino in origin.⁵³ St. Patrick’s, as the Mother Church for the English Catholics of Montréal, could not escape the changing demographics of practising Catholics in the city, and its congregation came to represent the diversity found throughout parishes on the island. Hence, Irish memories at St. Patrick’s had to contend with the history of a new type of congregation, in a “simultaneity-of-stories.”

5.3 Breen’s Archives: Custodians of St. Patrick’s and Guardians of Irishness, 1990s

The displacement of large segments of the original congregation did not hamper the work of a core group of Canadian Irish still attached to St. Patrick’s. Led by Monsignor Breen, they strove to preserve not only the building of St. Patrick’s, but also its role as a custodian of Irishness in the city. By the 1990s, Irish ethnic identities had become quite subsumed in Montréal. Commentators such as George O’Reilly Jr., a former mayor of Verdun, deplored that the place of the Irish in Montréal, one of the founding communities of the city, was not more evident.⁵⁴ Scholars, David Wilson amongst them, suggest that this might have been caused by the integration of Irish communities to the

⁵¹ Russell Breen, *Sermon Preached at St. Patrick’s Basilica – Christmas 1991 – By Msgr. Russell Breen, Pastor*, 1. RBF

⁵² Russell Breen, *Sermon Preached at St. Patrick’s Basilica – Christmas 1992 – By Msgr. Russell Breen, Pastor*, 1. RBF

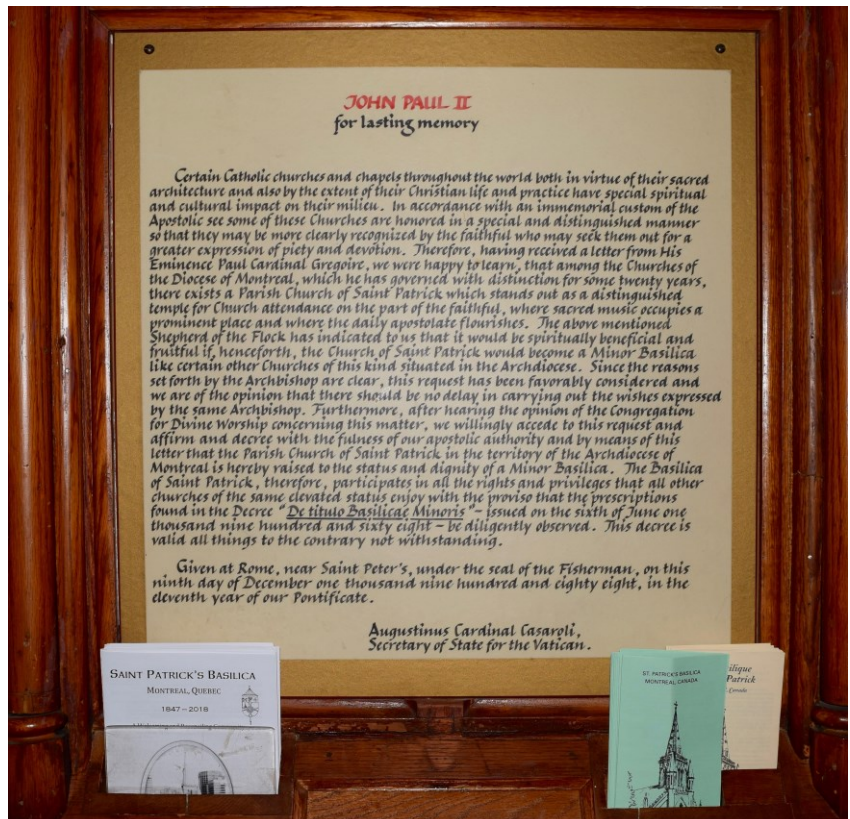
⁵³ Patricia Burns, *Transcript of interview with Tim Burke*, unpublished, 1992, 4-5. PBF; Patricia Burns, *Transcript of interview with Father Michael Healy*, unpublished, 1992, 9. PBF

⁵⁴ Patricia Burns, *Transcript of interview with George O’Reilly Jr*, unpublished, 1992, 7. PBF

“dominant cultural milieu of Canada” by the late 1980s.⁵⁵ In Montréal however, as in other Canadian locales, some of the Irish did effectively retained their distinct ethnic identities, and St. Patrick’s continued to be one of the *loci* in which they anchored and fostered such identities.⁵⁶

The Church’s congregation might not be composed of a majority of ethnic Irish parishioners anymore, but St. Patrick’s continued its role as a steward of the Irish presence in Montréal. A list of its wardens in 1989, whose names are Breen, O’Donnell, Taylor, Phelan, Mooney, O’Brien, Moody and McGovern, tend to prove that, at least in the running of the parish, the Irish community still held sway in their ancestral home of worship.⁵⁷ The church actually received from Rome, in 1989, the status of Minor Basilica, especially for its historical stewardship of the English-speaking Catholics in Montréal. A plaque commemorating this elevation to Basilica status still adorns the back of St. Patrick’s (Fig. 5.4).

Fig. 5.4 Plaque commemorating the elevation of St. Patrick’s Church to Minor Basilica in 1989, situated at the back of the nave.
© Camille Harrigan



⁵⁵ Sheila T. McGree, and Victoria M. Esses, “The Irish in Canada: A Demographic Study Based on the 1986 Census,” *The Canadian Journal of Irish Studies* Vol. 16, No. 1 (July 1990): 6.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 13.

⁵⁷ Wardens of St. Patrick’s Parish, *Minutes of the Meeting of the Wardens of St. Patrick’s Parish, held in the Library of the Rectory, 460 Dorchester Blvd. West, Montreal, on Wednesday, March 29th, 1989, at 6:00 P.M.* RBF

The Church, in fact, continued to be central to Montréal Irish activities in the 1990s. Monsignor Breen was an advisor to *Irish Activities Montreal 1992*, and he took a particular interest in the faith of a project in early 1990: the production of an “exhaustive historiography [of the Irish] which would constitute the first and most essential publication for any subsequent historical works.”⁵⁸ Patrick O’Hara, one of the leaders of the project commented that “Given the very long presence of the Irish in Quebec such a historiography would be especially valuable to all academics, researchers, or historians who would wish to pursue further work in this field.”⁵⁹ Also involved in this endeavour was a long list of individuals and organizations interested in recovering the history of the Irish in Québec.⁶⁰ Under the auspices of the Institut québécois de recherche sur la culture, this research was deemed essential to recover the history of a community which, in Québec, sometimes disappeared in the cleavage between Francophones and Anglophones.⁶¹ As the St. Patrick’s Society newsletter reported, “people know of the great influx of Irish immigrants in the 1840’s fleeing the Great Famine, [but] few are aware of the great involvement of the Irish in the making of the province before then [and] little is known or documented of that history.”⁶² It is therefore with immense pride that Mgrs. Breen must have welcomed Robert J. Grace’s *The Irish in Quebec: an introduction to the historiography – Followed by An Annotated Bibliography on the Irish in Quebec*.

Breen’s efforts in safeguarding Irishness in the city were not only ones of retrieval. He was, in fact, instrumental in renewing a sense of Irishness at St. Patrick’s. He collaborated with

⁵⁸ Patrick A. O’Hara, *Letter Concerning the Irish Activities Montreal 1992*. August 6, 1991. RBF

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Among them: Claude Bourguignon (Centre d’interprétation des Irlandais du Québec), Graeme Décarie (Concordia University), Michael Kenneally (St. Patrick’s Society), Brian McDonough (English-Speaking Catholic Council), Brennan O’Donnell (Archives Canada), Kevin O’Donnell (Radio-Canada), Marianna O’Gallagher (Carraig Books), Leo Delaney (President Irish Activities Montreal 1992), Gus O’Gormain (President St. Patrick’s Society), Patrick Kennig (Rector Concordia University) and finally Fernand Harvey (Quebec Cultural Research Institute).

⁶¹ Fernand Harvey, *Projet – État de la recherche sur les Irlandais du Québec*, Institut québécois de recherche sur la culture, 19 juillet 1991, 2. RBF

⁶² St. Patrick’s Society of Montreal, *Nuacht: Newsletter of St. Patrick’s Society of Montreal Vol. 3, No. 4* (Montreal: August 1991), 1. RBF

Comhaltas to put together a Mass in Irish, to be celebrated at the Basilica.⁶³ He also officiated at the closing of the D'Arcy McGee High School, and oversaw the transfer of commemorative plaques from the school to the Church's Lady Chapel, thus ensuring St. Patrick's role as a repository for Irish Catholic memorabilia.⁶⁴ But it is clearly in his efforts to safeguard the building of St. Patrick's that Breen most clearly demonstrated his intention to stimulate the bonds between the ethnic Irish community and its ancestral church. Patrick Kenniff, from Concordia University, described it: "The efforts of Monsignor Breen to keep the legacy of St. Patrick's alive, and to restore that church, now a Basilica, to its original splendour [is] part of the heritage not only of Irish and English-speaking Catholics in Montréal, but of all Montréalers."⁶⁵ It is important to note that it is the Basilica's role in fostering the Irish community that would be used time and again to solicit financial help. For in the 1980s, St. Patrick's was in a deplorable state.

With the depletion of its traditional congregation and a decline in overall numbers of Catholics in Québec, combined with the rising cost of maintaining a building of St. Patrick's stature, it is unsurprising that the pastor of St. Patrick's was faced with a need for intensive restoration work by the end of the twentieth century. Figures 5.5 and 5.6 show the extensive work done on the interior of the Basilica, which needed painstaking and minute refurbishment to, once again, display the magnificence and grandeur of the decor designed by Alexander Locke at the beginning of the century. The Basilica, which was to be "the instrument for the divine and the human to meet and to interact" needed its splendour restored if it was to fulfill its role.⁶⁶ During his Christmas sermon in 1992, Breen reported that a parishioner had written to him:

⁶³ Patrick Short, *Letter to the Archbishop of Dublin & Primate of Ireland, November 24, 1991*. RBF

⁶⁴ Russell Breen, *Homily Preached by Rev. Msgr. Russell Breen on Sunday, May 17th, 1992 at St. Patrick's Basilica on the Occasion of the 60th Anniversary of D'Arcy McGee High School and the Official Closing of the School on June 30th, 1992*, 2. RBF

⁶⁵ Patrick Kenniff, *An Address by Dr. Patrick Kenniff, Rector and Vice-Chancellor of Concordia University, and President, Celebrations Montreal 1642-1992, at the Queen Elizabeth Hotel for the Saint Patrick's Society Luncheon, Friday 15 March 1991*, 3. RBF

⁶⁶ Russell Breen, *Sermon Preached at St. Patrick's Basilica – Christmas 1992 – By Msgr. Russell Breen*, 2-3. RBF

I woke early yesterday morning thinking of the interior of St. Patrick's, how dark it was, I was dark like that. My husband suggested we go out for a drive. We arrived at the Basilica in time for Mass at 11:00 A.M. I did not question our being there. I was pleased when I walked in. I realized the renovations had been completed. A sense of light sprung in me. I looked around at the familiar sights, the beautiful stained-glass windows, the Stations of the Cross. My husband nudged by arm to look at the ceiling. I felt the light, the bright. This morning when I woke, darkness had been replaced with light.⁶⁷

Clearly, the Basilica's restoration had a spiritual as well as a material component, which Breen sought to underline. The exterior of the Basilica was also in dire need of extended work. Breen himself reported that, shortly after he began his pastorate, a stone from the belfry had fallen on a parishioner walking in the front of the Church.⁶⁸ St. Patrick's structure was compromised and widespread work had to be undertaken, especially around the front rose window. A contemporary photograph of the Basilica (Fig. 5.7) shows how the facade still bears the marks of this widespread renovation, which not only restored the interior of the Church but also its structure.



Fig. 5.5 Photograph of the refurbishment done in the 1990s, most of which was done by hand.

© Patricia Miller

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Russell Breen, *Talk Given by Rev. Msgr. Russell Breen on Sunday, May 30th, 1993 on the Occasion of the Benefactors' Concert Marking the Completion of the Restoration of St. Patrick's Basilica*, 1. RBF

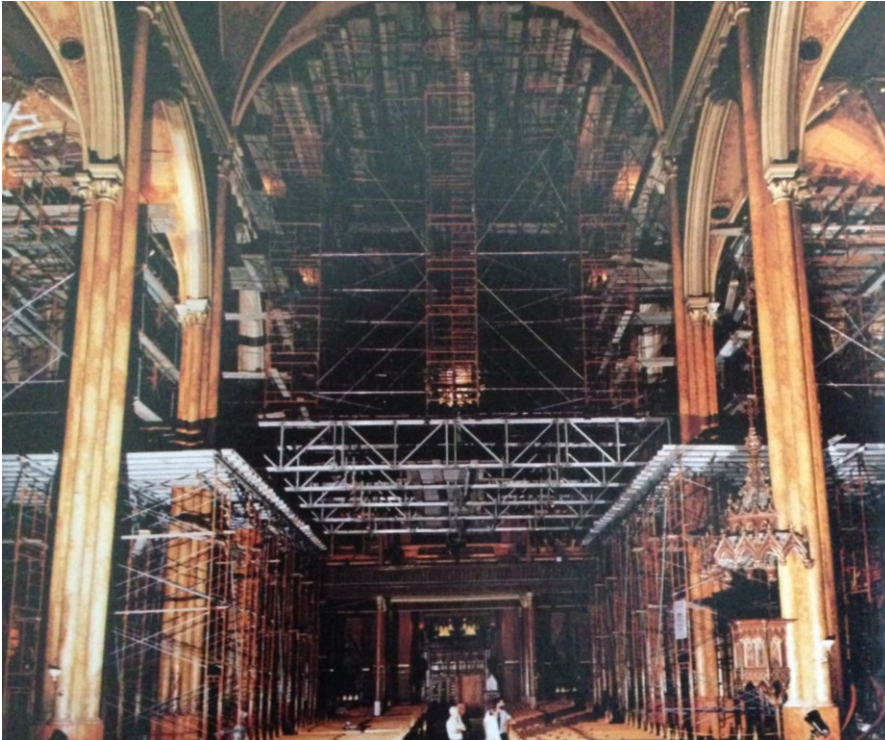


Fig. 5.6 Photograph of the interior restoration done in the 1990s.
© Patricia Miller



Fig. 5.7 Restored facade of St. Patrick's Basilica.
© Camille Harrigan

Recognised as a provincial historical monument in 1985, St. Patrick's benefitted from this status to finance some of its restoration. Unfortunately, provincial help was not sufficient, and Breen and the Capital Campaign Steering Committee turned to both parishioners and other levels of government to fund the Church's restoration. Interestingly, campaign literature and a pledge card were distributed on the Feast of St. Patrick's in 1989. As the campaign was also to be mentioned by Breen during his St. Patrick's Day service, one can deduce that the Committee hoped to attract donations from a scattered Irish community, the traditional congregation of St. Patrick's.⁶⁹ These individuals might have had a more personal and filial connection to the Church, as opposed to the heterogeneous congregation of the modern Basilica, which did not have the same emotional connection with its storied stones. A small plaque at the front of St. Patrick's, by the pulpit, commemorates the contribution of Canadian-Irish families to the restoration efforts (Fig. 5.8) . An application to the Federal government to receive National Historic Monument status was also undertaken at the end of 1989. This would allow St. Patrick's to apply for federal funds to finance its restoration.⁷⁰

Fig. 5.8 Plaque commemorating the contribution of the Murphy, McIlhone, and O'Reilly families to the 1990s renovation.

© Camille Harrigan



⁶⁹ Capital Campaign Steering Committee, *Minutes of the Meeting of the Capital Campaign Steering Committee*, Tuesday, 21 February 1989. RBF

⁷⁰ Capital Campaign Steering Committee, *Minutes of the Meeting of the Capital Campaign Steering Committee*, Monday, 1 May 1989. RBF

Officially, St. Patrick's status as a "Gothic Revival" church was to be the deciding factor in granting the Church's Monument status.⁷¹ Breen announced, in 1990, that "after a very major study of the Gothic Revival in Canada, the Board [Federal Government] had come to the conclusion that St. Patrick's Basilica in Montreal was a fine representative example of the Gothic revival style in Canadian ecclesiastical architecture and was of national architectural significance and will be commemorated by means of a plaque on the external walls of the building."⁷² But clearly, the Campaign Steering Committee understood that St. Patrick's was "much more than a simple landmark. [Because] what is a building but bricks and mortar?"⁷³ They recognised that "St. Patrick's physical structure [was] indeed significant, and worth saving on its architectural merits, but what makes it really special is how much of our city's evolution has been built on its foundations, and colored by its stained glass."⁷⁴

The most significant part of the Campaign's literature reinforced the links between community, memory, and St. Patrick's. In a section entitled "Answers to your Questions," which dealt with the fundamental reasons one should support the restoration, the Committee makes quite explicit the intrinsic value of St. Patrick's as an Irish *lieu de mémoire*: "Why is the community being asked to support the restoration? St. Patrick's parishioners are generously contributing to the campaign. But St. Patrick's is more than a place of worship – it is an historical monument, and important provider of social services, and a vital part of the downtown landscape. St. Patrick's is a

⁷¹ Jackie Daze, *Phone conversation with Government Official*, November 20, 1989. RBF

⁷² Russell Breen, *Homily Preached by Msgr, Russell Breen at St. Patrick's Basilica on Christmas Day in 1990*, 1-2.

RBF

See Appendix 13 for a view of this commemorative plaque outside St. Patrick's. It is clearly its merits as an architectural landmark that gave the Basilica its Federal status. For further illustration of this, see Parks Canada Directory of Federal Heritage Designations http://www.pc.gc.ca/apps/dfhd/page_nhs_eng.aspx?id=658.

⁷³ Capital Campaign Steering Committee, *St. Patrick's – A Monument Heritage: Official Campaign Documents*, 1989-1990.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

work of urban art – that beauty, however, is in imminent danger.”⁷⁵ This status, as well as the ongoing activities of the Basilica, was finally the lynchpin of the fundraising efforts made in the early 1990s. The J.W. McConnell Family Foundation, for example, was solicited on the basis of St. Patrick’s historical and ongoing efforts for the community.⁷⁶ The building itself was mentioned only as needed, and it is St. Patrick’s historical engagement with the *community* which was put forward.

As the head Pastor of St. Patrick’s, Monsignor Russell Breen took to heart the preservation of not only the historical building entrusted into his care, but also the history and memories which accompanied the storied stones of St. Patrick’s. Dedicated to a new type of congregation, Breen nevertheless worked within the larger Irish community in Montréal to ensure the Basilica’s place as a site of memory for the community which had historically sustained it.

5.4 The Last Official Publications, 1997-2001

The altered circumstances of St. Patrick provided a different impetus for the publication of one of the last histories of the Basilica. The celebratory booklet, edited by Patricia Miller, published for the sesquicentenary in 1997 catered to a different need than its predecessors. The roll of staff and wardens from the booklet demonstrates that, by the late 1990s, St. Patrick’s was a decidedly

⁷⁵ The complete section: “ANSWERS TO YOUR QUESTIONS: What makes St. Patrick’s special? One of North America’s finest examples of Gothic architecture, St. Patrick’s is a place of breathtaking beauty. Painstakingly hand-crafted, its interior, which spans 85 feet from floor to ceiling, is absolutely inspiring. Standing at 223 feet long by 105 feet wide, with a steeple reaching nearly 230 feet high, St. Patrick’s can hold nearly 2,500 people. In recognition of St. Patrick’s importance to the Montreal landscape, the government of Quebec has designated it an official historical monument. What role has St. Patrick’s played in Montreal’s development? Since its establishment, St. Patrick’s has been one of the foremost influences on Montreal’s social development. The priests and parishioners of St. Patrick’s have created a number of important service agencies, including St. Patrick’s Orphan Asylum, St. Bridget’s Refuge, St. Patrick’s School, St. Patrick’s Hospital (forerunner to St. Mary’s), the Catholic Women’s League, and Camp Kinkora. Why is the community being asked to support the restoration? St. Patrick’s parishioners are generously contributing to the campaign. But St. Patrick’s is more than a place of worship – it is an historical monument, and important provider of social services, and a vital part of the downtown landscape. St. Patrick’s is a work of urban art – that beauty, however, is in imminent danger. The stained glass windows, for example, must be repaired now or they will be lost forever. Further, its urgent needs cannot be met by its congregation alone. St. Patrick’s will not be able to afford the vital repairs it must make without support from external sources.”

In Capital Campaign Steering Committee, *St. Patrick’s – A Monument Heritage: Official Campaign Documents*, 1989-1990. RBF

⁷⁶ Russell Breen, and Brian F. O’Neill, *Letter to Mr. Derek A. Price, President of the J.W. McConnell Family Foundation, April 12, 1990*. RBF

mixed parish catering to all English-speaking Catholics within its boundaries. The wardens might still be mostly Canadian-Irish – as if the historical community was not entirely ready to pass on the stewardship of the Church – but the congregation reflected Montréal’s urban diversity.⁷⁷ The 1997 publication was not only a site of memory for the Irish community reclaiming the Basilica for its anniversary, but also an educational and heritage publication for the new St. Patrick’s congregation. Lavishly decorated by photographs of the Basilica, the pamphlet shows the distinct architecture and wealth of the temple, as it outlines the history of the church and the community that sustained it in the past. What is revealing about this publication is that it looked very much to the future: “St. Patrick’s, built 20 years before Canada was a nation, stands serene and solid as Montréal changes around it. With the aspirations of its founding Irish Congregation in mind, St. Patrick’s Basilica celebrates its 150th Anniversary recognized for its past, united in the present and confident of the future.”⁷⁸

The preface from the Most Rev. Neil E. Willard, V.G., the Auxiliary Bishop of Montréal, “May each and every one who identifies with Saint Patrick’s rejoice in the memories of the past, savour the celebration of the present, and strive to continue to build a strong community in the future,” as well as the translations of St. Patrick’s history into French and Spanish, prove that Miller’s booklet has clearly moved from the celebratory publications of old.⁷⁹ Those had been concerned with the minutiae of Irish Catholic life, but Miller highlights a broader history of the site that assembles a now diverse congregation around the solemnity and splendour of its surroundings.

⁷⁷ St. Patrick’s Basilica Staff and Priests: Georges Dussault, Pierre Gingras, Peter Zhou, Alan Yuk Lun Hui, Heriberto Albarracin, Boachie Fosu, Carole Croteau, Micheline Girard, Liam Maloney, Cecilia Pok Sze Hui, Joseph Pok Man Hui, Judy Giguère, Sharon Cook, Mary McGovern, Kevin Savor, Carol McCormick, Albert Biondi, Bishop Leonard Crowley, Msgr. Barry Egan-Hones, Fr. Herbert Shulz. Wardens: Peter O’Brien, Brian O’Neill, Antoine Maloney, Dan Sullivan, Micheal Lerch, Jay Gould, Lynn Doyle. The 150th Anniversary Committee: Don McNaughton, Jeanine Beaubien, Michael Kenneally, Patrick Kenniff, Michael Lerch, Joseph Quinn, Alanna Rourke, Beverley Rozek, David Ruddy, Harold Thuringer.

Patricia Miller, *Montréal: St. Patrick’s Basilica* (Montreal: Published by St. Patrick’s Basilica, 1997).

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 11.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 3.

At this point, both the guardians of St. Patrick's and its congregation could imbue the space with their own meaning. In an illustration of Massey's concept of simultaneity of stories-so-far, Miller's booklet illustrates the fact that space is always lived, challenged and far from "being dead and fixed."⁸⁰ St. Patrick's, as a symbolic space, is never static, but a "dynamic site of meaning and depository for successive generations' ideological bric-à-brac."⁸¹

The last of St. Patrick's twentieth century publications can be seen as one more layer to this generational ideological "bric-à-brac," and also as homage to the prolific *St. Patrick's Message*. The *St. Patrick's Now*, published only to 2001, was a quarterly publication written by the Fabrique of St. Patrick's. The brainchild of Msgr. Barry Egan Jones, it was first published in the fall of 1997. The quarterly's entry into patrician life can probably be explained by the resurgence of interest in all things Irish during the late 1990s. As the Irish diaspora celebrated the 150th anniversary of the Famine and Canadian-Irish profiles were raised by the actions of Action Grosse Île, who strode to safeguard the Irish nature of the National Historical Site on the island, it is unsurprising that, in one of the traditional houses of the Irish in Montréal, renewed interest in Irishness blossomed.⁸²

The *Now* served some of the same purposes as Miller's book. However, it also revealed more about the memories and identities fostered at St. Patrick's at the end of the century. As a yet unexplored source, it warrants further academic analysis because it is, in itself, a site of memory. Published for the first time in 1997, it reveals a completely transformed parish. Host to thirty-five nationalities, the Basilica had become, by that point, a truly Catholic space in which the Irish narrative had to contend with an array of parallel ethnic stories.⁸³ As the publication makes quite

⁸⁰ Massey, *For Space*, 14.

⁸¹ Brian S. Osborne, "Constructing landscapes of power: the George Etienne Cartier monument, Montreal," *Journal of Historical Geography* Vol. 24, No. 4 (1998): 453.

⁸² For a complete account of the actions of Action Grosse Ile, the Canadian-Irish group which opposed federal plans to turn Grosse Ile into a Canadian Ellis island, see two articles by the movement's historian. Michael Quigley, "Grosse Ile: Canada's Irish Famine Memorial," *Labour/Le Travail* Vol. 39 (Spring 1997): 195-214; Michael Quigley, "Grosse Ile: An Argument and Some Modest Proposals," *The Canadian Journal of Irish Studies* Vol. 20, No. 1 (1994): 41-59.

⁸³ Fabrique of St. Patrick's Parish, *St. Patrick's Now* Vol. 5, No. 1 (Montreal, Autumn 2001), 1-2. BANQ

clear, “The Irish flavour of the Basilica will always be there, but as part of the Church Universal, St. Patrick’s will reflect increasingly the cultural diversity of the English-speaking population of Montreal.”⁸⁴ On the one hand, the environment of St. Patrick’s makes quite clear that this had been an *Irish Catholic* church. The profusion of shamrocks in the Basilica’s decoration (Fig. 5.10, 5.11 and 5.12) intimates quite clearly at the identity of its historical congregation. But, as the *Now* aptly points out, St. Patrick’s came to accommodate numerous versions of Catholic identities in the city. As St. Patrick’s also stood as a repository for Irish identities in the city, it is noteworthy to mention that the element of class, which had characterized the Church’s early twentieth century publications, was noticeably absent in the *Now*, and so the Church came to represent a more generalized form of Irishness in the city.

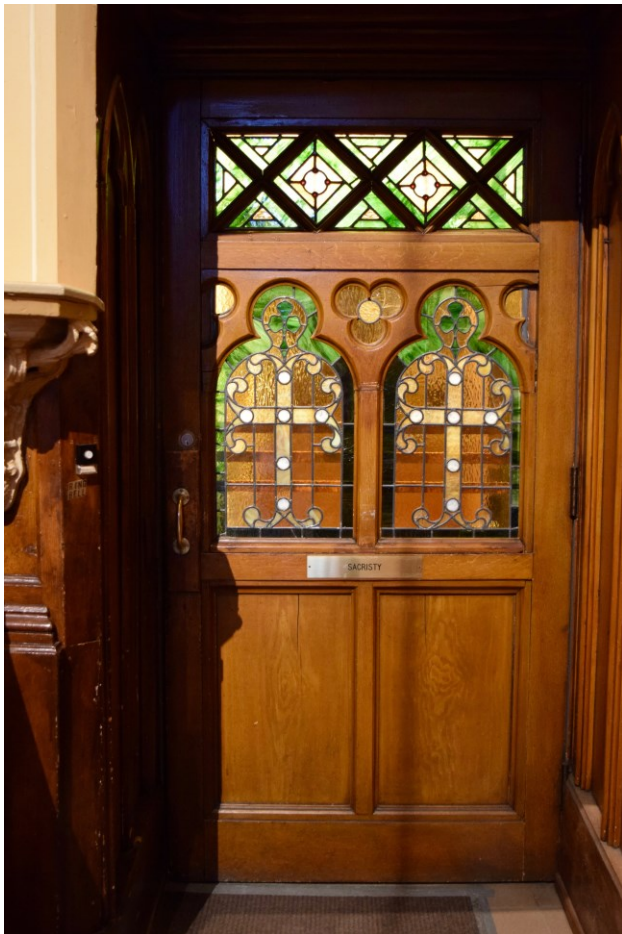


Fig. 5.9 Sacristy on the east side of the Basilica. Note the use of the shamrock in the glass decorating the door.

© Camille Harrigan

⁸⁴ Fabrique of St. Patrick’s Parish, *St. Patrick’s Now Vol. 1, No. 1* (Montreal, Fall 1997), 2. BANQ



Fig. 5.10 Decorative glass over the west entrance. Note the use of the shamrock and the reference to St. Patrick's bishop mitre in the quatrefoil above the door.

© Camille Harrigan

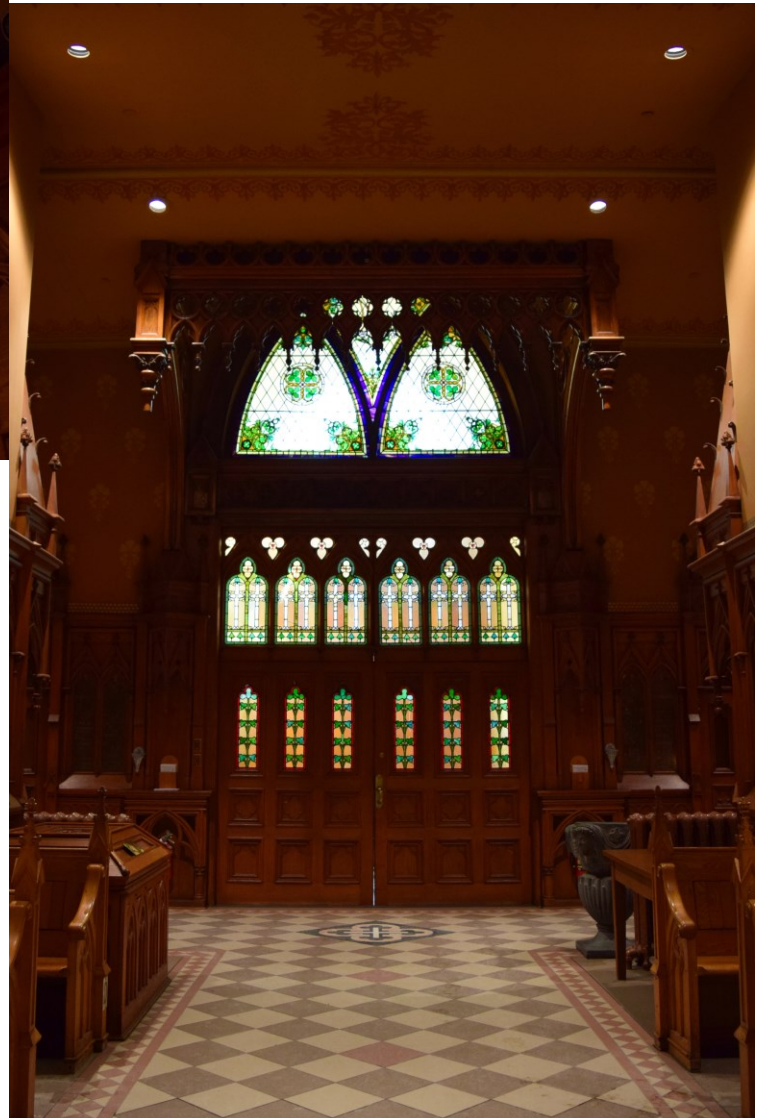


Fig. 5.11 Main entrance of the Basilica. Again the shamrock is the main motif in the glass decorating the doors.

© Camille Harrigan

The generalisation of narratives put forward at the Basilica at the end of the century is the direct result of the loss of other Irish spaces around Montréal. As narratives from other locations, St. Ann's amongst them, came to be re-attached to the Basilica, the *Now* proved Doreen Massey's position that places are "constantly shifting articulations of social relations through time" and that "particular attempts to characterise them, to define, and claim coherence and a particular meaning for [them], [should characterise] specific envelopes of space-time."⁸⁵ As the middle-class "lace-curtain" Irish who had sustained the parish in the first half of the century departed, the "imagined community" inhabiting St. Patrick's evolved. The Basilica was re-imagined, and the "narrative and performative discourses that give [it its] meaning," were altered to accommodate the new congregation and a simultaneity of Irish narratives that had become unmoored in the rest of Montréal.⁸⁶ The *Now*'s first number thus advertised a pilgrimage to Grosse Île where Msgr. Barry Egan Jones, the pastor of St. Patrick's, celebrated a Mass dedicated to Irish victims of the Great Irish Famine.⁸⁷ On Easter 2000, another special Mass dedicated to the 6,000 victims of the 1847 typhus epidemic was also celebrated at St. Patrick's.⁸⁸ This is in marked contrast with the history of the church a century earlier, when *St. Ann's* was the focus of Famine celebrations. With the demolition of the other Irish parish, in 1970, St. Ann's celebrations and narratives seem to have been transported at St. Patrick's, and the class divide between the two locales was erased.

The *St. Patrick's Now* also served as a tool for the custodians of the parish who wished to celebrate and foster its Irish history. The publication sponsored the written biography of the Basilica by journalist Alan Hustak: "A long overdue history of St. Patrick's will be in bookstores this spring."⁸⁹ Archival comments on the history of the parish also accompanied the *Now*, and made

⁸⁵ Massey, "Places and Their Pasts," 188.

⁸⁶ Leach, "Belonging: Towards a Theory of Identification with Place," 132.

⁸⁷ Fabrique of St. Patrick's Parish, *St. Patrick's Now Vol. 1, No. 1* (Montreal, Fall 1997), 2. BANQ

⁸⁸ Fabrique of St. Patrick's Parish, *St. Patrick's Now Vol. 3, No. 2* (Montreal, Spring 2000), 4. BANQ

⁸⁹ Fabrique of St. Patrick's Parish, *St. Patrick's Now Vol. 1, No. 2* (Montreal, Winter 1998), 3. BANQ

explicit the role of the Irish in Montréal: “Shamrock’s Victory Recalled – The Montreal Shamrocks, a hockey team for Catholic boys which was financed by St. Patrick’s parish, won the Stanley Cup 100 years ago. As a result of their victory the rules of the game were rewritten.”⁹⁰ Projects such as the refurbishing of Congress Hall, to be converted into an Irish Cultural Centre, and an Irish Presidential visit to the Basilica, as well as a Christian heritage tour of Ireland, were all advertised in the parish quarterly, further demonstrating the efforts made by the parish administration to safeguard the Irish identity of St. Patrick’s.⁹¹

As “St. Patrick’s offers everything one needs to be a good Christian,” it had long attracted a new type of congregation that the *Now* had to take into account.⁹² The “changing face” of St. Patrick’s influenced some of the publications’ efforts. Previously, remarks such as “In Communion with the Saints – Some of the artists and original donors have been forgotten over time. If any one in the congregation can furnish specific information about the various panels, such as who originally may have donated or painted specific saints, please contact the parish office,” would not have been necessary.⁹³ The traditional community of St. Patrick’s invested its stones with meaning, with memories; their identities were closely tied to the history of the church. The new state of affairs at St. Patrick’s encouraged the publishers of the *Now* to inform their readership on the built environment of the church. The first page of every edition was accompanied by an explanation related to various Church decorations. For example: “The sanctuary lamp glows like a giant festive ornament in the Basilica. The massive brass lamp was designed more than a century ago by Alexander Locke, the interior decorator who is also responsible for the windows in the church. The lamp is 22 feet tall and weighs a tonne. Attached to the framework are six angels crowned by a halo

⁹⁰ Fabrique of St. Patrick’s Parish, *St. Patrick’s Now Vol. 2, No. 3* (Montreal, Spring 1999), 2. BANQ

⁹¹ Fabrique of St. Patrick’s Parish, *St. Patrick’s Now Vol. 2, No. 1* (Montreal, Fall 1998), 3-4. BANQ; Fabrique of St. Patrick’s Parish, *St. Patrick’s Now Vol. 3, No. 1* (Montreal, Winter 1999), 3. BANQ

⁹² Fabrique of St. Patrick’s Parish, *St. Patrick’s Now Vol. 5, No. 1* (Montreal, Autumn 2001), 1-2. BANQ

⁹³ Fabrique of St. Patrick’s Parish, *St. Patrick’s Now Vol. 3, No. 2* (Montreal, Spring 2000), 1. BANQ

of crosses and fleur-de-lys, and below them hangs a Celtic cross.”⁹⁴ This lamp (Fig. 5.13) is another illustration of the decorator’s mastery in the Art Nouveau style exemplified by Louis Comfort Tiffany. The angels, their pedestal, the orb and the Celtic cross that hangs from the lamp are good illustration of the goldsmith work Alexander Locke was capable of producing.



Fig. 5.12 Sanctuary lamp designed by Alexander Locke. © Camille Harrigan

⁹⁴ Fabrique of St. Patrick’s Parish, *St. Patrick’s Now Vol. 3, No. 1* (Montreal, Winter 1999), 1. BANQ

For new parishioners who did not have personal or filial access to the history of St. Patrick's, this section of the *St. Patrick's Now* offered the means to connect with their religious environment. This was to be especially significant in 2001, which Msgr. Barry Egan-Jones declared The Year of the Steward, with the "view to increase awareness of the need for [all] for whom St. Patrick's is [the] place of worship and sacramental life," to have a more active part in the stewardship of the church.⁹⁵ The appeal would not have been necessary half a century before, but the ethnic composition of St. Patrick's and the attachment of most of its parishioners had been forever altered. At the turn of the century then, St. Patrick's Basilica was first and foremost a Catholic space. If some in its congregation strove to safeguard its Irish nature, they did so against the tides of change.

5.5 A Last Ethnic Ceremony: The Green Mass

For a fair portion of the twentieth century St. Patrick's stood as a bastion of Irish identity in the city, particularly its more successful and conservative segment. Unfortunately, with the changes of mores wrought by the 1960s in Québec, and the exodus of a large part of the old core population to the suburbs, the Church's religious vocation changed. These changes had been announced in the 1947 history of the Church: "That we may capture some of the inspiration and be fired by the ideals of our forefathers, this modest booklet is dedicated to those men who contributed to the growth of the Irish Church in Montreal. Their memory today is a blessing when nations cynically set at discount and hold with scorn these spiritual values by which men live."⁹⁶ Today, the Basilica is effectively home to a large English-speaking African and Filipino congregation. Irish Catholics have ceased to congregate in vast numbers on a regular basis. This is reflected in Church bulletins where one can surmise ethnicity from Mass Intentions.⁹⁷ Nevertheless, the community still invest in the

⁹⁵ Fabrique of St. Patrick's Parish, *St. Patrick's Now Vol. 4, No. 1* (Montreal, Winter 2000), 3. BANQ

⁹⁶ *A Story of One Hundred Years – St. Patrick's Church Montreal 1847-1947*, 5.

⁹⁷ For an example, see Appendix 14.

Basilica as it stands as a monument to the Irish presence in Montréal. The list of wardens for 2018, for example, tends to demonstrate that a strong Irish presence can still be felt in the housekeeping of St. Patrick's.⁹⁸

This continued Irish presence is enacted each year because, before the massive celebrations of St. Patrick's Day take over the main thoroughfares of Montréal, a more traditional celebration is held at St. Patrick's Basilica. The "Green Mass" has become an institution in its own right for the now scattered Irish community. As a *lieu de mémoire*, the religious ceremony reiterates and reifies some unanticipated narratives about the Irish community in the metropolis. In its 2014, 2015 and 2017 incarnations, the Green Mass was presided over by the Archbishop of Montréal with the bishop as a concelebrant seconded by the four priests assigned to St. Patrick's.⁹⁹ Ushered by the Knights of Columbus, the ceremony is always attended by numerous dignitaries, politicians and the Queen of the St. Patrick's Day Parade and her court. Although the origins of the moniker "Green Mass" have become obscure, the celebration of an ethnic and commemorative Mass on the morning of the Montréal St. Patrick's Day Parade has been firmly embedded in tradition since the dawn of St. Patrick's.¹⁰⁰ While the traditional congregation of St. Patrick's has dispersed and secularized, Canadian Irish inevitably returned to the Basilica on the St. Patrick's Day weekend to celebrate. The association between the Basilica and the celebration has long been a feature of the day's revelry. Only between 1919 and 1929, when the Ancient Order of Hibernians became responsible for the organization of the day's festivities did St. Patrick's Church not participate directly in the

⁹⁸ The wardens of St. Patrick's, in January 2018, were Lynn Lonergan Doyle, John Galic, Peter O'Brien, Robert Raizenne, Beverley Rozek-O'Donnell and Lorna Telfer. The expression "housekeeping" is borrowed from Angela Olaguera, a parishioner of St. Patrick's who explained to this researcher that although all are made welcome at St. Patrick's, there is still a strong sentiment that the day-to-day life, the "housekeeping of St. Patrick's" is the purview of the remaining members of the ancestral community.

⁹⁹ In 2016, the Green Mass coincided with Palm Sunday and the Basilica, now home to a more diverse congregation, chose to celebrate the latter religious ceremony instead of performing its St. Patrick's Day Mass as it had done on previous occasions when both religious festivals coincided. The *Message* recorded such an instance in March 1940. One might surmise that this is another indicator of changing demographics and ethnic affiliation at St. Patrick's.

¹⁰⁰ An email from Mary McGovern, the parish administrator, reveals that the moniker "Green Mass" cannot be traced to a specific date but see Appendix 15 for two clippings from the *True Witness and Catholic Chronicle* of March 1891 that illustrated both the grandiose nature of the celebrations and their historicity.

celebrations. During their tenure, due to political differences between the Catholic hierarchy responsible for the parish and the AOH, the official Mass on St. Patrick's Day was transferred to local parishes: "It seems that the Order, which had long been unhappy with the local Catholic hierarchy's stance against militant Irish republicanism, removed the observance of mass at St Patrick's, the veritable home of the Irish-Catholic 'establishment', as a rebuke to its clerical authority."¹⁰¹

When, in 1929, the AOH was replaced as the organizational body responsible for the celebrations, the newly formed United Irish Societies of Montreal quickly reinstated the Basilica as *the* site of Irish worship on the day of the parade. A celebratory Mass at St. Patrick's, preceding the Parade, became re-institutionalized. This tradition is firmly anchored in the realities and history of the Irish diaspora where, according to Tanja Bueltmann, "St. Patrick's Day celebrations were an important transferred cultural practice, maintained as a powerful form of identity expression."¹⁰² Bueltmann proposed that these celebrations "primarily served as an acculturation strategy that helped members of the Irish community to locate themselves in the new world. Cultural memory and memory narratives articulated at commemorative events were particularly fruitful ways of locating the self, helping to frame events and produce coherence with the past."¹⁰³

As a *lieu de mémoire*, the religious ceremony reiterates and reifies some unanticipated narratives about the Irish community in Montréal. In its 2014 incarnation, the familiar tropes associated with the Irish in North America - their story of dreadful woes and persecution - took center stage. The Archbishop of Montréal, who presided over the proceedings, referenced the massive influx of Irish immigrants coming to America during the Great Irish Famine of 1845-50, and thus reinforced specific narratives about the community for which he was officiating. The

¹⁰¹ Mike Cronin, and Daryl Adair, *The Wearing of the Green: A History of St. Patrick's Day* (London: Routledge, 2002), 139.

¹⁰² Bueltmann, "Remembering the Homeland: St. Patrick's Day Celebrations in New Zealand to 1910," 13.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

Archbishop used here a discursive memory narrative about the Famine in which the events of 1845-1850 have become the central origin story of Irish emigration. This negates the fact that the Famine was only the peak of a migratory movement that was already well underway in the mid-nineteenth century, as explained in chapter 2. Inscribing the Montréal Irish community in the greater Irish Famine narrative, folding the history of the Irish “above the hill,” the initial parishioners of the Basilica, into a broader meta-narrative about Irish emigration to Montréal, Archbishop Christian Lépine’s discourse reaffirmed ideas about the community’s Famine origins, and created a collective memory that has no historical foundation. He posed the Basilica as the repository of one collective story, that of the Famine, that was once contested. This homogeneity applied to the different stories of the Irish diaspora in Montréal is something Guy Beiner has found to be quite problematic in his own research on the 1798 Rebellion, because as the diaspora constructs its own catastrophic origin with the Famine, it relegates divergent memories to the dustbin of history.¹⁰⁴

The use of discursive memory narratives during the 2014 ceremony was thus quite significant. Archbishop Lépine not only made reference to his Irish brethren who had come to Canada to escape persecution, but he also referred to nationalist readings of the Great Irish Famine and the tragedy of the “Coffin Ships” to explain the Irish presence in Montréal. Lépine’s words were in fact oddly resonant with those the American AOH inscribed in 1909 on the Celtic Cross at Grosse Île: “Children of the Gael died in the thousands on this island having fled from the laws of the foreign tyrants and an artificial famine in the years 1847-48. God’s loyal blessing upon them. Let this monument be a token to their name and honour from the Gaels of America. God Save Ireland.”¹⁰⁵ This is a phenomenon familiar to scholars in other *loci* of the Irish diaspora, among them Astrid Wonneberger, who has observed Irish American communities and their origin

¹⁰⁴ Guy Beiner, *Remembering the Year of the French: Irish Folk History and Social Memory* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2007), 5.

¹⁰⁵ Michael Quigley, “Grosse Ile: Canada’s Island Famine Memorial,” *History Ireland* Vol. 5, No. 2 (Summer 1997): 22.

discourses. She notes that these communities use Famine narratives to create the base for a common identity in the diaspora. These narratives, which fit historical events into the self-perception of specific groups, reinvent history and traditions, emphasising certain elements and discarding others, so as to construct baseless common identities.¹⁰⁶ In the case of St. Patrick's, the sacralisation of memory associated with the sufferings of the Great Famine refashioned the history of the Basilica into one of sacred experience that merges the realities of different classes and segments of the Irish community in the city; putting at its disposal ever-present saints, martyrs and a heritage to emulate.¹⁰⁷ In a classic case of "social forgetting," the discourses at the Green Mass obscure the fact that St. Patrick's history definitively predates the Famine.¹⁰⁸ This sacralisation of the Famine narrative at St. Patrick's echoes a similar phenomenon which Cormac Ó Gráda remarked on in his analysis of the *collective* memory of the Famine, which became the "key feature" of the 1990s commemoration of the events.¹⁰⁹ He points out that while "historical scholarship suggests that the impact of the Irish Famine was unequal and divisive," actors in the twentieth century commemoration have reinvented the narrative of the Famine as an inclusive event that affected *all* Irish people and their descendants.¹¹⁰ For Ó Gráda, such a reimagining "occludes the uneven and divisive character of the famine."¹¹¹ The Montréal Irish communities once reflected quite clearly this divisive character but since the late 1990s, as previously discussed, St. Patrick's Basilica has also been the theatre of a reimagining of its history as it became one of the last repository for Irish

¹⁰⁶ Astrid Wonneberger, "The invention of history in the Irish-American diaspora," in *Diaspora, identity and religion: new directions in theory and research*, eds. Waltraud Kokot, Khaching Tololyan, and Carolin Alfonso (London & New York: Routledge, 2004), web version.

¹⁰⁷ In an interview with Patricia Burns in the 1990s, Moe Malone reminisced on the socio-economic differences that existed within the Irish population of Montréal during the century. He made quite clear that these distinctions expressed themselves in the locations the communities inhabited: towards the mountain, in Griffintown, Verdun, and Park Extension.

See Patricia Burns, *Transcript of interview with Moe Malone*, unpublished, 1992, 10.

¹⁰⁸ Guy Beiner, "Disremembering 1798? An Archaeology of Social Forgetting and Remembrance in Ulster," *History and Memory* Vol. 25, No. 1, (Spring/Summer 2013): 11.

¹⁰⁹ Cormac Ó Gráda, "Famine, Trauma and Memory," *Béaloideas* lml 69 (2001): 136.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 121.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 138.

memories in the city.

A second narrative was also put forward at the Green Mass. Numerous inferences to the inclusiveness of the Irish community in Montréal, and its relationship to French Canadians were highlighted. Not only did priests praise the tradition of fellowship the two Catholic communities supposedly shared, but Lépine also quite cleverly legitimized his participation in the Mass by invoking an Irish ancestor. The day's festivities celebrated the Basilica as a site where diasporic Irishness and Irishness as an aspect of the multicultural city could intersect. This was especially true in 2015, when the refugee narrative came to the fore.¹¹² This focus on multiculturalism during St. Patrick's Day celebrations is something Marc Scully, examining the St. Patrick's festivities in London, has also remarked on.¹¹³ In a unique reworking of history, a very post-referendum examination of ethno-linguistic relations in Québec, the fraught Irish-French Canadian relationship is also redeemed during the Mass. This is in keeping with Lowenthal's assumption that "the past is altered mainly to make history conform with memory. Memory not only conserves the past but adjusts recall to current needs. Instead of remembering exactly what was, we make the past intelligible in the light of present circumstances."¹¹⁴ In a new era of celebrated multiculturalism, the history of the Irish in Montréal is amended to fit new paradigms. As John Bodnar argues, historical consciousness in commemoration more often than not reshapes the past to address contemporary political matters: such was the case in 2015.¹¹⁵

If the discursive memory narratives put forward during some iterations of the Green Mass illustrate how a common identity was obtained in the Irish diaspora in Montréal, the events of the day can also be read as a site of identity creation; St. Patrick's Day celebrations around the world

¹¹² The parallels between the nineteenth century Irish exodus and the situation of Syrian refugees in 2014-2015 were made quite clear.

¹¹³ Marc Scully, "Whose Day Is It Anyway? St. Patrick's Day as a Contested Performance of National and Diasporic Irishness," *Studies in Ethnicity and Nationalism* Vol. 12, No. 1 (2012): 127-131.

¹¹⁴ Lowenthal, "Past Time, Present Place: Landscape and Memory," 27.

¹¹⁵ Eberhard Bort, ed., *Commemorating Ireland: History, Politics, Culture* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2004), 3.

have often served as such. Oona Frawley has suggested that, for Irish migrants and their descendants, “the need to establish a cultural identity in a new space that accounted for the one left behind [meaning Ireland] meant the evolution of traditions and celebrations, and the commitment to a type of cultural memory that selected what it might have needed as much as what it desired.”¹¹⁶ The Montréal’s St. Patrick’s Day celebrations are an import from Ireland, but they have an inherent quality of hybridity that has developed over generations. One of its final products, the “Green Mass,” is very much a result of an evolving diasporic identity. Since the Irish community in Montréal has transformed, left the city center to migrate to the suburbs as it rose socially, and left the church as a result of secularization, its sense of self became paradoxically vested in institutions such as St. Patrick’s.

The “Green Mass” is therefore one *locus* where Irish Montrealers have come to express what has been described by Herbert Gans as symbolic ethnicity. Irish diasporans, in the greater Montréal region, have now little chance to interact as an ethnic group. Irish enclaves, as well as occupational specialization, have disappeared, making ethnic ties between members more permeable and less necessary. The ethnic culture retained by those members is therefore expressed at particular sites. Some of those Canadian Irish have chosen to affiliate themselves with an abstract collectivity that does not necessarily exist as an interacting group, except for those few moments when symbolic ethnicity can be put forward. According to Gans, symbolic ethnicity is characterized “by a nostalgic allegiance to the culture of the immigrant generation, or that of the old country; a love for and a pride in a tradition that can be felt without having to be incorporated in everyday behavior.”¹¹⁷ The attendance at “Green Mass” reflects this stance on ethnicity.

The day is also one of performance, not only of symbolic ethnicity, but also of Montréal Irishness. This goes further than the Basilica’s Monsignor wearing a bright Kelly green surplus in

¹¹⁶ Frawley, *Memory Ireland – Volume 2: Diaspora and Memory Practices*, 4.

¹¹⁷ Gans, “Symbolic ethnicity: The future of ethnic groups and cultures in America,” 9.

the middle of Lent.¹¹⁸ Through both the discourses, the ceremony and the music chosen, tropes of Irishness are being performed on that particular March morning.¹¹⁹ The memory of the Irish presence in Montréal is therefore made “visible in the public sphere,” as Irish cultural heritage is performed on the day.¹²⁰ As one observer of the celebration has coined it, the Mass has literally been dyed green, even if it has not yet been transformed into the carnivalesque spaces observed elsewhere.¹²¹

Both the narratives incorporated into the ceremony and the music chosen each year are significant in reinforcing the Irish nature of the day. Apart from the quite grandiose rendition of “Hail Glorious St. Patrick” which always concludes the ceremony, the audience is most often treated to intervals of Celtic harp music, and a performance of *Danny Boy* by soprano Carol McCormick.¹²² This particular tune, a favourite in the diaspora, added to references to W.B. Yeats’ poetry and Irish proverbs, help colour the festivities. This is far from reflecting the realities of everyday St. Patrick’s as it stands today. Home to a multi-ethnic English-speaking congregation, the parishioners of St. Patrick’s involved in the ceremony are actually contributing to another performance during the “Green Mass,” that of inclusion. They represent the new identity of St. Patrick’s, a cosmopolitan urban Catholic parish.

The examination of St. Patrick’s Basilica’s “Green Mass” as an historical space, a commemorative space, an ethnic space and a performative space illustrates how the once ethnic Church has evolved and how it now stands as a *lieu de mémoire* for the Irish community in greater Montréal. Since the Basilica is now home to a growing community of non-Irish worshippers, the

¹¹⁸ Traditionally, the surplus worn by Catholic priests during Lent is purple.

¹¹⁹ Aoife Monks, ““Everyone Can Be Irish for the Day”: Towards a Theory of Diasporic Performance in the St. Patrick’s Day Parade,” *New England Theatre Journal* Vol. 16 (August 2005): 122.

¹²⁰ Diana Taylor, “Performance and intangible cultural heritage,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Performance Studies*, ed. Tracy C. Davies (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 97.

¹²¹ John Nagle, ““Everybody is Irish on St. Paddy’s”: Ambivalence and Alterity at London’s St. Patrick’s Day 2002,” *Identities: Global Studies in Culture and Power* Vol. 12, No. 4 (2005): 571.

¹²² *Green Mass Program*, March 2014, 2015 and 2017. For the full programs, see Appendix 16.

next century will probably be rife with interesting moments of identity negotiation for the Church, which will provide researchers with much to examine.

5.6 An Ongoing Production of History and Memory: New Media

Already researchers can mine St. Patrick's Basilica's use of new media. A 'podcast tour,' produced in 2014, in both French and English, accompanies visitors' tour of the Basilica.¹²³ Clearly meant as an audio-guide for the Basilica only and not as an introduction to the subject of the Irish in Montréal, the podcast was produced in collaboration by an intern from Concordia's School of Irish Studies and the Basilica's staff.¹²⁴ In a twenty-minute exploration of the history, memories and architecture of St. Patrick's, the visitor is quickly introduced to the Mother Church of English-speaking Catholics in Montréal. Glossing over the minutiae of the history of St. Patrick's and how it came to be built, the podcast offers a brief account of the role of the Seminary of Sulpice in erecting the Church, it touches on the Gothic Revival, and mentions the disputes caused by the absence of Irish workers during the construction. The bulk of the podcast is nevertheless focused on the built-environment of present-day St. Patrick's. In fact, the podcast serves to reinforce the "simultaneity of stories" which became characteristic of St. Patrick's in the last three decades. The podcast reinscribes the history of the Irish into the physical building of the Basilica but it does so in a way that leaves ample room for the current congregation to appropriate the sacred building.

Hence, the Way of the Cross is described, as are the altars dedicated to St. Ann, the patroness saint of Québec, and St. Joseph, the patron saint of Canada; both bracket St. Patrick's altar. The stained-glass work and lamp designed by Alexander Locke, as well as the windows imported from Innsbruck are also described and analysed during the podcast. The Basilica's position as a repository

¹²³ St. Patrick's Basilica, *Podcast*, produced in 2014. The Church Bulletin provides the QR code necessary to download the podcast.

¹²⁴ For an introduction to the history of a different Irish local in Montréal, see Lisa Gasior's audio podcast "Sounding Griffintown," available on iTunes. Via recorded audio and interviews, Gasior pieces together the formidable history and memory of this Irish neighbourhood.

of Irish memory, as one of the last Irish *loci*, is also made quite clear.¹²⁵ The transfer of the Mother of Perpetual Help altar, from St. Ann's to St. Patrick's on the destruction of the former is mentioned. In fact, a shrine to Our Mother of Perpetual Help, modeled on the one the Redemptorists had installed at St. Ann's was inaugurated at St. Patrick's Church in late 1946.¹²⁶ Held on Wednesdays, most probably as to not interfere with the immensely popular Tuesday prayers in Griffintown (Fig. 5.13), the devotions were already well established when the shrine was transferred to St. Patrick's upon St. Ann's Church's destruction in 1970 (Fig. 5.14 and 5.15).¹²⁷



Fig. 5.13 Radio Rosary: Fr. Gilbert Doyle leads the rosary at the shrine of Our Lady of Perpetual Help, St. Ann's Church, Montreal, 1954. © Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer

¹²⁵ This phenomenon has had a material component but also a spiritual one, as parishioners from other Irish parishes transferred their allegiance to St. Patrick's when their own Church were dissolved. See Patricia Burns' interviews. Among them, the transcript of her interview with William O'Donnell, unpublished, from 1992. PBF

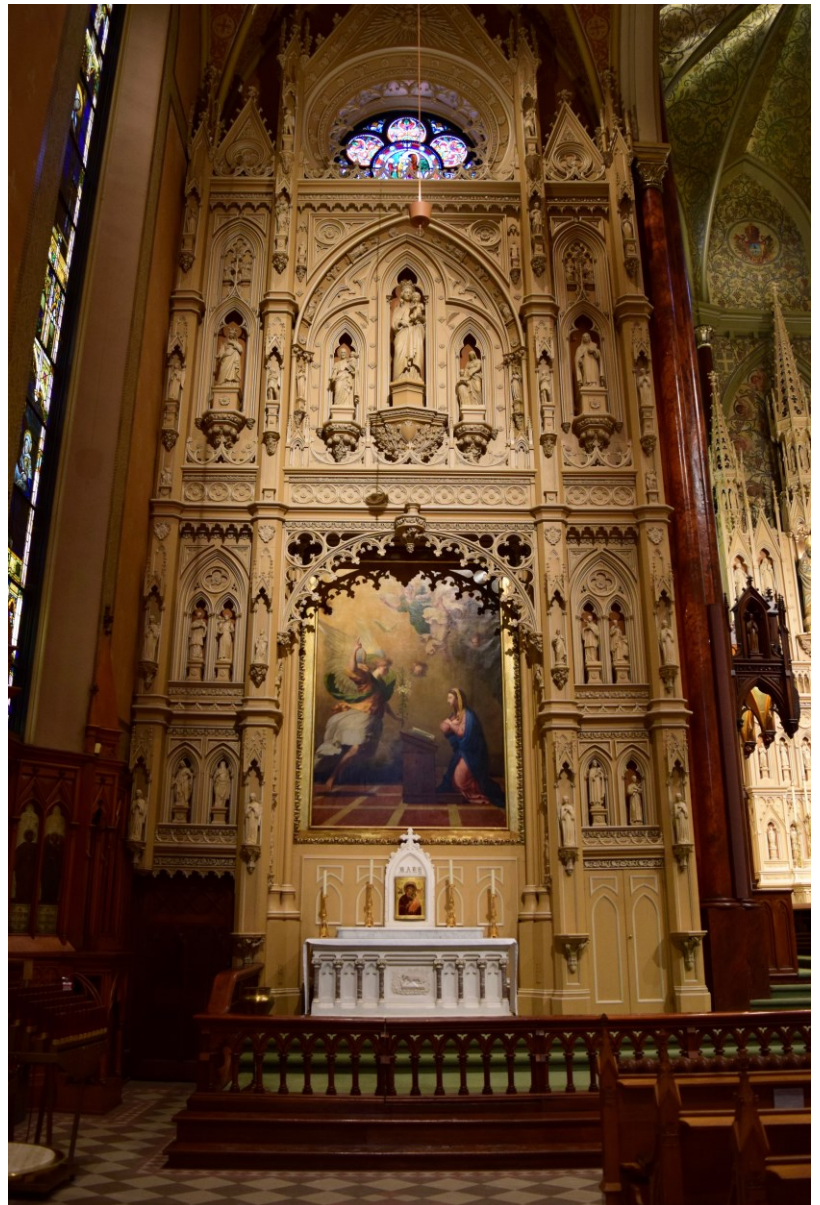
¹²⁶ *St. Patrick's Message*, February 1946, 10.

¹²⁷ *St. Patrick's Message*, May-June 1947, 10.



Fig. 5.14 Our Lady of Perpetual Help shrine, St. Ann's, 1934.
© *Golden Jubilee Number – Redemptorists Fathers at St. Ann's*

Fig. 5.15 Our Lady of Perpetual Help shrine, St. Patrick's Basilica. Note the inclusion of the St. Ann's Church icon, which was transferred in 1970.
© Camille Harrigan



The merging of St. Anthony's organ to the St. Patrick's instrument in 1972 also features in the podcast and reinforces the Basilica's status as a repository for Irish Montreal memorabilia. Explanations on windows deemed of particular interest, as well as descriptions of the commemorative plaques ornamenting the back of the church conclude the podcast's exploration of St. Patrick's materiality. Resonant with similar attempts at capturing the history and memory of the Basilica found in the *St. Patrick's Now*, the podcast can be read as a particular vehicle for an ongoing production of memory, which is respectful of St. Patrick's contemporary position as a multicultural site of worship and a tourist attraction.

In fact, St. Patrick's is very much a contemporary Basilica, and this is reflected in the ongoing addition to the church's decoration. In the wainscot, new paintings representing Frère André, the French-Canadian Brother canonised in 2010 (Fig. 5.16), as well as Kateri Tekakwitha, the Mohawk saint elevated to this status in 2012 (Fig. 5.17), have been added to the litany of saints represented at St. Patrick's. The Basilica's position as the mother Church of contemporary English-speaking Catholics in Montréal is therefore an ongoing production at St. Patrick's. This might explain why a bicentenary booklet produced in 2013, celebrating the life and achievements of the church's most beloved priest, Father Patrick Dowd, can only be found in the Basilica's rectory.¹²⁸ Compiling both familial recollections, scholarly work and historical context, the booklet recaptures the traditions of celebratory booklets of the early decades of St. Patrick's in a blend of history and commemoration. The stories attached to St. Patrick's are at the core of this publication. It has, in fact, the most exhaustive reminiscence on one of St. Patrick's best remembered stories from the Famine era, the story of little Rose's marble.¹²⁹ However, access to this publication is reserved to

¹²⁸ Dowd Family, *Fr. Patrick Dowd - Bi Centenary Booklet Celebrating his Life and Achievements*, Booklet published for the gathering celebrating Fr Patrick Dowd's life and achievements in his home village of Dunleer on the 200th anniversary of his birth on Sunday 24th November 2013.

¹²⁹ One of the most poignant sections of the annals recounts how Father Dowd was cast in a King Solomon-like role to reunite a famine orphan with her mother. The document records how an Irish widow, Suzanne Brown, became separated from her youngest daughter Rose in Montreal's fever sheds after she had nearly succumbed to typhus, only to recover

those visiting the Basilica’s office. After all, the celebratory booklets that preceded this one were used by St. Patrick’s traditional congregation to reinforce their identity and their history. As this population is no longer representative of the contemporary congregation, it is normal that the celebration of Father Dowd’s bicentenary would garner limited attention.



Fig. 5.16 Painting of Saint Frère André in the wainscot, situated on the east side of the nave.
© Camille Harrigan



Fig. 5.17 Painting of Saint Kateri Tekakwitha in the wainscot, situated on the east side of the nave.
© Camille Harrigan

from her illness having lost contact with her child. While convalescing under the care of the Grey Nuns, the Irish widow helped to educate the orphans they had taken in. According to the annals: “When she found herself surrounded by the orphans who absorbed her teachings like thirsty earth absorbs the dew, she thought of her little Rose: “If I had her here with me, she said, I would teach her with all the others.” With the weighing on her mind, one March evening, she attended a Lenten prayer service or a benediction of the Holy Sacrament in St Patrick’s church. In the silence of the ceremony, she was disturbed from her contemplation by the sound of a marble rolling on the floor which came to rest in the folds of her clothes. She had barely raised her eyes when she saw a little girl aged three or four running to collect it. “Is this not my little Rose,” she said trembling with emotion. Indeed, it was this child who she mourned and thought she had lost forever, now returned to her at this moment by our Lord, and by instinct, she reached out. However, her adoptive mother who had missed nothing of what happened, intervened and protested. Before the ceremony had even finished both women went to the sacristy to submit the case to Father Dowd. He did not delay in resolving the issue, and that very evening, Madame Brown triumphed, coming back to the refuge with little Rose.” See Dowd Family, *Fr. Patrick Dowd - Bi Centenary Booklet Celebrating his Life and Achievements*.

The Irish memories incarnated in St. Patrick's are fading, as the ethnic custodians of St. Patrick's congregate no longer. To anchor those memories once again, the parish has turned to its built environment and to a further use of new media, a Facebook page amongst them. The administrative staff, helped by another intern from Concordia University's School of Irish Studies, have made attempts at re-inscribing the history and memory of congregations past into the stones of St. Patrick's Basilica. Detailed explanations of the architectural elements present in the church, and posted on the Basilica's page, now provide the congregation and the Basilica's followers – among which might be Canadian-Irish Montrealers that are not parishioners – with the opportunity to connect with their church.¹³⁰ St. Patrick's therefore stands as an ongoing site of production of history and memory, and the use of new media is only one aspect of this historic church's contemporary identity which future researchers will need to address.

¹³⁰ These vignettes were also included in the Basilica's bulletins. For all the Facebook posts "from the archives," see Appendix 17.

Chapter 6

Conclusion

Change and adaptation as well as tradition and memory are all terms which characterize St. Patrick's Basilica's evolution from its opening on March 17, 1847 to its present incarnation as a contemporary Catholic church. Indeed, as Montréal's downtown core has radically changed from St. Patrick's opening in 1847, so did one of the city's most prominent churches. From a gothic monument set atop a hill catering to the more prosperous segment of Irish Catholics in the city, from a church whose steeple could be seen by all, St. Patrick's Basilica has become, at the beginning of the twenty-first century, a thoroughly urban parish representative of the city's diversity, one whose very building has been swallowed by the metropolis around it. Amidst high rises and busy thoroughfares, it is now devoted to the needs of Catholics from a wide-range of ethnic horizons, but especially the Filipino, South Indian and African communities.

In a Québec that has undergone profound urban, political, ethnic and religious revolutions in the last five decades, St. Patrick's has stood as a witness to these changes in the province. The construction of St. Patrick's first testified to an Irish presence in Montréal well before the Great Irish Famine. In their dealing with French-Canadian ecclesiastical authorities, the lay leaders who obtained the creation of St. Patrick's from the Seminary of St. Sulpice proved their resourcefulness and their willingness to organize as an assembled body. Strengthened by this first moment of identity construction, the Irish Catholics assembled in 1847 entered the defining years of their community. Under the leadership of the formidable Father Patrick Dowd they redefined and reified what it meant to be Irish in Montréal in the nineteenth century. Through the St. Patrick's Society, and during confrontations with the French-Canadian religious authorities, such as the dismemberment and debt transfer episodes, the Irish Catholics of St. Patrick's fostered specific socio-economic and ethno-religious identities which would sustain the congregation for more than a century.

An exploration of archival sources produced by St. Patrick's Church highlights how these distinctive identities continued to be fostered "above the hill" during the first half of the twentieth century. During their last golden era, the Irish Catholics of St. Patrick's, under the leadership of Father Gerald McShane, formed a community whose history and narratives are often overlooked by scholars and amateurs attracted by the romantic notion of working-class Irish Griffintown. This thesis wished to recapture the history of these "lace-curtain" Irish that had their own experience of Montréal.

This thesis enhances our understanding of the diversity of Irish experiences in the diaspora. As William H. Mulligan Jr., quoted at the very beginning of this thesis, remarks the same identifier "Irish" is used to identify vastly different populations, each with their own experience of place and their own unique version of Irishness. By exploring the history of the Irish "above the hill" this thesis highlights the need to understand the divisions that existed within the Montréal Irish community. It also uncovers the significant influence individual priests have had on the history and identity of a segment of the Irish in Montréal.

Father Patrick Dowd and Father Gerald McShane have both contributed to fashion the history of St. Patrick's Church and their pastorates were key to establishing the middle-class "lace-curtain" identities fostered "above the hill." A lot is already known about Father Dowd, but this thesis examines the minutia of Father McShane's shepherding of the St. Patrick's congregation, especially through his published parish bulletin, the *St. Patrick's Message*. As a new source, the *Message* represents a formidable opportunity for the study of early twentieth century Irish-Canadians.

The trajectory of identities in Montréal, from Irish to Irish-Canadian to Canadian-Irish, is not the only thing this thesis wished to trace. Using the newly released archives of the ninth pastor of St. Patrick's Church, Monsignor Russell Breen, this thesis also sketches a portrait of Anglophone

Québec in the 1980s and 1990s. For any political scientist, Russell Breen's official and personal papers offer a unique glimpse into the emotional and political position of English-speaking Montrealers during Québec's Independence crisis. Breen's papers also illustrate the custodian role St. Patrick's continued to occupy for English-speaking Catholics in Montréal. A careful analysis of the religious, cultural and historical production of St. Patrick's at the turn of the century, amongst them the short-lived *St. Patrick's Now*, previously unexplored, support this thesis's examination of the changed nature of St. Patrick's Basilica at the end of the century. More than ever a *lieu de mémoire*, the Basilica stands as a repository for Irish memories. It is nevertheless a fully functioning religious site and this liminal stance, between heritage and function, is the next challenge of St. Patrick's Basilica. Concluding with an ethnographic analysis of the last Irish ceremony performed at St. Patrick's, the Green Mass, and finally through an examination of the Basilica's recent use of new media, this research traces this transformation of St. Patrick's from a middle-class Irish Catholic church to a contemporary multicultural Basilica.

Not simply tracing the fate of a religious building, this thesis examines St. Patrick's as a historical, diasporic, ethnic and memory space. It studies the past and the present incarnations of St. Patrick's community, an aggregate of Irish diasporans that have dealt with evolving notions of identities and memories. Despite this multi-faceted analysis, which had scrutinized the spiritual, communal and physical facets of St. Patrick's Basilica, more work still needs to be done. If a complete picture of the Basilica is to be uncovered, oral history and ethnographic interviews with past and present parishioners, both ethnic Irish and others, should be conducted. They should yield further information on the transformation of St. Patrick's, and its dual role as a site of memory for Irish Montréal and an evolving Catholic space. Finally, interviews with parishioners who have transferred their Tuesday devotions to Our Lady of Perpetual Help from St. Ann's Church to St.

Patrick's would also inform on the Basilica's role as a repository for Irish Montréal's traditions and memorabilia.

As the city that sustains it continues to change, St. Patrick's Basilica, this towering witness to the evolution of Montréal and its Irish population, also transforms itself. This historic "house of the Irish" evolves and its new outlook, urban and multicultural, forces one to ask, do the stones of St. Patrick's still speak? And if they do, for whom and for how long?

Appendix 1

Letter from Captain T. Leigh Goldie to John Samuel McCord dated December 4, 1847.

My Dear Sir,

Knowing your numerous avocations I prefer committing to paper the following suggestion, rather than trouble you with a personal interview.

For some years past has existed some doubt in the minds of many of the habitants of the city whether in the event of a crisis in our political affairs the Irish Roman Catholic population would afford us their active cooperation. Now that this crisis has arrived the Irishmen have come forward with zeal and tacitly. I therefore consider that every assistance should be afforded them provided their officers are Irish as to insure their efficiency. A number of influential Gentlemen holding commissions in the militia have come forward as their officers in whom the Government may place the utmost reliance, such as Ms. Monrough, Tobin, Doyle etc. and these are again desirous of having as their commanding officer a Gentlemen of the name of Benjamin Holmes, the Cashier of the Montreal Bank and a halfway officer who served with distinction during the last American war.

Should the above suggestion meet with the approbation of Sir John Colborne, I feel convinced that a much valuable addition will be gained to our militia forces.

Probably the allocutions called by the change of the Colonels Dyer and Guy may enable you to effect this matter without adding to the Brigades or Battalions now constituted – Any further information within my power shall be gladly afforded you.

I have the honour to be,

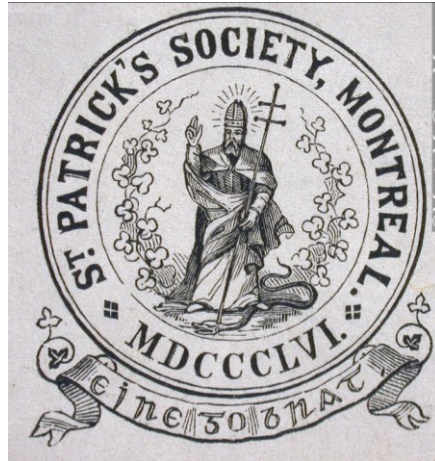
Yours very truly

Captain Goldie A.D.C

Source:

Wayne Timbers, “Britannique et irlandaise; l’identité ethnique et démographique des Irlandais protestants et la formation d’une communauté à Montréal, 1834-1860” (M.A. Thesis, McGill University, 2001), 77.

Appendix 2



Source :

John Henry Walker, *Emblem of St. Patrick's Society*, Montreal, 1856.
McCord Museum Archives.



Source :

John Henry Walker, *Coats of arms of Irish Protestant Benevolent Society*, Montreal, 1856.
McCord Museum Archives.

Appendix 3

Address presented to His Lordship, Bishop Bourget

We, the members of Saint Patrick's Society, on this auspicious occasion of Your Lordship's Golden Wedding to the Church of God, desire to express our thanks for your paternal solicitude for our spiritual needs, while as a Priest you laboured amongst us; and for your untiring apostolic zeal during the many years you have so worthily [governed] the Diocese.

In accordance with what has ever been a proud characteristic of our Race, we desire to assure your Lordship of our implicit obedience to the behests of our spiritual superiors and of our filial love and gratitude to you, who as Patron and chief guide to the premier Irish Society of this Dominion, has endeared yourself to all Irishmen by your many acts of kindness to this, their representative Society.

We bed Your Lordship to accept this small offering towards the completion of the Sacred Edifice which will fittingly commemorate the innumerable works you have accomplished for the honour of God and the happiness of His creatures.

The late calamitous fire will in some measure account for the smallness of our offering, [ut] having destroyed a considerable portion of our property.

That you may be long spared to guide us and to officiate in that Cathedral of which for so many years you have in the fullness of your generosity magnanimously deprived yourself, will ever be the prayer of those who happily avail themselves of this golden opportunity of subscribing themselves your Lordship's sincerely devoted children, the members of the St. Patrick's Society.

Signed by the Officers and members of the Society.

Source:

St. Patrick's Society. *Address presented to Bishop Bourget on his Golden Jubilee, 1872.*
St. Patrick's Society Archives

Appendix 4

1. Were there any meetings of the Irish Catholics agitating the necessity of building a church for them - the Recollet church having gone quite too small for them? (I mean long before the foundations of St. Patrick's Church are laid) - Please give your recollections of any of their meetings.
2. You recollect the great necessity there was for ten years before St. Patrick's was built for another church for the Parish here in consequence of the great crowds that could not get admission into the Recollet, the poor and faithful Irish during Mass filled Notre Dame St. outside the church and back with Dollard Lane.
3. Do you recollect that at one or more of the meetings referred to above, we were told we would not be allowed to build a church ourselves, as that was the duty or business of the Fabrique or of the ecclesiastical authorities.
4. Did you ever hear the saying (in consequence of their (the Fabrique) putting us off from them [illegible] and in refusing to allow us to build a church for ourselves) - "That they (the Fabrique) would not allow us to build a church ourselves nor build one for us."
5. Any recollections you may have of the 10 years previous to the opening of St. Patrick's would be valuable at the present moment and very interesting.
6. When St. Patrick's (present building) was projected did you know or hear of any meeting of the Irish Catholics called for the purpose of assisting the building of it.
7. Were the Irish Catholics consulted in any way as to the plan, size or cost of the proposed building, or in the choice of the site that was to be selected? Was not all done without asking their opinion?
8. Did you know or hear of the Irish authorising any one or any body to act in their name in the preliminary steps that was taken to build St. Patrick's.
9. Did not Father Phelan do all and exhibit in the Recollet Church the model of St. Patrick's and described it to the Congregation.
10. Was there at any time a meeting of the Irish Catholics to organise collections for the amount named by the Fabrique (£3000 or \$12,000) that the Irish were to contribute towards the erection of the church.
11. To whom did you pay your subscription?
12. Was the work suspended at any time, if so do you recollect the cause.
13. Did you hear of any change in the plans, if so who suggested them?
14. Did not the church in the way the work was done (by day work) under Mr. Comptes as overseer and not by contract, cost a good deal more than it would have if [sic] one by contract? Please give all the information you can on this here. As an extension contractor at that time (Bonsecour Market) you can form a good idea on this. I have heard as much as 20 to 30 percent named as the extra cost in consequence.
15. Finally please state anything else that you know of connected with the matter.

Edward Murphy
Montreal March 1884

Source:

Edward Murphy, *Questions submitted to John Kelly, a resident of Montreal since 1830, in reference to the inception and building of St. Patrick's Church of Montreal*, March 1884.
St. Patrick's Basilica Archives

Appendix 5

February 11th, 1867.

Evidently a letter had been received by the Reverend Chaplain, as he addressed a letter to the Society on the subject of members leaving the Society and the possibility of internal dissension, as the following resolution would seem to indicate: -

That whereas the Society has learned with deep regrets and concern from the letter of our Reverend and esteemed Chaplain, that it had been whispered about through the City that the Irish and breaking up by internal dissensions and fatal divisions, and that this is attributable mainly to some trouble alleged to have taken place within the Society: and that whilst we sincerely thank our respected Chaplain for his valuable advice placed in so friendly a way at our service at a moment when such rash and wicked attempts are being made to injure the Society, and for the frank, patriotic and truly Christian admonition therein contained, and which we willingly adopt:-

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED:-

That we most respectfully beg to assure him that such rumours are altogether without foundation or any just cause, and have been propagated solely by a few individuals who unable any longer to use this Society for the advancement of their own selfish ends, have resorted to such contemptible means to impeach the good standing of the Society, weaken its influence and if possible destroy its good name;

And that fully aware of the sad and painful impression which such false and deceptive misrepresentations must necessarily have made upon the mind of our zealous and beloved Pastor, we do assure him that at no period of its existence did St. Patrick's Society present more unanimity of sentiment or a greater array of membership than at the present moment, the best proof of its vitality being in the large numbers who have lately begun to enrol themselves in our ranks;

And furthermore, that this Society though debarred in a stringent manner by the very provisions of its Constitution from taking part or cognizance of the agitation of personal or rather political questions of any kind, will always rejoice to hear that harmony of sentiment and unity of action exists amongst all classes of Irishmen in this City.

And be it resolved that a copy of this resolution be forwarded to the Reverend Chaplain, Father O'Dowd.

Source:

St. Patrick's Society of Montreal, *Minutes of Meeting*, February 11, 1867.
St. Patrick's Society Archives

Appendix 6

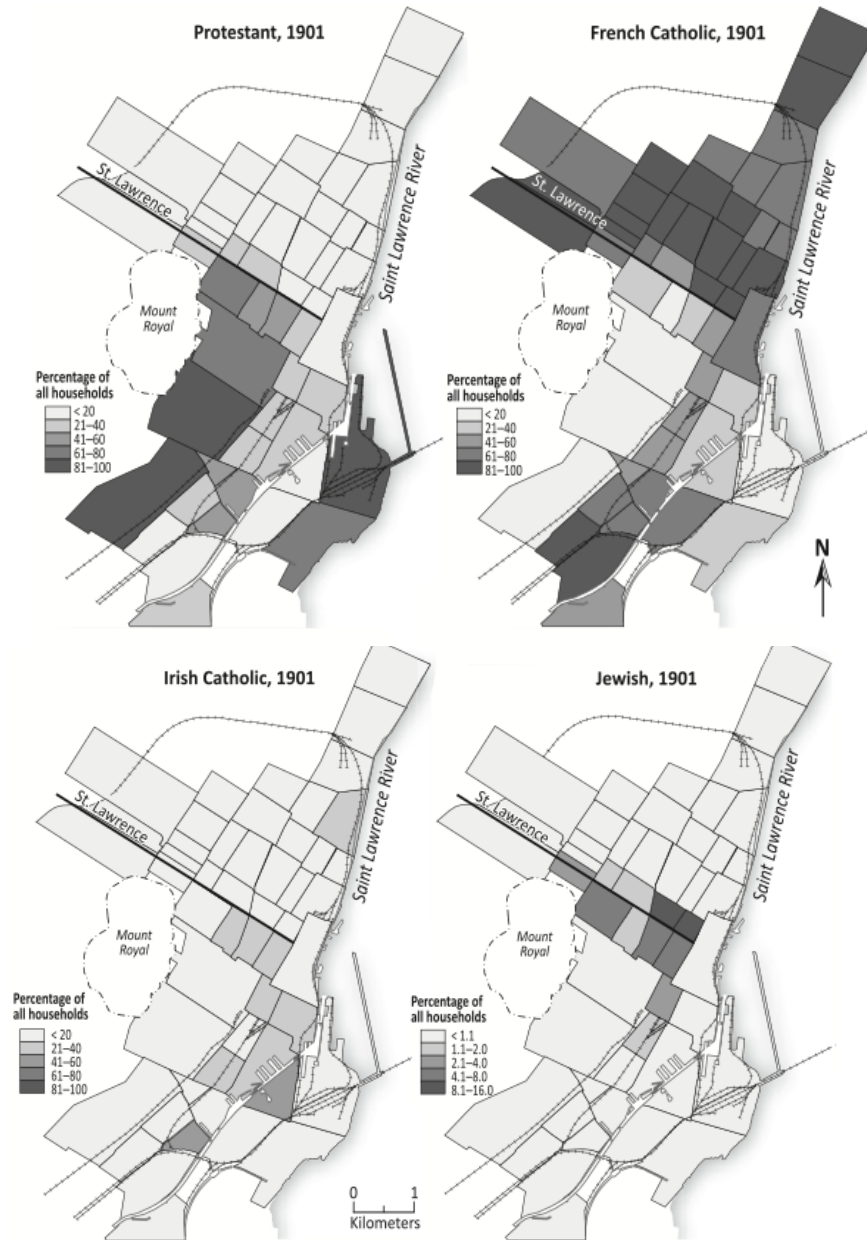


Figure 2 Concentrations of the four largest cultural communities by district, Montreal, 1901

Source: Census of 1901 triple sample.

Note: A different scale is used to visualize the smaller Jewish group.

Source:

Sherry H. Olson, Jason A. Gilliland, and Danielle Gauvreau, "Did Segregation Increase as the City Expanded? The Case of Montreal, 1881-1901," *Social Science History* Vol. 35, No. 4 (2011): 478.

Appendix 7



Source:

Henri Julien, *Scene at the Bonaventure Station on the Departure of the Irish Pilgrims for Rome*, Montreal, 1877; Anonymous, *Montreal – Arrival of the Irish Canadian Pilgrims from Rome – Father Dowd Addressing the Multitude from the Rectory St. Patrick's Church*, 1877. McCord Museum Archives.

Appendix 8

Church Wardens of St. Patrick's – Mr. T. W. McAnulty, Chief Warden; Hon. Mr. Justice Edmund Guerin, Acting Warden; Mr. Thos T. Smyth, Acting Warden; Mr. Felix Casey, Mr. T. P. Crowe, Mr. P. F. McCaffrey, Mr. Jas. Rogers, Mr. J. T. Davis, Mr. H. J. Kavanagh, K.C.

Trustees Montreal St. Patrick's Orphan Asylum – Dr. John A. MacDonald, Mr. P. McCrory, Hon. C. J. Doherty, Minister of Justice; Dr. Donald Hingston, Mr. T. W. McAnulty, Mr. H. J. Trihey, B.C.L, Mr. W. J. Rafferty, Mr. Clarence F. Smith, Mr. H. J. McKeon, Mr. Jas. H. Maher.

Trustees Montreal St. Bridget's Refuge – Hon. James McShane, Mr. Bernard Tansey, Mr. M. Fitzgibbon, Dr. E. J. C. Kennedy, Mr. Frank J. Curran, K.C.

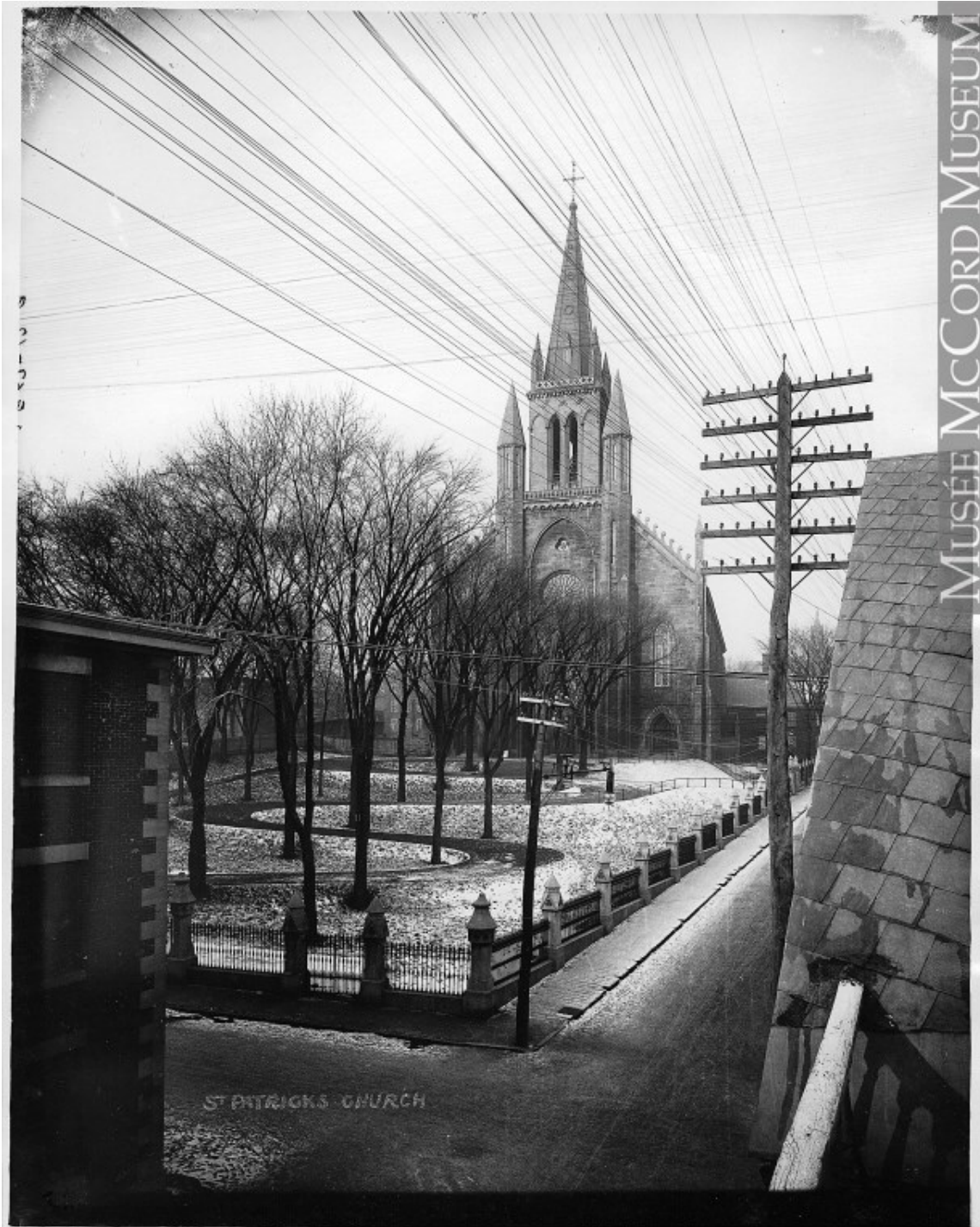
Board of Governors Catholic High School – Rev. Gerald J. McShane, S.S., Chairman; Very Rev. William Canon O'Meara, P.P.; Rev. Jno. E. Donnelly, P.P.; Hon. J. J. Guerin, M.D.; Mr. Martin Egan, Ald. P. Monahan, Mr. J. T. Davis, Mr. G. W. Farrell, Mr. John Hammill, Secretary.

Source :

St. Patrick's Church, Montreal. Announcements – Lenten Season, 1914 (Montreal: Printers Limited, 1914), 27.

Bibliothèque et Archives Nationales du Québec

Appendix 9



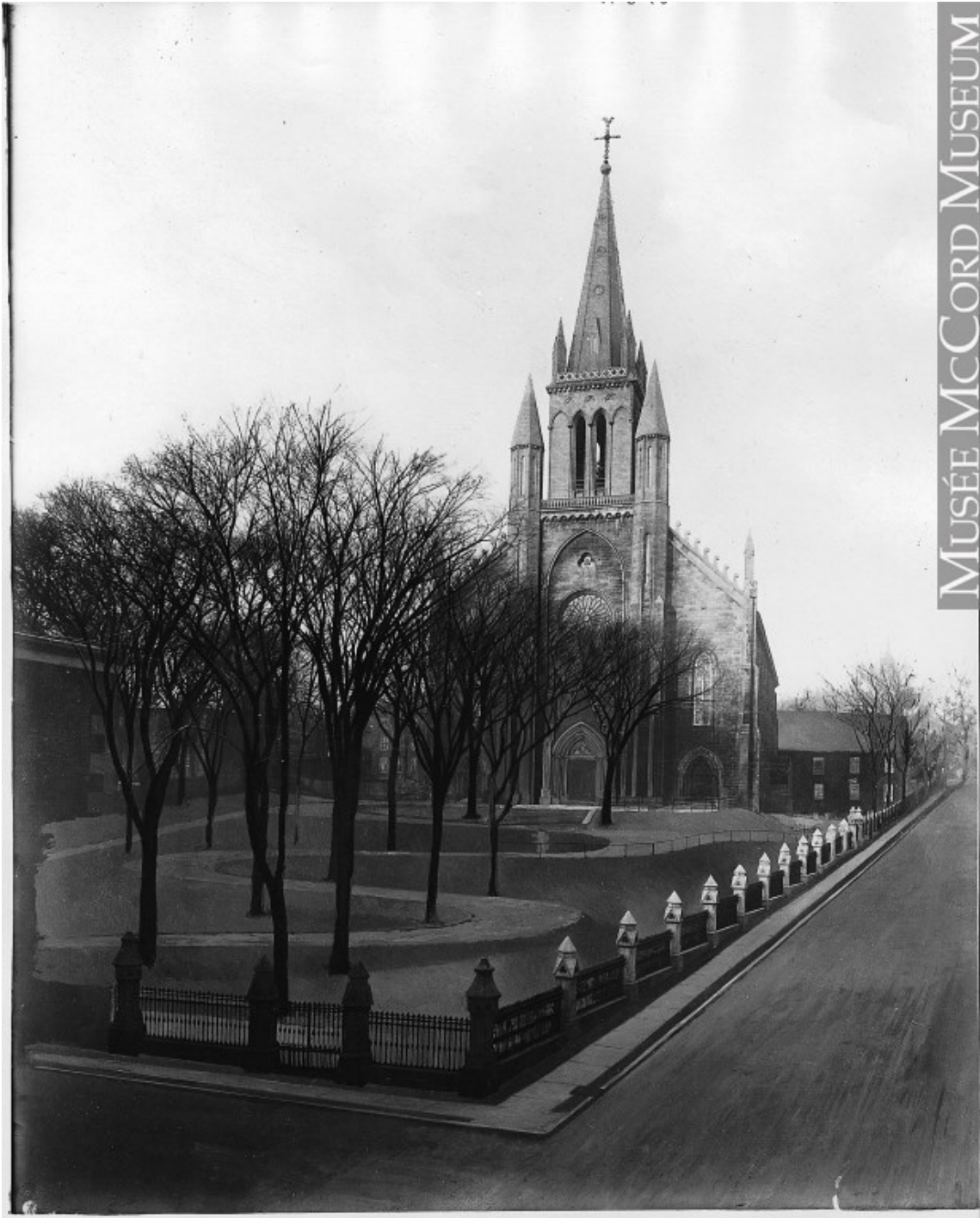
Source:

William Notman & Son, *St. Patrick's Church, St. Alexandre Street, Montreal, QC, about 1896*,
Montreal, about 1896.
McCord Museum Archives.



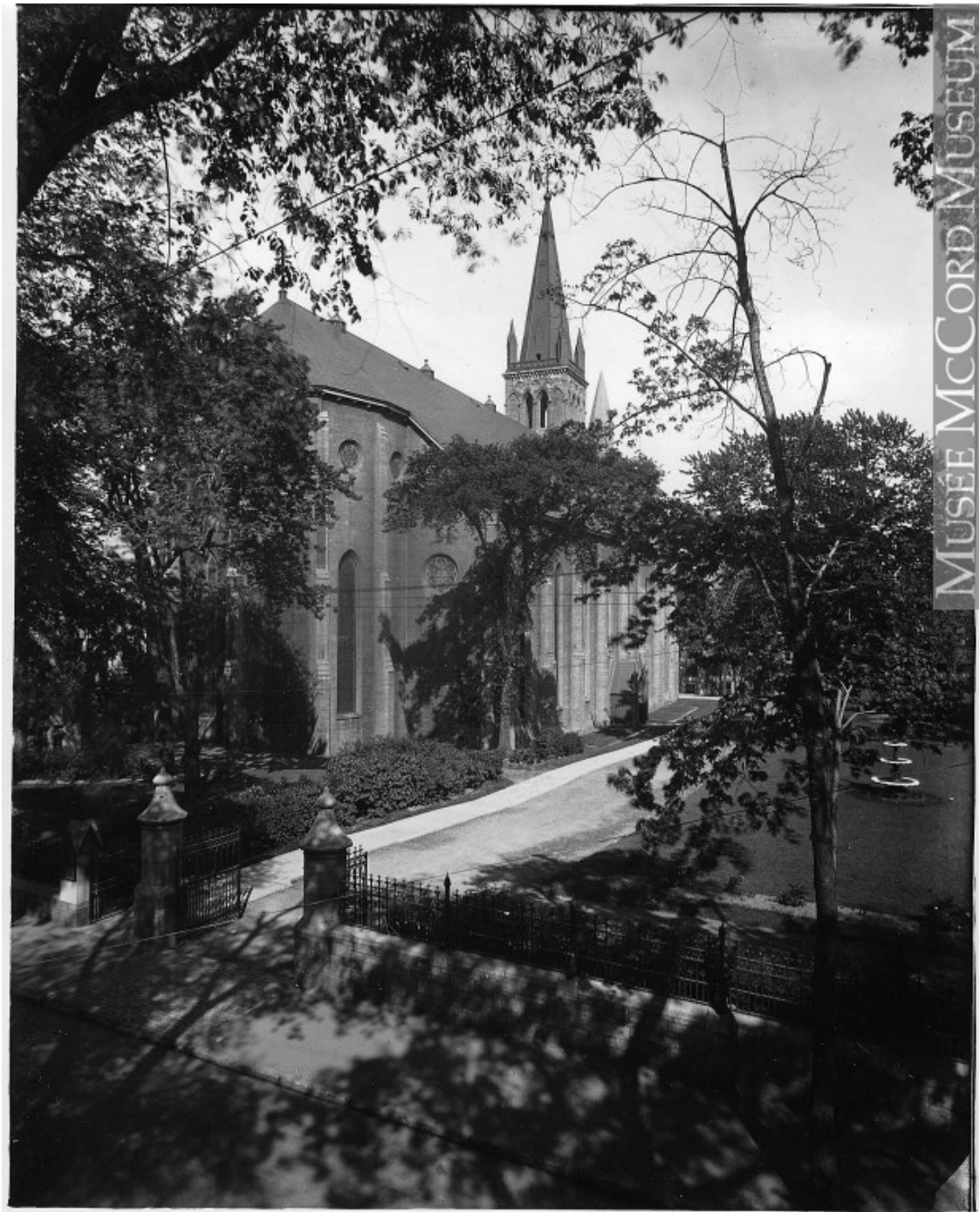
Source:

William Notman & Son, *St. Patrick's Presbytery, Dorchester Street, Montreal, QC, about 1896*,
Montreal, about 1896.
McCord Museum Archives.



Source:

William Notman & Son, *St. Patrick's Church, Montreal, QC, painted photograph, 1910*, Montreal, 1910.
McCord Museum Archives.



Source:

William Notman & Son, *St. Patrick's Church, Dorchester Street, Montreal, QC, 1915*, Montreal, 1915.
McCord Museum Archives.



Source:

William Notman & Son, *Montreal looking west from Southam Press Building, QC, 1926-1927*,
Montreal, 1926-27.
McCord Museum Archives.



Source:

Photos © Camille Harrigan



Source:

Photos © Camille Harrigan



Source:

Photos © Camille Harrigan

Appendix 10

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Please mention ST. PATRICK'S MESSAGE in addressing advertisers

Source:

St. Patrick's Message, March 1919, 24-25.
St. Patrick's Basilica Archives

In Memoriam

*Of your charity pray for the souls of the following persons
who recently departed this life:*

Mrs. W. J. Jollis, Archibald Grant, Alex. Hamilton, Mrs. W. J. Palmer, Mrs. F. M. Rogers, Mrs. John Wells, Eliz. Taylor, Wilhelmina Lohmann, Ellen Higgins, John Burnham, Kevin Foley, Charles Byers, Herbert G. Highfield, Mrs. L. S. Watson, Eleanor W. McEntyre, Mrs. Robert McShane, Eliz. Mullin, Mary Creaney, Sgt. Thaddie I. D'Hendt, Michael J. Cunningham, Mrs. Sarah McGinn, Maria E. Campion, John Purtell, Mrs. Ellen McBride, Mrs. Thos. Kelly, Jacobus A. M. Vermeulen, John F. McKenzie, Michael O'Shaughnessy, Henry Staines, Mrs. Valentine Lafrance, Mrs. John Morrow, Mrs. M. Millard, John McCracken, Mrs. C. H. Dettmers, Mrs. Andrew King, Mrs. Aaron Bertsch, Neil J. Faubert, Mrs. John M. Cole, Mrs. Peter J. Scully, Alice Jane Brown, Mrs. J. Grace Bernard.

Masses of Requiem were celebrated for the repose of the souls of:

Mrs. Mary McGuire, Mr. and Mrs. John Walsh, Ald. Thos. O'Connell, Mrs. Philip Doherty, Mrs. Mary Brennan, Eliz. Lyons, Constance Zepf Sorgius, Stephen Creaney, Mrs. Julia Flynn, Mr. and Mrs. James Foran, Ann and Emma Cosgrove, Patrick J. Cooney, Norah J. O'Dowd, L. H. Timmins, Charlotte Armstrong, Mr. and Mrs. Wm. P. McCaffrey, James Tracey, Mrs. L. O. P. Walsh, Deceased members Young Irishmen's Literary Society, Mrs. Terrence Harrington Archibald J. Grant, Donald MacDonald, Mrs. Joseph E. Morrison, John J. Fitzgerald, Bridget E. Clarke, John Morrow, Wilhelmina Lohmann, Mrs. Patrick Rooney, Mr. and Mrs. John Bradley and son, Denis Tansey, Sgt. Pilot Edmund Conry, Mr. and Mrs. John Crowe and family, Mrs. Wm. Joliff, Mrs. John McMartin, Edmund J. Slattery, Mrs. Mary Poulton, Mrs. Wm. Palmer, John Ryan, Peter Doyle, Alice Conway, Mrs. Mary Nolan, Philip U. Martin, Mrs. Michael Shea, Mrs. John Neeson, Dr. W. L. McDougald, A. J. Grant, Mrs. Ed. O'Flaherty, Louis P. Whelan, Mrs. W. F. Tighe, Eliz. Taylor, Mr. and Mrs. C. A. Munroe and family, Mrs. Hugh McAlear, Yvonne G. Collins, Mrs. L. S. Watson, Mrs. James Scullion, J. W. Dwyer, Thos. Flynn, Thos. W. McAnulty, Sgt. Air Gunner Stewart Walker, James Drury, John Doyle, Eliz. L. O'Connor, Mr. and Mrs. Edmund Conway and daughter Alice, Mrs. R. E. Hunter, Henry Staines, Ernest Alovisi, Mr. and Mrs. T. P. Tansey, Pilot Officer James F. Haley, Mrs. Jane Latimer and son John, Mary Catherine and Joseph Cagney, Mrs. Simon McCarry, Mrs. Henry Tosini, James A. McGuigan, Helen W. Curran, Mr. and Mrs. Ed. Barron, Albert Legault, George Furlong, Mr. and Mrs. Francis J. Snyder, A. Deguire, Mrs. Ellen T. Millard, Sgt. Air Gunner John Edward Lamb, Anthony O'Shaughnessy, John Dunne, Mrs. Bridget Devlin, Claude Brady, Sgt. Pilot Gerard Newman, Mr. and Mrs. Edward Murphy, J. Burns, Dr. F. J. Hackett, E. R. Hoskinson, Mrs. Kath. Scully, Mr. and Mrs. Thos. Burke and family, Henry J. Kavanagh, Eileen Murphy, and the Souls in Purgatory.

*Unto them, O Jesus blest,
Grant Thine everlasting rest.*

Source:

St. Patrick's Message, October 1942, 22.
St. Patrick's Basilica Archives

Appendix 11

To the
Parishioners of St. Patrick's
YOU, who receive better salaries
YOU, who make better profits

Now is Your Opportunity
To put something aside
FOR sickness and when work is scarce
FOR years of business depression

Over 100,000 Persons
come regularly to this Bank to deposit
their savings.

Follow their Good Example
Delay no Longer

Your employers, your father and mother, your wife, your children, THE COUNTRY will be proud of you.

Every courtesy and attention will be shown to you. You are cordially invited.
A. P. LESPERANCE, *General Manager*

The
Montreal City & District
Savings Bank
HEAD OFFICE AND 14 BRANCHES IN MONTREAL

Please mention ST. PATRICK'S MESSAGE in addressing advertisers

Source:

St. Patrick's Message, December 1918, 5.
St. Patrick's Basilica Archives



The Prestige of a Bank Account

SUCCESSFUL businesses and independent incomes, like people and communities, do not spring up overnight, full grown.

Wealth comes slowly at first, but every dollar saved brings financial independence nearer.

The prestige of a sound banking connection has been a determining factor in the successful careers of many people around you.

The Royal Bank of Canada

(INCORPORATED 1869)

31 Branches in Montreal
Every Branch a Savings Bank

Beaver Hall Branch
Corner Dorchester and Beaver
Hill

W. H. STEVENS, *Manager*

Please mention **ST. PATRICK'S MESSAGE** in addressing advertisers

Source:

St. Patrick's Message, May-June 1924, 3.
St. Patrick's Basilica Archives

Have You Forgotten Something?

Personal jewellery and valued keepsakes need protection while you are away. Put them in your own private

SAFE DEPOSIT BOX

RENT ONE FOR A TRIFLE AT YOUR LOCAL BRANCH

THE ROYAL BANK OF CANADA

600 BRANCHES IN ALL PARTS OF CANADA

Please mention St. PATRICK'S MESSAGE in addressing advertisers

Source:

St. Patrick's Message, May-June 1939, 7.
St. Patrick's Basilica Archives

Appendix 12

Saint Patrick's 1847-1937

From out the vistaed ways of vanished years,
Through clinging mists of time and dimming tears,
Through NINETY archways lighting hoary walls,
Upon our ear like sweetest music falls
The 'lumined story told in worship's glory,
Of old Saint Patrick's!

O blessed, full, and fruitful NINETY YEARS
Of earnest love, of sacrifice, and prayer;
Of kneeling throngs before God's Altar fair,
Who wept their joy, their sorrow, hopes and fears,
To Him Who listened there,
In old Saint Patrick's!

How many Holy Masses have implored
God's blessing while the multitude adored,
And praise and reverence to His Holy Name
Of loving hearts went up a burning flame,
From old Saint Patrick's!

Dear holy priests of olden Irish way,
Dear blessed heralds of eternal day!
The spirit of your charity divine
Still vigil keeps at our Apostle's shrine,
While drifting from the ancient listening walls
Sweet memory's music all your worth recalls,
At old Saint Patrick's!

And still adoring kneels the surging throng
While yester years repeat their blessings long,
Sweet treasured graces which God's love imparts
To magnify and strengthen watchful hearts;
Such hearts as kept old Erin's faith aglow
In dreams come true long ninety years ago,
In old Saint Patrick's!

Old? The hoary temple knows not age.
'Tis young in gesture, and its charm abides;
Eternal values seek eternal wage,
In God alone the skyward spire confides,
While youthful e'er,
And saintly fair,
Is old Saint Patrick's! (12)

Source:

St. Patrick's Message, March 1937, 12.
St. Patrick's Basilica Archives

Appendix 13



Source:

Photos © Camille Harrigan

Appendix 14

Mass Intentions:

Saturday, January 6th, 2018

5:00 p.m. Ed Murphy *requested by* his friends

Sunday, January 7th, 2018

9:00 a.m. Maria & Salvatore Ruscito *requested by* their children

11:00 a.m. *Pro Populo*

12:30 p.m. Deceased members of the Gadia & Fernando Families *requested by* Rudy Pang

5:00 p.m. Vincent and Mary McGovern

Monday, January 8, 2018

12:10 p.m. Bruno Raizenne *requested by* Robert Raizenne

5:15 p.m. In Thanksgiving to St. Anthony *requested by* Pierrette Leclerc

Tuesday, January 9, 2018

12:10 p.m. Leslie Gallant *requested by* Francis & Joyce

5:15 p.m. Maryam & Mansour *requested by* Mohammad

Wednesday, January 10, 2018

12:10 p.m. Gertrude Hofmann-Reuter *requested by* her son Michael Reuter

5:15 p.m. In Thanksgiving to Saint Ann

Thursday, January 11, 2018

12:10 p.m. Marciano Pacua *requested by* Aurora Guerrero

5:15 p.m. Fortunata & Candido Bangalan Sr. *requested by* the Family

Friday, January 12, 2018

12:10 p.m. Special Intention

5:15 p.m. Emma Tawney-Fister *requested by* Frances

Saturday, January 13, 2018

5:00 p.m. Deceased members of the McCormick & Doherty Families

Source:

St. Patrick's Church, *Church Bulletin, January 7, 2018.*
http://www.stpatricksmtl.ca/PDF/Church_Bulletin.pdf

Appendix 15

and the vast | ever since then the annual blessing | the first time, when a grand musical | program was
 wed that the | amount to between \$1,000 and \$1,500 | musical entertainment was given by the | promotion of



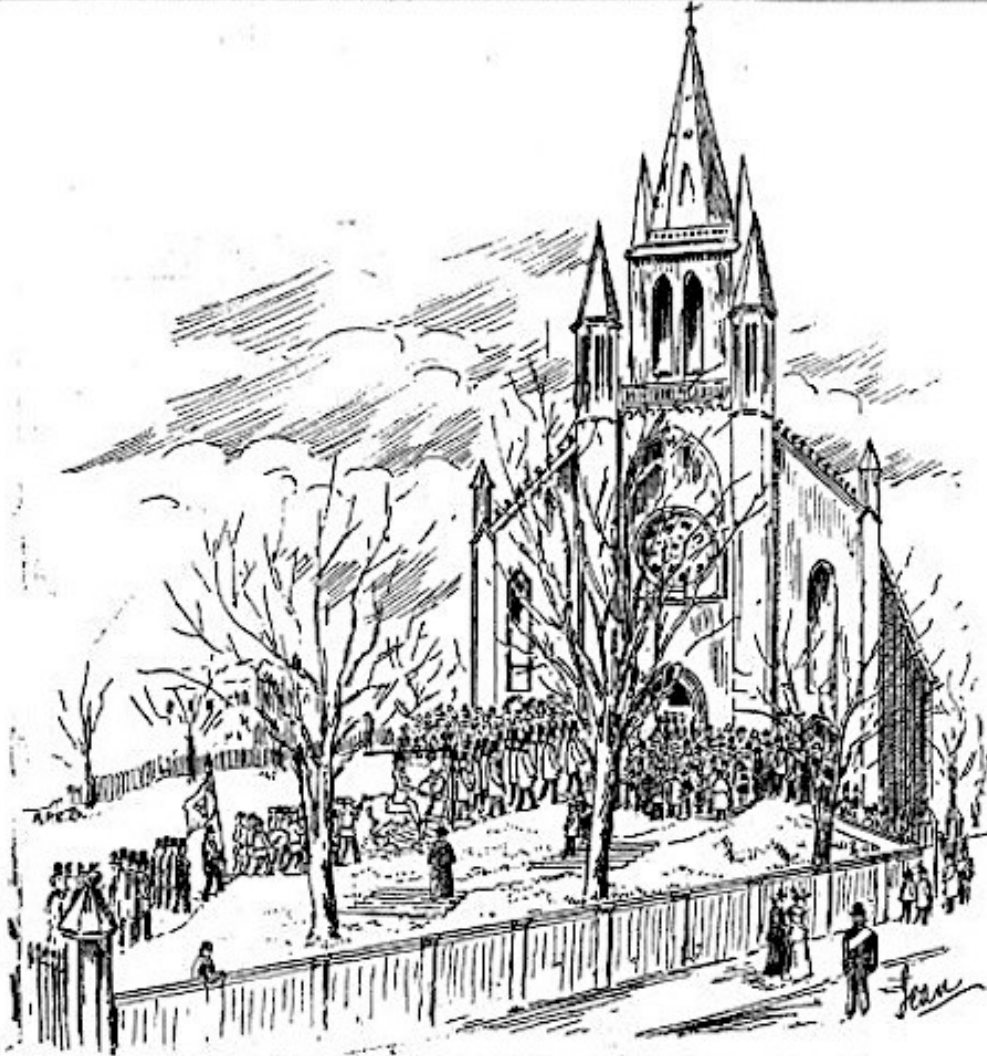
INTERIOR VIEW OF ST. PATRICK'S CHURCH AT HIGH MASS.

urtain drops | In 1888 the funds of the association had | members of the St. Patrick's Literary | who the next
 Association of the Colored. At the at- | de in Montreal

Source:

True Witness and Catholic Chronicle, "Interior View of St. Patrick's Church at High Mass,"
 Wednesday March 21, 1894

effect. Then came the musical gem of evening's entertainment long to be remembered, and one on which the were always found at the fire in all that pertained to the welfare of Ireland, and created a very favorable impression by her admirable rendering of "Glennie Ma



PROCESSION ENTERING ST. PATRICK'S CHURCH.


dearing Young CHARLES," by Miss Libbie society, under whose auspices it was not only this—they were also an orna- if all those adorning young chorists." Meers, Hayes and Young were very

Source:


True Witness and Catholic Chronicle, "Procession Entering St. Patrick's Church," Wednesday March 21, 1894.

Appendix 16

GREEN MASS
SAINT PATRICK'S BASILICA
 1847-2014



Sunday, March 16, 2014


Montréal, Québec
www.stpatricksmtl.ca

THE FEAST OF SAINT PATRICK

Presider & Homilist	Most Reverend Christian Lépine Archbishop of Montréal
Concelebrants:	Most Rev. Thomas Dowd, E.V. Auxiliary Bishop of Montréal Rev. Msgr. Francis John Coyle, Pastor Rev. Fr. Janil Chakkiath, O.S.S.T. Asst. Rev. Fr. Andrew Thuraisingam Deacon Richard Saint-Louis Ciaran Pitchford Dr. Gordon Williams
MC:	Alan Hustak
Deacon of the Word:	Pierre-Louis Houle and Robert Taylor
Deacon of the Altar:	
Commentator:	
Lector:	
Vergers: Nick Suarez	Thurifer: Tyra Trono
Incense Bearer: Tracy Trono	Cross Bearer: Cliff Sobkowicz
Acolytes: Alvin Kuate Defo and Zenas Kuate Defo	Book Bearer: Adrian Raymundo
Crozier Bearer: Jefferson Macarine	Mitre Bearer: Sebastien Mendez

Eucharistic Ministers: (not already mentioned) Janet McLean, Irene Menear, Christopher Huang, Sonia Fauteux, Robert Carbonari, Stuart Tighelear and Patricia Moran (co-ordinator of altar servers).

Gift Bearers: Parade Queen Sarah Murphy and Princesses, Carly Meredith, Kelsey Hannon, Kathleen Zuk and Elspeth McMurray.

Ushers: The Knights of Columbus

Sacristans: Guy Sirois and Filippo Raveenthiran

SAINT PATRICK'S BASILICA CHOIR

Music Director:	Kevin Savor
Soloist:	Carol McCormick

GUEST MUSICIAN

Celtic Harp:	Susan Palmer
---------------------	--------------

Prelude: *Celtic Harp* - Susan Palmer

Procession: *Saint Patrick's Breastplate - Traditional*

Welcome: Rev. Msgr. Francis John Coyle, Pastor

Greeting: Archbishop Christian Lépine

Penitential Rite

Kyrie: *Baldwin, arr. Kevin Savor*

Collect

First Reading: **Genesis 12. 1-4**

Psalm 126: R. May Your love be upon us, O Lord, as we place all our hope in You.


Second Reading: **2 Timothy 1.8b-10**

Gospel Acclamation: *Celtic - O'Carroll & Walker*

Gospel: **Matthew 17.1-9**
Proclaimed by Deacon Ciaran Pitchford
Archbishop Christian Lépine

Homily:

Collection



INTERLUDE: CELTIC HARP

Presentation of the Msgr. Russell Whitton Breen Medal to Dan J. Sullivan
by Archbishop Christian Lépine.

Profession of Faith

Prayer of the Faithful: R. Lord, hear our prayer.

Presentation of the Gifts: St. Patrick's Parade Queen and Princesses

Offertory: *Be Thou My Vision, Chilcott*

Sanctus: *MacMillan*

Eucharistic Prayer

Memorial Acclamation

Great Amen

Agnus Dei: *Hebrides, arr. Kevin Savor*

Communion: *Distant Land, Rutter*

Londonderry Air - Soloist: Carol McCormick, Soprano

Prayer after Communion

Final Blessing

Recessional: *Hail Glorious St. Patrick- Traditional*

Celtic, arranged by Kevin Savor

Postlude:

Celtic Harp - Susan Palmer



MSGR. RUSSELL WHITTON BREEN MEDAL

Msgr. Russell Whitton Breen was the 9th pastor of St. Patrick's Basilica. Msgr. Breen had a successful career at Loyola College and Concordia University in Montreal as a scholar and administrator before his nomination as pastor of Saint Patrick's Basilica in 1985. Msgr. Breen initiated a long overdue multi-million dollar restoration of Saint Patrick's Basilica. Rallying private, corporate and government support Msgr. Breen was able to return our increasingly dilapidated church to its former splendour.

Falling ill in 1994, Msgr. Breen retired to Ma Maison St. Joseph where he lived under the care of the Little Sisters of the Poor until his death June 26, 2005. In recognition of his enormous contribution to the Parish of Saint Patrick, Msgr. Coyle and the wardens of the Fabrique have had the Msgr. Breen Medal struck. The medal honours the memory of Msgr. Breen and acknowledges those who have served the Parish with distinction.

Dan J. Sullivan is to be honoured today. Dan, the son of James E. Sullivan and Sylvia Marie Chenard was born in Port Arthur Ontario and moved to Montreal with his parents at the age of four in 1939 where they settled in NDG and attended Notre Dame de Grace Church.

Dan graduated with a B.A. in Economics from Loyola College, a Bachelor of Civil Law from McGill and he received an M.B.A. from the European campus in France of the INSEAD. His successful professional career led him into the legal side of banking where the aspect he enjoyed most was working with international clients.

Dan has been extremely active in community work including serving on boards and committees at St. Ignatius of Loyola Parish, the Fr. Dowd Foundation, Catholic Community Services, Sacred Heart School and St. Mary's Hospital. Dan was brought on as a warden of the Parish of Saint Patrick and as a trustee of the St. Patrick's Basilica Restoration Foundation by Fr. Lawrence MacEachern in 1994 where he has dutifully served until his retirement last year.

Dan has an abiding memory of his first visit to Saint Patrick's when the then pastor Msgr. McShane personally picked up the collection with a long handled whicker basket and shook the basket in front of the parishioner until a donation was made. Dan has two children, Patricia and Peter and two grand-daughters, Katrina and Kyra. Dan is married to Gillian Cave.

The Sanctuary Lamp is burning this week in memory of Mr. Gilles Simard
requested by the Alexander-Power families

Mass Intentions:

Saturday, March 15th, 2014

5:00 p.m. Esteban Mendez Diaz requested by Maria Antonieta Valdes & Dionisio Mendez

Sunday, March 16th, 2014

10:00 a.m. *Pro Populo - GREEN MASS*

12:30 p.m. Meezaun Gafoor requested by her loved ones

5:00 p.m. Pauline Bradley requested by Gemma & Harry Brooks

Monday, March 17th, 2014

12:10 p.m. Mrs. Bridget Griffin requested by the Griffin Family

5:15 p.m. In Thanksgiving requested by Anthony Dos Santos

Tuesday, March 18th, 2014

12:10 p.m. In Thanksgiving requested by Rita

5:15 p.m. Felisa, Simeon, Remia & Anacleto Dancil requested by the Bangalan Family

Wednesday, March 19th, 2014

12:10 p.m. Vincent McGovern requested by the priests, wardens & staff of St. Patrick's

5:15 p.m. Patrick Penagos-Steward requested by his parents

Thursday, March 20th, 2014

12:10 p.m. Mr. Gilles Simard requested by the Alexander-Power Families

5:15 p.m. Joseph John LeBlanc requested by Marc Bolduc

Friday, March 21st, 2014

12:10 p.m. Giséle Poitvin & Bernard Marcil requested by Huguette Rivard & André Prévost

5:15 p.m. All Souls requested by the Parishioners

Saturday, March 22nd, 2014

5:00 p.m. Eunice Tellier requested by Msgr. Coyle, the wardens & staff of St. Patrick's

SAINT PATRICK'S DAY APPEAL

Since Saint Patrick's Day of 2012 we have been appealing to you to help us raise \$500,000 to cover financial overruns in previous restoration projects and to raise money to help finance urgent repairs to our small towers or Pinnacle Project and our Chimney Project.

To date we have collected \$192,000 and thank you for your generosity.

The Pinnacle Project was completed in December 2013. We thank the Conseil du Patrimoine Religieux du Québec for funding 70% of the cost and Parks Canada for a grant of \$100,000 under their Cost-Sharing program for National Historic Sites. Next on the list is the chimney BUT we still need to reach our goal of \$500,000 in order complete the project and help with cash flow.

We need your help, please make your donation to the Saint Patrick's Restoration Foundation where the full amount is put towards restoring our Basilica. All donations will receive a receipt for income tax purposes.

Thank you, Mary McGovern mcgovern@stpatricksmtl.ca



GREEN MASS
 SAINT PATRICK'S BASILICA
 1847-2015



SUNDAY, MARCH 22, 2015
 10 A.M.

MONTRÉAL, QUÉBEC
 www.stpatricksmtl.ca

SAINT PATRICK'S RESTORATION FOUNDATION

Revenu Quebec has confirmed that the *St. Patrick's Restoration Foundation* is designated as a "Registered Cultural Organization" for Quebec taxation purposes. Large donations can potentially qualify for tax credits that equal approximately 75% of the amount of the gift, such that a gift of, say, \$25,000 can be made at an actual cost to the donor of \$6,250!

**DONATIONS BETWEEN \$5,000 AND \$25,000
 MADE BEFORE JANUARY 1, 2018**

A donor may receive, for a given taxation year, in addition to the tax credit for donations currently allowed by the tax system, a non-refundable tax credit equal to 25% of the eligible amount of a initial large donation made in the current year or one of the four preceding years.

A COMMITMENT OF \$250,000 (PLUS) OVER A TEN YEAR PERIOD

Instead of the tax credit for donations and the new additional tax credit as described above, these individuals may claim a non-refundable tax credit calculated at a rate of 30% of the donation. The St. Patrick's Restoration Foundation was set up in 1988 for the sole purpose of financing the restoration work needed by Saint Patrick's Basilica, its ancillary buildings and land.

For more information:
http://www.finances.gouv.qc.ca/documents/bulletins/en/BULEN_2013-6-a-b.pdf

Or contact your personal tax advisor for further details. The foregoing is provided for general information purposes only.

Thank you, Mary McGovern
 mcgovern@stpatricksmtl.ca

Mass Schedule

September - June Weekday Masses
 Monday to Friday
 12:10 P.M. and 5:15 P.M.

July - August Weekday Masses
 Monday, 12:10 P.M.
 Tuesday, 12:10 P.M. and 5:15 P.M.
 Wednesday-Friday, 12:10 P.M.

Weekend Masses
 Saturday at 5 P.M.
 Sunday at 9 A.M., 11A.M., 12:30 P.M. and 5 P.M.
 Parish Office: 514-866-7379 • info@stpatricksmtl.ca
 www.stpatricksmtl.ca



**BASILICA TOUR
 PODCAST**



ENGLISH



FRENCH

PRINTED COURTESY OF L'APRIMERIE RYAN INC. 514-989-1011

THE FEAST OF SAINT PATRICK

President: Most Reverend Christian Lépine,
Archbishop of Montréal
 Most Rev. Thomas Dowd, E. V.,
 Auxiliary Bishop of Montréal
 Rev. Msgr. Francis John Coyle, Pastor
 Rev. Fr. Janil Joseph Chakkiah, Assist.
 Deacon Bernol Thibault and
 Rev. Fr. Robert Clark

Deacon of the Word: Claran Pitchford
Deacon of the Altar: Dr. Gordon Williams

Homilist: Archbishop Christian Lépine

Commentator: Pierre-Louis Houle
Lector: Robert Taylor

Verger: Nick Suarez **Thurifer:** Tracy Trono **Incense Bearer:**
 Tyra Trono **Cross Bearer:** Cliff Sobkowitz **Acolytes:** Alvin
 Kuate Delfo and Zenas Kuate Delfo **Book Bearer:** Adrian
 Raymundo **Crozier Bearer:** Jefferson Maccarine **Mitre
 Bearer:** Sebastian Mendez

✠ The Junior Altar Servers of Saint Patrick's Basilica
Eucharistic Ministers: (not already mentioned) Stephen
 Casimir, Jack Kenny, Christopher Huang, Sonia Fautoux,
 Maria Valdez, Glen Clemente, Robert Carboan and Patricia
 Moran (co-ordinator of altar servers).

Gift Bearers: Parade Queen, Carly Meredith and
 Princesses, Samantha Quinn, Jenna Robinson, Catherine
 Polson and Shanelle Cartray

Ushers: The Knights of Columbus
Sacristans: Guy Sirois and Filippo Kalthresu

SAINT PATRICK'S BASILICA CHOIR

Music Director: Kevin Savor
Solist: Carol McCormick
GUEST MUSICIAN
Celtic Harp: Susan Palmer

THE FEAST OF SAINT PATRICK

Prelude: Celtic Harp - Susan Palmer
Procession: Saint Patrick's Breviary - Traditional
Welcome: Rev. Msgr. Francis John Coyle, Pastor
 Archbishop Christian Lépine

Greeting: Pentiential Rite
Kyrie: Baldwin, arr. Kevin Savor

Collect

First Reading: Jeremiah 31:31-34
Psalm 51: R. A pure heart create for me, O God.
Second Reading: Hebrews 5:7-9

Gospel Acclamation: Celtic - O'Carroll & Walker
Gospel: John 12:20-33
 Proclaimed by Deacon Claran Pitchford

Homily: Archbishop Christian Lépine
 INTERLUDE: celtic harp

✠

Profession of Faith

Prayer of the Faithful: R. Lord, hear our prayer.
Presentation of the Gifts: St. Patrick's Parade Queen and
 Parade Princesses

Offertory: "O God of Wisdom", Cel, arr. K. Savor
 MacMillan

Sanctus: MacMillan

Eucharistic Prayer

Memorial Acclamation

Great Amen

Agnus Dei: Hebrides, arr. Kevin Savor
Communion: "Irish Blessing", Deneas Agy, arr. Kevin
 Savor
 Londonderry Air - Solist: Carol McCormick, Soprano

Prayer after Communion

Final Blessing

Recessional: Hail Glorious St. Patrick - Traditional
 Celtic, arranged by Kevin Savor

Postlude: Celtic Harp - Susan Palmer

GREEN MASS
SAINT PATRICK'S BASILICA
1847-2017



SUNDAY, MARCH 19, 2017
10:00 A.M.


MONTRÉAL, QUÉBEC
www.stpatricksmtl.ca

HAPPY ST. PATRICK'S DAY

MAY GOD BLESS YOU!

*"I ARISE TODAY
THROUGH GOD'S STRENGTH TO PILOT ME;
GOD'S MIGHT TO UPHOLD ME,
GOD'S WISDOM TO GUIDE ME,
GOD'S EYE TO LOOK BEFORE ME,
GOD'S EAR TO HEAR ME,
GOD'S WORD TO SPEAK TO ME,
GOD'S HAND TO GUARD ME,
GOD'S WAY TO LIE BEFORE ME,
GOD'S SHIELD TO PROTECT ME,
GOD'S HOSTS TO SAVE ME..."*

ST. PATRICK

Mass Schedule

September - June Weekday Masses

Monday to Friday:
12:10 p.m. and 5:15 p.m.

July - August Weekday Masses

Monday: 12:10 p.m.
Tuesday: 12:10 p.m. and 5:15 p.m.
Wednesday-Friday: 12:10 p.m.

Weekend Masses

Saturday at 5 p.m.
Sunday at 9 p.m., 11 p.m., 12:30 p.m. and 5 p.m.
Parish Office: 514-866-7379, info@stpatricksmtl.ca
www.stpatricksmtl.ca

**BASILICA
TOUR
PODCAST**



ENGLISH



FRENCH

PRINTED COURTESY OF IMPRIMERIE RYAN INC. 514-989-1011

THE FEAST OF SAINT PATRICK

President: Most Reverend Christian Lépine,
Archbishop of Montreal

Concelebrants: Most Rev. Thomas Dowd, V.G.
Rev. Fr. Raymond Lalonde, E.V.
Rev. Msgr. Francis John Coyne, Pastor
Rev. Fr. Janel Joseph, Associate Pastor

MCs: Deacon Benoît Thibault

Deacon of the Word: Ciaran Pitchford

Deacon of the Altar: Dr. Gordon Williams

Homilist: Archbishop Christian Lépine

Commentator: Cliff Sobkowicz

Lector: Robert Taylor

Vergers: Brian McBrnen Thurlter; Tyna Trono Incense
Bearer: Tracy Trono **Cross Bearer:** Charles Taker

Acolytes: Laura Farrel and Sonia Faudoux **Book Bearer:** Adrian Raymundo **Crozier Bearer:** Jefferson Macarline

Mitre Bearer: Sebastien Mendez

✠ The Junior Altar Servers of Saint Patrick's Basilica
Eucharistic Ministers: (not already mentioned) Jack Kenny,
Christopher Huang, Maria Valdez, Robert Carbonari, Irene
Meneier, Janet McLean, Rosalia Panarillo and Patricia
Moran (co-ordinator of altar servers).

Gift Bearers: Parade Queen, Mary Lynne Loftus and
Princesses, Catherine Barmwell, Sydney Legare, Meagan
Coleman and Robin Brodrick.

Ushers: The Knights of Columbus

Sacristans: Filippo Kalthresu and Gerry McCormick

SAINT PATRICK'S BASILICA CHOIR

Music Director: Kevin Savor

Soloist: Carol McCormick

guest musician:

Celtic Harp: Susan Palmer

THE FEAST OF SAINT PATRICK

Prelude: Celtic Harp - Susan Palmer

Procession: Saint Patrick's Breastplate - Traditional

Welcome: Rev. Msgr. Francis John Coyne, Pastor

Greeting: Archbishop Christian Lépine

Penitential Rite

Kyrie: Baldwin, arr. Kevin Savor

Collect

First Reading: Exodus 17.3-7

Psalm 51: R. O that today you would listen to the
voice of the Lord. Do not harden your
heart!

Second Reading: Romans 5.1-2, 5-8

Gospel Acclamation: Celtic - O'Carroll & Walker

Gospel: John 4.5-42

Proclaimed by Deacon Ciaran Pitchford

Homily: Archbishop Christian Lépine

Interlude: CELTIC HARP

Profession of Faith

Prayer of the Faithful: R. Lord, hear our prayer.

Presentation of the Gifts: St. Patrick's Parade Queen and
Parade Princesses

Offertory: "Jerusalem, My Happy Home", Bartock,
arr. K. Savor

Sanctus: MacMillan

Eucharistic Prayer

Memorial Acclamation

Great Amen

Agnus Dei: Hebrides, arr. Kevin Savor

Communion: "Christ Be With Me", Vaughn Williams,
arr. Kevin Savor

Londonderry Air - Soloist: Carol McCormick, Soprano

Prayer after Communion

Final Blessing

Recessional: Hail Glorious St. Patrick - Traditional
Celtic, arranged by Kevin Savor

Postlude: Celtic Harp - Susan Palmer

Source:

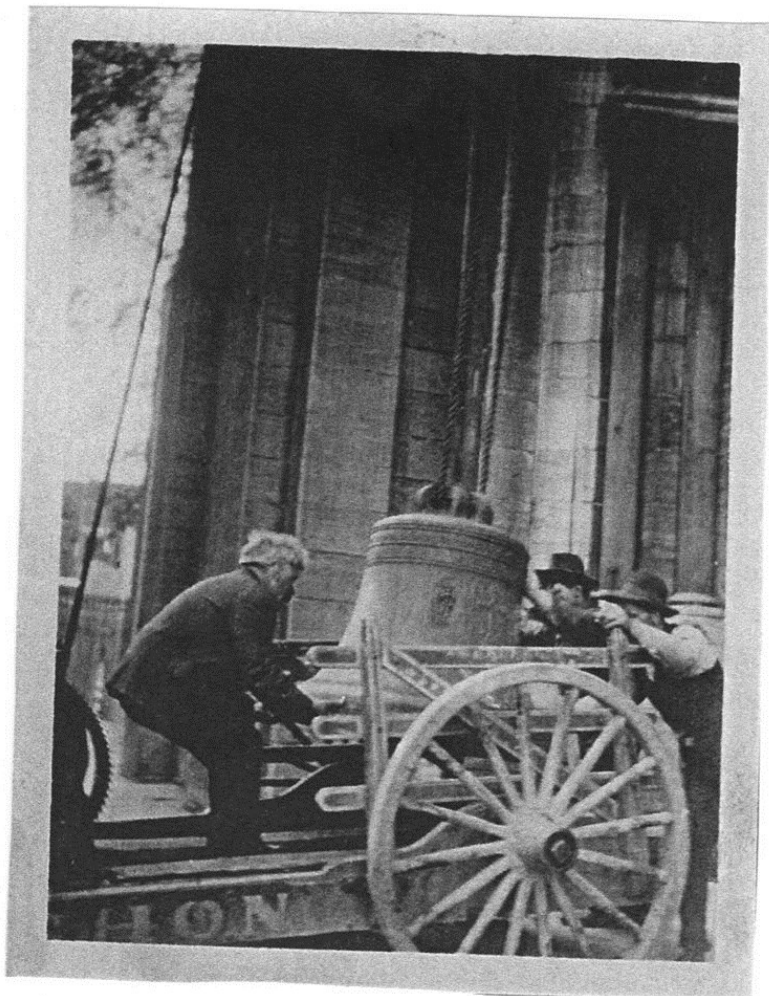
Green Mass Program, March 2014; Green Mass Program, March 2015; Green Mass Program, March 2017.

Appendix 17

TBT @ Saint Patrick's Basilica

Saint Patrick's Chimes

At the rear of the Basilica, will be seen four bronze plaques recording details of Saint Patrick's Chimes installed as a lasting remembrance of the XXI International Eucharistic Congress held in Montreal in 1910, and during which St. Patrick's played a most important role... second only to Notre Dame. Among the bells is the famous "Charlotte" which used to hang in the old belfry of the former parish church of Notre Dame, demolished in 1843. This bell was first cast in 1774 and after being injured, it was recast in 1908 and rededicated with the new ones in 1910. (Text from: The Story of Old St. Patrick's, by R. Lipscombe, 1967)



Source:

St. Patrick's Basilica, Montreal, "Saint Patrick's Chimes," Facebook, July 30, 2015, <https://www.facebook.com/stpatricksmtl/>

TBT @ Saint Patrick's Basilica

On the West side of the Basilica's main entrance, tucked between the choir loft staircase and confessional, visitors and parishioners can enjoy a stained glass depiction of St. Patrick. Entitled "St. Patrick conferring with Druids and King," this panel illustrates how St. Patrick used the shamrock to educate the population about the Holy Trinity. The vivid colours and realistic details of this window allows viewers to learn and immerse themselves into the life and story associated to the patron saint of Ireland.

This hand-painted window was commissioned from Innsbruck, Austria in the 1890s. It was commissioned along with "The Immaculate Conception and the Holy Rosary," now located on the East side of the Basilica's main entrance.



Source:

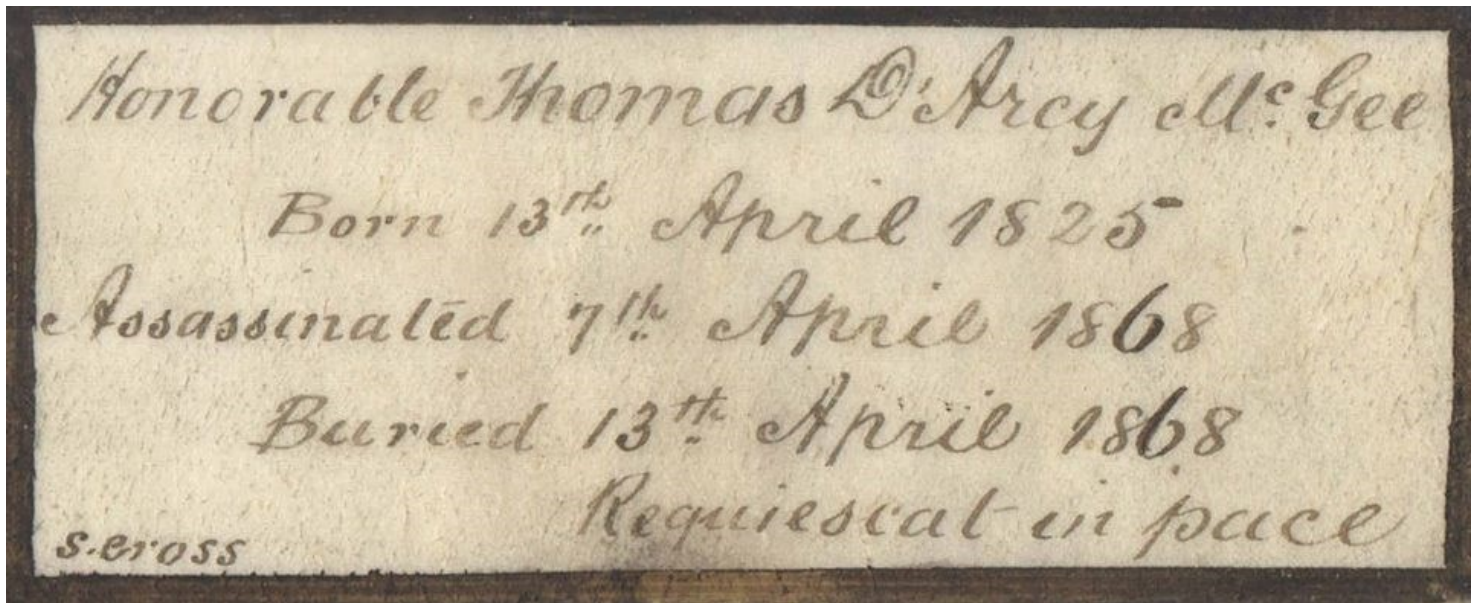
St. Patrick's Basilica, Montreal, "TBT @ Saint Patrick's Basilica," Facebook, August 13, 2015, <https://www.facebook.com/stpatricksmntl/>

TBT @ Saint Patrick's Basilica
Mourning Card - Thomas D'Arcy McGee

Thomas D'Arcy McGee, known as one of the Fathers of Confederation (1867), was a parishioner of St. Patrick's Basilica. Following the Confederation of Canada, he was assassinated and his funeral was held at St. Patrick's Basilica on April 13, 1868.

The attached image is the mourning card for Thomas D'Arcy McGee's funeral. This memorial card was kept by Fr. Dowd, a priest at St. Patrick's from 1848 to 1891.

St. Patrick's Basilica houses other memorials to Thomas D'Arcy McGee. By the main entrance, parishioners and visitors can find a commemorative plaque and to the left side of the Basilica's main aisle, McGee's pew, number 240, can be easily identified by a Canadian flag and burgundy cushions.

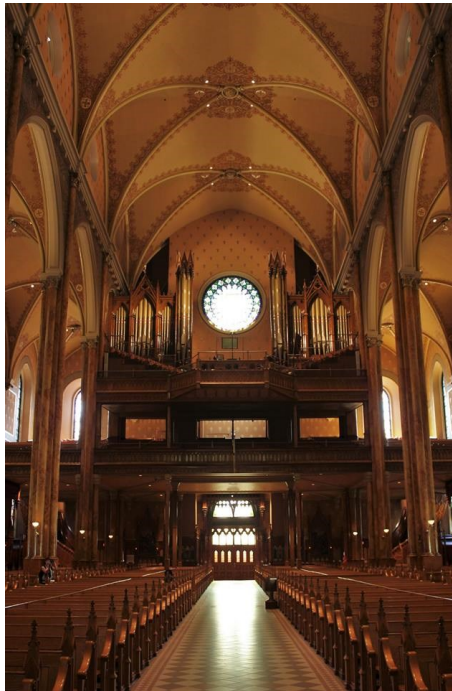


Source:

St. Patrick's Basilica, Montreal, "Mourning Card - Thomas D'Arcy McGee," Facebook, August 20, 2015, <https://www.facebook.com/stpatricksmtl/>

THE BASILICA ORGAN

Music plays a prominent role in liturgical worship. Singing, chanting, or listening to classical music is one way for believers to celebrate and reflect on the sacred. The warm resonating tones of St. Patrick's Basilica's Casavant organ provide parishioners and visitors with an uplifting spiritual experience. It is hard to imagine the Basilica without its beautiful organ music, but St. Patrick's did not have an organ when it first opened in 1847. The original organ was only installed in 1852 upon completion of the organ loft. Built by Samuel Russell Warren, it was an instrument with three keyboards (manuals). In 1895, the organ company Casavant Frères rebuilt and electrified the Warren organ with a system known as electro-pneumatic action. This system utilizes an electric current to control the air pressure moving through the organ's pipes. In addition to electrifying the instrument, the company separated the organ case, exposing the Catherine Wheel window. This large circular window can still be viewed between the organ's pipes and remains one of the Basilica's unique decorative features. Since 1895, the Casavant organ has undergone several phases of reconstruction and restoration. For example, in celebration of St. Patrick's 125th anniversary, the Casavant organ from St. Anthony's Church was integrated with St. Patrick's in 1972. This work was successfully undertaken by the company Guibault-Thérien Inc., under the direction of the master organ-builder Guy Thérien. In the present-day the organ continues to be maintained by the company Les Ateliers Guibault Bellavance Carignan. Under their direction, approximately 100,000.00\$ of repairs have been completed over the past ten years. This work would not have been possible without the donations of patrons who contributed to the Basilica's Restoration Foundation. It is due to the generosity of different community members that St. Patrick's Basilica is fortunate to maintain this impressive instrument with an equally impressive history. We hope that parishioners and visitors continue to enjoy and be inspired by this instrument's music. Kevin Savor has been Saint Patrick's organist and music director since 1995.
Jessica Poulin



Source:

St. Patrick's Basilica, Montreal, "THE BASILICA ORGAN," Facebook, July 12, 2016, <https://www.facebook.com/stpatricksmtl/>

ASSUMPTION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN

Many parishioners and visitors of St. Patrick's Basilica are struck by the detail and beauty of the structure's interior decorations and artwork. The majority of these works are unique and contribute towards the basilica's irreplaceable splendor. However, different designers and artists have incorporated replicas of religious artwork into the basilica. One such artist is Alexander Locke, who reproduced and incorporated Tiziano Vecelli's the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin onto the right-side of the sanctuary. Originally painted by Tiziano Vecelli, or Titian, in the 16th century, this Italian Renaissance



painting depicts the Blessed Virgin Mary being taken into heaven at the end of her earthly life. Locke skillfully recreated this painting when he and his company began refurbishing the sanctuary between 1893 and 1900. Locke's oil painting is securely installed on a panel that is approximately 31 feet high and 14 feet wide. Despite its dimensions the painting blends seamlessly with the vine, grape and wheat motif that decorates the walls of the sanctuary. Thanks to the generous patrons who contributed to the Basilica's Restoration Foundation, Locke's reproduction of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin was restored between 1987 and 1992. We encourage parishioners and visitors to take the time to view this beautifully restored painting and reflect on the miracle that it represents.

Jessica Poulin

Source:

St. Patrick's Basilica, Montreal, "Assumption of the Blessed Virgin," Facebook, July 20, 2016, <https://www.facebook.com/stpatricksmtl/>

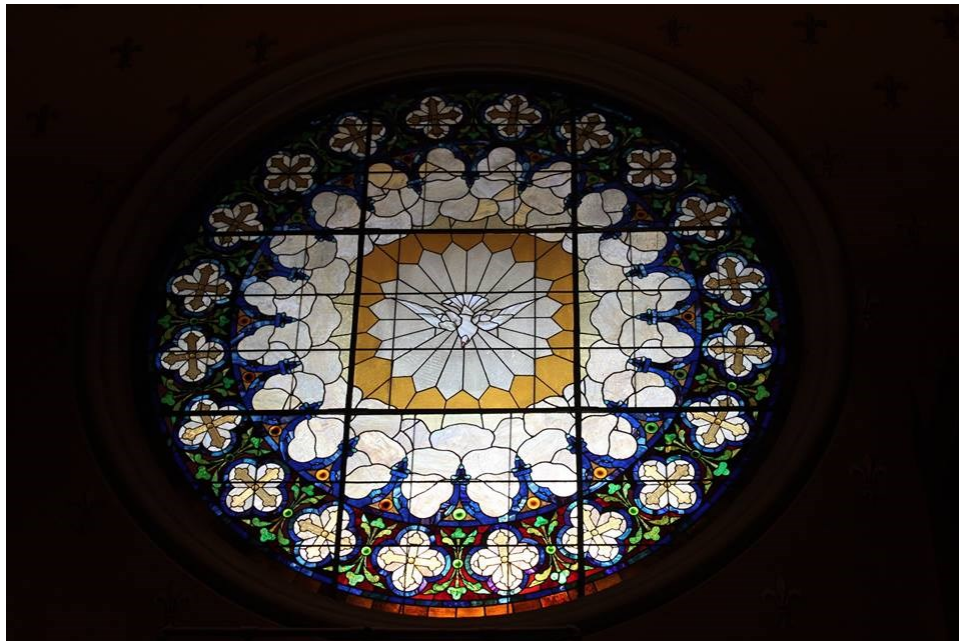
From the Archives

In 1893, 46 years after the official opening of St. Patrick's, the interior of the religious structure underwent its first major renovation. The sanctuary was refurbished at this time and only completed by 1900. Throughout the decorated sanctuary space, parishioners and visitors can appreciate the artwork of Alexander Locke, who is not only responsible for the four stained glass windows depicting the Evangelists, but also the large brass-sanctuary lamp, two murals and hand painted mosaic-pattern covering the walls. Intricately incorporated within these embellishments are Christian symbols that remind viewers of God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. For example, Locke's sanctuary lamp, which was installed by 1896, is adorned with six angels bearing shields. On these shields viewers can see the symbols of the Alpha and Omega, helping us remember that God is eternal and life without end. Other shields bear the insignia of Jesus Christ, as represented by the Crucifix and the PX Christogram. Specifically, the PX Christogram, or the CHI-RHO, symbolizes the first two letters of Jesus Christ. If one looks above the lamp, towards the ceiling of the sanctuary space, a crown of thorns, an IHS inscription, and an eagle can be seen. The crown of thorns brings to mind the sacrifice of Christ and His crucifixion. The IHS inscription, sometimes inscribed with capital letters, is a monogram for Jesus Christ. Finally, the eagle, perceived by many as a powerful and noble creature is a representation of St. John the Evangelist.

These Christian symbols and many others can be found throughout the interior decorations of the Basilica. For example, the dove, a symbol of the Holy Spirit can be found throughout the structure. A dove decorates the Rose Window between the organ pipes, and the light of the Basilica's pulpit.

All of these symbols are expressive and reflective communicative tools. We encourage you to look for these symbols in the interwoven ornamentation of the sanctuary space, the Basilica's arches, ceiling and windows.

Jessica Poulin



Source:

St. Patrick's Basilica, Montreal, "From the Archives," Facebook, July 28, 2016, <https://www.facebook.com/stpatricksmtl/>

A HISTORY OF THE SACRED HEART ALTAR

Four marble altars line the nave of the Basilica. These side altars were originally constructed to meet the devotional or private prayer needs of believers and to provide visiting clergy with a space to individually celebrate Mass. While the four altars are no longer used for Eucharistic liturgical service, they remain important sites of devotion and remembrance. In the following synopsis we will look at one of the oldest side-altars designed by the architect Mr. W.E. Doran who oversaw the 1893-1899 interior renovations of St. Patrick's. Based on the Basilica's records the oldest of the side-altars is located to the right of the sanctuary. Following Doran's designs a Mr. R. Forsyth constructed and installed this altar by 1902. This altar was originally dedicated to St. Bridget, but in the present-day a statue of the Sacred Heart adorns the altar. While the figure of St. Bridget does not decorate the altar itself a stained glass window dedicated to her continues to preside over the structure. At first glance the altar appears unembellished, but Doran and Forsyth found ways of modestly decorating the altar with different religious motifs. Carvings of cherubs, flowers, bundles of wheat and grapes, which align with the mosaic ornamentation of the sanctuary, delicately trim the altar's antependium (front). Like so many the Basilica's interior decorations the construction and installation of the altar was



made possible with the generosity of parishioners. Mr. M. Burke, President of "The True Witness Printing and Publishing Co.," and his sister Ms. E. Burke are responsible for funding the construction of this altar. Their names can still be seen on the altar's base and their kindness continues to be memorialized. We encourage parishioners and visitors to take the time to admire the details of the altar and to consider the work that went into creating it.



Jessica Poulin

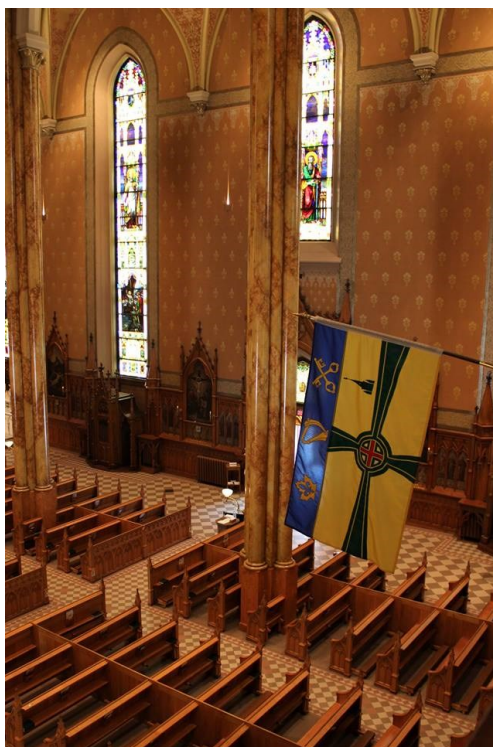
Source:

St. Patrick's Basilica, Montreal, "A History of the Sacred Heart Altar," Facebook, August 3, 2016, <https://www.facebook.com/stpatricksmtl/>

A HISTORY OF ST. PATRICK'S ARMORIAL BEARINGS

In anticipation of St. Patrick's Basilica's 150th anniversary and on behalf of the Wardens of the parish, Reverend Monsignor Barry A. Egan-Jones petitioned the Canadian Heraldic Authority of Canada to grant the Basilica armorial bearings. In light of the Basilica's unique history and active role as mother church to Montreal's English-speaking Catholics, the Canadian Heraldic Authority of Canada granted and assigned arms to St. Patrick's Basilica in 1996. The arms were officially presented to the parish in 1997. In the present-day, visitors and parishioners can see the heraldic visuals or symbols of the Basilica's arms on a flag that is displayed from the Basilica's balcony. Each symbol has been carefully selected and arranged to call attention to the Basilica's historic and ongoing religious, Irish, provincial, federal and municipal associations. The Basilica's religious standing is expressed through the flag's blue and gold colours. These colours align with the armorial tinctures of Pope John Paul II, who raised St. Patrick's Church to the status of a Minor Basilica in 1989. Two crossed keys, visible in the flag's upper corner, denote this special status. The Basilica's Irish connection is signified by a gold harp, Ireland's heraldic emblem, and a green Celtic cross. These symbols help convey that St. Patrick's Basilica was originally established to serve Montreal's growing English-speaking Irish-Catholic population of the 1830s and newly-arrived Irish emigrants. This significant role in the social history of Montreal has been memorialized through the incorporation of a red cross set in the centre of the green Celtic cross. This red cross would be familiar to many living in Montreal as a red cross can be found on the flag of the city. The Basilica's larger federal and provincial connection is indicated by a Canadian maple leaf with a fleur-de-lis of Quebec superimposed onto it. These multitude of symbols help tell the story of St. Patrick's Basilica, itself represented on the flag by a silhouette of its central and flanking towers.

Jessica Poulin

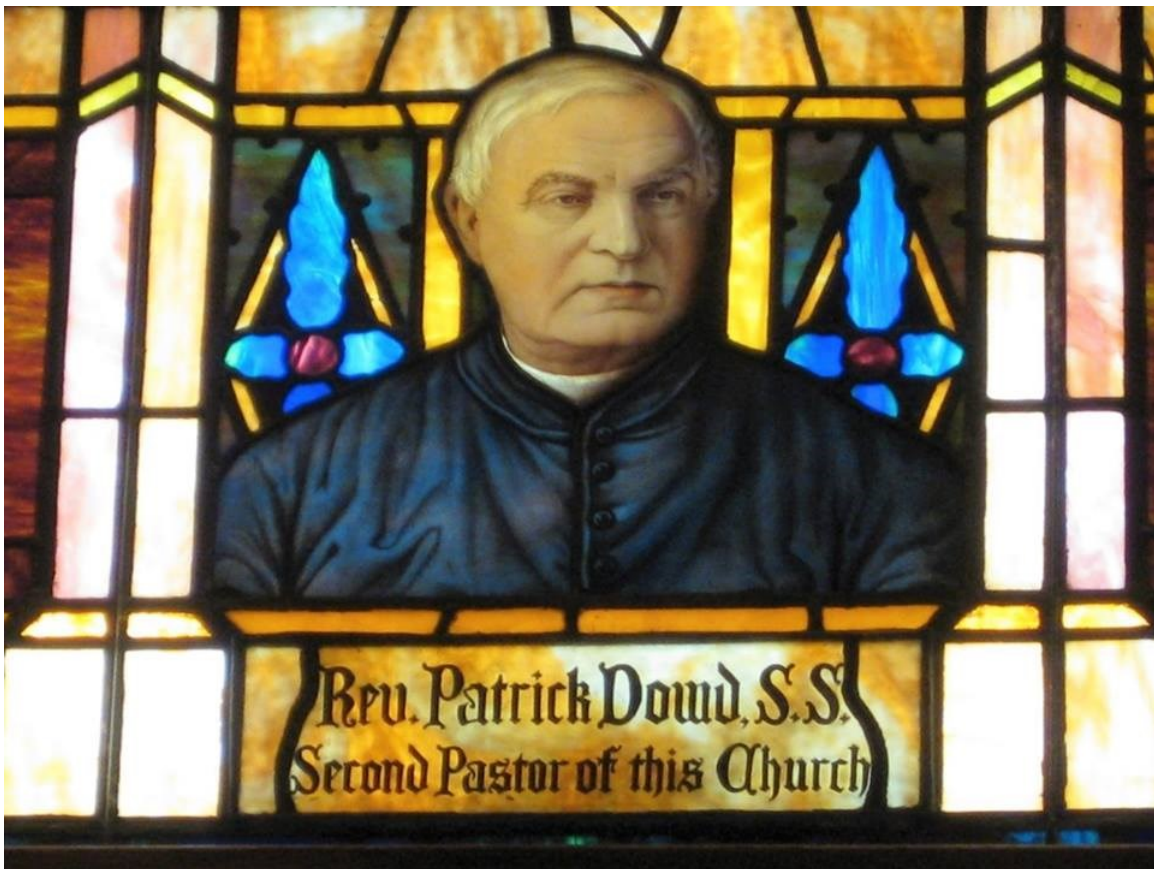


Source:

St. Patrick's Basilica, Montreal, "A HISTORY OF ST. PATRICK'S ARMORIAL BEARINGS," Facebook, August 9, 2016, <https://www.facebook.com/stpatricksmntl/>

PORTRAIT OF FR. PATRICK DOWD

To the right of the sanctuary a stained glass window depicting the figure of St. Patrick and a scene from his life can be viewed by parishioners and visitors. Originally installed by Alexander Locke and his company during WWI, the window is a beautiful homage to Ireland's patron saint. This window, however, contains a unique feature. At the base of the window a portrait of a Sulpician priest can be seen. This priest is Fr. Dowd, a remarkable figure in the social history of the basilica. Originally from Co. Louth, Ireland, Fr. Dowd came to St. Patrick's in 1848, following the devastating typhus epidemic of 1847. Fr. Dowd dedicated himself towards the advancement of Montreal's Irish and greater community. His benevolent work with the Sisters of Charity and the Congregation of Notre-Dame is one example. Appointed the second pastor of St. Patrick's in 1860, Fr. Dowd remained at St. Patrick's until his death in 1891. Following his death parishioners commissioned a stained glass portrait of Fr. Dowd, which was originally fixed into a window from Innsbruck, Austria (now located by the front western entrance of the basilica). When Alexander Locke and his company began installing new windows into the nave, Fr. Dowd's portrait was removed from the Austrian window and flawlessly incorporated into Locke's stained glass. Fr. Dowd was an impressive figure in the religious and social history of St. Patrick's Basilica and the city of Montreal. His portrait continues to honour his life. Please take the time to carefully view the basilica's windows and explore the different figures and scenes they represent.



Source:

St. Patrick's Basilica, Montreal, "PORTRAIT OF FR. PATRICK DOWD," Facebook, August 16, 2016, <https://www.facebook.com/stpatricksmtl/>

A HISTORY OF ST. BRIGID OF KILDARE

Known by many as St. Brigid of Kildare, St. Brigid of Ireland or Mary of the Gael, St. Brigid, along with St. Patrick and St. Columba, is a patron saint of Ireland.

Religious scholars believe that St. Brigid was born in the fifth century in Co. Louth, Ireland and that she was responsible for founding several monasteries, including Cill-Dara.

Details concerning St. Brigid's religious life and her role as a prominent leader in the early Irish church can be found throughout St. Patrick's Basilica's interior decorations. For example, a stained-glass window dedicated to this powerful woman is located above the Basilica's Sacred Heart altar. Erected in the 1920s by the Locke Decorative Company, the base of this window depicts St. Brigid receiving her veil from St. Mel. The upper portion of this window portrays the figure of this early Irish Christian nun and clearly denotes her status as an abbess by presenting her holding a crosier. Similarly, an oil painting located in the nearby niches of the Basilica's scoting depicts the Saint holding a miniature monastery, another attribute signifying St. Brigid's standing as founder and superior of a religious community.

St. Brigid, you will find various spellings of her name in the Basilica, is the Patron Saint of dairymaids, midwives, Irish Nuns and newborn babies. Parishioners and visitors who would like to venerate or contemplate the life of St. Brigid can view her relics in the Basilica's reconciliation room.
Jessica Poulin



Source:

St. Patrick's Basilica, Montreal, "A HISTORY OF ST. BRIGID OF KILDARE," Facebook, August 17, 2016, <https://www.facebook.com/stpatricksmtl/>

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