

Carving the Past in Stone: Le Monument aux Patriotes

Rosemary O'Flaherty

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Abstract

Carving the Past in Stone: Le Monument aux Patriotes

Rosemary O'Flaherty

In 1858 the Institut Canadien raised Le Monument aux Patriotes in Montreal's Notre-Dame-des-Neiges Cemetery purportedly to honour those individuals victimized by the rebellions of 1837 and 1838. From the outset, it was a contested memorial. Throughout the two decades following the rebellions, the liberals of the Institut were increasingly at loggerheads with the conservative, ultramontane clergy. Both groups sought to contextualize the rebellions in terms of their respective ideologies in an attempt to define French Canadian identity. The situation climaxed in 1858 when the Bishop of Montreal, Ignace Bourget, unequivocally denounced the Institut.

By raising the Monument, the Institut hoped to create an origin legend for the emerging French Canadian nation, based on the liberal principles inherent in the rebellions, as an enlightened people, complete with a cult of heroes. Locating the Monument in a cemetery, however, spoke to the ambiguity of the Institut's intentions. This rural setting, on consecrated ground, suggests the Institut's need to soften the idiom of liberalism by assuaging ultramontane sensibilities. Similarly, the Monument's puzzling inscriptions beg the question as to what exactly the Institut was trying to commemorate. In the final analysis, the Monument remains today, a contested site of memory.

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Table of Contents

Chapter One:	Introduction	1
Chapter Two:	A Tale of Two Ideologies	5
Chapter Three:	Commemorating Liberalism	40
Chapter Four:	Conclusion: Beyond 1858	80
Bibliography:		84

List of Figures

Figure One:	Le Monument aux Patriotes	42
Figure Two:	Map of Notre-Dame-des-Neiges Cemetery	43
Figure Three:	West Face	46
Figure Four:	South Face	48
Figure Five:	East Face	50
Figure Six:	North Face	54
Figure Seven:	Example of a Bi-directional Face (Southeast Face)	57

Chapter One

Introduction

Le Monument aux Patriotes¹ stands today in a peaceful spot, all but neglected, just inside the main gates of Montreal's Notre-Dame-des-Neiges cemetery. As a memorial to the patriots of the rebellions of 1837-1838, it has never captured the popular imagination. The story of the Monument tells a tale of two ideologies, liberalism and ultramontanism, that competed for ascendancy in Montreal during the mid-nineteenth century.

On the day of its inauguration, Sunday, November 16, 1858, Euclide Roy, President of the Institut Canadien² described how the patriots had opposed the dark forces of tyranny, struggled to rectify trampled rights, and championed menaced liberties. To honour these great men, said Roy, was "le premier devoir d'un peuple éclairé et intelligent."³ The tenor of his speech reflected the Institut's conviction that Enlightenment principles had fuelled the rebellions and represented the genesis of a liberal tradition in Lower Canada. The Institut based its liberalism on the ideas of the French philosophers, Descartes, Lammenais and Voltaire. It embraced the theories of reason, popular sovereignty and the rights of man. The Institut perceived itself as the guardian of this liberalism in Lower Canada and, in raising a monument to the patriots, sought to garner support for the idea of French Canada as an emergent liberal and progressive people.

¹ This thesis designates any further references to Le Monument aux Patriotes as 'Monument'.

² Similarly, any further references to the Institut Canadien will be designated as 'Institut'.

³ Le Pays, 16 novembre 1858.

These liberal thinkers of the Institut were not the rebels of 1837-1838. They were their ideological successors. If the rebellions had failed to spawn a new nation, its legatees aspired to the same end by employing more subtle means. Nation, as applied to French Canada in the mid-nineteenth century, implied a communal legacy established through local and ethnic ties, a national patrimony that superseded the idea of sovereign state.⁴

An emergent nation needs to define itself in concert with, or against some rupture with the past. Roy's speech conscripted the rebellions and the patriots as French Canada's fault line, investing them with a memory that spoke to the sacred birth of a transformed French Canadian nation. By carving the memory of rebellion in stone, the Monument attempted to freeze the story in time to preserve some vestige of the liberal tradition of the 1830s as a legitimate origin legend. As a memorial, it attempted to sculpt public history by creating and perpetuating a collective memory of persons and events. The Institut used the Monument as an avenue by which to impose its views of 1837-1838 on public perceptions of the past, but it was not alone in this attempt.

In the wake of the rebellions and the Act of Union, the liberals of the Institut and the parliamentary party, the Rouges, were among several factions competing to define identity for French Canada. The Bleus party, under the stewardship of Louis-Hippolyte LaFontaine and George-Etienne Cartier, had gradually gained ascendancy in French Canadian politics by "a pragmatic approach to ideology that espoused the values of liberal capitalism while accommodating itself to the social value of the Catholic

⁴ David Lowenthal, Possessed by the Past: The Heritage Crusade and the Spoils of History (New York: Free Press, 1996), 79 & 195.

Church.”⁵ In accommodating the Catholic clergy, the conservative Bleus enlisted the support of the Société Saint-Jean-Baptiste-de-Montréal (SSJBM) as a counterbalance to the social influence of the Institut. The ultramontane Catholic clergy of Lower Canada, led by Bishop Ignace Bourget of Montreal, quickly appreciated the political value of aligning with the Bleus and the SSJBM.

In the post-rebellion era, the clergy in Lower Canada was not ideologically homogeneous, although the two factions that evolved never openly split with each other. The ultramontanes ‘looked over the mountain’ to Rome as the ultimate arbiter of Catholicism and scrupulously abided by all papal directives. Politically conservative, the ultramontanes perceived any form of liberalism as antithetical to ecclesiastical authority. Straddling the Bleus/Rouges divide were the more Gallican Sulpicians. Although in many matters they concurred with the ultramontanes, the Sulpicians allowed for some measure of liberalism in the interpretation of Church affairs, favouring an approach of limited Church autonomy. As long time seigneurs on the Island of Montreal and surrounding areas, the Sulpicians administered the sprawling parish of Notre-Dame that, in the 1850s, included the whole island. By giving the nod to civil government, they hoped to retain administration of the parish. Bourget, however, wanted to wrest control from them and divide the island up into smaller parishes.⁶

⁵ John A. Dickinson and Brian Young, A Short History of Quebec, 2nd ed. (Toronto: Copp Clark Pitman Ltd., 1993), 182.

⁶ Léon Pouliot, S.J., Monseigneur Bourget et Son Temps: Affrontement avec l’Institut Canadien (1858-1870), Tome IV (Montreal, Les Éditions Bellarmin, 1976), 23-24. Ronald Rudin, Founding Fathers: The Celebration of Champlain and Laval in the Streets of Quebec, 1878-1908 (Toronto, Buffalo, London: University of Toronto Press, 2003), 13.

By 1853, when the Institut first conceived the idea of raising a monument to the patriots of 1837-1838, there was a variety of social, political, and religious factions all vying for power in Montreal. As conservative and ultramontane orthodoxy increasingly dominated French Canada, the liberals of the Institut may have hoped to halt this tide of conservatism by preserving a liberal interpretation of the rebellions in stone. The Monument, therefore, attempted to impress upon Montreal's public memory a liberal and enlightened version of French Canada as an emergent nation. To this end, however, it was largely unsuccessful as the prevalence of ultramontane ideology effectively defeated the Monument's purpose in the nineteenth century.

This thesis will look at the Monument as an historical construction by the Institut to impose its views of 1837-1838 on public perceptions of the past. By mid-century, liberalism was in decline and increasingly at loggerheads with the conservative, ultramontane clergy. To understand the impact of these events, the principal issues that created the rift between liberals and ultramontanes will be addressed. Having set the Monument within its ideological context, this thesis will then endeavour to explore the fundamental question of just who or what the Institut had intended to commemorate by raising the Monument.

Chapter Two

A Tale of Two Ideologies

The group of young liberals who founded the Institut Canadien on December 17, 1844 had sought, by its establishment, to provide the citizens of Montreal with a forum for the study of science, languages, and the arts, in effect an informal University of the People. In the mid-nineteenth century, the liberal thrust of the Institut countered that of the conservative and ultramontane positions. This chapter will explore the contours of both liberal and ultramontane thought, along with their similarities and differences.

This exercise will include what the liberals of the Institut believed and what they hoped to accomplish by raising a monument to the patriots of 1837-1838. Pertinent to this discussion is an understanding of how historians have interpreted the Institut and the ways in which this paper adds to previous historical debate of this topic.

Ultramontane thought will be addressed in a similar vein, providing a précis of ultramontane aspirations and ambitions and how these contributed to the Institut's decision to commemorate the patriots. As with the Institut, an analysis of historical writing on the ultramontanes will further enhance comprehension of how the interaction between the two schools of thought affected the raising of the Monument.

The final section of this chapter details the actual conception and raising of the Monument. This should provide the reader with an understanding of how the conflict between the Institut and the ultramontanes shaped the end product, the Monument aux Patriotes.

What was the Institut Canadien?

Prior to the Institut's founding, Montreal's liberal French-speakers believed that the lack of a French-speaking university had hampered their intellectual development. Self-styled liberals, the young men of the Institut espoused Enlightenment principles and admired the French and American varieties of republicanism which they attempted to incorporate into the fabric of their program.¹ As Susan Mann put it, "France had once sent colonists to the new world ... in the nineteenth century she sent ideas ... [and] ... in Montreal, a small group of young intellectuals eagerly took up the programme of European liberalism."²

Nineteenth century literary/social clubs had given the liberals of the emerging bourgeoisie a forum in which to formulate and propagate their political and social aspirations. The Institut Canadien fulfilled this role for French Canada by disseminating and popularizing the values of liberalism and democracy. The Institut's program of public lectures encouraged the growth of social and cultural association within an urban framework, and gave liberalism a new venue that allowed the development of a socio-cultural public life amongst Montreal francophones. For the generation of the 1840s these public lectures became what the ex-patriot Edouard-Raymond Fabre's bookstore

¹Yvan Lamonde, "La bibliothèque de l'Institut Canadien de Montréal (1852-1876): Pour une analyse multidimensionnelle," Revue d'histoire de l'Amérique française 41, no. 3 (été 1987): 356-357.

²Nancy Susan Robertson, The Institut Canadien: An Essay in Cultural History, Unpublished MA Thesis (London, ON: The University of Western Ontario, 1965), 23. When writing her MA thesis in 1965, Susan Mann wrote under the name "Nancy Susan Robertson." Mann's subsequent work has been variously published under the names "Susan Mann" and "Susan Mann Trofimenkoff." This paper will use the name "Susan Mann" except where citations require one of the other variations.

had been to the previous generation, “le rendez-vous par excellence de l’élite nationaliste ... le centre permanent du groupe patriote ... centre de divers réseaux de communication, d’information et de ressources.”³ Quebec intellectual historian Yvan Lamonde viewed associations like the Institut in the context of similar social-cum-literary societies that proliferated in the nineteenth century like the Scottish and English Mechanics’ Institutes and the lyceums and athenaeums of the United States. He maintained that these institutions heralded a new public life within the embryonic urban milieu, which he called the associative life.

Lamonde saw such institutions as catalytic in the rise of the associative life and its concomitant clubs and he found their basis in liberalism. He defined liberalism, in this context, as the autonomy of lay control and, in terms of the Institut, he valorized the independence of its library as well as its pioneering forays into diversified lecture topics. Lamonde saw the Institut’s lecture series as a project that served the new urban society by responding to the disjunctions and ruptures caused by the rapidity of the Industrial Revolution. By promoting the principles of freedom of association, Lamonde contended that the Institut breathed new life into liberalism following the failure of the rebellions.⁴

Graduates of the Catholic colleges in Lower Canada, the liberals of the Institut were, by and large, the sons of farmers and seigneurs who identified themselves as heirs to the patriotic tradition with which they invested the rebellions. They believed that the

³ Roger D. Parent, “Duvernay le magnifique,” in Le Centenaire du Barreau de Montréal 1849-1949, eds., Pierre Beullac and E. Fabre Surveyer (Montreal: Ducharme, 1949), 55.

⁴ Yvan Lamonde, Gens de Parole: conférences publiques, essais et débats à l’Institut Canadien de Montréal, 1845-1871 (Montréal: Les Éditions du Boréal, 1990), 66.

rebellions of 1837 and 1838 had amounted to a political struggle for self-determination, which they interpreted as the genesis of a French Canadian radical tradition.⁵ They located this self-conscious choice within the group context of the Institut adopting an ethos of “la survivance,”⁶ a sacrificial struggle for the survival of a liberal cause. The Institut assumed the role as the self-appointed guardian of that cause.⁷

The Institut, the Rouges, and their journalistic mouthpiece, Le Pays, imputed to the rebellions a liberal and patriotic tradition, while minimizing any religious interpretation. Understanding the liberal and anti-clerical thrust of the Institut, however, should not be confused with anti-Catholicism. The liberals of the Institut were quintessentially Catholic, driven by a largely Catholic agenda. Léon Pouliot, in his Monseigneur Bourget et Son Temps: Affrontement avec l’Institut Canadien, 1858-1870, recognized the importance of the Catholic character of the Institut. Whereas earlier historians such as Mann and Philippe Sylvain had defined the Institut solely in its role of opposing the ultramontanes, Pouliot adopted a more pan-Catholic stance, suggesting religion as the national common denominator for French Catholics. He applauded the liberals of the Institut for celebrating French intellectual life and establishing, “une école de chefs, les chefs de demain”⁸ as well as its efforts in cultivating literature, the arts, history and science, and admired both its brilliant administrative ability and passion for ideals. Pouliot praised Louis-Joseph Papineau and maintained that the spirit of liberalism

⁵ Robertson, iii, 105, 146.

⁶ Ibid., v, 8.

⁷ Robert Rumilly, Histoire de la Société Saint-Jean-Baptiste de Montréal: Des Patriotes au Fleurdelisé 1834-1948 (Montréal: Les Éditions de l’Aurore, 1975), 79.

⁸ Pouliot, 15.

fostered by the Institut represented a regeneration of Papineau's efforts to defend Lower Canada's rights and aspirations.⁹

Pouliot did not see the ensuing confrontation between the Institut and the ultramontanes as one of liberalism versus ultramontanism nor did he perceive it in terms of competing varieties of nationalism. He understood the split within the Institut, which was to occur in the spring of 1858, as a quarrel internal to the Institut between moderate and radical liberals. Pouliot believed that the only nationalism in French Canada was Catholic nationalism, and not necessarily the ultramontane variety, which included room for moderate liberalism.¹⁰

The Institut was undoubtedly Catholic. That its particular brand of nationalism incorporated Catholicism is central to the argument of this thesis. As Lamonde has pointed out, the Institut aspired to promote liberalism within a more enlightened Catholicism.¹¹ The Institut believed that the liberalism it ascribed to the patriots fulfilled a part of this agenda. Memorializing them in a funereal manner could surround them with a holy and sacred character that bespoke their Catholicism. It was this blend of liberalism and Catholicism that led the Institut to consider raising a monument to the patriots.

Giving a public lecture before the Institut in 1852 on the political heroes of Lower Canada, Charles Laberge reconstituted the past within the parameters of the Institut's current program. Laberge idealized the Patriot leaders of the Assembly in the 1830s as paragons of liberal virtue with the altruistic goal of securing political and social rights for

⁹ Ibid., 16-19.

¹⁰ Ibid., 7, 16-17, 41, 76.

¹¹ Yvan Lamonde, Louis-Antoine Dessaulles: Un seigneur libéral et anticlérical (Éditions Fides, 1994), 25.

Lower Canada. He characterized the rebellions as selfless struggles, informed by both liberal ideals and patriotism.¹² The religious and conservative newspaper, La Minerve, was quick to respond to what it considered a profanation of the sacred. In the 1830s, La Minerve, under the direction of Patriot, Ludger Duvernay, had been loud in its support of the patriots. By the 1850s, however, La Minerve had moved toward the political right and was now anxious to shed its liberal image. It ridiculed the nostalgic sentimentality of Laberge's lecture by dissecting the contemporary platform of the Rouges that unmistakably revealed an agenda as radical and anti-clerical as that of their Patriot predecessors. According to La Minerve, the Institut program consisted of abolition of the tithe, representation by population, repeal of the union, an elected magistrature, an elected governor, and total annexation to the United States. Within the conservative temper of the times, the Institut needed a major coup-de-main to counteract La Minerve's damaging exposition and realign its liberal program with the emerging popular patterns of nationalism and patriotism under a religious umbrella.¹³

The Institut's opportunity arose at a séance extraordinaire held on June 7, 1853 to consider various avenues by which to commemorate the heroes of 1837 and 1838. The Institut members voted at this séance to erect tombstones or monuments in honour of those who had lost their lives or been otherwise victimized during, and in the wake of, the rebellions. The Institut intended the proposed memorial to transmit to posterity the

¹² Jean-Paul Bernard, Les Rouges: Libéralisme, Nationalisme et Anticléricalisme au milieu du XIX^e Siècle (Montréal: Les Presses de L'Université du Québec, 1971), 110.

¹³ Ibid., 106, 110; La Minerve, 9 avril 1853.

devotion of the rebels to their country. To this end, the séance established a Monument Committee to raise funds for the proposed project.¹⁴

Other branches of the Institut throughout Lower Canada, in particular those of Trois-Rivières and Quebec City, supported this endeavour, but adamantly expressed their belief that the undertaking refrain from assuming a partisan, political character but speak instead to all Canadians. These other Instituts concurred in the belief that the proposed memorial must remind future generations that the martyrs of 1837 and 1838 should not be forgotten. Le Pays concluded its plea by reminding its readers that these patriots had chosen death in order to leave a legacy of liberty; to forget them would be to dishonour them. The memorial would commemorate those who died in defense of political freedom as well as those who mounted the scaffold as a noble and generous sacrifice to preserve liberty for their French Catholic compatriots.¹⁵ In the end, it was to become much more than this.

The rebellions became to the Institut, therefore, the fault line for the emergence of French Canadian nationalism and a defining moment in nation building. The liberals of the Institut portrayed the rebellions as a moment of crisis indicative of an emerging national will. The rebellions represented a cleavage that divorced them from the strictures of the ancien régime and by which they embraced Enlightenment principles. The Institut was a bourgeois foray into liberalism that attempted to employ emerging nationalism as a rallying point for its agenda.

¹⁴ Le Pays, 9 juin 1853; BFHL, Fonds 6, 6.11 (10 juin 1853).

¹⁵ Le Pays, 11 juin 1853; 6 août 1853.

Who were the Ultramontanes?

In the aftermath of the rebellions, the early 1840s saw a period of relative political calm. With the ink still fresh on the Act uniting the two provinces of Canada, the various factions vying for the soul of Lower Canada kept a low profile. None wished to be precipitate in word or action, thereby threatening their chances to win popular ratification. All wrestled with interpreting the memory of the rebellions in a palatable way. The Bleus initially straddled the two extreme camps of ultramontane and Institut in an effort to forge a viable collective identity that would distinguish the French Canadian nation. All of the French-speaking factions in Lower Canada, which had experienced the trauma of rebellion, faced the fear of having their language, religion, and laws absorbed by the union with Upper Canada. This common fear spoke to emergent concepts of nationalism and community and created unanimity in the belief that the Act of Union (1840) was a unifying curse for French Lower Canada, endangering the essence of its nationality, “notre langue, nos moeurs et nos droits.”¹⁶ As a definition of French Canadian nationalism, these sentiments had the potential to unify French Lower Canada but, as Lamonde contended, the varying interpretations of the mores and rights could just as easily divide.¹⁷

Like the Institut, the Church strongly opposed the Union on the basis that Lord Durham’s report had sought to assimilate French Canadian Catholics.¹⁸ The Church defined French Canadian nationalism as “la religion, le catholicisme d’abord, puis la

¹⁶ Le Canadien, 27 janvier 1840.

¹⁷ Yvan Lamonde, Histoire Sociale des Idées au Québec (1760-1896), Volume 1 (Les Éditions Fides, 2000), 285.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 285.

patrie. ...le Canada sans catholicisme c'est un drapeau sans couleur [...]. Car ce ne sont pas des frontières ni même des lois et des administrations politiques et civiles qui font une nationalité, c'est une religion, une langue, un caractère national. Pour l'Eglise, c'est, parce que nous sommes catholique que nous sommes une nation en ce coin d'Amérique."¹⁹ While the Institut shared the ultramontane fear of assimilation, it preferred a much less obviously clerical approach. Although the two ideologies frequently clashed, they nevertheless shared common ground and were not averse to accommodating each other when the situation warranted.

Although the constitution of 1791 had curtailed the Church's legal powers, it had regained some of them by its loyalty to the crown during the rebellions.²⁰ Bourget had to move quickly to consolidate those gains to ensure they did not fall victim to the assimilationists. He needed to present the Church in Lower Canada in the light of real and perceived authority. If he could deliver peace and order to the British Colonial Office, he could quell support for assimilation. Bourget perceived liberalism, as represented by the Institut, as a cradle of social unrest that might foment further civil disobedience. Bourget, therefore, had to contain the Institut's pretensions to liberalism.

The societal changes occasioned by rebellion in both America and Europe crystallized the ultramontane determination to augment both spiritual and temporal spheres of influence. The newly appointed Bishop of Montreal, Ignace Bourget, discerned the similarities between the Patriot agenda in the 1830s and that of the Institut in the 1840s which resulted in his perception that the Institut was little more than a thinly

¹⁹ Les Mélanges Religieux, 26 novembre 1842.

²⁰ Lamonde, Histoire Sociale des Idées, 288.

disguised version of the Patriot party of the 1830s.²¹ La Minerve, trying to dissociate itself from its rebellion-era radicalism, reinterpreted the rebellions in keeping with the ultramontane version where “le grand parti canadien-français d’avant 1837 avait combattu pour Dieu et ses foyers, pour la religion et la nationalité et il n’avait rien de commun avec le parti libéral du jour.”²² The Bishops of Montreal and Quebec concurred wholeheartedly with La Minerve in the firm belief that hearth, home, religion and nationality should properly come under the auspices of the clergy.²³

To this end, Bourget enticed a plethora of religious orders, both male and female, from France to Lower Canada. This move energized the Canadian Church and, throughout the 1840s, vocations for both the priesthood and religious orders multiplied rapidly with the ordination of secular priests doubling between 1844 and 1848. To counter the nefarious effects of secular education programs such as the Institut had undertaken, Bourget established parish libraries and introduced a journalistic voice for the Diocese of Montreal, Les Mélanges Religieux (1841-1852). To ensure his message was received at the parish level, Bourget introduced a program of parish retreats and parish missions which began, perhaps unfortunately, under the direction of l’abbé Charles Chiniqy.²⁴

²¹ Lamonde, Gens de Parole, 113. Robertson, 84-85.

²² Bernard, Rouges, 159.

²³ Ibid., 160.

²⁴ In the 1840s, Charles Chiniqy, a charismatic but eccentric Roman Catholic priest, appeared as the great apostle of temperance in Lower Canada. By 1848, he had become Bourget’s chief lieutenant in the crusade against alcohol and succeeded in linking the temperance campaign to the national survival of French Canada. Bourget, however, received repeated reports of sexual misconduct on Chiniqy’s part and, in 1851, ordered Chiniqy to cease his mission work in Montreal. Chiniqy continued his pastoral work in Kankakee, Illinois within the Chicago diocese where he was ultimately

Chiniquy notwithstanding, Bourget's religious revival took its toll on the currency of liberal thought. The French Catholics of Lower Canada rallied to La Minerve's position that the Church alone had the competence to uphold the cherished values of hearth, home, religion and nationality. As Lamonde pointed out, the Catholic population perceived, with contentment and pride, that Bourget's religious revival had resulted in a triumphant reflowering of Catholicism.²⁵ Lamonde's contention stands in stark contrast to that of historian Philippe Sylvain. While Sylvain clearly saw the Institut as the standard-bearer of liberal thought, he presented the ultramontane wing of the Church as a moribund institution desperately trying to conserve its power and privilege. The achievements of Montreal's clergy in the mid-nineteenth century, as documented above, do not lend credence to Sylvain's conclusions. Neither, however, does Lamonde's idea that the blossoming of nineteenth century Catholicism suffocated liberalism, preclude the fact that the liberals of the Institut continued to attract and maintain a certain level of support in Lower Canada.²⁶

As the 1840s drew to a close, the two primary groups contending to dominate

excommunicated. After his excommunication from the Church in 1856, Chiniquy converted to Presbyterianism, married, and returned to Canada where he devoted himself to writing and lecturing against the Catholic Church. Chiniquy's book The Priest, the Woman and the Confessional is now banned in Canada as hate literature. (Sources: J. Noel, "Dry Patriotism: The Chiniquy Crusade" Canadian Historical Review, LXXI, no. 2 (1990), pp. 189-207; R. Douglas Francis, Richard Jones, and Donald B. Smith, Origins: Canadian History to Confederation, 2nd ed. (Toronto: Harcourt & Brace Company, Canada, 1992), 306-307.

²⁵ Lamonde, Histoire Sociale des Idées, 288.

²⁶ Philippe Sylvain, "Libéralisme et ultramontanisme au Canada français: affrontement idéologique et doctrinal (1840-1865)" in The Shield of Achilles: Aspects of Canada in the Victorian Age, ed. W.L. Morton (Toronto/Montreal: McClelland and Stewart Limited, 1968), 24; Lamonde, Gens, 66.

Lower Canada were the ultramontane clergy, with the tacit support of the Bleus, the SSJBM and La Minerve, and the liberals of the Institut, backed by the Rouges and, later, Le Pays. Both groups wanted to attain the hegemony in Lower Canada within the relatively new political structure of Responsible Government, as yet uncharted political and social territory. Initially, neither faction had the upper hand in Lower Canada but both gradually came to understand and appreciate that the period of rebellion had forever changed Lower Canada's self-image.

The ensuing clash in the late 1850s between Institut and ultramontanes would be a battle for the contested terrain of emerging nationalism. Both parties sought to strengthen their respective positions by using different versions of the rebellions to justify present realities. The ultramontanes were determined to undermine the Institut's efforts to revive the liberal thought that had fuelled the spirit of 1837 and 1838. In the nineteenth century, therefore, it would be the ultramontane Church, rather than the Institut that emerged as the premier national institution and the primary defender of French Canadian nationalism.²⁷

Into the Fray

By the early 1850s, memories of the rebellions were beginning to blur at the margins and both liberals and ultramontanes recognized this as an opportunity to refashion the events of 1837 and 1838 after their own philosophical and political inclinations. The ultramontanes presented their case without ambiguity; language,

²⁷ Lamonde, Gens, 66.

religion, and law under the auspices of ecclesiastical authority formed the basis of the French Canadian nation. Their position was not negotiable. The Institut, however, refused to countenance this blatant clerical encroachment upon patently civil territory. Church and State should remain separate, respecting each other's mutually exclusive spheres of influence. The Institut believed that the liberalism that had swept Europe and America in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries must triumph in the nascent French Canadian nation.

La Minerve remained firmly entrenched in the Bleu and ultramontane camp and continued to defend the mingling of religion and politics as coming "de Dieu: elles sont soeurs, elles sont grandes et sublimes unies; mais quelle anarchie quand l'ambition ou la jalousie les sépare!"²⁸ It perceived any attempt at separation of Church and state as a by-product of secular ambition, the result of which would be social anarchy. It viewed the liberal agenda to separate church and state as impious, abusive, and insulting to the clergy.²⁹ Le Pays, on the other hand, argued that, despite the defeat of the rebellions, the events of the 1830s had succeeded in creating an irreparable rupture between past and present where the liberty of popular sovereignty had now superseded divine right. "Le Pays estime bientôt qu'il ne fallait pas se dissimuler que la lutte engagée au Canada n'était pas entre whig et tory ... mais entre le passé et l'avenir, entre l'autorité de droit divin et la souveraineté populaire, entre le despotisme et la liberté."³⁰

Sylvain drew parallels between Lower Canada and the mid-nineteenth century

²⁸ La Minerve, 27 juin 1857.

²⁹ Lamonde, Histoire Sociale des Idées, 232.

³⁰ Bernard, Rouges, 140; Le Pays, 11 juillet 1857.

drive for Italian unification with respect to the separation of Church and state. He viewed Italian unification as the showpiece of liberalism in the nineteenth century. The Italian liberals, in aspiring to nationhood, had hoped to denude the Papacy of its temporal possessions and deprive the Church of all temporal power in Italy.³¹ Herein lay the essence of the situation for the liberals in Lower Canada; to divorce the civil state from the episcopal state.

Sylvain made the salient point that the reign of Pope Pius IX, between 1846 and 1878, had spanned the period of struggle for Italian unification (known as the Risorgimento in Italian history between the years 1815 and 1870), and also coincided with the leadership of Ignace Bourget as Bishop of Montreal (1840-1877).³² Both Sylvain and Lovell Clark perceived that the complementary careers of Bourget and Pius IX had significant ramifications for the situation between the Institut and ultramontanes. "... it was because Bishop Bourget's attention was fixed upon the turbulent European scene, and upon the plight of his beloved Pontiff, that he sought to insulate his people from what he considered to be the subversive and dangerous ideas responsible for such conditions. It was for the same reason that he saw the Institut Canadien as a threat to French Canadian society."³³ As Italian unification got under way, it encouraged the liberals of the Institut who wished to emulate it in a variety of ways. The fledgling Italian nation-state was emerging from under the thumb of the Papacy and the Austro-Hungarian

³¹ Sylvain, 116.

³² Ibid., 111; Peter Gay and R.K. Webb, Modern Europe (New York: Harper & Row, 1973), 775.

³³ Lovell C. Clark, preface to Lovell C. Clark, ed., The Guibord Affair: Canadian History Through the Press Series. (Toronto, Montreal: Holt, Rinehart and Winston of Canada, Limited, 1971), xvi.

Empire, complete with an origin legend and a slate of national heroes. The Institut needed to find its Cavour, Garibaldi and Mazzini. It found them in the patriots, and chose to celebrate their memory on a monument that would read as a history lesson set in stone.

While the storm clouds gathered between the Institut and the ultramontanes, the respective positions of Le Pays and La Minerve became polarized. As the debate escalated, La Minerve spent its energy demonstrating that the liberals of the Institut and Le Pays aspired to undermine and, if possible, destroy Catholicism. The liberals continued to object to the clerical interpretation of nationalism, which appeared to sanction national dependence on clerical authority. As Jean-Paul Bernard saw it, “De fait, la caractéristique la plus nette du libéralisme canadien-français était l’indépendance devant un clergé qu’il estimait trop porté à bénir le conservatisme et à exercer son influence en dehors de la religion.”³⁴ If the intransigence of the liberals irritated the conservative ultramontanes, so also ultramontane intransigence irritated the liberals, their disparate positions having the flavour of a folie à deux.³⁵

The crux of contention between the ultramontanes and the Institut was that both wished to impose their philosophy ‘à la cité.’ The protagonists attempted to demonstrate the authenticity of their respective ideologies by enlisting constructions of the past that validated present arguments. Memory speaks, however, to what is forgotten as well as to what is remembered. The conservative clergy attempted to displace the memory of the rebellions as a moment of secular freedom with another memory, that opposition to duly constituted authority had resulted in death, execution, and exile. In contrast, the liberals

³⁴ Bernard, Rouges, 138-139.

³⁵ Ibid., 141.

of the Institut, anxious for popular ratification of enlightened liberal ideals, reminded the public that it was to attain these very ideals that the rebellions had been fought.³⁶

Bearing these constraints in mind, the ultramontanes and the Institut each endeavoured to represent the past in terms of their own ideology. Both needed to package a foundation legend that could weave the past into a collective identity for the emergent French Canadian nation. Ultimately, the period of rebellion had produced disenchantment. In order to displace this negative connotation, the Institut needed to sacralize the events of the 1830s with layers of myth. Insisting on the heroism of the past seemed the best antidote to a murky, uncertain future.³⁷

This troubled relationship between the ultramontanes and the Institut continued to deteriorate throughout the decade of the 1850s, their differences ever widening. The tone of politics in Lower Canada changed perceptibly, waxing more conservative and ultramontane, and casting suspicion on liberal initiatives. The brief resurrection between 1855 and 1857 of the radically liberal *l'Avenir* had tainted the efforts of the more moderate liberals to present their cause as a viable alternative to conservative ultramontanism.³⁸ Perhaps *Le Pays*' more measured approach better represented

³⁶ L.K. Dritz, foreword to *Realms of Memory: Rethinking the French Past* Volume I: *Conflicts and Divisions* by Pierre Nora (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992), ix.

³⁷ Nora, 7-8.

³⁸ Although moderate in tone at its inception in 1847, *l'Avenir*, under the stewardship of editor, Jean-Baptiste Eric Dorion, 'l'enfant terrible' of mid-century Lower Canada, became embroiled in a quarrel with *Les Mélanges Religieux*. This heralded a change in editorial policy toward radical liberalism and anti-clericalism. *l'Avenir* emulated the tone, style and virulence characteristic of the French philosopher Lammenais' journal, also called *l'Avenir*. (André Beaulieu and Jean Hamelin, *Les Journaux du Québec de 1764 à 1964*, *Les Cahiers de l'Institut d'Histoire* 6 [Québec: Les Presses de l'Université Laval, 1965], 60.)

liberalism in the 1850s but the radical politics of l'Avenir forced Le Pays to chart a careful course through the labyrinth of political and religious opinion.

With the disappearance of l'Avenir, the appellations rouges and liberal became synonymous with Le Pays and the Institut. The radicalism of l'Avenir had provided a foil against which the Institut and Le Pays could be judged moderate liberals. The Institut now became the sole focus of contention between the liberals and the ultramontanes, "Dans la mesure où l'on s'accorde pour affirmer que l'Institut Canadien de Montréal fut le foyer de l'opposition entre libéraux et ultramontains."³⁹

The vituperative quarrel between the ultramontanes and the liberals of the Institut eventually focused upon the question of the Institut's library. Although there had been earlier rumblings about the library, by 1854 Bishop Bourget began warning the faithful about the imminent danger posed by the Institut, "Pour être tenu à suivre cette directive dans la pratique, l'on attendra que le Supérieur ecclésiastique ait signalé l'institut qu'il juge dangereux dans le sens dont il vient d'être parlé."⁴⁰

Early in 1855, the clergy in Lower Canada had begun to press Bishop Bourget to officially condemn the Institut library. Sensitive to the political and social consequences of antagonizing the clergy, the Institut launched an initiative in the spring of 1855 to reform its library and remove any books or journals which the clergy might deem deleterious to good moral health. These exertions on behalf of self-regulation foundered against the intractability of liberal opinion and, by the spring of 1858, the continued

³⁹ Yvan Lamonde, "Les Archives de l'Institut Canadien de Montréal (1844-1900): historique et inventaire," Revue d'Histoire de l'Amérique française 28 (1 juin 1974), 80.

⁴⁰ Pouliot, 20.

obduracy of the Institut left Bishop Bourget little recourse but to defer to the clamouring of his clergy for a confrontation with the Institut.⁴¹

If, as Sylvain has averred, liberal revolution and conservative counter-revolution dominated the discourse of the mid- nineteenth century then, in Montreal, the Institut represented the former and the Church, the latter. This confrontation took the form of three pastoral letters issued by Bourget. The first letter, issued March 10, 1858, warned that literary institutes should divest themselves of any literature that the Church construed as contrary to faith and good morals. It adamantly asserted that the dissemination of bad books was a catalyst for revolution in both Europe and North American. Bourget's letter cited Gregory XVI's encyclical of August 15, 1832, *Mirari Vos*, which had vilified liberalism and the attendant pursuit of intellectual freedom as twin evils that promoted rejection of the Church as a legitimate power in the civil state. While Bourget's letter did not specifically target the Institut, the tone of his pastoral letter left no doubt against whom this missive was directed.⁴²

La Minerve responded with barely disguised delight to Bourget's pastoral letter, publishing judicious excerpts from it that vindicated past inferences that the Institut was a viper indeed. For example, "Quand la voix imposante d'un évêque se fait entendre pour dénoncer un mal qui commence à se glisser dans son troupeau; quand, empruntant une

⁴¹ LPME, 21; Sylvain, 132.

⁴² Yvan Lamonde, "La bibliothèque de l'Institut Canadien de Montréal (1852-1876): Pour une analyse multidimensionnelle," Revue d'histoire de l'Amérique française 41, no. 3 (été 1987), 338; Sylvain, II, 221, 224; Anne Fremantle, The Papal encyclicals in their Historical Context (New York, The New American Library, 1956), 127-128.

double force aux paroles tombées de la bouche même du Vicaire de J.-C. (sic), il démasque l'erreur qui va bientôt lever la tête, c'est que le danger est imminent."⁴³

Unable to ignore Bourget's veiled threat, the Institut announced in Le Pays that a séance extraordinaire would be held on April 13. This séance purported to investigate the library to determine if there was any substance to the accusation that it harboured literature of an obscene or morally detrimental nature. Member Pierre Blanchet, former editor of l'Avenir, tabled a proposal to the effect that: (1) the success of the Institut Canadien had aroused the jealousy and hatred of the enemies of progress who sought to suppress the development of human intelligence; (2) these said sworn enemies were in fact enraged because they had never had the foresight or initiative to establish a library or a forum for discussion for the population; (3) the Institut's sworn enemies had the temerity to organize rival institutes with the sole goal of decapitating intellectual progress; and (4) the Institut had a noble mission and had always acted with scrupulous solicitude that its library should be exclusively composed of books that were moral, scientific, philosophical, historical and nourished the development of intelligence.⁴⁴ The assembly ratified Blanchet's proposal by a close vote of 110 to 88 and issued a blanket declaration. "Il soutient que l'Institut a toujours été et est seul compétent à juger de la moralité de sa bibliothèque et qu'il est capable d'en prendre l'administration sans l'intervention d'influences étrangères."⁴⁵

Whether from conviction or fear of clerical reprisal, those members of the Institut

⁴³ Ibid., 30.

⁴⁴ Le Pays, 15 avril 1858.

⁴⁵ Pouliot, 31.

who had voted against Blanchet's proposal tendered their resignations in a letter published in Le Pays on April 22, 1858. This collective letter of resignation protested the presence in the Institut library of irreligious and immoral literature that encouraged "des idées les plus absurdes en fait de religion, de morale et de nationalité."⁴⁶ Curiously, the letter of resignation carried 138 signatures when only 88 had actually voted against Blanchet's proposal. Perhaps, as Pouliot speculated, some members of the Institut may have abstained from either voting or attending the séance extraordinaire of April 13 hoping that the conflict would be amicably resolved. The language in which Blanchet had framed his proposal, however, quashed any such compromise.⁴⁷

Those who resigned perceived Bourget's request to purge the library as reasonable and viewed the Institut's reaction as paranoid. As La Minerve put it, "Aveuglés par de grands mots sur la liberté que personne n'attaquait, les membres de la majorité ont poussé l'oubli de la justice et de la raison jusqu'à se refuser à eux-mêmes le droit de s'enquérir de la vérité des faits que nous avons allégués et que nous avons offert de prouver relativement à la bibliothèque."⁴⁸ These conscientious objectors dissolved their association with the Institut with the serious allegation that it jeopardized religion, morals, nationality and the youth of the country.⁴⁹

Shortly thereafter, the Superior of the Sulpicians, in an attempt to diffuse the liberal propaganda of Le Pays and the Institut, established a second literary institut, Le Cabinet de Lecture. The new Cabinet pursued the Institut's goal of public instruction but

⁴⁶ Le Pays, 24 avril 1858.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 22 avril 1858; Pouliot, 32.

⁴⁸ La Minerve, 24 avril 1858.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

discreetly abstained from the kind of political affiliation that the clergy believed had so corrupted the Institut and rendered it lethal to Catholic doctrine. This newly minted Cabinet spawned yet another literary-social club, the Institut Canadien Français (ICF) which welcomed the fealty of the 138 resignees. The Church equipped both Le Cabinet and the ICF with their own libraries and publicly supported their conferences which espoused a French Canadian nationalism rooted in the version of national and religious tradition favoured by the ultramontanes.⁵⁰

The Bishop of Montreal responded quickly and brutally to the Institut's effrontery at insisting that it was the sole, competent judge of its own library. In contrast to his rather low key and understated letter of March 10, Bourget's second pastoral letter of April 30, 1858 thundered against the Institut and its library. Bourget stated that a comparison of the Institut Catalogue of 1852 with the Church's Index⁵¹ had uncovered a plethora of condemned volumes that contributed to a climate of low morality. As the head of the Church in Montreal, Bourget considered himself justified in publicly excoriating this blight. Although Bourget's threats to excommunicate and withhold absolution from anyone who refused to submit to the episcopal directives may have seemed draconian to some, the tone of his pastoral letter suggests his readiness to retreat from the brink of open warfare should the Institut gave some indication of conciliation.⁵²

⁵⁰ Le Pays, 15 avril 1858; Pouliot, 37.

⁵¹ The Church had instituted the Congregation of the Index to investigate suspect publications and, when deemed unfavourable by the Pontiff, these publications were entered into the catalogue of the Index. By virtue of the prescriptions of the Council of Trent, 1545-1563, the simple fact of possessing, reading, selling or communicating one of the prohibited books was an error so grave that it entailed excommunication without respite unless directly removed by the Bishop. (Fremantle, 17, 123).

⁵² Pouliot, 35; Lamonde, Bibliothèque, 340; Le Pays, 24 avril 1848; LPME, 35.

Although guilty in the courts of both clerical and public opinion, the Institut neither retracted Blanchet's proposal, nor capitulated to Bourget's directives. By taking no action the Institut had, once again, upped the ante, resulting in Bourget's final pastoral letter of May 31, 1858. This letter once again attacked the Institut library, this time by directing its ire towards the Institut's faithful supporter, Le Pays, as an irreligious and heretical newspaper that propagated the great liberal error that the separation of Church and state must obtain.⁵³

The Institut formed a committee of four members: Emery Coderre, Joseph Doutre, Wilfrid Laurier and Louis-Antoine Dessaulles to de-escalate the quarrel with Bourget and negotiate a mutually acceptable solution. The Committee suggested the Institut submit its catalogue to Bourget who could then specifically indicate which books he found objectionable, but Bourget ignored the olive branch. As long as Blanchet's proposal of April 13, 1858 remained in effect, Bourget resisted all efforts at détente.⁵⁴

The quarrel between Church and Institut in the spring of 1858 had degenerated into an internecine verbal war of condemnations and counter-condemnations. Despite the 138 resignations and the condemnation of both Bishop and Rome, the liberal bourgeoisie persevered in resisting the anti-liberal thrust of the ultramontanes. Clerical condemnation of the Institut library notwithstanding, the library continued to thrive, its percentage of titles tripling between 1852 and 1876 so that ordinary citizens continued to borrow and

⁵³ Lamonde, Bibliothèque, 340; LPME, 35.

⁵⁴ Pouliot, 38-39.

read these books. Here were two factions warring within the bosom of a single nationality for the right to define that nationality.⁵⁵

In Les Rouges: Libéralisme, Nationalisme et Anticléricalisme au milieu du XIX^e Siècle, Jean-Paul Bernard concentrated his discussion on these two varieties of nationalism, liberalism and ultramontanism. In weighing arguments on behalf of both schools of thought, Bernard tried to disentangle the different perspectives on nationalism and how this shaped French Canadian identity. He maintained that the growing rift between the Institut and the ultramontane clergy seriously jeopardized the future of French Canadian liberalism. Like Mann, he viewed the liberal-ultramontane showdown in terms of ideological polarization. Unlike Mann, however, he saw this polarization as an intellectual rather than a partisan one, whereby he perceived the antagonism between the two ideologies as contingent upon the intransigence of both parties.

Bernard focused on liberalism as a quest to define French Canadian identity. Lamonde, however, maintained that defining identity was not initially on the agenda of the liberals. Rather they were drawn into a nationalist debate by the ultramontanes. Lamonde saw the Institut as liberal and anti-clerical with republican leanings, determined to separate the religious and civil orders.⁵⁶ As the ultramontane clergy waxed ever more conservative and insular, it became imperative for the Institut to clearly define what its liberalism meant. Lamonde described the texture of ultramontane nationalism as Catholic first, then francophone and rural. He saw the nationalism and liberalism of the

⁵⁵ Lamonde, Bibliothèque, 357-357.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

Institut as informed by a more international perspective and broad knowledge of current events.⁵⁷

Ultimately Lamonde concluded that the Institut did not succeed in placating the ultramontanes, which spelled the defeat of the Institut's radical liberalism in the latter half of the nineteenth century. Following Confederation, Lamonde maintained that the Rouges adopted a more moderate liberalism that could co-exist with Catholicism. Here was the enlightened Catholicism that Pouliot had argued could accommodate liberalism.

In the late 1850s, however, the two groups were still engaged in a duel for ascendancy. In the absence of firm evidence, it is tempting to speculate whether the differences between the ultramontanes and the Institut in the spring of 1858 fuelled the Institut's decision to proceed with its plans to raise a monument to the patriots. The project had, after all, been stalled in the planning stage since 1853. The Institut sensed that it was losing the contest with the ultramontanes to impose its liberal philosophy on the Lower Canadian French-speaking population. It needed an unambiguous statement signifying that liberalism did not necessarily impinge upon the religious or moral tone of the province. A monument to the patriots of 1837 and 1838 could potentially create a liberal foundation legend. The difficult part would be to present these patriot heroes of French Canada as complementary to the ultramontane refrain of hearth, home, and religion as the core of the rebellions and the basis for the emerging French Canadian nation.

⁵⁷ Lamonde, *Gens*, 6, 49, 60, 79.

Raising the Monument

In planning to raise a monument to the heroes of the past, whether living or dead, the Institut began to weave its tapestry of a liberal, patriotic foundation legend. By imbuing 1837 and 1838 with a cult of heroes, the Institut could possibly provide French Canada with a heroic past, a coherent narrative for national unity, and a touchstone for the spiritual ancestors of the French Canadian nation. Commemorating the patriots as revered ancestors sacralized the national character and sublimated years of conquest, fealty to a foreign empire, and subservience to a Church that seemed to collude with that empire.⁵⁸

The original plans conceived in 1853 had called for the erection of three separate monuments; the first, in Montreal, would honour the memory of those who had been executed, the second, in Saint-Denis, would be dedicated to the memory of those who had perished on the South Shore, while the third monument, in Saint-Eustache, would mark the sacrifice of the patriots on the North Shore.⁵⁹ Eventually, for lack of funds, the Institut scuttled the idea of a triple commemoration organized along geographic lines in favour of a single monument. This tripartite concept for the memorial would resurface later and form the organizing principle for the memorial plaques on the final version of the Monument in Notre-Dame-des-Neiges.

Raising this Monument was an exercise in rearranging perceptions of the past by using the crisis of rebellion as a rallying point. In the 1850s, the particular account of the rebellions remembered was crucial to furthering the interests of both the ultramontanes

⁵⁸ Dritz, ix.

⁵⁹ BFHL, Fonds 6, 6.10, 20 (juin 1853).

and the Institut. Commemoration provided an avenue by which to keep the memory of liberalism alive. The task for the Institut was, therefore, to influence public memory.

In a theoretical way, Maurice Halbwachs and Pierre Nora have addressed many of the issues the Institut faced in its task to impose a specific set of memories. They investigated how individuals and societies remember the past. Halbwachs distinguished between autobiographical memory, the memory of things personally experienced, and historical memory, accessible through written and objective records. The shifting sands of autobiographical memory distort the historical memory almost immediately. Memory is thus porous and permeable. This applied to the Institut in two ways. Those patriots who had experienced the rebellions found themselves reconciling the events of the 1830s with the realities of the 1850s and they adjusted the memory to justify their present needs.

Those liberals too young to have participated in the rebellions imagined a past by locating themselves within a group context and from this collective context, as Halbwachs pointed out, filled the pores of memory by populating them with the only material at hand, pieces of the present. In the process, the collectivity examined this reconstructed past and eliminated what was no longer useful. The immediacy of the rebellions receded and their memory became the stuff of Nora's concept of benign myth which neither constrained nor imposed upon the present, dissipating the tension between what the patriots had been and what they had become. From these imaginative reconstructions, the Institut attempted to commemorate a past that essentially reflected the present community. Perhaps wary of the liberalism that had led to rebellion, that community expressed its reservations about the Institut's program by withholding monetary support from the initiative to construct a memorial.

By the end of 1857, the Committee had managed to raise only £293, hardly enough to cover the cost of its proposed three monuments. Bowing to this financial constraint, the Committee decided upon a single monument and issued a call for submissions for its design. The Monument Committee received both architectural submissions and construction quotations and, on December 15, 1857, finally accepted the design of Théophile Fahrland,⁶⁰ an engraver and architect, as well as a member of the Institut. Fahrland offered his services, without remuneration, to oversee construction of the monument and awarded the contract for the Monument's execution to Messrs. Mayer and Leclair with the stipulation that expenses not exceed £400.

Fahrland's proposed plan for the Monument called for an octagonal column, 50 feet high surmounted by a capstone. One face of the Monument would bear a copy of the 92 resolutions.⁶¹ This demonstrated the Institut's determination to ensure that the memory of the rebellions be indelibly associated with an honourable attempt to win rights and freedoms for Lower Canada within the legitimate British constitutional system. It was a suggestion, however, whose noble cost exceeded the Institut's rather ignoble budget. The Institut subsequently proposed drawing up the 92 resolutions on a parchment for deposit

⁶⁰ Théophile Fahrland, a Montreal engraver and architect, born in France in 1825, was a graduate of l'École des Beaux-Arts de Paris. He had worked previously with the contractors, Mayer and Leclair, who were awarded the contract to build the Monument. Subsequent to designing the Monument, Fahrland worked for the Parish of Notre-Dame. (J. Russell Harper, Early Painters and Engravers in Canada [Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1970], 108.)

⁶¹ Issued in 1834 by the Patriot-dominated Assembly in Lower Canada, the 92 Resolutions were, as Allan Greer has pointed out, "a long-winded and rather disorganized collection of grievances, assertions, and threats ... [dwelling] ... at length on the iniquities of the Legislative Council." (Allan Greer, The Patriots and the People: The Rebellion of 1837 in Rural Lower Canada [Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993],

in a cave at the base of the Monument, but lack of support and funding also doomed this idea. Ultimately, the 92 resolutions would be relegated to a one-line mention on the main face of the Monument. Fahrland's adopted design also included plans for inscribed plaques to decorate the other faces of the monument and these inscriptions would evolve as construction proceeded.⁶²

Despite the conflict with Bourget and the resignation of many Institut members, plans continued apace in the spring of 1858 to raise the Monument. Three days after the séance extraordinaire of April 13, 1858, held in response to Bourget's letter condemning the Institut, it established the Committee for Inscriptions, which submitted its initial ideas to the Sulpician Superior of the Montreal seminary on August 10, 1858. The Superior requested and received some changes; 'Religieux Souvenir' should replace 'La Patrie Reconnaissante' and include the legend, 'C'est une Sainte et Salutaire pensée de prier pour les morts.' The Institut accepted the Superior's recommendations without quibble.⁶³

Over the next month, the Institut drew up a list of the dignitaries who would be invited to the inauguration of the Monument. This list included former Patriots, George-Etienne Cartier, Louis-Hippolyte LaFontaine, Wolfred Nelson, Dr. Edmund Bailey O'Callaghan, Louis-Joseph Papineau, François-Xavier Prieur, Benjamin Viger, as well as the editors of Montreal's French language newspapers. By the end of May, the

137). Some resolutions addressed finances, land tenure, an unfair justice system as well as discrimination against French Canadians. (Greer, 137-138).

⁶² BFHL, Fonds 6, 6.10 (2 novembre 1857, 15 décembre 1857, 30 décembre 1857); Le Pays, 21 novembre 1857.

⁶³ BFHL, Fonds 6, 6.10 (1 août 1858, 11 août 1858).

Committee had invited orators and members of the clergy to bless the 'pierre augulaire' and began planning a gala event for inauguration day.⁶⁴

As the summer of 1858 turned to autumn, the Institut engaged in a flurry of preparations for the inauguration, which it planned to celebrate on Sunday, November 14, 1858, co-incidentally close to the twenty-first anniversary of the battle of Saint-Denis (November 23, 1837). It issued invitations on dignified, cream-coloured, watermarked paper to the following effect:

"Monsieur

Les membres de l'Institut Canadien sont priés de se rendre à leur Salle, Dimanche, le 14 courant à Midi et demi, pour se réunir et se rendre encorps au Marché à Foin où la Procession s'organisera, et partira à 1 heure P.M., pour se rendre au Cimetière, si le temps le permet.

Montréal, 13 Nov. 1858."⁶⁵

Synopses of the causes and events of the insurrections filled the pages of Le Pays as inauguration day approached. On the Tuesday following the inauguration, Le Pays reported that a crowd of close to 1,000 people had attended. Attendees had met at the Hay Market (present day Victoria Square) and proceeded along St. Antoine Street toward the cemetery accompanied by a band playing funeral marches. Although by inauguration day, only the octagonal base of the Monument was complete, the finished Monument was

⁶⁴ BFHL, Fonds 6, 6.10 (16 avril 1858, 12 mai 1858, 31 mai 1858).

⁶⁵ Ibid., 13 novembre 1858.

now supposed to stand 60 feet high, 60 feet in circumference. It would be comprised of a base and a 37-foot obelisk, crowned by either an urn or a French eagle holding an olive branch in his mouth as a sign of peace. In the end, neither of these appeared on the final version of the Monument. It was capped with a small pyramid, the typical crown of the obelisk. The foundation was to have four caves in preparation for the deposit of historical documents and, to the extent possible, the remains of victims of the insurrections.⁶⁶ This last was at the instigation of Le Pays which, back in 1853, had suggested disinterring the remains of the fallen patriots from scattered cemeteries and reinterring them together beneath the memorial.⁶⁷ The Institut announced that the Monument would be completed the following spring, at which time, it would organize a grand funeral for the movement of remains to their final resting-place.⁶⁸

Although inaugurations do not always coincide with project completion, one does question why the Institut chose this particular time for inauguration when the Monument would only be completed the following spring.⁶⁹ While no evidence was uncovered to indicate why the Institut chose November of 1858, it seems plausible that it was perhaps anxious to find a way by which to counter the negative publicity it had received the previous spring in the battle with Bourget.

November 14th dawned cold, bright, and clear. As directed by the invitation, the

⁶⁶ I was unable to determine if, in fact, caves were ever carved into the Monument.

⁶⁷ Le Pays, 30 juillet 1853.

⁶⁸ Le Pays, 13 novembre 1858.

⁶⁹ NDDN is a case in point. For example, according to NDDN's biennial information bulletin, the cemetery was founded March 26, 1854, received its first burial on May 29, 1855, but was only officially inaugurated on July 23, 1871. (Source: Cimetière Notre-Dame-des-Neiges, Basilique Notre-Dame de Montréal, "150 Years of History" in

dignitaries and spectators gathered at 1 p.m. for the procession to the cemetery. Just as opposition to the Act of Union had momentarily united French Canadian factions, so the inauguration of the Monument afforded a brief respite from the faction fights between liberals and conservatives, the secular and the religious. All of the popular literary-social clubs attended: the Institut, the ICF and the SSJBM, lending the inauguration something of the character of a fête nationale.

The Institut President, Euclide Roy, spoke in what would come to be called in the next century, the 'High Language of Commemoration', a diction that commemorates in a hyperbole of valorization and glorification. A lexicon of emotive words distinguishes such diction, often eclipsing the actual events memorialized, the memory of the event frequently superseding the event itself.⁷⁰ Roy emphasized that, although forgotten for twenty years, the Institut would now finally place upon the martyrs a crown of immortality. "Ce monument sera pour nos enfants comme une page toujours ouverte où ils puiseront tous les beaux sentiments qu'inspire le patriotisme."⁷¹ Roy portrayed the Monument as a symbol of the patriots as heroes and martyrs for the sacred cause of liberty. The assembly dispersed at 5 p.m. with the promise that, next spring, the Institut would undertake to transfer the remains of some of those who had died during the rebellions to the site of the Monument.⁷²

Dialogue: Bulletin d'information de la Fabrique de la paroisse Notre-Dame de Montréal,
6, no. 18 (Mars 2004), 2.

⁷⁰ Le Pays, 16 novembre 1858.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Ibid.

In the following spring of 1859, the Institut proposed yet another 'deposit' scheme in order to keep its association with patriotism and nationalism in the forefront of public perception. The collection of documents to be deposited in a cave at the base of the monument would include: a document bearing the date of the Monument's inauguration, a parchment with the procedures of the Monument Committee, a list of the names of all those who had subscribed to its raising, a copy of the 92 Resolutions and Lord Gosford's proclamation that he would dispense government funds despite the Assembly's refusal to vote the Civil List. A metal plaque would cover the cave inscribed with the words, "Érigé aux victimes de la Révolution."⁷³ The Monument Committee announced that any person who subscribed before July 1st could have his name inscribed on the parchment of contributors before its final placement in the base of the Monument.⁷⁴

Although the rancour engendered by Bourget's pastoral letters of the previous year had dissipated somewhat, Bourget's injunction against the Institut continued to have a dramatic impact. Although during the 1840s the SSJBM shared many founding members with the Institut, the politics and direction of the two organizations had diverged considerably throughout the decade of the 1850s. In 1857, Bourget had warned the SSJBM that he would publicly boycott the celebration of the June 24th fête nationale if it invited the Institut to participate. The SSJBM acceded to Bourget's wishes and the Institut organized its own celebration at Mont Saint-Hilaire.⁷⁵ In 1858, just as Bourget had done in the previous two years, he once again suggested that the SSJBM exclude the

⁷³ BFHL, Fonds 6: 6.10 (27 avril 1859).

⁷⁴ Ibid., 1 juin 1859.

⁷⁵ Bernard, Rouges, 157.

Institut from the upcoming fête nationale. By June 1859, the situation between the Institut and the SSJBM had further deteriorated. In addition to Bourget's moratorium on the Institut's participation in the fête nationale, the SSJBM had taken its own measures to discredit and undermine Institut influence.

Despite Bourget's objections, the SSJBM had tabled a motion to contribute £25 to the Monument Committee at its annual meeting in the spring of 1858. A year later, however, at its annual meeting of June 7, 1859, the SSJBM proposed an amendment to this resolution that, in future, no motion should be voted for funds that supported projects that contravened the goals and laws of the association. Although the motion was not carried (23 for, 36 against), the SSJBM failed to remit the £25 promised to the Institut for the Monument.⁷⁶ After the SSJBM reneged on its commitment to the Monument, the Institut retaliated by referring the matter to its lawyers. The SSJBM vote presents an interesting anomaly. Although officially it was taking a stand against the Institut, a hefty sixty-one percent of those who voted obviously did not support the official party line.⁷⁷ Perhaps this indicates that there was a dissenting segment within the SSJBM that was not prepared to wholly embrace the ultramontane position.

Abandoned by the SSJBM and the clergy for the fête nationale in 1859, the Institut decided to combine its own celebrations for St-Jean-Baptiste Day with the Monument events it had promised on inauguration day the previous November.

⁷⁶ It is interesting to note that in 1852 the SSJBM had voted funds to defray the funeral expenses of its founder, Ludger Duvernay (£55) and in 1855 voted another £45 to move Duvernay's remains and build his monument. There is no mention on the Duvernay monument however, that he was an ardent Patriot in the 1830s.

⁷⁷ Le Pays, 2 juillet 1859.

Beginning on the 11th of June, and in every subsequent issue of Le Pays until the end of that month, the Institut Canadien advertised that a concert-promenade would be held on June 24th at the Bonsecours Market to raise funds for the completion of the Monument.⁷⁸ There was, however, no documentation in the Institut archives to indicate when construction of the Monument was actually completed.

On the Tuesday following the divided fête nationale celebrations of June 24th, Le Pays took the SSJBM to task as the author of cleavage within French Canada. Le Pays expressed its sadness that the SSJBM had so obviously pursued a narrow political agenda when such a society should be national in character. Le Pays concluded that, rather than behaving expansively and inclusively, the SSJBM had acted judgementally. By failing to include the Institut in the fête nationale, Le Pays accused the SSJBM of single-handedly deciding who should or should not be called “Canadian” and, by so doing, had ostracized the Institut. Le Pays pointed to the fact that it was the Institut, and not the SSJBM, which had honoured the glorious and heroic sacrifice of French Canada’s ancestors in raising a Monument to the victims of 1837 and 1838.

In the wake of the 1859 fête nationale debacle, little more was heard of the Monument. It did not prove to be, as the Institut had hoped, the maypole of liberal nationalism around which French Canada could rally. For the time being, it seemed that the SSJBM and the clergy, with their message of ultramontane conservatism, had triumphed. Le Pays made one last effort to discredit the ascendancy of the SSJBM. It reported on September 17, 1859 that the SSJBM only pretended to a national character

⁷⁸ Le Pays, 11, 14, 16, 18, 21, juin 1859.

when, in fact, it was nothing more than an association of 'pigmées politiques' looking for success only in intrigue.

Despite the effort and hope that the Institut had vested in the Monument, the concept of the Patriots as national heroes did not capture the popular imagination in the 1850s. The Monument, as the purveyor of memory, garnered neither moral nor monetary support. The Institut delayed paying the contractors, Mayer and Leclair, until well into 1860, when it finally settled the account for a total of \$1,234.25.⁷⁹ The last recorded meeting of the Monument Committee took place on September 13, 1861 at which the Committee once again resurrected the idea of moving the remains of some of the rebellion victims to the Monument. It was an idea that withered on the vine. No burial would take place at the Monument until François-Xavier Prieur's death in 1891.⁸⁰ The Institut lost its bid to create a viable liberal origin legend for French Canada. Its aspirations came to rest in a block of granite, 60 feet high, left to languish in a graveyard.

⁷⁹ BFHL, Fonds 6: 6.10 (22 juin 1860).

⁸⁰ Ibid.; Emile Falardeau, Prieur l'idéaliste (Montréal: Collection Illustrée "Les Anciens" L'Institut de la Nouvelle-France: Centre de Culture Nationale, 1944), 25; Le cimetière Notre-Dame-des-Neiges on-line burial records at www.cimetièrendn.org.

Chapter 3

Commemorating Liberalism

Nothing was left to chance in the construction of the Monument. The shape of the Monument, its inscriptions and its location were all designed to commemorate liberalism. After providing a short tour of the Monument, this chapter will consider the role of monuments and cemeteries in nineteenth century Lower Canada and how the Institut employed these devices to attract support for its liberal ideology.

The Monument aux Patriotes

Made of Canadian grey limestone, the Monument is a fifty-foot high octagonal obelisk surmounted by a pyramidal capstone. (See Figure 1). It rests on a small hill just inside and a little to the north of Notre-Dame-des-Neiges' main gates. There have been no changes made to the Monument in the 146 years since its construction, other than necessary repair work. Similarly, other than a few cosmetic changes and a little modernization, its environment has also remained relatively in tact.

In 2004, primary access to the Monument is via a concrete staircase from the cemetery's main road on the south side of the Monument. A secondary road branches from this main road toward the west side or main face of the Monument. This suggests that primary access to the Monument was originally from this secondary road to the main face before the building of the concrete stairway in the 1870s. An 'L-shaped' tertiary road, virtually impassable in winter, passes both the north and east sides of the Monument at right angles. The main road that goes past the Monument to the cemetery's

administration building dates back to the cemetery's inception in 1855. Presuming that the secondary road was once the main access to the Monument, this road also probably dates to 1855. The tertiary road would have been built later in the nineteenth century after the Fabrique installed the Sisters of Providence as caretakers in the cemetery. It was under their direction that work began on building the network of roads that criss-cross the cemetery today. The main entrance to the cemetery in 1858 was, as it remains to this day, on Côte-des-Neiges Road. For the first thirty years of the cemetery's existence, a large wooden gate decorated this entrance which opened on to an elliptical, grassy island with a large wooden cross. While the decoration has changed, the elliptical island remains. (See Figure 2).

The four large surface faces of the Monument represent the compass points, while the four smaller, corner surfaces are bi-directional. There are four concrete footstones approaching the four compass faces of the Monument, the northernmost of which bears the simple inscription, 'F.X. Prieur'.¹

Beginning at the west face of the Monument, which looks toward the Côte-des-Neiges gates, and moving in a counter clockwise direction, the story inscribed on the plinth is an abbreviated history of the rebellions of 1837-1838. The placement of the commemorative plaques is very precise and, unfolds in chronological order, detailing the highlights of the rebellion events. The west face presents the high level information about the rebellions, while the other faces contain the detailed information about rebellion battles and sites.

¹ See discussion of François-Xavier Prieur's burial on Page 52.



Figure 1
Le Monument aux Patriotes, Notre-Dame-des-Neiges Cemetery, Montreal, QC
November 21, 2004
Source: www.cimetierenddn.org

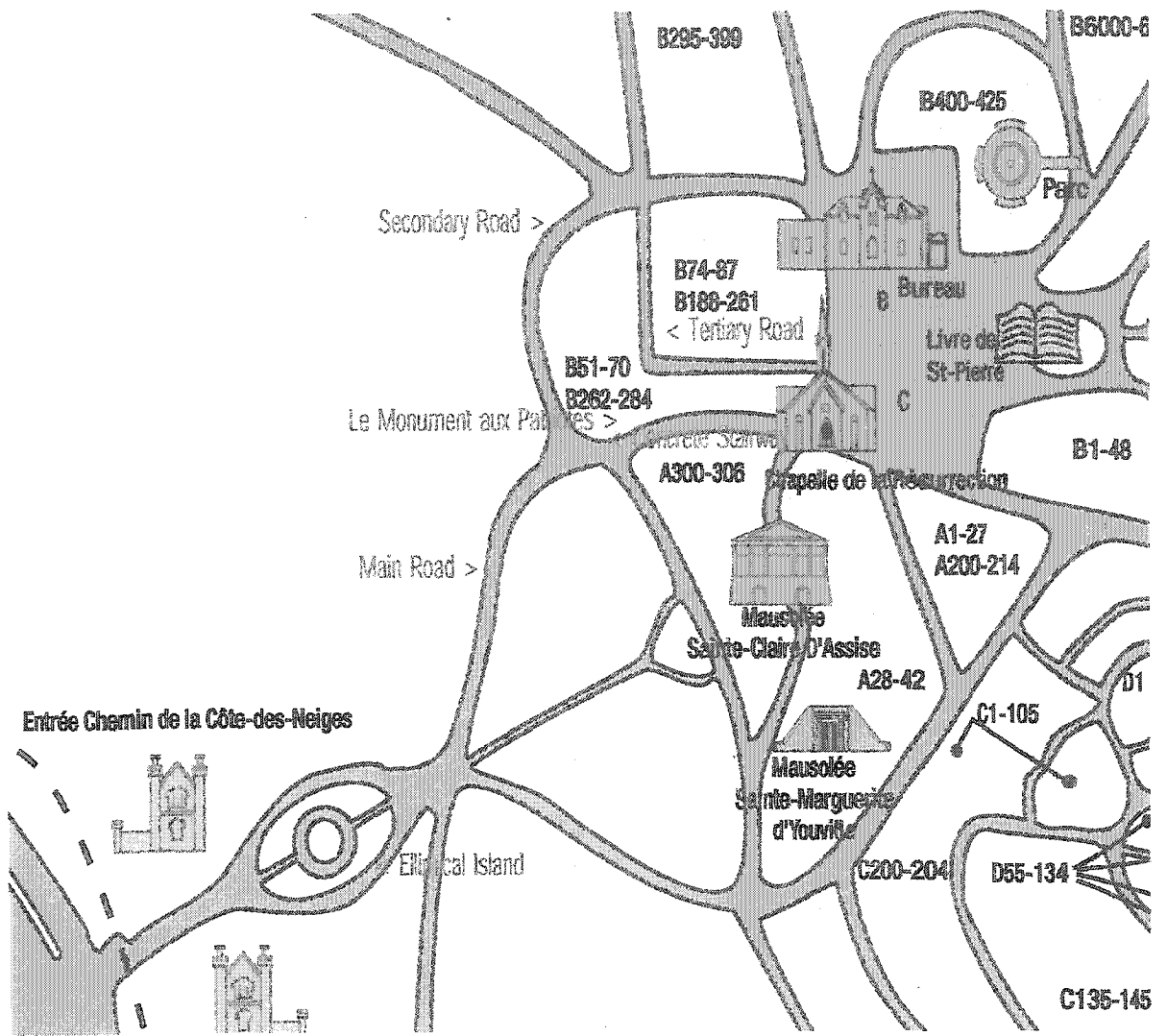


Figure 2
 Map of Notre-Dame-des-Neiges Cemetery, Montreal, QC
 November 21, 2004
 Source: www.cimetierenddn.org

The West Face

Reading from top to bottom, the main or west face of the Monument (See Figure 3) performs a variety of functions. The dedication, 'Aux Victimes Politiques de 1837-1838' sets the tone for the Monument by indicating that it commemorates those whom its authors perceived as political victims arising from the events of 1837 and 1838.

Curiously, there is no mention of rebellion or insurrection. Perhaps the Institut wanted to de-emphasize civil disobedience, a concept that would have fed the ultramontane belief that liberalism bred chaos. Moreover, the words 'in memory of' are conspicuously absent. 'In memoriams' usually signify death but, as we shall see later, the Institut did not wish to confine its epitaphs to those who had died. The term 'political victims' included those still living as well.²

Reading downwards, the next line inscribed on the west face is 'Religieux Souvenir.' This inscription had implications with respect both to internecine clerical quarrels as well as to ultramontane-Institut battles as to how to remember the rebellions. In the former case, the Institut added this inscription at the request of the Superior of the Sulpician seminary.³ The Sulpicians and Bourget had yet to resolve the thorny issue of dismantling the sprawling parish of Notre-Dame that, historically, had governed all the churches in Montreal. By supporting the Institut's endeavour on behalf of the patriots, the Sulpicians were effectively courting Institut support against Bourget.

² I uncovered no evidence that documents how the Institut arrived at most of the inscriptions selected for the Monument. One can only make reasoned inferences as to the Institut's intentions.

³ BFHL, Fonds 6: 6.11 (11 août 1858).

This religious inscription, however, may also indicate that the Sulpicians were not anxious to alienate their clerical cousins by appearing to sanction a lay association that had blatantly anti-clerical overtones. The clergy, as discussed in Chapter 2, had framed the rebellions in terms of French Canada's religious mission to North America and the epitaph, 'Religieux Souvenir', affirmed this interpretation.

The liberals of the Institut raised the Monument in an effort to influence the popular imagination to remember the rebellions as a defining moment in French Canada's history. In effect, it wished to establish the rebellions as an origin legend for a liberal and enlightened nation of French Canadians. The inscription below 'Religieux Souvenir' on the west face of the Monument gives some credence to this thesis.

Forming the lion's share of the main face, these inscriptions encapsulate the Institut's belief that the tyranny of the colonial government had caused the rebellions and that the patriot response had constituted a bona fide struggle for civil freedom. They recount the history of the 92 resolutions adopted by the Assembly of Lower Canada in 1834, the subsequent refusal by the Assembly to vote the Civil List and, despite this refusal, Lord Gosford's distribution of the public monies.⁴ The final inscription on the west face precedes the acknowledgement of those responsible for raising the Monument with a reminder that this Monument was 'religieux et historique,' another attempt perhaps to reinforce the concept that the liberal ideals represented on this Monument were not irreconcilable with Catholicism. These political inscriptions on the main face give way to the cult of heroes on the other faces of the Monument.

⁴ Greer, 137, 142-143.

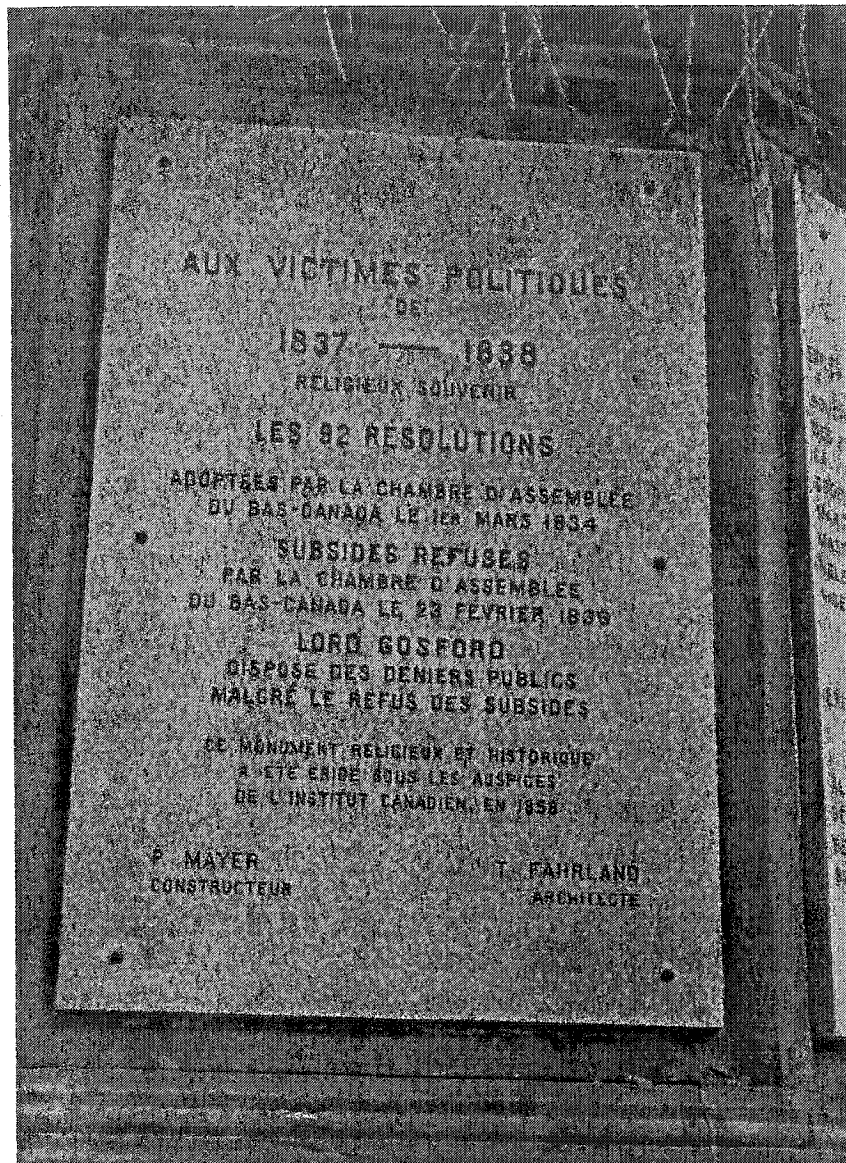


Figure 3
West Face

Le Monument aux Patriotes, Notre-Dame-des-Neiges Cemetery, Montreal, QC
Courtesy Dr. Ronald Rudin, Concordia University, Montreal, QC

The South Face

Continuing in the counter clockwise direction, the next face of the Monument is the south face (See Figure 4). Looking towards Montreal's south shore in the direction of the Richelieu Valley, this face commemorates the battles of Saint-Denis and Saint-Charles. The name of Charles-Ovide Perrault dominates the scroll of names of those who died in the course of these two battles. Perrault's pride of place derives perhaps from the fact that he was the Assembly member for Vaudreuil but more likely refers to the fact that he was Edouard-Raymond Fabre's brother-in-law. As a long-standing patriot, Fabre's bookshop had been the favoured meeting place of the Patriots prior to the rebellion. It was Fabre who, at the battle of Saint-Charles, had convinced Papineau and O'Callaghan to flee to the U.S. Fabre was imprisoned for his part in the rebellion but received an official pardon within a year. An early member of both the SSJBM and the Institut, Fabre had been the driving force behind the Association de la Délivrance for the repatriation of the patriot exiles and the first president of the committee to raise the Monument.⁵

Perrault is one of only two of the rebellion leaders (the other being Jean-Olivier Chénier commemorated on the north face) mentioned on the Monument, a curious anomaly. The Institut may have omitted the leaders to downplay the vacuum in liberal leadership during and after the battle of Saint-Charles, in keeping with Fussell's

⁵ Jean-Louis Roy, Edouard-Raymond Fabre: libraire et patriote canadien, 1799-1854 (Montréal: Hurtubise HMH, Ltée, 1974), 21, 55, 122, 128, 135, 142-143; BFHL, Fonds 5, 5.10, 5.11.

contention of “the unredeemable defectiveness of all civil and military leaders.”⁶ Civil and military leadership, whether of the rebels or the government, would have presented a quandary to the Institut in view of the fact that they had predicated the rebellion upon poor government leadership and yet the Patriots themselves had given such poor leadership during the rebellions. Papineau, in particular, is conspicuously absent. While he had aroused the passions of both the Assembly and the peasants in the countryside, he had deserted the cause at the first sign of defeat (the battle of Saint-Charles), along with some of the other patriot leaders.

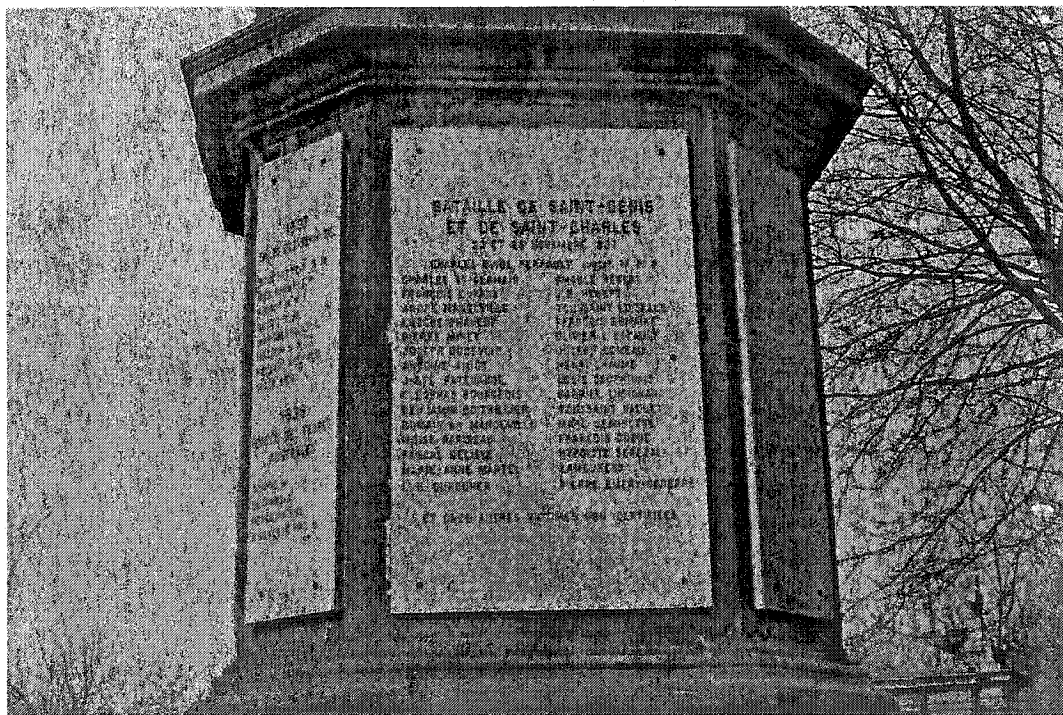


Figure 4
 South Face
 Le Monument aux Patriotes, Notre-Dame-des-Neiges Cemetery, Montreal, QC
 Courtesy Dr. Ronald Rudin, Concordia University, Montreal, QC

⁶ Paul Fussell, The Great War and Modern Memory (New York and London: Oxford University Press, 1975), 12.

The East Face

Leaving the south face and continuing to the right, the east face is encountered. (See Figure 5). Facing east towards the Prison des Patriotes, the execution place of the rebels in 1838 and 1839, this face commemorates those patriots executed by sentence of Court Martial. The twelve names of the executed are arranged, from top to bottom, in the chronological order in which they died; December 21, 1838, January 18, 1839, and February 15, 1839.

In 1858, the portion of the cemetery open for burials did not extend much beyond the present day administration building (See Figure 2). The land east of this was still wild and untamed. Facing eastwards into the wilderness left the executed in a liminal limbo, alone with the rural landscape. It was a subtle thread that tied the Monument in collective memory to the rural past.

The east face, looking towards a veritable no-man's land, differs from the other faces by solely commemorating executions. In reading these inscriptions, it is pertinent to bear in mind that the only executions that took place after the rebellions resulted from the 1838 skirmishes. The violence of 1838 significantly superseded that of 1837 and the relegation of this plaque to the, at that time, least accessible face of the Monument may reflect the Institut's desire to downplay this facet of the rebellion.

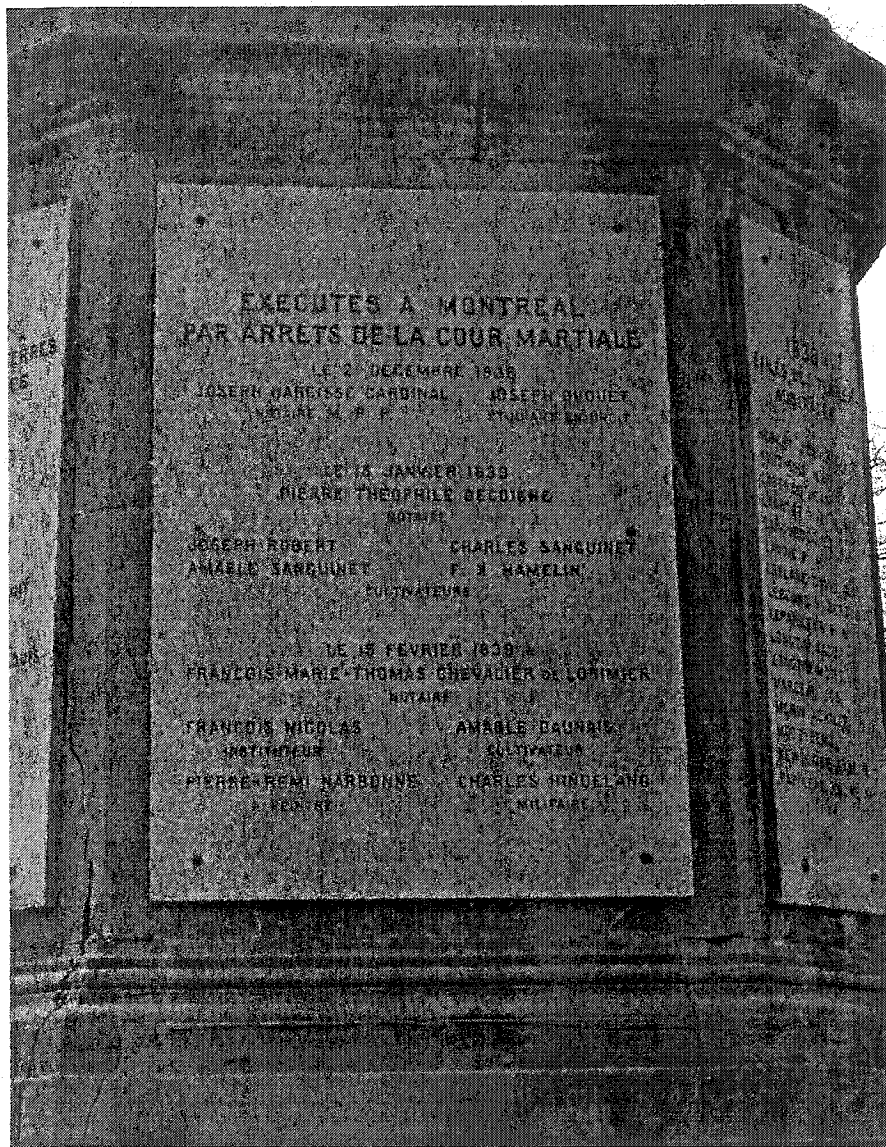


Figure 5

East Face

Le Monument aux Patriotes, Notre-Dame-des-Neiges Cemetery, Montreal, QC

Courtesy Dr. Ronald Rudin, Concordia University, Montreal, QC

The North Face

Proceeding again to the right, is the north face of the Monument. As with the preceding two faces, the north face has geographic significance (See Figure 6). It looks down the Mountain toward the then sparsely populated north end of Montreal and across Rivière-des-Prairies to two small villages in the district of Deux-Montagnes, Saint-Eustache and Saint-Benoit, where the final battles of 1837 were fought. As with Perrault on the south face, Dr. Chénier's name dominates the plaque. Chénier was one of the rebel leaders in Saint-Eustache who died during the course of the confrontation. Immediately beneath Chénier's name are the words, "ses restes reposent ici". This is misinformation but the Institut may have included it, anticipating that it would receive permission to have Dr. Chénier's remains transferred to Notre-Dame-des-Neiges. The permission was never forthcoming from the Fabrique because Chénier, as a Patriot, had been excommunicated and could not be buried in consecrated ground.

In fact, Chénier was originally buried in 1838 in a Saint-Eustache cemetery designated for unbaptized babies. His remains were exhumed in 1891 and kept for a long time at the SSJBM's Maison Duvernay in Old Montreal. In July 1987, on the occasion of the celebrations of the 150th anniversary of the Battle of Saint-Eustache, Chénier's remains were reinterred at Saint-Eustache.⁷ Co-incident with Chénier's return to Saint-Eustache, the Bishop of St. Jérôme, Monsignor Charles Valois, finally lifted the ban of excommunication against those patriots who fell within his north shore jurisdiction. Chénier's name is followed by a roll call of honour of those who died during the battles

⁷www.oparadis.qc.ca/cimetière/jardins_celebrites/grands_noms/chenier_o/chenier_olivier_gn.html. 7 July 2004.

of Saint-Eustache and Saint-Benoit. The Institut provided a disclaimer at the foot of the list to the effect that the remains of those inscribed on this plaque, as well as many others rested in the cemeteries of Saint-Eustache and neighbouring Saint-Scholastique.

The engagement at Odelltown appears almost as a footnote toward the bottom of the north face. On a superficial level this inscription appears to mar the geographic harmony of the Monument, as Odelltown would more appropriately belong on the south face. As the south face, with its long list of the deceased, was already somewhat crowded, moving Odelltown to the north face may represent nothing more than an exercise in spatial organization. On closer reflection however, Odelltown is well placed.

This 1838 skirmish was one of the last of the rebellion period and, in this sense, the Monument maintains a measure of chronological congruency if one looks only at battle commemorations, moving from right to left and top to bottom. As a battle site, Odelltown was indeed only a footnote to the larger engagements of the rebellions. While looking at this face and glancing down at the concrete slab below, the visitor will note the solitary inscription, 'F.X. Prieur'. It is here that François-Xavier Prieur was buried in 1891 in close proximity to the plaque commemorating Odelltown where he had fought for the rebels.

François-Xavier Prieur participated in the 1838 rebellion at Beauharnois as a Castor or Captain leading a contingent of 150 Chasseurs from St. Timothée. He was captured and sentenced to death, a sentence that was later commuted to exile through the influence of the Ellice family of Beauharnois. Through the efforts of Edouard-Raymond Fabre's Association de la Délivrance, Prieur returned in 1846 from exile in Australia. He later became the prefect of Saint-Vincent-de-Paul penitentiary and, subsequently in

1875, superintendent of prisons in the new Province of Quebec. Prieur died on February 1, 1891 and is one of only three persons buried at the site of the Monument.⁸ Although at the time of the Monument's construction, there was no-one buried at the site, by the end of the nineteenth century when the bitterness between the ultramontanes and the Institut had abated, three patriots were interred at the site of the Monument. These were François-Xavier Prieur (1891), François-Maurice LePailleur (1891) and Léandre Ducharme (1897).

The Superior of the Seminary of St. Sulpice provided the final inscription at the very bottom of the north face, 'C'est une sainte et salutaire pensée de prier pour les morts'⁹. This quotation, from the second book of Maccabees, is mis-cited on the Monument as 'M.L.H., Ch. 12, V. 46.' According to Vatican Reference Librarian, Dr. Massimo Ceresa, the inscribed 'H' should in fact be the Roman numeral 'II.' Dr. Ceresa provided the correct reference as "M[acchabeorum] L[iber] II [secundus] Ch[apter] 12, V[erse] 46."¹⁰ This reference to the Book of Maccabees suggests that the Sulpicians chose to sanction the Monument in a way that would mollify the ultramontanes by viewing the rebellions in terms of French Canada's religious mission to North America. The Institut continued to market liberalism by means of a monument swathed in Catholicism.

⁸ Falardeau, 10, 19, 24, 25; Elinor Kyte Senior, Redcoats and Patriotes: The Rebellions in Lower Canada 1837-38, Canadian War Museum Historical Publication no. 20 (Stittsville, Ontario: Canada's Wings, Inc., 1985), 156, 171-173, 189-190.

⁹ 2 Maccabees 12:46 (NRSV New Revised Standard Version).

¹⁰ Email correspondence with Dr. Massimo Ceresa, Reference Librarian, Vatican Library, 14 May 2004.

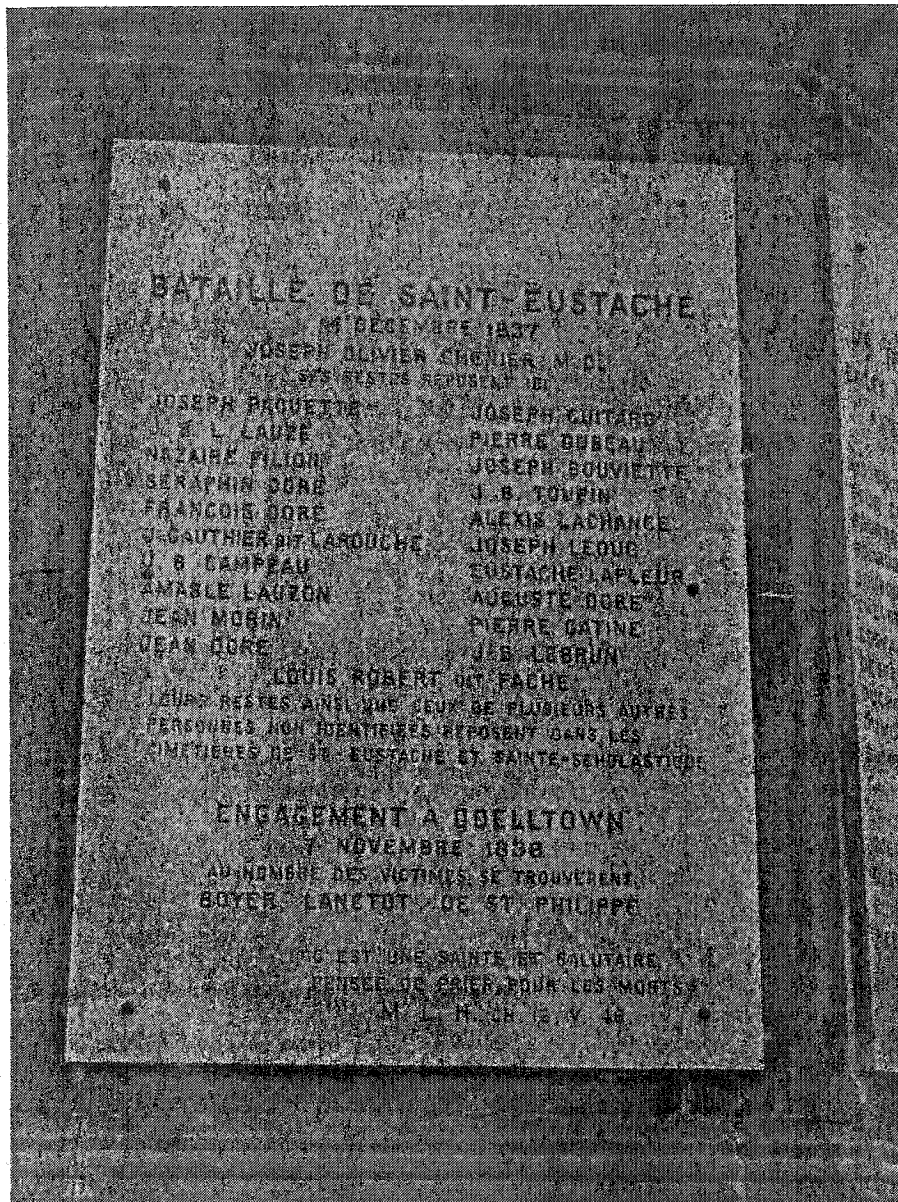


Figure 6
 North Face
 Le Monument aux Patriotes, Notre-Dame-des-Neiges Cemetery, Montreal, QC
 Courtesy Dr. Ronald Rudin, Concordia University, Montreal, QC

The Bi-directional Faces

In addition to the four compass point faces of the Monument, there are also four, slightly smaller bi-directional faces. (See Figure 7 for an example). Once again, moving in the counter clockwise direction from the main face, the four corner panels on the plinth list, in alphabetical order, those who were exiled for their part in the rebellion. The corner panels preserve the integrity of the Monument's geographic consonance and suggest a metaphor for the idea of the exiles being scattered to the four corners of the earth.

The four bi-directional panels are perhaps the most difficult of the faces to elucidate. Locating the Monument in a cemetery, the mention of mortal remains on the plaques, and the final wording on the north face that exhorts prayers for the dead, all speak to the Monument's funereal character. Paradoxically, however, the four corner panels, commemorate the exiles, all of whom were repatriated by 1846 and most of whom were still living in 1858. To endeavour to understand the rather convoluted logic that memorializes the living requires some knowledge of the philosophy of exile.

The varieties of banishment include: exile as a form of punishment in peacetime, punishment as a result of war, and exile as an integral component of war. By its very nature, war usually entails removal from the ordinary domestic abode so that "the common experience of soldiers was dire long-term exile at an unbridgeable distance from home."¹¹ The rebellion exiles had left their homes to fight the battles of the insurrection

¹¹ Fussell, 64.

and then were left to languish in the Prison des Patriotes until sentenced and banished from their homeland in ignominy. From the Institut's perspective, the sacrifice had been great and the exiles were as much victims of the political struggle in a moral sense as those who had perished. The self-imposed exile of leaders like Papineau and O'Callaghan are excluded, indicating perhaps the Institut's ambivalence as to how to treat with leaders who had fled the rebellion. Hence, the inscriptions on the Monument memorialized anyone that the Institut considered victims: the dead, the executed, the exiled and, as the main face stated, the political victims.

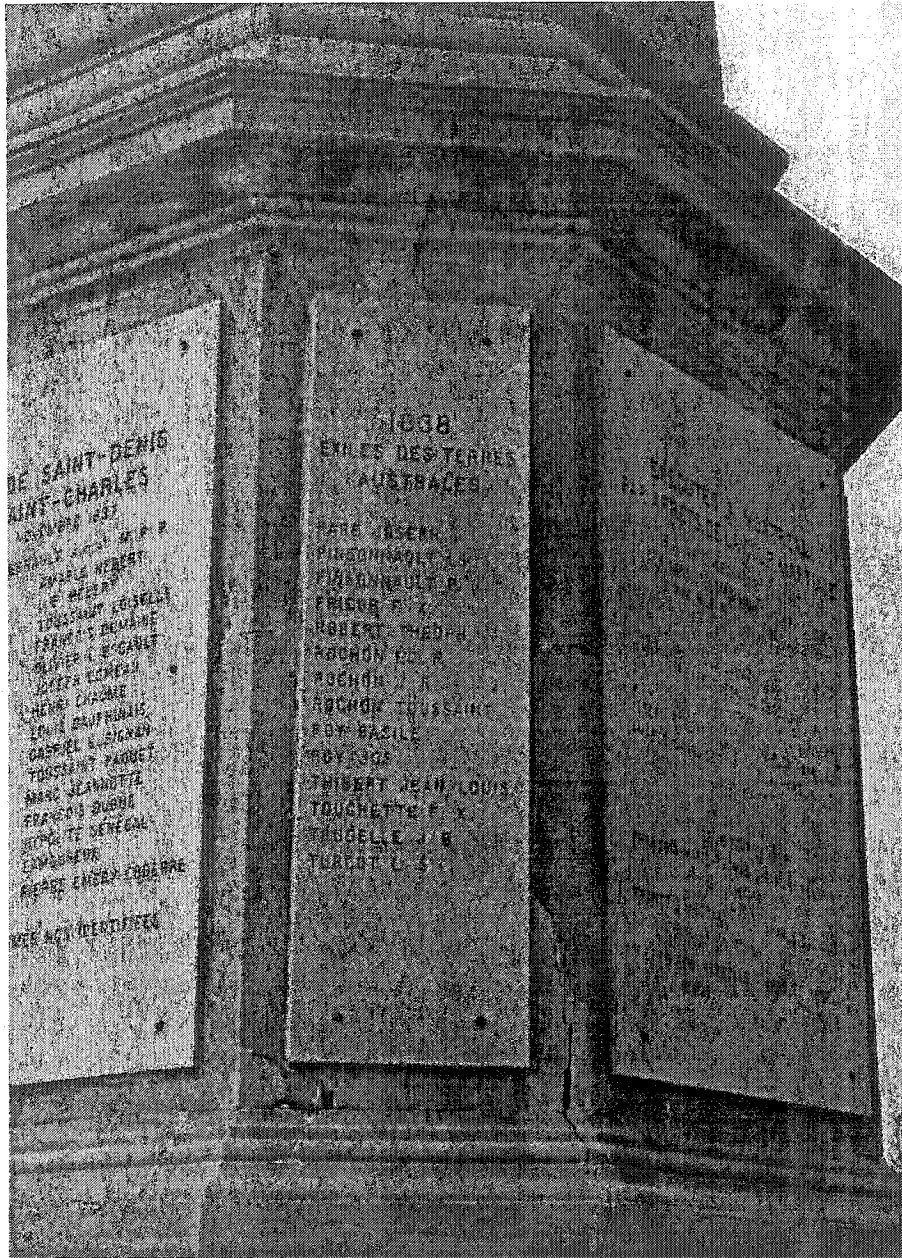


Figure 7
 Example of a bi-directional face (Southeast Face)
 Le Monument aux Patriotes, Notre-Dame-des-Neiges Cemetery, Montreal, QC
 Courtesy Dr. Ronald Rudin, Concordia University, Montreal, QC

The Significance of Cemetery

A literal reading of the Monument only tells part of the story. It is also necessary to understand mid-nineteenth century conceptions of cemeteries and cemetery art, including monuments. Cemeteries, by their very nature, serve to keep memories alive. As opposed to the lexicon of descriptive phrases like 'silent cities' or 'cities of the dead', cemeteries address the living. Dating from antiquity, civilizations have articulated their social values by the manner in which they approach death and its rituals. Cemeteries and funereal ritual involve social and cultural constructions that speak to the present. Angels, urns, crosses, and elegiac verse comfort the living and cleanse the memory of the dead. They idealize the prosaic reality of life, imposing well-ordered closure. The underlying design of the cemetery "as the visual and spatial expression of death, may tell us a great deal about the living people who created them."¹² In burial grounds, the living become paramount while the dead act as a foil by which the living grapple with their own mortality. In this sense, the beautification of burial grounds and their evolution into landscaped gardens resonate with the mystical framework that the living impose on death in an attempt to cheat fate. In a similar fashion, the living pushed cemeteries outside of the city so that they could compartmentalize the dead, not permitting them to encroach upon the abodes of the living.

Nevertheless, the social sense of obligation to the dead persists. They are, paradoxically, a vital part of living communities. They are museums where the living can

¹² Richard V. Francaviglia, "The Cemetery as an Evolving Cultural Landscape," Annals of the Association of American Geographers 61, no. 3 (September 1971), 509.

communicate with the past while remaining separate from it. A cemetery is “in the true meaning of the word ... [] ... a monument, a bringing to mind.”¹³

As the urban population exploded throughout the nineteenth century, pressure increased to remove burying grounds from city centres for hygienic reasons. These cemeteries earned the name ‘rural’ based on the fact that they were generally located outside city limits. Montreal City Council adopted a by-law on July 6, 1853 to prohibit any further burials within the city limits to take effect from the following May. In 1850s Montreal, the northern part of Mount Royal lay well beyond the confines of the city and the area known as Côte-des-Neiges was still very much a rural village. The impetus for this new genre of cemetery came from the Père-Lachaise cemetery in Paris (1804) and Mount Auburn in Cambridge, Massachusetts (1831). Together, these two cemeteries became the prototype for the rural cemetery.

In addition to their funereal functions, these new cemeteries also acted as pastoral pleasure grounds, “a place where visitors could escape the grime and bustle of urban life.”¹⁴ The architects of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries designed their cemeteries with careful planning and forethought. These cemeteries developed in tandem with the cultural landscape of the communities they served. As Francaviglia noted, “cemeteries have undergone the same general spatial and architectural evolution as the American scene, and they may in fact be miniaturizations and idealizations of larger American

¹³ Thomas Bender, “The ‘Rural’ Cemetery Movement: Urban Travail and the Appeal of Nature,” The New England Quarterly XLVII, (March-December 1974), 204.

¹⁴ Kenneth T. Jackson and Camilo José Vergara, Silent Cities: The Evolution of the American Cemetery (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1989), 5.

settlement patterns.”¹⁵ As North America urbanized and suburbanized, the rural cemetery played a significant role in easing the demographic transition from the rural to the urban.

From the outset, cemeteries provided relief from the rapid industrialization of urban centres. They represented the first open spaces where the growing urban population could find relaxation and recreation. The nineteenth century public enjoyed strolls through, and picnics in, these pleasant green spaces where the cloying dirt of the factory could be left behind. Long before these cemeteries filled up with graves, their natural beauty and wildness attracted a public starved for a spark of rural romance in unlovely cities. They inspired the landscape architects of mid-century to suggest the construction of similar open spaces that would exclude burials and be solely for recreational purposes. Cemetery historians Kenneth Jackson and Camilo Vergara averred that “the rural cemetery movement met with such public approval that it inspired the American park movement.”¹⁶ This was the genesis of projects such as New York City’s Central Park and Montreal’s Mount Royal Park which shared a common designer, Frederick Law Olmsted.

The rural cemeteries with their combination of gardens, fountains, trees and monuments had the ambience of the pastoral, the recent past to which many of the new urban dwellers looked with nostalgia. They provided the balance between what was and what had been. The city could retain its urban character while the cemetery, in its role as a recreational park, spoke to the rural past, the place from which the public traced its communal roots. Here the uprooted rural society found continuity between past and

¹⁵ Francaviglia, 501.

¹⁶ Jackson and Vergara, 19.

present that romanticized the rural past and permitted it to build bridges to the urban present.¹⁷ In Lower Canada, the romantic landscape of the rural cemetery allowed French Canada an outlet by which to slowly redefine its national character from that of a rural people to an urban populace by balancing past and present identities “within a counterpoint of romantic nature and the city.”¹⁸

With the cemetery as a recreational ground, French Canadians could earn their urban living while remaining attached to the romanticism of the bucolic. This afforded the ultramontanes an opportunity to perpetuate the notion of French Canada as a rural idyll, for the newly opened Notre-Dame-des-Neiges authenticated the rural myth, a peaceful oasis of green on the undeveloped upper slope of Mount Royal. The idea of nature as a salve was, as Howett put it, “part, of course, of the nineteenth-century Romantic canon.”¹⁹ From this perspective, Notre-Dame-des-Neiges fulfilled Jay Winter’s assertion that sacred forests typically symbolize the land for which rebels had fought.²⁰ This authenticates the idea of the summit of Mount Royal as a patrimonial lieux de

¹⁷ Jackson and Vergara, 19, 120; J.B. Jackson, “The Vanishing Epitaph: From Monument to Place,” *Landscape* 17, no. 2 (Winter 1967-1968), 25; Francaviglia, 506; Bender, 196, 199-203; Bernard Debarbieux and Claude Marois, “Le mont Royal: Forme naturelle, paysages et territorialités urbaines,” *Cahiers de Géographie du Québec* 41, no. 113 (September 1997), 180.

¹⁸ Bender, 205.

¹⁹ Catherine Howett, “Living Landscapes for the Dead,” *Landscape* 21, no. 3 (Spring-Summer 1977), 11.

²⁰ Jay Winter, *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning: The Great War in European Cultural History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 24.

mémoire whose natural state of wilderness conferred legitimacy on the idea of French Canadians as a rural population.²¹

Rural cemeteries, like Notre-Dame-des-Neiges possess binary symbolism in that while they abound in the pastoral, the beautiful landscapes mute the ugliness of death. Constructing the Monument on the peaceful crown of the mountain belied the violent events it commemorated. As Fussell has pointed out “Pastoral has always been a favoured mode for elegy, whether general or personal, because pastoral contains perennial flowers, and perennials betoken immortality.”²² The pastoral tranquillity of the cemetery eased the tragedy of rebellion.

According to Fussell, “If the opposite of war is peace, the opposite of experiencing moments of war is proposing moments of pastoral.”²³ The pastoral spoke to the ultramontane idealization of the habitant in the seigneurial system as the model for French Canada. The myth had taken root and the Institut, rather than ignore it, incorporated it into the idiom of the Monument. If 1837-1838 was a moment of war, building the Monument in a nineteenth century rural cemetery was a moment of the pastoral. The Monument preserved in stone the moment of war, that is, the rebellions. The tone of the inscriptions on the Monument perpetuated the rebellions as a liberal initiative. The cemetery acknowledged the myth of French Canada as a rural idyll with its landscape of uncharted virgin forest. Notre-Dame-des-Neiges became, as did most nineteenth century cemeteries, a place to “present and celebrate history,”²⁴ a breeding

²¹ Bender, 206-207; Debarbieux and Marois, 188-189.

²² Fussell, 253.

²³ Ibid., 222-223.

²⁴ Ibid., 5.

ground for competing historical interpretations, in effect, an “ideology played out in geography.”²⁵

Located virtually at the entrance to the cemetery, the Monument represented a threshold, a boundary that distinguished two opposing worlds, the living and the dead, and two opposing ideologies. Its location became the place where these opposed worlds communicated, facilitating the passage from the sacred to the profane. The cemetery entrance “breaks the continuity of the surrounding neighbourhood and announces a special realm dedicated to the departed.”²⁶ Nineteenth century conceptions of the cemetery projected religious connotations upon the landscape perpetuating the idea of the cemetery as sacred space. The quietude of this primitive and rural environment lent itself to meditation on the mysteries of life and death. The cemetery became the material manifestation of the Christian admonishment, “Come away to a lonely place all by yourself and rest a while.”²⁷ A secluded place, the cemetery inspired introspection and muted the fear of oblivion with its symbols of immortality. As the coming together of the sacred and the profane, Notre-Dame-des-Neiges’ hilltop location was, as Debarbieux and Marois posited, a translation in concrete form, an abstract, symbolic device. It put into right relationship the celestial, terrestrial, and sub-terrestrial worlds that had become dissociated through differing worldviews. Here, both Institut and ultramontanes hoped to

²⁵ Alan Gordon, Making Public Pasts: The Contested Terrain of Montreal’s Public Memories, 1891-1930 (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2001), 141.

²⁶ Jackson and Vergara, 72.

²⁷ Mark, 6:30 (NRSV).

manipulate the cultural landscape of Montreal by reflecting their own values upon the physical landscape.²⁸

By the mid-nineteenth century, the Catholics of Montreal fell into all of the paradigms of cemetery, not the least of which was to locate the burial ground outside of the city limits and provide for future expansion. Bowing to the impact of urbanization, the Fabrique of Notre-Dame parish undertook the search for a new cemetery site in July of 1853. With a choice between land in Côte-St-Luc and Dr. Pierre Beaubien's land in the village of Côte-des-Neiges, the Fabrique recommended, and the superior of the Sulpician seminary accepted, the latter. By the end of the year, the transaction was complete at a cost of £3,000 for 115 arpents on the north side of Mount Royal, to be paid for, not by the Fabrique, but by the churches of Montreal that came within the purview of Notre-Dame Parish. Notre-Dame-des-Neiges was born and first opened its gates to receive the faithful departed in 1855.²⁹

When the Institut devised its plan to raise a monument to the patriots of 1837, they too cast about for suitable sites. By the end of 1856, when its fund raising campaign had fallen far short of the objective, the Institut realized it could financially accommodate only one monument. As almost all of the funds it had collected were slated for the construction of the Monument, the Institut looked for creative ways to situate it. The newly opened cemetery appealed to it for a variety of reasons. Being consecrated ground,

²⁸ Howett, 9; J.B; Jackson, 24-25; Francaviglia, 501-502, 509; Debarbieux and Marois, 173.

²⁹ Siméon Mondou, Études sur Le Culte des Morts chez Les Anciens et Les Peuples Modernes et Les Cimetières catholiques de Montréal depuis La Fondation de la Colonie, 3rd ed. (Montréal: Imprimerie du Messager, 1911), 89-93.

the cemetery gave authority to the Institut's chosen image of the patriots as sacred ancestors. As a Catholic burial ground, raising the Monument in the cemetery sanctioned the Monument and the ideology it represented as a Catholic initiative. Finally, having the blessing of the Sulpicians could possibly widen the already growing gap between the ultramontane and Gallican clergies, leaving an opening into which the Institut could wedge itself.

On December 12, 1856, the Institut inquired of the Fabrique if it would consider donating land for the purpose of raising a monument to the patriots. The Sulpicians acceded to the Institut's request, but apparently, only in order to publicize the new cemetery and encourage the sale of lots.³⁰ Less than a year later, the Institut had its answer, announcing that the Fabrique of Montreal had generously donated land in the new cemetery for the purpose of raising the Monument. The minutes of the Committee to raise the Monument for November 2, 1857 described the donated land as one of the nicest spots in the cemetery.³¹

Location, Form and Iconography

The small hillock of land on which the Institut erected the Monument constituted a dominant site of memory for the particular origin legend that the Institut favoured for French Canada. The idea of the hilltop cemetery has a long history. From a practical point of view, the hilltop is not susceptible to flooding and the rocky landscape usually precludes its use for agricultural purposes. Typically, the oldest burials in hilltop

³⁰ Le cimetière Notre-Dame-des-Neiges web site at www.cimetierenddn.org.

³¹ BFHL, Fonds 6: 6.11 (12 Dec 1856, 2 Nov 1857).

cemeteries were at the summit, with the more recent burials spiralling downward from there.

In the case of Montreal, building on the rugged terrain of Mount Royal was prohibitively expensive so that only the very rich of the city built homes on the side of the mountain. Until the two cemeteries³² located on its summit, the upper reaches of Mount Royal remained densely forested. The top of Mount Royal topographically dominated the plain of Montreal and created tension between the rural, untamed wilderness and the industrial modernity of the city. It articulated a fundamental tension between two competing varieties of nationalism. That is, between the social and religious conservatism of the ultramontanes and the “nationalisme canadien-français, qui s’enracine dans l’affrontement politique et militaire entre la France et l’Angleterre au XVIIIe siècle et dans l’échec des revendications nationales des francophones dans les années 1830.”³³ The authors of both types of nationalism sought to evoke feelings that supported their particular constructions of nationalism.

Hilltops abound with religious connotations deriving from the Judeo-Christian tradition. In the Old Testament, Moses carried the Ten Commandments tablets down from the top of Mount Sinai while the New Testament provides similar examples such as the Sermon on the Mount, the Transfiguration, and, of course, Golgotha, the centre piece of Christianity.³⁴ Hilltops imbued cemeteries with the ethos of a place apart, a liminal place where the sacred met the profane and triumphed. The hillock of the Monument

³² The Catholic cemetery, Notre-Dame-des-Neiges and the Protestant cemetery, Mount Royal.

³³ Debarbieux and Marois, 185.

³⁴ Exodus 34:1-4; Matthew, 5:1-2, 17:1-2, 27:33. (NRSV).

thus assumed the character of mythical space. It became a contentious site, drawing on competing snippets of history, legend, folklore, and tradition. For the ultramontanes, the Monument was a profane marker on a sacred site. For the Institut, it was a sacred marker on a sacred site.

As a *lieux de mémoire*, the Monument was a symbolic memorial to the idea that the patriots had fought for freedom. The ultramontane onslaught of the mid-nineteenth century victimized the Institut's liberal interpretation of the rebellions, a view that would receive considerably more attention a century later. Sites such as the Monument are calculated to serve as enduring memorials that evoke the memory of a common set of values by which a people or a nation can define itself. More importantly, perhaps, such a site has the immediate effect of transporting visitors back in time to a point where they can imagine a history that aligns with their present experience. Dominant sites do not act alone in producing this effect but as agents of the social groups whose ideologies have given the sites emotive significance. As Halbwachs pointed out, these social groups create the infrastructure around which a nation or a people can retrieve collective memories and reconstruct them in a way that locates them as a legitimate foundation legend.³⁵

As a tangible link with the past, the Monument supported Halbwachs' contentions. It deconstructed the events of the rebellions into constituent parts around which the Institut could construct myths and legends that lent credence to its view of the

³⁵ Nancy Wood, "Memory's Remains: *Les lieux de mémoire*," History & Memory: Studies in Representation of the Past 6, no. 1 (Spring/Summer 1994), 123-124; Roy Rosenzweig and David Thelen, The Presence of the Past: Popular Uses of History in

patriots as the founding heroes of an emergent nation. Situating the Monument in the cemetery imbued it with the ethos of hearth, home, and soil. It attached the Monument to the idea of French Canada as a rural nation and affirmed bonds to a departed family and a departed community. A proper location for the Monument was imperative to the Monument's ability to manipulate what French Canada chose to remember. The cemetery was a dignified and holy place in which to remember this great chapter in the annals of French Canada's history.³⁶

A new commemorative consciousness gained currency in the mid-nineteenth century and the beauty of the rural cemetery became an apposite setting for visual representations of history. The cult of the 'great man' approach to history made the monuments to their memory in these cemeteries a tangible expression of these historical representations. Cemeteries and cemetery art enjoyed their zenith from 1850 to 1930, the early part of that period being devoted to simple monuments like the Monument with little ornamentation. As the nineteenth century drew to a close, more decorative and lavish cemetery art flourished and the allegorical monument gained in popularity.³⁷

Dating from the 1840s, schools of sculpture in North America began to mushroom. Those years saw a passion for sculpture that, like the cemeteries it adorned, evolved from the simple, dignified ornamentation of the rural and garden cemeteries to the lavish statuary and iron enclosures of the later monumental cemeteries. Where the landscape had once predominated, human intervention now prevailed. As more and

American Life (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), 68, 105-106; Nora, xxiii; Halbwachs, 175-183.

³⁶ Halbwachs, 63-65; Nora, 18; Howett, 9.

³⁷ Jackson and Vergara, 71. Gordon, 138.

grander sculpture appeared, it acquired new functionality. Memorial markers became a way for the living to use the dead as a device to influence public memory, particularly in the mid-nineteenth century when the cemetery had the dual purpose of burial ground and city park.³⁸ Cemetery sculpture assumed a new role, “to provoke a specific response in the viewer, to heal, and to instruct.”³⁹ This change invested cemetery art with a new symbolic resonance that left its audience increasingly aware of its historical antecedents.⁴⁰

The Institut raised its Monument to inculcate the notion of the patriots as the first and ultimate nationalists who had fought to defend the freedom and the very soil of their homeland. In their simplicity, the Monument’s inscriptions valorized the rebellions as a meritorious struggle against the dark forces of tyranny and symbolized the heroic sacrifice of the patriots. With its roll call of the dead, the executed, and the exiled, the Monument invoked not only a sense of communal commitment to the cause of liberalism, but a powerful sense of the individual commitment that had been expended on behalf of French Canada. It was a clever device to evoke a sense of indebtedness to the patriots. The Monument encouraged French Canada to emulate the virtues of the patriots and to uphold the ideals of liberalism for which the patriots had sacrificed so much. Without a doubt, the Institut’s Monument meant to communicate a message and did so by its form, its inscriptions and its locale.⁴¹

³⁸ Jackson and Vergara, 71; Frederic A. Sharf, “The Garden Cemetery and American Sculpture: Mount Auburn,” *The Art Quarterly* XXIV (1961), 80, 84-85; Howett, 12.

³⁹ Howett, 11.

⁴⁰ Sharf, 84.

⁴¹ Jonathan Vance, *Death So Noble: Memory, Meaning, and the First World War* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1997), 29, 44, 115-116; Winter, 95-96.

Maurice Agulhon, in his study of statuary, pointed out that the mid-nineteenth century saw the beginning of monuments dedicated to the military, to those who fought on the frontier of political struggle, and, in particular to those who died a dramatic death. Thus, the Monument did more than commemorate people and events, it commemorated a social and political philosophy. At inception, it was not, in Agulhon's terms, a 'monument-tombe' but rather a 'monument-signal'. Rather than marking mortal remains, it signified an ideology and was a material testament to the particular subset of memories that the Institut hoped would take precedence in the collective memory of French Canada.⁴²

Agulhon distinguished between ideological and political statues, seeing the former as representing social philosophies whereas the latter witnessed to opposing choices resulting from political struggle within a given régime or system. Applying Agulhon's paradigm, the Monument straddles his two definitions of statuary. He further maintained that political statues, like the Monument, reside in private settings such as a cemetery, but cautioned that the private setting of this genre of monument renders it easy to forget that political and patriotic statuary often have their genesis in revolution.

Agulhon observed that the proliferation of monuments in the nineteenth century indicated an optimistic, albeit naïve, liberalism. He supported this contention by noting that the erection of monuments had its apotheosis in those countries most inclined towards secular politics; Britain, France and the United States. Agulhon's 'peuple des statues' were the first to raise monuments and statues to ordinary men as heroes,

⁴² Maurice Agulhon, "La 'statuomanie' et l'histoire," Université Panthéon, Sorbonne, Paris (Winter, 79), 149, 153.

especially those involved in political struggle, those who died young in battle, or who suffered dramatic and premature death. Military and revolutionary commemoration became particularly fashionable during the reign of Napoleon III (1849-1870) which coincided with the raising of the Institut's Monument.

By employing the obelisk form as a memorial, the Institut used its funerary aspect to emphasize the sacrifice of the patriots and its form to underline the sublime nature of the liberal principles for which it stood. The scripted catalogue on the plinth of the Monument inscribed the story of the rebellions in stone, transmitting to posterity a collective memorial of the struggle for liberalism. There are a variety of causal factors for the choice of obelisks and pyramids, rather than statues, such as fashion and economy, as well as a certain reluctance to visualize individual heroes.⁴³

The obelisk, of Egyptian origin, is an ancient variation on the pyramid. Robert Shipley speculated that the pyramid may have derived from the effect of the sun's rays penetrating the clouds after a rain, a common ruse often employed to depict God showering grace on the earth. The ancient Egyptians believed the pyramid to be endowed with magical powers as its soaring height represented eternity. The slender pyramid of the obelisk form is usually cut off at the top and crowned with a capstone in the form of a second and smaller pyramid and this was the form ultimately adopted by the Institut. From the Christian perspective, the obelisk of the Institut's Monument pointing toward heaven suggests the virtue of its symbolism. Whether the Institut intended its obelisk to symbolize this remains open to interpretation in light of the fact that in the mid-nineteenth century, the obelisk was the least expensive type of monument to raise. In

addition to the economy of the obelisk, the pyramidal form became fashionable during the early nineteenth century. The New England sculptor, Horatio Greenough, referred to the obelisk as the purest monumental form of structure, and proceeded to recommend the obelisk as the optimal form to adopt for the proposed Bunker Hill memorial. As a result, the obelisk form became highly popular as the model for commemorative markers in the second half of the nineteenth century.⁴⁴ The obelisk also sometimes served as a tomb. The Monument appeared to serve both as an allegorical tomb for the victims of 1837-1838, the living as well as the dead, and as a testament to the history of the rebellion.

Winter argued that monuments possess “ambiguities of iconography and ritual ... and while they embody and proclaim a host of commemorative messages ... they do not obliterate the simple truth that people die in war.”⁴⁵ Winter is simultaneously correct and incorrect. The ambiguities exist because the vision behind any monument derives from personality, which is in itself ambiguous. Time, however, exacerbates the ambiguity by adding layer upon layer of myth and legend which do in fact obliterate ‘the simple truth’, an oxymoron at best.

From conception in 1853 to the inauguration of the Monument in 1858, a variety of philosophical ideals along with social, religious, and political realities converged to influence the final product. Leading the way was the Institut, determined to preserve and perpetuate liberalism. Creation of a foundation legend meant manipulating the past for present purposes and the Institut did so by using the power of myth, the invention of

⁴³ Winter, 146.

⁴⁴ Robert Shipley, To Mark Our Place: A History of Canadian War Memorials (Toronto: NC Press Limited, 1987), 106; Jackson and Vergara, 80-81; Agulhon, 147; Francaviglia, 507.

tradition, and the dominant site of the Monument as the focal point from which to commemorate a cult of foundation heroes.

Epitaphs on memorial markers evolved from their traditional function as a simple reminder of a life once lived toward instructing the living with messages that venerated the virtues of the dead. Funereal ritual ennobled the dead and invested their lives with a moral piety that the living could emulate. This was an appeal to the past as a blueprint for the present and both ultramontanes and Institut recognized commemoration as a useful agency for disseminating their respective ideologies.

Commemorating What?

The study of commemoration involves understanding how and why individuals and societies understand their past. Nicholas Rogers and Adrian Shubert made the point that “Monuments help to anchor collective remembering in fixed, tangible sites ... [] ... to legitimate the very notion of a collective memory.”⁴⁶ They described the late eighteenth to early twentieth centuries as an age when public memory was concerned with constructing narratives of national identity to anchor emergent nation-states, with the nineteenth century being the golden age of commemorative politics. This pre-occupation with nation building was a consequence of the Industrial Revolution which unhinged pre-industrial forms of community and left a void. History, heritage and memory, real or imagined, filled the gap with permutations and combinations that refashioned the past, frequently packaged in cloaks of myth.

⁴⁵ Winter, 78.

In building the Monument the Institut actively sought to conscript the rebellions into a national myth, supporting its view of French Canada's evolution into a liberal and enlightened society. As the disaster and horror of rebellion were pushed to the margins of memory, the chaos and social upheaval of the Industrial Revolution began to skew the memory.

À propos of the mid-nineteenth century, Lower Canada moved slowly from a rural, atomized people to an urban collectivity, forcing a redefinition of national identity. The social turmoil of industrialization and urbanization sounded the death knell for the familiar rural way of life, giving rise to the need to grieve for what had been lost. At such moments of crisis in the national psyche, individuals and communities respond to loss by searching for any vestige of memory that provides a sense of security and permanence. In the process, fragments of the past, things half-remembered and half-imagined, crystallize like pearl around a grain of sand and the memories become precious. When a group of individuals collectively mourn a precious object, an ancestral legacy is born that gives the group a sense of communal identity. This identity finds a common voice "not in the genuine voice of a surviving tradition still maintained but in the diluted one of the victim uprooted from a lost tradition still beloved."⁴⁷ Although rural society in French Canada had centred on the local church, such allegiance did not preclude knowledge of national and international events. The Enlightenment, the rebellions, and, subsequently, the Industrial Revolution, were the raw material that fed a massive rupture in French

⁴⁶ Nicholas Rogers and Adrian Shubert, "Spectacle, Monument, and Memory," Histoire sociale/Social History XXIX, no. 58 (Novembre-November 1996), 269, 272.

⁴⁷ Lowenthal 77.

Canada's identity. From out of this maelstrom, French Canada searched for new forms of historical representation.⁴⁸

The ultramontanes had warned the patriots that their chosen course of action might result in the loss of Lower Canada's ethnic, linguistic and religious identity. They appealed to that set of collective memories that centred on parish and Church and a return to the peace and prosperity of an idealized, rural way of life. The liberal ideas that the Institut imported from Europe and the United States were, therefore, on a collision course with Bourget's ultramontane clergy, and the Institut grappled with ways to change the idiom of French Canada's collective memory. It needed to counter the negative perception that the actions of the patriots had contributed to irrecoverable loss. The Institut appealed to the cult of heroes arising from the rebellions. Raising a monument might evoke the right blend of mystical emotions to legitimize the patriots as a cult of heroes. This cult could then become the basis for a French Canadian origin legend as an emergent nation which had shed its innocence and graduated into modern society.

As a sacred symbol, the Monument represented a heroic tradition to the Institut, but an icon of social and political chaos to the ultramontanes. This provided French Canada with a choice as to how to represent its cultural community and define a renewed social identity. Both the liberals of the Institut and the ultramontanes sought to situate memories of the rebellions within a context that would tap the heartstrings of public

⁴⁸ Susan A Crane, "(Not) Writing History: Rethinking the Intersections of Personal History and Collective Memory with Hans von Aufsess," History & Memory: Studies in Representation of the Past 6, no. 2 (Fall/Winter 1994), 5, 6, 15; Saul Friedländer, When Memory Comes (New York, Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 1991), 69. Carlo Ginzburg, "Shared Memories, Private Recollections," History & Memory: Studies in Representation of the

memory. The veracity of that memory was unimportant if it served to legitimize some version of the past with which French Canadians could identify.

The search for a new representational mode in Lower Canada meant finding a set of collective memories that supported the idea of French Canada as a self-conscious entity with a distinctive set of characteristics. The present could be accommodated by projecting it on to the past, thereby forging communal links with ancestors and establishing a linear tradition to the present. The Institut hoped that the Monument would rally French Canada around the idea of a pastoral, rural people transformed by revolution into a liberal and enlightened society, a nation that had thrown off the feudal shackles. This was a vain hope however, for the contest for memory and its associated lieux de mémoire was as many-sided as the Institut's own Monument.

To make this context concrete, it is informative to consider the building of the Duvernay monument in 1855 vis-à-vis that of the patriots in 1858. As one of the new breed of liberal professionals, Ludger Duvernay was active in the patriot movement of the 1830s, openly criticizing the colonial government. He was imprisoned three times. Determined to preserve French Catholic culture in the face of the dominant English, Protestant culture, Duvernay founded the SSJBM in 1834 and, that year, French Canada celebrated its first fête nationale. Following the rebellion, Duvernay reconstituted and actively promoted the society. After his death in 1852, the SSJBM appropriated him as its hero and, in 1855, raised a monument to his memory in Notre-Dame-des-Neiges. The Duvernay monument celebrated his role as a founding father of the SSJBM and the fête

Past 9, no. 1 / 2 (Fall 1997),360; David Hey, The Oxford Guide to Family History (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 6-7, 12, 69.

nationale to the exclusion of his very active role as a Patriot. Duvernay effectively became the folk hero of the ultramontanes, the fête nationale the tangible expression. The ultramontanes anchored festivity and ritual to a rural idyll with the Church as the arbiter of legitimate authority. These were the sentiments expressed by the Duvernay monument with no quarter given to the rebellions. In contrast, the Institut's Monument focused exclusively on the rebellions as sacramental cornerstones upon which to build a new nation.⁴⁹

The Institut employed the patriots as the folk heroes for the liberals. To create a viable alternative to the ultramontanes, the Institut needed to create a dialogue with the past that would "marry experience with imagination and enable people to connect with 'imagined communities' beyond the ones that they had learned in family circles."⁵⁰ As Rosenzweig and Thelen have argued, people and societies imagine varieties of their past communities. Within the Rosenzweig-Thelen model, the Institut critically analyzed the past and extrapolated from it those pieces that served to support its particular narrative.⁵¹ If, as Lowenthal and Hobsbawm have argued, myth and invention are essential to the politics of identity, then the Institut was bent on using them to create a new identity for French Canadians that accorded with its Enlightenment principles. By endowing the patriots with images of a struggle for freedom, complete with a set of heroes, the Institut afforded French Canadians an empowering communal legacy. The Institut concentrated, therefore, on inventing a sacred mythology around the Monument upon which to build its vision of nation. It mythologized the patriots as a cult of heroes whose sacrifice in the

⁴⁹ Gordon, 153-157; Fussell, 146-147.

⁵⁰ Rosenzweig and Thelen, 187.

rebellions could be packaged as a virtuous struggle for self-determination. The Institut abjured the clerical flavour of the fête nationale, under the auspices of Bourget and the SSJBM, for the image of the patriots and the rebellions as the birth of a new and liberal nation.

The Duvernay and Patriot monuments represented, respectively, the aspirations of the ultramontanes and the Institut, to influence public memory according to their very different ideas of what French Canada should become. Both groups sought to consolidate their positions by creating nostalgia for a hallowed past, real or imagined, which was capable of communicating a coherent canon of collective memories.

The Institut's Monument straddled the divide between where French Canada had been before the rebellions and where the Institut hoped it would go in the 1850s. It encapsulated both the memories that the Institut hoped to ignite and those it sought to suppress. Such manipulation of memory might imbue the Monument with significance in the history and memory of French Canada for, as Nora puts it, "the moment of lieux de mémoire occurs at the same time that an immense and intimate fund of memory disappears, surviving only as a reconstituted object beneath the gaze of critical history."⁵² Unfortunately for the Institut, the fund of memory did not disappear. While the Institut tried valiantly to invent memories that imagined a national community forged by rebellion, sacrifice and liberal ideals, the ultramontanes, to the same end, redoubled their

⁵¹ Ibid., 203-205.

⁵² Nora, 12.

efforts to cobble together a very different type of nationalism which was conservative and religious.⁵³

In the post-rebellion period, French Canada began a search for new ways to identify itself that were complicated by the vagaries of both industrial and demographic revolutions. To remedy the situation, both the ultramontanes and the liberals of the Institut borrowed pieces of the past, changed some, discarded those that did not fit within their respective paradigms, and invented history where it suited their purposes. They vied with each other to dominate the contested terrain of French Canada's memories.

⁵³ Wood, 129.

Chapter Four

Conclusion: Beyond 1858

In 2004, long after construction of the Monument, Notre-Dame-des-Neiges' website and written promotional material feature it as a point of interest in the cemetery. The background provided by these media is, however, sketchy and simplistic. Similarly, websites pertaining to the patriots all but ignore the Monument. Perhaps the answer to the silence lies in the fact that the Monument, contested from conception, continues to generate tension.

To celebrate its 150th anniversary in 2004, Notre-Dame-des-Neiges commissioned a book to narrate the cemetery's history which, as of this writing remains unpublished. As part of this project, the cemetery engaged architect and art historian, Pierre-Richard Bisson, to peruse the archives of the Fabrique. His findings make interesting reading. It appears from Bisson's correspondence that the land which the Monument occupies became a matter of contention between the cemetery and the SSJBM. Quoting from a committee report of the general assembly of wardens for Notre-Dame parish, to which Bisson assigns a date of 1855, Bisson reported that the cemetery committee "a donné le terrain pour le monument du fondateur de la Saint-Jean-Baptiste et pour celui des victimes de 1837-1838."¹ Bisson expressed the opinion that 'donné' meant only the superficial use of the ground for burial and the erection of suitable memorial markers and that there was no intention of actually ceding the land which Bisson opined was the inalienable property of the Fabrique.²

¹ AFND, Correspondence P.-R. Bisson to Alain Tremblay (14 août 2002).

² Ibid.

The plot thickens! In 1917, then SSJBM President, Victor Morin, presented the cemetery with an offer that the SSJBM would be pleased to provide perpetual care and maintenance for lots 67-B (Monument aux Patriotes) and 58-C (Duvernay Monument) if the cemetery would cede the land on which they stood to the SSJBM. According to Bisson, the cemetery replied that it would be appropriate and fitting for the SSJBM to assume this obligation but made no comment on the question of ceding the land.³

In the minutes of a Fabrique meeting in 1927, Bisson reports that the SSJBM once again made an attempt to obtain the land for the two monuments. It based this claim upon an extract from its own minutes of a meeting in 1855 where it claimed that the cemetery had undoubtedly given the land to the SSJBM, at least for the Duvernay Monument. Bisson was unable to find any corroborating evidence for this. The issue of the land was raised again in 1938, at which time one of the Notre-Dame wardens suggested giving the land to the SSJBM, but the matter was dropped.⁴

By 1940, the Monument, now 82 years old, was badly deteriorating. The Quebec Department of Land, Parks and Forests evaluated restoration work at \$3,000 and agreed to undertake the necessary repairs if the cemetery transferred to it the deed to the land. There the matter rested until 1960, at which time the Fabrique noted that repairs were essential to the tune of \$2,000 which the cemetery agreed to assume temporarily on the understanding that the SSJBM would reimburse expenses.⁵ A visual examination of the

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

Monument indicates that this repair work was in fact completed, but Bisson does not report whether the SSJBM ever made good on its promise to reimburse the cemetery.

Forty years later, the Monument again threatens to crumble. In the Tribune Libre of May 28, 2003, Gilles Rhéaume⁶ penned a letter to Quebec Premier Jean Charest requesting government funds to help restore the Monument. Rhéaume described the state of the Monument as "...dans état que les spécialistes et les experts estiment lamentable. Nous vous demandons donc de prendre les mesures pour cette pièce unique du parc patrimonial québécois soit rénovée dans les plus brefs délais."⁷ Nevertheless, the Tribune Libre's patriot website begins with a quote from Jacques Lacoursière that echoes the sentiments expressed by Euclide Roy at the inauguration of the Monument, "Dans tous les pays du monde, celui qui verse son sang pour la patrie a droit au titre de héros. Les peuples libres savent se souvenir de leurs patriotes."⁸ Lacoursière and Rhéaume are exceptional in perpetuating the Monument as part of the nationalist repertoire in Quebec.

The Institut chose, as the subject of its history lesson in stone, to commemorate the memory of the rebellions of 1837-1838 as well as the ideals defeated in that rebellion. The Monument was a cheat-sheet for a history lesson. It was a self-conscious choice by the Institut to preserve selective events from the rebellions that would guide the development of a nationalist mentality in accordance with liberal principles.

⁶ Gilles Rhéaume is Director of the Institut of Studies of Linguistic Policies and Chairman of the Mouvement Souverainiste du Québec. His numerous articles appear in *L'Action-Nationale* and *L'Actualité*.

⁷ www.vigile.net/ds-patriotes/, September 7, 2004. Emails from this author to Rhéaume failed to elicit any response.

⁸ *Ibid.*

The Monument operates in a variety of ways and on a variety of levels. At its simplest, the Monument remembers those who died, while on a more profound level, the monument stands as a grave marker for those principles defeated in rebellion which continued under attack by the ultramontanes in its aftermath. Out of a very Catholic repertoire, the Institut constructed the Monument as a funereal device, as a history lesson, and, by the Monument's very form, a beacon of hope that the liberal enlightenment would again flower in the emerging nation.

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