

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

John Matthew Barlow

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ABSTRACT

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

John Matthew Barlow, Ph.D.
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This dissertation examines the arc of Irish-Catholic identity in Griffintown, a working-class neighbourhood of Montréal, over the course of the “long” twentieth century, from 1868 to 2009. Griffintown is significant as it was both the first and last Irish-Catholic neighbourhood of the city. Situating the working-class Irish-Catholics of Griffintown within a postcolonial framework, this dissertation examines the development and functioning of a diasporic Irish culture in Montréal. We see how that culture operated in Griffintown, at times shielding the residents of the neighbourhood from goings on in the wider city and nation, and at other times allowing for the forging of common cause across class lines within the Irish-Catholic community of Montréal. In the years following World War II, Irish-Catholic Griffintown disappeared from the landscape, owing to depopulation and the physical destruction of the neighbourhood. We then see how Irish-Catholic identity in Montréal as a whole broke down, as the Irish made common cause with the Anglo-Protestants of the city to forge a new alliance: Anglo-Montréal. Thus situated, the Anglophone population of the city girded itself in a defensive posture for the linguistic, cultural, economic, and constitutional strife that dominated life in Montréal over the second half of the twentieth century. In the years since the second referendum on Québec sovereignty in 1995, Irish identity has undergone a renaissance of sorts in Montréal, due to both developments locally and the reinvigoration of the Irish diaspora globally since the 1980s. In this process, we see the

intersection of history and memory as Griffintown has become the site of Irish memory and remembrance on Montréal's cultural landscape. The Irish of Montréal, then, have used Griffintown as a means of claiming their space on the cultural landscape of the city and to demonstrate their long-standing connection to Montréal. In effect, Griffintown has allowed the Irish in Montréal to re-claim their stake as one of Montréal's "founding nations."

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to the memory of my grandparents, Rodney Rupert Browne, and Eleanor Shipman Browne.

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Preface

Griffintown, today a derelict and abandoned district, was once a bustling working class neighbourhood on the north bank of the Lachine Canal, just down the hill from downtown Montréal. Settled as early as the 1810s, Griffintown was the site of the beginnings of the Canadian Industrial Revolution on the Lachine Canal in the 1840s. From its beginnings and throughout the nineteenth century, Griffintown was a predominantly Irish-Catholic neighbourhood. As the twentieth century dawned, however, the Irish were leaving Griffintown while the French Canadian population grew, and Jews and Italians began to settle in the neighbourhood. The Irish continued to leave Griffintown throughout the twentieth century, as the neighbourhood itself underwent a long decline, culminating in the 1960s. By this time, the Irish comprised one-fourteenth of the population of Griffintown; Italians and Ukrainians were now the majority. In the mid-1970s, there was not much left of the neighbourhood at all, other than abandoned factories and warehouses, empty lots, and a few businesses and stands of row houses scattered amongst the ruins.

Despite never being home to the majority of Montréal's Irish-Catholic population, Griffintown has long been associated with this group, the first large scale immigrant group to Montréal. The Irish experience in Montréal was more complicated than in other cities of the Irish diaspora. This is not to say that integration for the Irish in Montréal was necessarily easier in these other cities. Indeed, in some cases, Montréal may have been the easier city to settle in, given its Catholic majority. The Irish, especially the Catholics, encountered fierce nativist movements in some other locations, in both

Canada and the United States.¹ Nonetheless, the local contingencies of Montréal made the Irish experience there unlike that in other diasporic locations. Montréal is, of course, the only major city in North America, outside of Mexico, where English is not the predominant language. And it is the only major city in North America, including Mexico City, with a vociferous minority population that has traditionally jealously and actively defended its linguistic rights, as the Anglo Montréal community has.²

While the Irish-Catholics in Montréal were the first “immigrant”³ group to arrive in the city, they were not the first “Other” group, as they were in cities like Boston, New York, Liverpool, Manchester, or Sydney. In Montréal, they arrived in a city already divided along ethno-religious/linguistic lines (to say nothing of the classed landscape of Montréal) between the Anglo-Protestants, on the one hand, and the French Canadians, on the other. Despite co-operation, especially between the Anglo-Protestant and the French Canadian bourgeoisies, both groups eyed each other with suspicion. With the exception of some neighbourhoods where there was a mixed residential pattern, there was little interaction between French Canadians and Anglo-Protestants in Montréal prior to the

¹ See, Oscar Handlin, *Boston's Immigrants, 1790-1880: A Study in Acculturation* (Cambridge, MA: The Balknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1959); T.W. Acheson, *Saint John: The Making of a Colonial Urban Community* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1985); Dale T. Knobel, *Paddy and the Republic: Ethnicity and Nationality in Antebellum America* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1986); Gregory S. Kealey, *Toronto Workers Respond to Industrial Capitalism, 1867-1892* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991 (1980)); Scott W. See, *Riots in New Brunswick: Orange Nativism and Social Violence in the 1840s* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994); Noel Ignatiev, *How the Irish Became White* (New York: Routledge, 1995); Mark G. McGowan, *The Waning of the Green: Catholics, the Irish, and Identity in Toronto, 1887-1922* (Montréal: McGill-Queens University Press, 1999); Ryan Dye, “Catholic Protectionism or Irish Nationalism? Religion and Politics in Liverpool, 1829-1845,” *The Journal of British Studies*, 40/3 (2001): 357-90; Tyler Anbinder, *The Five Points: The New York City Neighborhood that Invented Tap Dance, Stole Elections, and Became the World's Most Notorious Slum* (New York: Plume, 2002); Malcolm Campbell, “Ireland's Furthest Shores: Irish Immigrant Settlement in Nineteenth-Century California and Eastern Australia,” *Pacific History Review*, 71/1 (2002): 59-90.

² This, of course, has benefited the Irish-Catholics of Montréal throughout the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

³ Both the French Canadian and British populations of Montréal arrived as conquering colonists, the French of the local aboriginal population and the British of the French. The Irish, on the other hand, were not colonists arriving in Montréal.

1960s. Indeed, the city was geographically divided between the French Canadian east end and the Anglophone west end, with boulevard Saint-Laurent as the dividing line.⁴ Thus, while the Irish in Boston, New York, and other cities were left to contend with only one majoritarian population in forging their own identity or space on the urban landscape, Irish-Catholics in Montréal encountered a situation wherein they were a double minority,⁵ in terms of both religion, where they were a minority within the Catholic Church, and language, forming a minority within the English-speaking population. They were thus left to negotiate an already complex urban landscape in order to make room for themselves, both physically and culturally between Montréal's dual majorities.⁶ In some cases, there was co-operation, in others, conflict.

The historical geographers Sherry Olson and Patricia Thornton argue that the Irish-Catholics of Montréal in the nineteenth century were able to create this cultural space for themselves through three means: the Catholic Church, politics, and the St. Patrick's Society. To this trinity, I would also add sport.⁷ The Church was instrumental,

⁴ Michel Tremblay, *Les Belles Souers* (Montréal: Leméac, 1972); Sherry Simon, *Translating Montreal: Episodes in the Life of a Divided City* (Montréal: McGill-Queens University Press, 2006), pp. 3-56.

⁵ This term, "double minority", was invented by John Moir, in an article concerning the plight of Anglo-Catholics in pre-Confederation Canada. Whilst Moir was concerned with the place of Anglo-Catholics in Canada as a whole, i.e.: a linguistic and religious minority, the term is equally applicable to the situation of the Irish-Catholics in Montréal in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. John Moir, "The Problem of the Double Minority: Some Reflections on the Development of the English-Speaking Catholic Church in Canada in the Nineteenth Century," *Histoire Sociale/Social History*, 8 (1971): 53-67. See, also, Ronald Rudin, *The Forgotten Quebecers: A History of English-Speaking Quebec, 1759-1980* (Québec: Institut québécois de recherche sur la culture, 1985), pp. 109-10.

⁶ The term "dual majorities" dates from the linguistic tensions of Montréal during the Quiet Revolution of the 1960s. The city's Anglophone population, despite being a numerical minority since the 1860s, had long dominated Montréal's economy and insisted that this gave it the right to be considered an equal majority with a French Canadian population determined to implement "la reconquête de Montréal." See, Paul-André Linteau, *Histoire de Montréal depuis la Confédération*, 2nd ed. (Montréal: Boréal, 2002 (1992)), p 84; Marc V. Levine, *La reconquête de Montréal*, trans. Marie Poirier (Montréal: VLB Éditeur, 1997 (1990)), chs. 1-3.

⁷ John Matthew Barlow, "'Scientific Aggression': Irishness, Manliness, Class, and Commercialisation in the Shamrock Hockey Club of Montréal, 1894-1901," *Coast to Coast: Hockey in*

as it allowed the Irish to carve out a major institutional space in Montréal; prior to their arrival, there were very few Anglophone Catholics in the city. In a sense, then, the Irish are responsible for the establishment of an Anglophone Catholic tradition in Montréal.⁸ Rosalyn Trigger argues that the parish was a particularly important institution for the establishment and maintenance of Irish-Catholic identity in Montréal in the nineteenth century. She also notes that the Catholic Church, at least, if not the parishioners themselves, sought to re-focus Irish identity away from Ireland itself, and instead to a localised, Montréal-based one.⁹ This process can certainly be seen in Griffintown, where the clergy and nuns of St. Ann's Parish, together with their parishioners, worked to forge and police the boundaries of a carefully constructed Irish-Catholic identity throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. However, both clergy and parishioners displayed an ambivalence towards Ireland, as we will see in subsequent chapters. On the one hand, there were signs of a local Irish-Catholic Montréal identity in Griffintown. And yet, displays of solidarity with Ireland were also common in the Griff, as it was more popularly called, especially around St. Patrick's Day every year.

Olson and Thornton's argument, however, is excessively focused on the upward mobility of Montréal's Irish-Catholic population and, as such, does not make an allowance for the persistence of Griffintown, a working-class slum. Griffintown was central to the forging of an Irish-Catholic identity in Montréal in the nineteenth and early twentieth century; indeed, it was referred to as the "House of the Irish" by the organisers

Canada before the Second World War, ed. John Chi-Kit Wong (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009, forthcoming).

⁸ Sherry Olson and Patricia Thornton, "The Challenge of the Irish-Catholic Community in Nineteenth-Century Montreal," *Histoire Sociale/Social History*, 35/70 (2003): 333-62.

⁹ Rosalyn Trigger, "The Role of the Parish in Fostering Irish-Catholic Identity in Nineteenth-Century Montreal," (MA thesis, McGill University, 1997).

of the annual St. Patrick's Day parade in 1914.¹⁰ Moreover, Irish-Catholic identity in Griffintown was working class in nature, and oftentimes stood at odds with that of the Irish-Catholic middle classes, as this dissertation shows. This separate Griffintown Irish-Catholic identity persisted into the middle of the twentieth century, until the decline and death of the neighbourhood, especially owing to the close relationship between the Irish of Griffintown and St. Ann's Catholic Church.

In the post-World War II era, the working classes¹¹ gained a newfound affluence, and class lines in Canada as a whole lessened, though they did not disappear. By the time that Griffintown disappeared in the 1960s, the Irish-Catholic population of Montréal, both working- and middle- classes,¹² had been subsumed into the larger Anglophone community. Together, they girded themselves for the linguistic struggles and strife, to say nothing of the attendant constitutional battles, that arose from the Quiet Revolution

¹⁰ Annual Meeting Minutes, 12 February 1914, St. Patrick's Basilica (Montréal) Archives (SPBMA), Irish-Catholic Committee Meeting Minutes.

¹¹ I refer to the working *classes*, and not *class* for specific reasons. First, while I do not deny that there was not, at times, something akin to working class consciousness, this was still an elusive concept and the fragmentation of the working classes was far more common than their unity. Moreover, this fragmentation was not always the fault of capitalists, but rather arose spontaneously from the workers themselves. They identified themselves with their trade, their ethnicity, their religion, their location, and so on before they identified themselves as part of an imagined community of the working class. Second, often left out of the equation in the search for working class solidarity by historians are the majority of the workers, the un- and semi- skilled workers. It is also clear that in many instances, working class organisations and unions had little interest in these workers, preferring to concentrate their attention on the skilled workers, further reinforcing the notion of the working *classes*. See, for example, Bryan D. Palmer, *A Culture in Conflict: Skilled Workers and Industrial Capitalism in Hamilton, Ontario, 1860-1914* (Montréal: McGill-Queens University Press, 1979); Gregory S. Kealey and Bryan D. Palmer, *Dreaming of what might be: The Knights of Labor in Ontario, 1880-1900* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1982); Roy Rosenzweig, *Eight hours for what we will: Workers and leisure in an industrial city, 1870-1920* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983); Joy Parr, *The Gender of Breadwinners: Women, Men, and Change in Two Industrial Towns, 1880-1950* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990); Victor A. Walsh, "'Drowning the Shamrock': Drink, Teetotalism, and the Irish-Catholics of Gilded-Age Pittsburgh," *Journal of American Ethnic History*, 10/1-2 (1990-1): 60-79; Kealey, *Toronto Workers Respond*; Ignatiev, *How The Irish Became White*; Lynne Marks, *Revivals and Roller Rinks: Religion, Leisure, and Identity in Late-Nineteenth-Century Small-Town Ontario* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996).

¹² The middle classes were, like the working classes, just as fragmented throughout the nineteenth century, and continue to be so today. Thus, for the same reasons I refer to the working *classes*, I also make reference to the middle *classes*.

and the rise of a *québécois* separatist movement in the late 1960s. Coincidentally, St. Ann's Church was torn down in July 1970, just three months before the October Crisis.

In the wake of the second referendum on Québec sovereignty in 1995, and as Montréal's population became increasingly multicultural, this Anglophone community underwent a fundamental re-ordering. The old-stock British Isles core of this community began to fracture, as the Scots and Irish, especially, began to re-assert their separate ethnic identities in the 1990s. In the case of the Irish, Griffintown has been central to this process, as it emerged as a *lieu de mémoire*, to borrow from the French theorist and historian, Pierre Nora. As such, Griffintown has become a symbolic site of remembrance created by and for, at least a segment of, the Irish-Catholic community of Montréal. Griffintown serves as the community's official preserve of an imagined historical memory, carefully created, reinforced, and policed by the self-appointed "official" custodians of the community's memory in Montréal.¹³

This dissertation, then, arises out of this intersection of history and memory, evident in this re-Irishification¹⁴ of Griffintown. As such, it explores the relationship between Griffintown, both real and/or imagined, and the larger question of Irish identity in Montréal over the "long" twentieth century, from 1868 to 2009. The starting date for this dissertation simply reflects the date that the Montréal Shamrock Lacrosse Club (L.C.), the subject of Chapter 2, was founded. Through the lens of the long twentieth century, we see that the re-imagined Griffintown of the early twenty-first century does

¹³ Pierre Nora, "General Introduction: Between History and Memory," *Realms of Memory: Rethinking the French Past, Vol. I: Conflict and Drama*, ed. Pierre Nora, trans. Arthur Goldhammer (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), pp. 6-7.

¹⁴ Credit for the invention of this term, "re-Irishification", must be given to Donna Whittaker, Assistant to the Chair of the Department of History at Concordia University, herself an Irish Montrealer. The term grew out of the many conversations Donna and I have had over the years about the Irish of Montréal, the place of Griffintown in the city, and Irish culture in general.

not always reflect the historical complications of Irish-Catholic life in Griffintown in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Thus, while acknowledging the presence of other ethno-religious groups in the neighbourhood, I am primarily interested in Griffintown as a site of Irish-Catholic working class identity formation and reinforcement and, ultimately, memory. I trace the arc of Irishness in Griffintown from the beginning of its decline as an Irish-Catholic neighbourhood in the late nineteenth century, to the death of the neighbourhood, and through its re-birth as an Irish-Catholic *lieu de mémoire* in the early twenty-first century. To this end, then, we can see three distinct periods in the life of Griffintown. The first, from the start of my time period in 1868 until the Depression, saw a “live” Griffintown. The second period, from World War II to 1970, saw Griffintown die. And, finally, the third period, since 1970, is one that has seen Griffintown in its afterlife, first as derelict, empty, and abandoned, and now as a site of memory. Even more recently, the Griff has been a sight of re-birth with the Cité du Multimédia development in the east end of the neighbourhood, and announcements in 2007 and 2008 of proposals to revitalise the old Irish-Catholic core of Griffintown.¹⁵

It is not enough, however, to point to the Irishness of the Griffintown community. The lives of the Irish-Catholic Griffintowners were also informed by and reacted to their classed and gendered identities, as working class, as Catholics, as men and women. Indeed, as Joy Parr has argued in her study of class and gender in small-town Ontario,

[n]ever did class or gender, either singly or in conjunction, map the whole of social existence; both personally and collectively,

¹⁵ Andy Riga, “Griffintown Reborn? \$1.3 Billion Blueprint: Proposed project would preserve face of district, developer says,” *The Gazette*, 23 November 2007, p. A1; Éric Clément, “Un projet de 2000 logements dans le sud-ouest,” *La Presse*, 13 November 2008; Jeanne Corriveau, “Bassin du Nouveau-Havre: Un projet de 750 millions le long du canal Lachine,” *Le Devoir*, 13 November 2008. In November 2008, however, Devimco announced that it was postponing the start of the project owing to the global financial crisis. See, Éric Clément, “La construction de Griffintown repoussée à 2010,” *La Presse*, 11 November 2008.

understandings and obligations were also framed in religious faith, ethnicity, nationality. None of these roles was assumed sequentially. A man was not by day a worker and by night a man, Saturdays a husband and Sundays a Baptist. Women who were mothers were mothers at the mill and at home, at the laundry line, and on the picket line.¹⁶

Identities, in other words, are simultaneous and multiple. Thus, Griffintown is more than just an Irish-Catholic landscape. The men, women, and children who occupied this space carried with them these multiple and simultaneous identities; sometimes their identities meshed, sometimes they conflicted. But these identities continually formed, re-formed, and policed the boundaries of what it meant to be an Irish-Catholic working class resident of Griffintown. Moreover, not only did the residents of Griffintown carry their identities with them, but the actual physical landscape of the neighbourhood was classed, gendered, and beholden to ethnic, religious, and national identities.

In the midst of this popularisation and essentialisation of Griffintown as *the* site of the Irish experience in Montréal, the neighbourhood is ripe for an historical exploration and re-evaluation, especially within the context of the decline of Irishness in Montréal over the course of the twentieth century. Earlier studies of the neighbourhood and, indeed, the Irish experience in Montréal in general, have largely focussed on the nineteenth century.¹⁷ These previous studies that have focussed on Griffintown have

¹⁶ Parr, *The Gender of Breadwinners*, p. 245.

¹⁷ See, for example, H.C. Pentland, "The Lachine Canal Strike of 1843," *Canadian Historical Review*, 29/3 (1948): 255-77; G.R.C. Keep, "The Irish Adjustment in Montreal," *Canadian Historical Review*, 31/1 (1950): 39-46; Dorothy Suzanne Cross, "The Irish in Montreal, 1867-1896" (MA thesis, McGill University, 1969); Peter DeLottinville, "Joe Beef of Montréal: Working-Class Culture and the Tavern, 1869-1889," *Labour/Le Travailleur*, 8-9 (1981-2): 9-40; Raymond Boily, *Les irlandais et le canal Lachine: La grève de 1843* (Montréal: Leméac, 1983); Barbara S. Pinto, "Ain't Misbehavin': The Montreal Shamrocks Lacrosse Club Fans, 1868 to 1884," (MA thesis, University of Western Ontario, 1990); Robert Lewis, "The Development of an early suburban industrial district: the Montreal ward of St. Ann, 1851-71," *Urban History Review/Revue d'histoire urbaine*, 19/3 (1991): 3-16; Bettina Bradbury, *Working Families: Age, Gender, and Daily Survival in Industrializing Montreal* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1993); Kevin James, "The Dynamics of Ethnic Associational Culture in a Nineteenth-Century City: Saint Patrick's Society of Montreal, 1834-1856," *Canadian Journal of Irish Studies/Revue canadienne d'études irlandaises*, 26/1 (2000): 47-67; Rosalyn Trigger, "The geopolitics of the Irish-Catholic parish in nineteenth-century

tended to be primarily concerned with class, the fact that the labourers under examination were Irish has either been a basic statement of fact, as in the case of Bettina Bradbury,¹⁸ or cause for ethnic stereotyping, as in the case of Clare Pentland.¹⁹ Exceptions to this are Barbara Pinto's work on the Montreal Shamrock L.C. and its fans, and Rosalyn Trigger's work on the Irish-Catholic community of Montréal in general. In Pinto's case, she examines the class dimensions of the behaviour of Shamrock L.C. fans at the matches, and argues that whilst their behaviour may have been reprehensible to the more genteel opponents of the Shamrocks and other spectators, to say nothing of the newspapermen of Montréal in the 1870s, this behaviour was entirely in keeping with the norms of working class culture.²⁰

Trigger, for her part, is less interested in class than she is in Irishness in nineteenth century Montréal. She examines the role of the parish within the city's Irish-Catholic community and its role in the formation and policing of identities there. In particular, she argues that the Catholic Church in Montréal sought to use the parish system as a means of forging an Irish Montréal identity in the wake of the Fenian crisis of the 1860s. The Church was thus interested in re-focussing the attention of Irish-Catholics

Montreal," *Journal of Historical Geography*, 27/4 (2001): 553-72; Rosalyn Trigger, "Protestant Restructuring in the Canadian City: Church and Mission in the Industrial Working-Class District of Griffintown, Montreal," *Urban History Review/Revue d'histoire urbaine*, 31/1 (2002): 5-18; David A. Wilson, "The Fenians in Montreal: Invasion, Intrigue, and Assassination," *Eire/Ireland*, 38/3-4 (2003): 109-33; Olson and Thornton, "The Challenge of the Irish-Catholic; Rosalyn Trigger, "God's Mobile Mansions: Protestant Church Relocation and Extension in Montreal, 1850-1914," (PhD dissertation, McGill University, 2004). The one exception to this is Peggy Regan, "Montreal's St. Patrick's Day Parade as a Political Statement: The rise of the Ancient Order of Hibernians, 1900-1929," (BA (Hons.) thesis, Concordia University, 2000).

¹⁸ See, Bradbury, *Working Families*.

¹⁹ Pentland dismisses the Irish-Catholic labourer on strike on the Lachine Canal works in the 1840s as "a primitive man, half a tribesman still." H.C. Pentland, *Labour and Capital in Canada, 1650-1850*, ed. Paul Philips (Toronto: James Lorimer, 1981), p. 105. This allows Pentland to make his argument that the Lachine Canal strike of 1843 was less about unfair labour practices and securing a fair wage on the part of the workers than an inter-tribal Irish battle between Connaughtmen and Munster men. Pentland, "The Lachine Canal Strike."

²⁰ Pinto, "Ain't Misbehavin'."

in the city away from Ireland and onto local concerns and contingencies. To this end, Trigger looks for cross-class co-operation amongst the Irish-Catholic parishes of the city and examines a pan-Montréal Irish-Catholic identity.²¹ However, what Trigger's work also demonstrates, perhaps inadvertently, is a fundamental ambivalence on the part of the Irish-Catholics of Montréal, caught between their loyalties to Canada and the British Empire, on the one hand, and Ireland on the other.

As a means of examining this ambivalent state of the Irish-Catholics of Griffintown, I situate the Irish-Catholics of Montréal within a postcolonial light, as it allows us to view this community at this intersection of Ireland and Québec. This, in turn, means that we can see more subtlety, ambiguity, and ambivalence in the Irish-Catholics of Montréal vis-à-vis their relationship to the city, the province/nation, the British Empire, and to the old country itself. An imagined Ireland has remained part and parcel of the Griffintown experience, as the residents found ways to represent the old country back to themselves, especially around Saint Patrick's Day. Today, in the memorialised landscape of Griffintown, representations of Ireland and Irish culture are central to the reformulation of the imagined Griffintown. Indeed, one can clearly see how the Irish-Catholic culture of Griffintown was one forged out of the ambivalence and hybridity of their experience in Québec.²²

Thus, the postcolonial gaze is an appealing one for examining the Irish-Catholics of Griffintown for two reasons. First, the colonial relations of Ireland to Britain, of colonised to coloniser, were replicated in Canada for the Irish-Catholics, at least to some extent. For the Irish-Catholic working classes of Griffintown, their supervisors, bosses,

²¹ Trigger, "The Role of the Parish"; Trigger, "The Geopolitics of the Parish."

²² See, Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1994).

and those who regulated their lives (outside of the Catholic Church, itself complicit in the colonial state in Québec), were Anglophones and Protestant, just as had been the case in Ireland. While an Irish-Catholic middle class did exist in nineteenth century Montréal, its membership generally did not have the same access to the corridors of power as did the Anglo-Protestant bourgeoisie,²³ something which also replicated the Irish context.²⁴ Moreover, Canada is a country based upon British parliamentary and common law traditions,²⁵ the same institutions that the British exported to and imposed upon Ireland during the colonial period there.²⁶ In other words, the power relations that existed in Ireland were replicated in Montréal – at least to a degree. The major difference in the Canadian/Québec colonial setting was that the gaze of the Imperial eye was not focussed

²³ See, Barlow, “‘Scientific Aggression’.”

²⁴ See, for example, Louis M. Cullen, “Catholic Social Classes Under the Penal Laws,” *Endurance and Emergence: Catholics in Ireland in the Eighteenth Century*, ed. T.P. Power and Kevin Whelan (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 1990): 57-84; David Dickson, “Catholics and Trade in Eighteenth Century Ireland: An Old Debate Revisited,” *Endurance and Emergence*, ed. Power and Whelan: 85-100; Kevin Whelan, *The Tree of Liberty: Radicalism, Catholicism, and the Construction of Irish Identity, 1760-1830* (Cork, IE: University of Cork Press, 1996), ch. 1.

²⁵ Québec presents somewhat of an anomaly, however. The primary legal tradition in the province is French civil law, though criminal law follows the English common law tradition. However, despite this, following the creation of the Supreme Court of Canada (SCC) in 1874, justices on the bench who came from the rest of Canada were ignorant of civil law and showed a reluctance to accommodate Québec’s distinct legal tradition, much to the chagrin of Franco-Quebecers. In this sense, then, Québec’s civil law tradition was nullified at the national level until the SCC became more sensitised in the twentieth century, following the advent of Canada’s first French Canadian prime minister, Sir Wilfrid Laurier, in 1896. The issue of the law, Québec’s distinct legal tradition, and the colonial relation of Canada to Britain was further demonstrated in the fact that, prior to 1948, the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council in London was the highest court of appeal in Canada. The Law Lords of the Judicial Committee rarely, if ever, had an understanding of French civil law tradition. John Dickinson and Brian Young, *A Short History of Quebec*, 3rd ed. (Montréal: McGill-Queens University Press, 2003), p. 253; H.V. Nelles, *A Little History of Canada*, (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 2005), pp. 160, 210; Supreme Court of Canada, “Creations and Beginnings of the Court,” <http://www.scc-csc.gc.ca/court-cour/creation/index-eng.asp>. (accessed 21 January 2007).

²⁶ Following the Act of Union (1801), and the creation of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, there was no longer a house of assembly in Dublin, the Irish now elected members to the Parliament in London. Prior to 1829, however, Catholics did not have the vote, as the franchise was restricted to property-holding Protestants only. This means, of course, that the pre-1801 Irish Assembly in Dublin was an entirely Protestant body, hence the eighteenth century in Ireland is referred to as the period of the Protestant Ascendancy. For a history of the Ascendancy era, see, R.F. Foster, *Modern Ireland, 1600-1972* (Toronto: Penguin, 1989), ch. 8.

directly or solely upon the Irish-Catholics. Rather, that gaze was moderated by the presence of other “Other” populations: French Canadians and aboriginals.

In addition, whereas a form of apartheid existed in Ireland prior to Catholic Emancipation in 1829, this was not the case in Canada. However, while there were not the civil and property restrictions that existed in Ireland, there was a well-established anti-Catholic tradition in Canada. This was most clearly manifested in the overwhelming success of the Orange Order there, as it was able to transcend ethno-national lines within the Protestant population in Canada. Orange membership rolls in Canada were filled with English, Scots, and American Protestants, in addition to Irish Protestants. Indeed, in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the Orange Order was more successful in Canada than anywhere else, including Ireland itself.²⁷ Even if the Orange Order cannot be considered in the mainstream of Anglo-Protestant culture in Canada, it is quite clear that it reflected this mainstream. Jim Miller and J.K. Johnson have both noted that anti-Catholic prejudices existed in Canada throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.²⁸ In short, many of the power relations and structures which existed in Ireland were replicated, even if in moderated form, in Montréal for the Irish-Catholic population here.

The second reason why the post-colonial gaze is appealing to view the Irish-Catholics of Montréal is that the behaviour of the Irish-Catholics of Griffintown reflects a fundamental ambivalence about their place in Canada and the British Empire, on the one

²⁷ See, for example, Hereward Senior, *Orangeism: The Canadian Phase* (Montréal: McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 1972); Cecil J. Houston and William J. Smyth, *The Sash That Canada Wore: A Historical Geography of the Orange Order in Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1980); Scott W. See, *Riots in New Brunswick*; John Matthew Barlow, “Fear and Loathing in Saint-Sylvestre: The Corrigan Murder Case, 1855-58,” (MA thesis, Simon Fraser University, 1998).

²⁸ J.R. Miller, “Anti-Catholic Thought in Victorian Canada,” *Canadian Historical Review*, 66/4 (1985): 474-94; J.K. Johnson, *Becoming Prominent: Regional Leadership in Upper Canada, 1791-1841* (Montréal: McGill-Queens University Press, 1989).

hand, and their relationship to Ireland, on the other. They were well aware that they were citizens of Canada, a quasi-sovereign nation within that empire, yet they still maintained their ties to Ireland, whether real or symbolic. Indeed, we can also see the limitations of Trigger's arguments concerning the Irish-Catholic parish in Montréal, a vehicle used by the Church to re-focus attention away from Ireland towards the forging of an Irish Montréal identity.²⁹ While the Church was successful to a degree, the appeal of Ireland remained for the Irish-Catholics of Montréal, who agitated for Home Rule and independence for Ireland, though within a rubric of loyalty to Canada.

This ambivalence was manifested in a variety of ways. For example, during the annual St. Patrick's Day celebrations in the early twentieth century, the St. Ann's Young Men's Association put plays on at the Théâtre Monument National which always reflected tropes of Irish culture and oppression at the hands of the British, whether they were explicitly nationalistic or not. And yet, Griffintown lads enlisted, or at least tried to, in the 199th Overseas Battalion, Irish Canadian Rangers, a unit in the Canadian Expeditionary Force (CEF) in World War I. Yet, despite these enlistments and the apparent support for the war effort, Irish-Catholic Griffintown, in the divisive 1917 general election refused to support Charles Doherty, their Member of Parliament, who was also the Minister of Justice and the man responsible for the enforcement of conscription.³⁰ The Irish-Catholics of Griffintown had competing loyalties to Canada and Ireland throughout this period, despite the fact that the majority of them had never been to the homeland.

²⁹ Trigger, "The Role of the Parish"; Trigger, "The Geopolitics of the Parish."

³⁰ *The Gazette*, 18 December 1917; Robin B. Burns, "The Montreal Irish and the Great War," *Canadian Catholic Historical Studies*, 52 (1985), p. 80. Doherty won re-election in the riding of St. Ann's, of which Griffintown was a part, however. See Chapter 3.

The competing loyalties of the Irish-Catholics of Griffintown, however, reflect the city of Montréal as a whole. In writing of the city, Sherry Simon has commented that she “grew up in a city as segregated as colonial Calcutta” in the 1950s and 60s. The Montréal of Simon’s childhood was no different than that of the nineteenth and early twentieth century, at least insofar as its segregated nature is concerned. It was a city divided along religious, linguistic, class, and ethnic lines. Simon raises the question of the postcolonial in Montréal, this divided city, examining how language and literature have been used as a means of both re-enforcing that divide, and to tell stories across them.³¹ History also has its role to play in this equation. The Irish-Catholic community of Montréal today makes use of history to reclaim its space on the divided urban landscape of the city, via Griffintown, as well as to reclaim its place in the history of the city.

Following this Preface, Chapter 1 provides an introduction proper to Griffintown. Here, I trace the history of the neighbourhood through the nineteenth century, and examine how the Griff was viewed by both its residents and those outside of the neighbourhood. Specifically, I examine Griffintown in the light of the slum discourse, in which reformers create the urban slum as a problem, to be diagnosed, treated, and cured in keeping with the strictures of modernity. The slum, in essence, is seen as mocking the wealth and power of the city it is located in. The slum arises out of a bourgeois imagination of the working class experience. This means that the residents of the slum continually find their homes under attack through successive waves of attempts at

³¹ Simon, *Translating Montreal*.

reform.³² Following this, I turn to the themes picked up in the subsequent chapters; the classed, gendered, ethnic, and religious identities of Griffintown and its residents from 1868 to 2008.

Chapters 2 through 5 of this dissertation do not provide a straight linear narrative history of Griffintown and its residents, though they are organised chronologically. Rather, I provide several “windows” into the Irish-Catholic community of Griffintown. In so doing, I examine how both the simultaneity of the identities of these historical actors interacted with each other, as well as how these people themselves interacted with the structures and institutions that regulated their quotidian lives. Finally, I examine how they used their agency to negotiate their role in the life of this neighbourhood and in Montréal as a whole.

With the historical basis of the Griff established, Chapter 2 is an examination of the Shamrock L.C., primarily through its Griffintown-based players and fans from 1868 to 1885. In this chapter, I expand upon Barbara Pinto’s 1990 examination of the Shamrock fans. Whereas Pinto’s argument is largely limited to class, I situate lacrosse as a postcolonial sporting form, given its hybridisation of aboriginal and European sporting forms. Within this larger framework, the Shamrock players and fans each used the club to their own ends. For the Shamrock players, who were all machinists or other skilled workers from Griffintown, the playing field was their avenue to respectability. The fans, on the other hand, were primarily un- and semi- skilled workers, and respectability was something that was neither attainable nor desirable. Alan Metcalfe has termed them the

³² Alan Mayne, *The Imagined Slum: Newspaper representations in three cities, 1870-1914* (New York: Leicester University Press, 1993), pp. 1-4; Richard Harris, “Slums,” *International Encyclopaedia of Human Geography*, ed. Rob Kitchen and Nigel Thrift (Amsterdam: Elsevier, forthcoming), paper kindly provided by author.

first modern sporting fans in Canada,³³ and this is an apt description. The popularisation and commodification of lacrosse as entertainment for its fans came at a time when mass, commercialised forms of leisure were beginning to be developed for the working classes in most major North American cities. Thus, these working class Griffintowners made use of the Shamrock L.C. matches in the same manner that the working classes of New York City made use of Coney Island and its amusement parks.

In the 1870s, Irish-Catholic Griffintown was at its peak, and Chapter 2 examines Irish-Catholic identity in the neighbourhood through this period and the start of the neighbourhood's decline as an Irish-Catholic location in the 1880s. During this period, this identity was localised, focussed internally on Griffintown. What follows, in Chapter 3, is an examination of the ambivalence of the Irish-Catholic working classes in Griffintown vis-à-vis their place in Canada and the British Empire, as well as their attachment to Ireland. This comes through a study of Irish nationalism and Irish Canadian national identity in the community from the turn of the twentieth century until 1917. A close reading of the St. Patrick's Day celebrations in Montréal in the first quarter of the twentieth century provides us with graphic evidence of the connection Griffintowners felt with Ireland, especially when viewed through the annual plays put on by the St. Ann's Young Men's Society at the Théâtre Monument National. However, this cannot be necessarily equated with a radical critique of British imperialism in Ireland and a demand for republicanism there, despite the presence of the Ancient Order of Hibernians (A.O.H.) and other radical groups in Griffintown. This was all complicated further by World War I and the attempts, in 1916, by the élites of the Irish community of

³³ Alan Metcalfe, *Canada Learns to Play: The Emergence of Organized Sport in Canada, 1807-1914* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1986), p. 193.

Montréal to raise a combat battalion of the Irish Canadian Rangers for service in France. Many working class lads from Griffintown enlisted. Others attempted to enlist, but were turned away because they were underfed, underweight, and unhealthy. Yet, as noted, Irish-Catholic Griffintown refused to support the Union government of Sir Robert Borden in the 1917 federal election. Thus, Griffintown provides a study in ambivalence vis-à-vis loyalties to Canada and Ireland during the first quarter of the twentieth century.

If the question of Irishness and identity led to the expression of ambivalence on the part of the Irish-Catholics of Griffintown, the period under examination in Chapter 4, from the Depression to 1970, sees the decline, depopulation, and destruction of the neighbourhood. Concomitant with that was the decline of a separate Irish identity in Montréal, subsumed as it was into the larger Anglo Montréal community, owing to the twinned processes, at least in Montréal, of post-World War II affluence and increased linguistic tensions. At the same time, Griffintown was undergoing a radical deindustrialisation, and depopulation. While other adjoining working class neighbourhoods, such as Little Burgundy, Saint-Henri, and Pointe-Saint-Charles also experienced deindustrialisation and depopulation, they were also chosen for a process of urban renewal through slum clearances and the construction of housing projects and inner-city parks. Griffintown, however, was exempt from this process, for reasons that are not entirely clear. It was not the target of these *rénovations urbaines*, to borrow the term used by the technocrats of the mid-twentieth century; Griffintown experienced devastation almost if by accident. Policy choices made in Ottawa, Québec, and at Montréal's *hôtel de ville* did not take Griffintown into account. Thus, it was left to become the abandoned, post-industrial landscape it is today.

Finally, Chapter 5 examines the re-birth of Griffintown as a site of Irish-Catholic remembrance since the early 1990s. In this process, Griffintown has been re-born as a *lieu de mémoire*, and the neighbourhood has emerged in an essentialised, reductionist form. The historical past of the neighbourhood has been, in essence, reinvented, minus the other ethnic groups that lived there, minus the tragedies, hardships, and sorrows of an urban industrial working class slum. This has allowed the production of a usable past, manufactured to reflect the interests of the stakeholders of this re-imagined Griffintown.

Taken together, then, this dissertation traces the arc of Irish identity in Griffintown over the long twentieth century, from its zenith in the 1870s, through its long decline beginning in the 1880s, to its death in the 1960s and re-birth in the 1990s and early twenty-first century. In this process, we are witness to how the residents of Griffintown, an Irish-Catholic working class neighbourhood, created and policed their own identities, and how they challenged outsiders' views of what a working class neighbourhood should be, and also how they let their neighbourhood die without much of a fight. And, finally, we see how former Griffintown residents, in many cases, the last generation of children to grow up there, have seized upon Griffintown as a site of memory formation in the past two decades.

Chapter 1: Mis-en-scène

I. Welcome to Griffintown

Leo Leonard, a.k.a.: Clawhammer Jack, is almost quite literally the last Irishman standing in Griffintown. Leonard is known as Clawhammer Jack on account of owning the Griffintown Horse Palace on Ottawa Street, near the corner of rue de la Montagne.¹ He grew up in nearby Goose Village,² and went to school in Griffintown: “I’ve seen all the changes here since 1934,” he says.”³

And changes there have been. If Leonard is the last man standing, though this may soon change if a proposed re-development of Griffintown takes flight,⁴ it was not always this way. Griffintown, settled as early as 1810, was traditionally, or at least traditionally seen, as an Irish-Catholic working-class neighbourhood. The early residents were the first waves of Irish-Catholic immigrants to Montréal in the wake of the Napoléonic Wars in Europe. They were supplemented by the wretched refugees from the

¹ As to how Leonard’s stable got its name, he says, “Jimmy O’Toole’s wife was going on about how Clawhammer Jack has a stable and no sign for it. One day this sign painter shows up. So I tell him to get busy doodling.” He figured that since San Francisco had its Horse Palace, “‘Call it the Griffintown Horse Palace,’ says I. That settled that.” As quoted in Claude Arpin, “City’s Horse Palace Still Kicking: Tiny stable tucked away on edge of downtown,” *The Gazette*, 10 November 1991. See, also, Leo Leonard, in Patricia Burns, *The Shamrock & The Shield: An Oral History of the Irish in Montreal*, (Montréal: Véhicule Press, 1998), pp. 146-7; Kristian Gravenor, “The Last Irishman Standing: How bureaucracy levelled the once shamrockerrific Griffintown,” *Montreal Mirror*, 11-17 March 2004.

² Goose Village, or Victoriatown as it was more properly known, was decimated in the 1960s to make way for the Autoroute Bonaventure and the Autostade, part of the Expo ’67 installations. Goose Village had initially been home to a good number of working class Irish-Catholics, but, by the 1950s, it was dominated primarily by Italians, who arrived in Montréal following World War II. Morin to Choquette, 29 November 1965, Archives de la Ville de Montréal (AVM), Dossiers du comité et du Conseil, 1961 à 1973, Série VM-1, Fonds Conseil municipal & Comité exécutif 4^e Série, File 808.A-1; Cité de Montréal – Services des Finances – Division des immeubles – Loyers de l’expropriation « Victoriatown » -- Comptes à recevoir, 7 January 1965, AVM, Dossiers du Comité et du Conseil, 1961 à 1973, Série VM-1, Fonds Conseil municipal & Comité exécutif 4^e Série, File 808.A-1. See Chapter 4 for more on the destruction of Goose Village.

³ As quoted in Arpin, “City’s Horse Palace.”

⁴ Andy Riga, “Griffintown Reborn? \$1.3-Billion Blueprint, Proposed project would preserve face of district, developer says,” *The Gazette*, 23 November 2007. This has Leonard pondering selling the Horse Palace and its attached properties and retiring. Alan Hustak, “Apocalypse for the Horseman; For 40 years Leo Leonard has been operating the Griffintown Horse Palace,” *The Gazette*, 3 April 2007; “Griffintown construction delayed until 2010: Developer blames economic turmoil, committed to purchase of \$13 million in properties, head of city team says,” *The Gazette*, 12 November 2008.

Famine in Ireland in the 1840s. As an Irish neighbourhood, Griffintown reached its peak in the immediate post-Confederation decades. After 1880, the Griff went into decline.

Irish-Catholic Griffintown was a close-knit community, where people knew their neighbours and the priests were familiar with their parishioners. Owing to the lack of back- or front- yards, and the absence of greenspace, in the warmer months, lives were lived on the streets of the Griff, as children played and their parents sat on their stoops, socialising.⁵ The priests, out for a stroll, oftentimes stopped by for a cup of tea, or a nip of something stronger, to chat with their flock. The young men of the neighbourhood congregated in gangs on the street corners, nattily-attired, simultaneously intimidating passers-by and flirting with the local girls. In the colder months, social activity continued, but indoors, as people huddled around the stoves in each other's kitchens, trying to keep warm in the bitter Montréal winters.⁶ Whatever the season, the men also congregated in the neighbourhood's multitude of drinking establishments.⁷

But if Griffintown was a vibrant community, if the residents there managed to forge a culture for themselves, it was also a site of struggle. Its residents were predominantly members of the more precarious positions of the working classes, primarily un- and semi- skilled workers. They toiled in the factories in whose shadows they lived, engaged in employment that was often problematic. Employment could be seasonal and was dangerous, and debilitating accidents, if not death itself, were not

⁵ Images such as this, which still predominate in nearby Saint-Henri, where I lived whilst writing this dissertation, were central to Montréal playwright David Fennario's landmark *Balconville*, which looked at the plight of the working classes in neighbouring Pointe-Saint-Charles during deindustrialisation there in the 1970s. David Fennario, *Balconville: A Play* (Vancouver: Talon Books, 1980).

⁶ Annie Wilson and Dennis Daugherty, in *Ghosts of Griffintown: Stories of an Irish Neighbourhood*, DVD, Richard Burman, dir., Burman Productions, 2003; Charles Blickstead, in, Burns, *The Shamrock & The Shield*, p. 55; Don Pidgeon, in Burns, *The Shamrock & The Shield*, p. 201.

⁷ Women were prohibited from entering taverns in Québec until the late 1970s, when a change in the liquor licensing régime in Québec created *brasseries*, which women are allowed to enter.

uncommon.⁸ In addition, the workers of Griffintown were subject to the periodic economic downturns the country faced, such as the Recession of the 1870s, or that which preceded World War I, to say nothing of the Great Depression of the 1930s. The residents of Griffintown needed to find ways to cope with the fact that they lived in an urban industrial slum, and the attendant health, sanitation, and social problems that came with that.

In this chapter, then, I provide an introduction and contextualisation of Griffintown in the nineteenth century, examining its place within Irish Montréal, and its emergence as an Irish-Catholic working-class neighbourhood. In so doing, I aim to introduce readers to some of the ambiguities and ambivalences of Griffintown. Thus, this chapter is designed to serve as context for the following chapters, to provide the early history and settlement of Griffintown in order to understand the story of the decline, death, and re-birth of Irish-Catholic Griffintown, as told in the remainder of this dissertation.

II. The Irish in Montréal

Griffintown was central to the Irish experience in Montréal, even if it was never home to the majority of the Irish-Catholics of the city. In 1871, Griffintown reached its highpoint in terms of its share of the Irish-Catholic population of Montréal, when 49.8 per cent of them called the neighbourhood home. By 1881, however, this number had fallen to around one-third.⁹ Nonetheless, Griffintown was both the first and last of

⁸ Indeed, my own great-great-great grandfather met his end in an industrial accident in Griffintown in 1882.

⁹ Dorothy Suzanne Cross, "The Irish in Montreal, 1867-1896," (MA thesis, McGill University, 1969), pp. 18, 200-23.

Montréal's Irish-Catholic neighbourhoods, and it is this persistence as both a physical location and a site of memory and remembrance that makes it so important to the Irish-Catholic experience in the city. In many ways, Griffintown formed and forged this experience, as many of the city's Irish-Catholics passed through the neighbourhood before moving on to more toney ones throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Throughout the nineteenth century, Montréal had a large and vibrant Irish population, the vast majority of whom were Catholic. Between 1861 and 1901, the Irish-origin population of Montréal grew by some 43 per cent, from 22,387 to 31,965. At the same time, this population was increasingly Canadianised, as the Irish-born segment of Montréal fell by 52 per cent, from 14,179 to 6,786, over the same time period.¹⁰ The growth of Montréal's Irish population is made more impressive when one considers the manner in which "Irish" was defined. Lineage was traced through the father's side; thus, the children of an Irish woman married to a French-Canadian would be counted as French-Canadian by the census takers.

Montréal's Irish population, which had roots back to the French régime, began to grow in earnest in the years after the end of the Napoléonic Wars in the 1810s. Whilst British North America was the preferred destination for the Irish prior to the Famine, this was probably owing to the fact that passage within the British Empire was almost half of that to the United States. In the years following 1846, and the repeal of the *Navigation Acts*, Irish emigration to the United States massively outstripped that to Canada. This pattern continued for the remainder of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. It is difficult to determine how many of those who landed in British North America remained

¹⁰ Canada, Census of Canada, 1861-1901.

and how many carried on to the United States.¹¹ This was especially true during the 1840s when the smaller British North American centres, including Montréal, simply could not absorb the large numbers of Famine refugees flooding into their ports. Many thus decamped for the United States, others headed up the St. Lawrence to Ontario, though some remained in the port cities of Saint John,¹² Québec, and Montréal.

Donald Akenson has forcefully argued that the Irish in Ontario, both Catholic and Protestant, were predominantly rural. He has also found that the majority of the Irish in Ontario were Protestants. This has led him to generalise that “in Canada...in...the pre-Confederation era [the Irish] were overwhelmingly rural.” As Peter Toner has noted, however, Ontario does not equal Canada, and he goes on to take Akenson to task for assuming that his findings for Ontario could be applied to all of Canada.¹³

Indeed, in Québec, the situation was quite different. Whereas nearly two-thirds of the Irish in Ontario were Protestant, in Québec, two-thirds were Catholic. As well, the Irish in Québec had a much higher rate of urbanisation than was the case for Ontario, where 20 per cent of the Irish were urbanised.¹⁴ In Québec, in the mid-nineteenth century, over 30 per cent of the Irish lived in Montréal and Québec alone; even more striking is that 43.3 per cent of the Irish-born population of Québec could be found in

¹¹ Cecil J. Houston and William J. Smyth, *Irish Emigration and Canadian Settlement: Patterns, Links & Letters* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990), pp. 20-31.

¹² See, in particular, T.W. Acheson, *Saint John: The Making of a Colonial Urban Community* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1985); Scott W. See, *Riots in New Brunswick: Orange Nativism and Social Violence in the 1840s* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993).

¹³ Donald H. Akenson, *Being Had: Historians and Evidence to the Irish in North America* (Port Credit, ON: P.D. Meany, 1985), pp. 83-4; P.M. Toner, “Lifting the Mist: Recent Studies on the Scots and Irish,” *Acadiensis*, 18/1 (1988), p. 219. See, also, Donald H. Akenson, *The Irish in Ontario: A Study in Rural History*, 2nd ed. (Montréal: McGill-Queens University Press, 1999 (1984)).

¹⁴ And, as Houston and Smyth note, Catholics were more than twice as likely as Protestants in Ontario to be urbanised. Cecil J. Houston and William J. Smyth, “The Irish Abroad: Better Questions Through a Better Source, the Canadian Census,” *Irish Geography*, 13 (1980), p. 14.

these two cities by 1871.¹⁵ Moreover, the proportion of Catholics amongst the Ontario Irish remained pretty much constant throughout the nineteenth century, which suggests that the bulk of the Famine refugees, most of whom were Catholic, who remained in Canada after disembarkation chose to settle in Québec.¹⁶

This raises the question as to why Irish-Catholics were more likely to remain in Montréal and Québec rather than continue upriver to Ontario. D.C. Conor suggests that this was owing to the predominantly Catholic culture that they encountered in Québec, as compared to Ontario, where there was a long-standing anti-Catholic bias.¹⁷ For his part, G.R.C. Keep argues that Montréal, by 1847, already had a well-established Irish community.¹⁸ Both Conor and Keep are overly simplistic in explaining the appeal of Montréal to Irish-Catholic immigrants in the mid-nineteenth century. Whereas Keep goes on to talk about the city's Irish-Protestant business élite, the problem with Conor's argument is that Anglo-Protestants were the majority in Montréal throughout the mid-nineteenth century. It was only after 1861 that French-Canadians became the majority.¹⁹ This Anglophone majority was in large part driven by the advent of an Irish population in Montréal; however, these early Irish immigrants were, prior to about the 1830s, both Catholic and Protestant. The presence of a large Anglo-Protestant population, whether

¹⁵ Robert J. Grace, *The Irish in Quebec: An Introduction to the Historiography*, (Québec: Institut québécois de recherche sur la culture, 1994), pp. 23-4.

¹⁶ Houston and Smyth, "The Irish Abroad," p. 227; Rosalyn Trigger, "The Role of the Parish in Fostering Irish-Catholic Ethnic Identity in Nineteenth-Century Montreal," (MA thesis, McGill University, 1997), pp. 23-4.

¹⁷ D.C. Conor, "The Irish-Canadian Image and Self-Image, 1840-76," (MA thesis, University of British Columbia, 1976), p. 65; Trigger, "The Role of the Parish," p. 24. See, also, Mary Haslam, "Ireland and Québec: rapprochement and ambiguity," (Paper presented to the "Constructions of Identity in Ireland and Québec" workshop, Concordia University, October 2006); Simon Jolivet, "Érin et le prisme québécois au début du XXème siècle: une première démarche," (Paper presented to the "Constructions of Identity in Ireland and Québec" workshop, Concordia University, October 2006).

¹⁸ G.R.C. Keep, "The Irish Adjustment in Montreal," *Canadian Historical Review*, 31/1 (1950), pp. 40-2.

¹⁹ Paul-André Linteau, *Brève histoire de Montréal* (Montréal: Boréal, 1992), p. 65.

Irish or British in origin, also meant that the anti-Catholic biases of the United Kingdom migrated to Montréal as well. Indeed, both the first military and civilian lodges of the Orange Order in Canada were founded in Montréal.²⁰

In Montréal, the Irish-Catholics found a bifurcated culture, one that was split between the Anglo-Protestants and the French-Canadian Catholics. Thus, they were left to negotiate their own space on the landscape of Montréal, emerging as a third cultural community in the city. They stood between the economically-dominant Anglo-Protestants and the numerically-dominant (at least after 1861) French Canadians, sharing a language with one, a religion with the other.²¹ Initially, this identity was created and defended by an Irish-Catholic middle-class, which had existed in Montréal since at least the 1820s. As Kevin James points out, one of the reasons for the formation of the St. Patrick's Society in 1834 was so that the Irish middle classes, both Catholic and Protestant,²² could distance and distinguish themselves from the working class Irish-Catholic radicals who supported Louis-Joseph Papineau's Parti Patriote in Griffintown. Sherry Olson and Patricia Thornton point to this gentrification and upward mobility as a continual process within Irish-Catholic Montréal in the nineteenth century.²³ Yet, with this upward social mobility came the beginnings of the breakdown of Irish-Catholic

²⁰ Cross, "The Irish in Montreal," pp. 164-5; Cecil J. Houston and William J. Smyth, *The Sash Canada Wore: A historical geography of the Orange Order in Canada*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1980), pp. 48-52. See, also, See, Daniel Horner, "'A Barbarism of the Worst Kind': Negotiating Gender and Public Space in the Aftermath of Montreal's Gavazzi Riot," (Unpublished paper presented to the Canadian Historical Association Conference, University of Western Ontario, May 2005), pp. 5-6.

²¹ Sherry Olson and Patricia Thornton, "The Challenge of the Irish-Catholic Community in Nineteenth-Century Montreal," *Histoire Sociale/Social History*, 35/70 (2003): 333-62.

²² The St. Patrick's Society was originally non-sectarian from its founding in 1834 until 1856, when heightened sectarian tensions in Canada as a whole led the Catholics of the society to eject the Protestants. The Irish-Protestants formed the Irish-Protestant Benevolent Association that year. Kevin James, "Dynamics of Ethnic Associational Culture in a Nineteenth-Century City: St. Patrick's Society of Montreal, 1834-56," *Canadian Journal of Irish Studies/Revue canadienne d'études irlandaises*, 26/1 (2000): 47-67.

²³ James, "Dynamics of Ethnic Associational Culture"; Olson and Thornton, "The Challenge of the Irish-Catholic Community."

identity in Montréal. The late nineteenth-century saw the beginnings of Anglo-Montréal, a new socio-political community in the city, forged out of the common interests of the Anglo-Protestant and Irish-Catholic bourgeoisies.

Griffintown was home to the largest community of Irish-Catholics in Montréal throughout the nineteenth century. In addition to the Griff, other Irish-Catholic working-class communities nearby, such as Pointe-Saint-Charles and Goose Village, remained vibrant; indeed, all three communities remained home to a substantial number of Irish-Catholics well into the twentieth century. The persistence of Griffintown and neighbourhoods like it defy the arguments of academics such as Olson and Thornton who point to the continual, and relatively rapid, upward social mobility of Montréal's Irish-Catholic population in the nineteenth century.

III. Griffintown

The Birth of Griffintown

The land that came to comprise Griffintown was initially granted to Jeanne Mance, the founder of Montréal's first hospital, the Hôtel-Dieu, in 1648, by Paul de Chomedey, sieur de Maisonneuve, who had founded Ville-Marie in 1642. The land, which was properly known as the Nazareth Fief, came to be more popularly known as the *grange des pauvres* because Mance and the Hôtel-Dieu used it to support their charitable work at the hospital, as well as with the poor of the burgeoning Ville-Marie. During the French régime, the Nazareth Fief was primarily used as a farm; a manor house and the various attendant outbuildings, and some dwellings, were constructed in the neighbourhood of where Nazareth Street is today. In 1698, Pierre Leber, a wealthy

merchant,²⁴ built a small chapel to Sainte-Anne at the edge of the Nazareth Fief, near where the foot of Murray Street is today at the canal. It is from this chapel that this area came to be known as the *quartier Sainte-Anne* and, during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, St. Ann's Ward.²⁵

In 1791, Thomas McCord, an Irish-Protestant businessman, secured a 99-year lease for the Nazareth Fief from the Sœurs hospitalières de l'Hôtel-Dieu de Montréal. Five years later, McCord returned to Ireland to attend to some family business, leaving his Montréal affairs in the hands of his associate, Patrick Langan. Langan then turned around and illegally sold the Nazareth Fief lease to Mary Griffin, whose husband, Robert,²⁶ ran a soap manufactory at the edge of the fief on what became Wellington Street.²⁷

Mary Griffin recognised the value of the Nazareth Fief, given its location just outside of the walls of Montréal, and along the route of the long-proposed Lachine

²⁴ Pierre Leber was the younger brother of Jeanne Leber, a canonised religious recluse from the French régime. Pierre inherited his father's merchant business, which was substantial. He was also an artist and painted several devotional portraits and images, many of which are today housed in the Maison Saint-Gabriel in Pointe-Saint-Charles. Musée Maison Saint-Gabriel, "Artwork Awaiting Discovery," http://www.maisonsaint-gabriel.qc.ca/oeuvres/index_e.html. (accessed 10 January 2009).

²⁵ David Marcin, "Griffintown: A Brief Chronicle," *Montreal Star*, 8 September 1975; Kathleen Lord, "Days and Nights: Class, Gender, and Society on Notre-Dame Street in Saint-Henri" (PhD dissertation, McGill University, 2000), ch. 1.

²⁶ Robert Griffin went on to become the first general manager of the Bank of Montreal at its founding in 1817. Léon Trépanier, "Petite histoire locale, le Vieux-Montréal et le Griffintown en feu," *Voix Populaire*, 5 August 1953; Marcin, "Griffintown."

²⁷ Wellington Street, which was initially laid out around 1668 during the French régime, was originally known as the chemin de Lachine. It was along this road that goods unloaded at the Port of Montréal were carried to Lachine to be re-loaded onto smaller ships to carry them up the St. Lawrence. In 1817, the chemin de Lachine was renamed Wellington Street in honour of the Duke of Wellington, who defeated Napoléon at the Battle of Waterloo. Ironically, it was Wellington's victory that led to the emigration of the Irish to Montréal, where they settled near a street named in his honour. "Répertoire historiques des toponymes montréalais," Ville de Montréal http://ville.montreal.qc.ca/portal/page?_pageid=1560,11245605&_dad=portal&_schema=PORTAL (accessed 20 February 2008).

Canal.²⁸ Thus, she negotiated a deal with the Sœurs hospitalières in 1804 for the subdivision of the land for development purposes. Proceeds would be shared by Griffin and the nuns. An urban plan was drawn up and the area was named “Griffintown.” The next year, McCord returned from Ireland and immediately turned to the courts to regain the lease that was rightfully his. While the courts continually ruled in McCord's favour, Griffin appealed each decision all the way up to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council in London, which finally decided in McCord's favour in 1813. Despite regaining control of the land, McCord had to be content with having a street named for him;²⁹ the Griffintown name stuck.

Land tenure in Griffintown, as in most areas of Lower Canada at that time,³⁰ was seigneurial. This meant that the land was not all that appealing for urban developers or tenants. Developers and leaseholders had to pay the seigneurial dues, which they, in turn, passed on to their tenants. Furthermore, Griffintown was made more expensive by the dues demanded by the nuns. In addition, McCord and the nuns were ruthless with their tenants and the bailiffs were kept on their toes seizing property and enforcing

²⁸ While construction of the Lachine Canal began in earnest in 1821, and it opened in 1825, plans for a canal to bypass the Lachine Rapids had been in existence since the French régime. In 1670, François de Salignac Fénélon initially suggested a canal. A decade later, François Dollier de Casson, the first Superior of the Sulpicians, imagined a canal to both supply water to Montréal's mills, as well as to provide for shipping into the interior of the continent. A preliminary canal was begun during the French régime, but never finished. Jean-Claude Marsan, *Montreal in Evolution* (Montréal: McGill-Queens University Press, 1990 (1974)), p. 89.

²⁹ McCord Street initially lay between Wellington and rue Notre-Dame, where it was truncated by the Bonaventure Rail Yards of the Grand Trunk Railway (GTR), later the Canadian National Railways (CNR). On the other side of the yards, Mountain Street headed up the slope to downtown Montréal and rue Sherbrooke. Mountain was re-christened as de la Montagne in the 1970s, when McCord Street was connected to it. See, Marcin, “Griffintown”; “Répertoire historiques des toponymes montréalais,” Ville de Montréal, http://ville.montreal.qc.ca/portal/page?_pageid=1560,11245605&_dad=portal&_schema=PORTAL (accessed 20 February 2008).

³⁰ In 1791, with the prospect of the settling of the Eastern Townships, seigneurial tenure was limited to those places where it already existed, to allow the Townships to be settled outside of the seigneurial system.

evictions if rent was not made. Finally, the more improvements made on the land by the developers and leaseholders, the higher their seigneurial assessments were, and thus, the higher the rents. This made the sale of sub-leases all the more difficult, especially since the nuns in particular were zealous, and the fees paid on the sub-leases made it not uncommon for the entire proceeds of a sale to end up in their coffers.³¹

Thus, there was a disincentive to build good, solid housing in Griffintown. Developers, not surprisingly, chose to construct slum housing in the neighbourhood: cheap, wooden housing of poor quality. This meant that fires were common in Griffintown. For example, in 1852, a fire began in a carpenter's shop at the corner of rue Saint-Gabriel and Nazareth Street. It spread rapidly, destroying over 200 homes, as well as St. Stephen's Anglican Church. Another fire in 1877 destroyed over sixty homes on Nazareth Street alone.³² In addition to this, Griffintown is on low-lying land, and as we shall see below, was prone to flooding almost annually during the spring run off on the St. Lawrence. That Griffintown became an urban slum, then, is not surprising given the combination of shoddy housing and flooding.

In addition to encountering a hostile built environment, one also has to wonder what the Irish-Catholic immigrants who settled in Griffintown thought when they looked at the urban landscape of the neighbourhood. Griffintown is bisected on both the north-south and east-west axes by William, Ann, King, Queen, Prince, and Duke streets.

³¹ Marcin, "Griffintown."

³² Trépanier, "Le Griffintown en feu"; Cross, "The Irish in Montreal," p. 210.

Reminders of the British Empire followed them across the Atlantic Ocean to Montréal in more ways than one.³³

Early Settlement and Industrialisation in Griffintown

Nonetheless, despite all of this, Griffintown was attractive to Irish immigrants piling into Montréal in the pre-Famine era, both for the abundance of cheap (in both cost and quality) housing, but also the proximity of Griffintown to the waterfront. It was there that many of these Irish immigrants found work, at least initially; they worked as navvies on the Lachine Canal or as stevedores at the harbour. Thus, the Griff was a convenient place to settle, located as it was at the eastern end of the canal.³⁴

Suzanne Cross describes the urban landscape of Griffintown in the first half of the nineteenth century:

The Irish were making [Griffintown] their own, but it was far from completely built up. Houses were erected one by one rather than street by street with the result that they were often interspersed with vacant lots where children could play. The houses were usually small and unsanitary, the inhabitants poverty-stricken, the streets dirty and ill-drained.³⁵

What she does not mention is the interspersal of industry throughout Griffintown, both before and after the canal's completion. Along with Robert Griffin's soap manufactory, Griffintown was also home to brickyards, abattoirs, breweries, ship-builders, foundries, carpentry shops, and various other enterprises. Indeed,

³³ See, "Répertoire historiques des toponymes montréalais," Ville de Montréal http://ville.montreal.qc.ca/portal/page?_pageid=1560,11245605&_dad=portal&_schema=PORTAL (accessed 21 February 2008.)

³⁴ Marcin, "Griffintown"; Yvon Desloges and Alain Gelly, *The Lachine Canal: Riding the Waves of Industrial and Urban Development, 1860-1950*, Donald Kellough, trans. (Sillery, QC: Les Éditions du Septentrion, 2002), pp. 22, 42, 191-3. Parks Canada, "The Lachine Canal: National Historic Site of Canada," Parks Canada, http://www.pc.gc.ca/lhn-nhs/qc/canallachine/natcul/index_E.asp (accessed 13 November 2003).

³⁵ Cross, "The Irish in Montreal," p. 200.

according to *The Gazette*, in 1831, Griffintown had “more machinery in operation within its limits than any other portion of Montreal.”³⁶

As industry began to spread out from what is now Vieux-Montréal in the 1830s, the navvies who had worked on the canal construction began to find work in these new industrial establishments in Griffintown and along the new canal. While the majority of production within Griffintown in this era was still dominated by the craft system, industry was developing; hence *The Gazette*'s excitement in 1831. By 1842, no less than one-third of Montréal's manufacturing base was located in Griffintown.³⁷ In addition to these larger establishments, Griffintown had a plethora of smaller shops, such as the carpentry shop on Nazareth Street in which the 1852 fire began.

Robert Lewis has identified two distinct periods of industrialisation in St. Ann's Ward. The first was in Griffintown proper, which saw the development of these large manufactories prior to the mid-1850s. The second period began in the 1850s and was located on the fringe of Griffintown and Pointe-Saint-Charles along the Lachine Canal. Indeed, Lewis refers to this as a separate district, which he calls “Canal.” While Griffintown reached its pinnacle in terms of industrial development and its base did not grow substantially beyond the mid-1850s, the canal district's growth dominated the period from 1851-71. For our purposes, however, it is not necessary to perpetuate the distinction between Griffintown and “Canal.” While the economy of size may have differed between Griffintown and Canal, the working classes of Griffintown found employment in both districts, and many of the workers

³⁶ *The Gazette*, 16 July 1831; Marcin, “Griffintown.”

³⁷ Robert D. Lewis, *Manufacturing Montreal: The making of an industrial landscape, 1850 to 1930* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), p. 101.

in the mills, factories, and other concerns at the St. Gabriel's Locks on the canal were, in fact, from Griffintown.³⁸

At any rate, by the mid-1850s, factory production had emerged in Griffintown.

Lewis notes that

[t]he technologically advanced, hydraulically-based, energy-intensive system emerging by mid-century was not lost on contemporary observers. Several booster pamphlets and descriptions called attention to the major changes taking place in this fringe section of Montreal. Large capital investments, growing market opportunities, and a multiskilled work force provided the impetus for industrial development. The burst of industrialization in Saint-Ann between 1847 and 1854 created more than two thousand jobs and rested on the investment of more than two million dollars in the ward's factories.³⁹

Primary amongst these new industrial concerns was the massive Redpath Sugar Refinery which churned out some 6,000 barrels of sugar monthly, at the south-eastern side of the St. Gabriel's Locks. Meanwhile, some 65 per cent of Canada's flour output came from three mills located at the Peel Basin of the Canal. Similarly, 80 per cent of the nails produced in Canada came from a complex of factories between the Peel Basin and St. Gabriel's Locks.⁴⁰

Then there was Augustin Cantin's Canada Marine Works yards, which were located at the north-western side of the St. Gabriel's Locks. Being French-Canadian, Cantin was a rarity in terms of the industrialisation of Griffintown; nonetheless, his firm demonstrates several facets of industrialisation in Montréal and around North America. By 1855, Cantin's works covered some fourteen acres of land, and his operations were

³⁸ Robert D. Lewis, "The development of an early suburban district: The Montreal ward of St. Ann, 1851-71," *Urban History Review/Revue d'histoire urbaine*, 19/3 (1991), p. 172.

³⁹ Lewis, *Manufacturing Montreal*, p. 102.

⁴⁰ Lewis, *Manufacturing Montreal*, p. 103; Parks Canada, "Lieu historique national du Canada du Canal-de-Lachine," Parks Canada, http://www.pc.gc.ca/lhn-nhs/qc/canallachine/natcul/natcul2c_F.asp (accessed 14 July 2007).

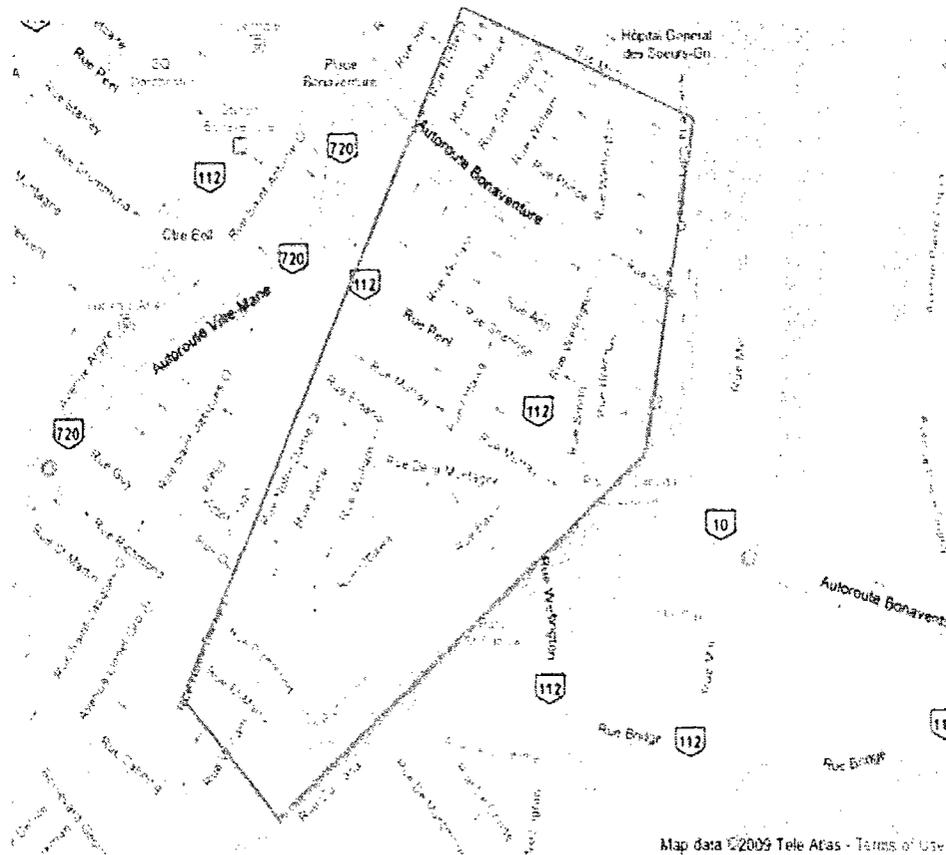
vertically integrated. Spread across his yards, Cantin had two basins off the canal, an engine foundry, a sawmill, draughting and modelling rooms, to say nothing of the construction shops and dry docks required to physically build the ships. The vertical integration meant that Canada Marine Works could perform the tasks required for the production of the ships, which varied from massive steamships to smaller vessels, from design to the manufacture of not just the ships, but their component parts, all at one site.⁴¹

Cantin's yards reflected this growing trend of industrialisation across North America, and the development of massive industrial concerns that were rationalised and vertically integrated. While the operations of the firm were consolidated in one location, from design, manufacturing, packaging, distribution, and the front office, this does not mean that these firms dominated Griffintown. There were indeed massive industrial concerns, such as Robertson Lead and Dow Breweries in the northeast corner of the Griff; but the neighbourhood maintained a mixture of both large and small operations. The larger concerns tended to be concentrated either around the canal or the neighbourhood's eastern fringes, near McGill Street (see Map 1.1). In part, this was dictated by the physical landscape and built environment of Griffintown; there was not enough space to construct massive factories and foundries. Indeed, Lewis argues that Griffintown's limited space helped to contribute to the development of large-scale industry in other parts of the city, in particular, Hochelaga-Maisonneuve in the east end and Saint-Louis-de-Mile-End in the north end.⁴² The mixture of large and small firms in Griffintown led to a great diversity of industry there. While Griffintown was dominated

⁴¹ Lewis, *Manufacturing Montreal*, pp. 104-06; Gerald Tulchinsky, *The River Barons: Montreal Businessmen and the Growth of Industry and Transportation* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1977), pp. 207-10.

⁴² Lewis, *Manufacturing Montreal*, ch. 8.

throughout the nineteenth century by the food, metal, chemical, and wood industries, these were supplemented by the textile, boot and shoe, broom, clothing, nail, brewing, and tobacco industries.⁴³ In other words, Griffintown's industrial profile was rather diversified.



Map 1.1: Map of Griffintown. The neighbourhood's boundaries are outlined. Source: TeleMaps/Google Earth, ©2009.

Griffintown's industrial base, then, exploded in the first wave of industrialisation in Montréal up to the middle of the nineteenth century, both in Griffintown proper and along the canal. In addition, Pointe-Saint-Charles, across the canal and at least partially

⁴³ Lewis, *Manufacturing Montreal*, pp. 105-06.

within St. Ann's Ward,⁴⁴ came to boast the Grand Trunk Railway's (GTR) massive, vertically-integrated yards after 1857. And while this boom of development was not to be repeated later in the century, Griffintown "remained the nineteenth-century locational core of the city's large and technologically advanced firms, whose scale of operations remained large relative to the rest of the city."⁴⁵

While employment could be found with relative ease, there were definite disadvantages to settling in Griffintown, from the high rents to substandard housing. After the end of the seigneurial system, the problem with high rents in Griffintown began to subside, even if the housing stock remained of poor quality. The Griff's proximity to the waterfront and the developing industry, as well as the various public works projects involving the expansion of the Montréal Harbour and the canal, the construction of Victoria Bridge, as well as railway construction, made it a prime location for immigrant labourers. Even after the development of Griffintown's manufacturing base, the waterfront remained an employment site, especially for the un-skilled labourers, however precarious such employment was.⁴⁶

By 1836, there were upwards of 1,200 Irish-Catholics in Griffintown proper, and this population continued to grow throughout the nineteenth century,⁴⁷ leading to a construction boom in the 1840s. As the manufacturing base blossomed, residences were

⁴⁴ The majority of Pointe-Saint-Charles was initially part of the Village of Saint-Gabriel, and outside of the borders of the Ville de Montréal, at least prior to amalgamation in 1881. After being incorporated into the Ville de Montréal, the old Village of Saint-Gabriel became known as St. Gabriel's Ward, which coincided with the parish of Saint-Gabriel, another Irish-Catholic parish. See, Lewis, *Manufacturing Montreal*, p. 41.

⁴⁵ Lewis, *Manufacturing Montreal*, pp. 106-07.

⁴⁶ See, Peter DeLottinville, "Joe Beef of Montreal: Working-Class Culture and the Tavern, 1869-1889," *Labour/Le Travailleur*, 8-9 (1981-2): 9-40.

⁴⁷ Cross, "The Irish in Montreal," pp. 14-19.

rapidly constructed to house the burgeoning working classes.⁴⁸ This coincided with the influx of Famine refugees from Ireland in the latter half of the 1840s.

The Famine Refugees

Starting in the spring of 1847, Montréal was inundated with thousands of poor, Irish-Catholic Famine refugees. Many of the sick and contagious managed to evade quarantine at Grosse-Île and make their way to Montréal, which caused serious problems, as the city was simply not prepared to deal with the inundation. Indeed, despite advanced warning of the emigrations from Ireland, Montréal's civic authorities appear to have been caught off-guard. On 20 May, *The Gazette* published a letter to the editor expressing concern about the incoming deluge.

It is some time since several communications have appeared in the public prints regarding precautionary measures to ensure the health of the city, and it is not a little surprising to find that no notice whatever has been taken by the authorities of a matter now daily becoming more important... We have only to refer to the intelligence received by the last Mail for the strongest grounds for anxiety and apprehension, and every reason for putting into practice the most energetic means for arresting and mitigating the virulence of contagious diseases. We will also find that many Fever Hospitals in the large towns of Ireland are crowded with patients labouring under typhus, endangered by starvation and filth, and with the likelihood of an overflowing immigration to this port, from a country suffering from famine and sickness, no further stimulus ought to be required to prompt an active exertion on our part.⁴⁹

In June, the masses began arriving. The week of 11 June 1847 saw some 6,000 people arrive at Montréal in ill-health, after being passed on at Grosse-Île. For these refugees, it was not starvation that was the problem, though that was the root cause, but the diseases that had come with the Famine in Ireland, most notably typhus. *The Gazette* reported that

⁴⁸ Léon Trépanier, "Le Vieux-Montréal: 'Hors les murs': Griffintown," *Voix Populaire*, 15 April 1953; Lewis, *Manufacturing Montreal*, pp. 113-14.

⁴⁹ *The Gazette*, 20 May 1847.

The arrival of about six thousand emigrants, during the present week, who have unfortunately been suffered to accumulate below, occasions many scenes revolting to humanity, but as a whole, they are doing well and are well cared for. So far as concerns the city, any inconvenience resulting from their arrival will soon pass, as means of transportation onwards are abundant.⁵⁰ The ladies of the Grey Nunnery, with a zeal above all praise, are attending to the sick; nor are the Catholic clergy neglectful of their duty.⁵¹

Fever shacks were hastily built on Windmill Point, Pointe-Saint-Charles. This was a reasonable location for the shacks, given its separation from sites of settlement in Montréal, but the shacks were inadequate. The *Montreal Pilot* concluded in June that there needed to be four times as many.⁵² The inundation of Famine refugees led to a crisis in Montréal at all levels, and the inability of the city to properly prepare for, let alone respond to, the crisis led to the attempted resignation of Mayor John Easton Mills in July 1847, though he was persuaded to remain in office. In December he contracted typhus himself and died.⁵³

In addition to those who were confined to the fever shacks at Windmill Point, thousands of relatively healthy Irish-Catholics moved into the city, though most of those who landed at Montréal did not remain long before moving on, either up the river to Ontario, or, more commonly, south to the United States. Nonetheless, Griffintown was where many of those who remained in Montréal ended up settling. This was true both of those who arrived relatively healthy and of the few who survived the fever shacks. These refugees were, of course, destitute, or nearly destitute, upon their arrival in Montréal. To

⁵⁰ Note the hope that the majority, if not all, of the refugees in quarantine at Windmill Point would move on, and not settle in Montréal.

⁵¹ *The Gazette*, 11 June 1847.

⁵² *Montreal Pilot and Journal of Commerce*, 15 June 1847.

⁵³ *Montreal Pilot and Journal of Commerce*, 3 July 1847. Archives de la Ville de Montréal, "Democracy in Montreal: Easton, John Mills (1846-47)," Ville de Montréal : http://www2.ville.montreal.qc.ca/archives/democratie/democratie_en/expo/maires/easton-mills/index.shtml (accessed 13 July 2007).

this end, the Irish-Catholic community did its best to provide charity and housing, and the rest of Montréal's population also chipped in. A House of Refuge was operated in Griffintown in 1846-7 to help deal with the arrival of the Famine Irish.⁵⁴

With the advent of these Famine refugees, the population of Griffintown and St. Ann's Ward exploded. From the 1850s to 1870s, Griffintown remained the overwhelmingly dominant section of St. Ann's. In 1861, for example, a full 87 per cent of the ward's households could be found in the Griff, whilst 13 per cent could be found in Pointe-Saint-Charles.⁵⁵ Subsequently, with the development of that part of Pointe-Saint-Charles within St. Ann's Ward, Griffintown's importance was diminished somewhat, though it continued to comprise over half of the population of the ward.⁵⁶

Table 1.1 shows the distribution of the population of St. Ann's Ward according to ethnic origin from 1861 to 1911. It shows that the Irish were the largest group in the ward throughout this period. This includes 1861, when St. Ann's Ward was home to some 4,881 Irish-born residents, to say nothing of their Canadian-born off-spring, who, in that year's census were counted as Canadian-born non-francophones. Given that the British-born population of the ward that year comprised barely 11 per cent, as compared to 30 per cent for the Irish-born, we can conclude that the majority of the Canadian-born non-francophones, if not the overwhelming majority, were Irish. This can be confirmed by the numbers of 1871, which show that 49.8 per cent of the ward was Irish. Indeed, the Irish dominance of St. Ann's was only broken in the first decade of the twentieth century, by which time the three main groups, Irish, French-Canadians, and British, were relatively equal in terms of their share of the population. That first decade of the

⁵⁴ *Montreal Witness*, 6 April 1847.

⁵⁵ Lewis, *Manufacturing Montreal*, pp. 114-15.

⁵⁶ Lewis, *Manufacturing Montreal*, pp. 114-15.

twentieth century also saw the advent of a large number of Syrians, Jews, and Italians who, together, comprised some 11.4 per cent of the population of St. Ann's Ward. This new population also reflected changing patterns of immigration to Montréal in the 1890s and first decade of the new century.

Table 1.1: St. Ann's Ward, Population by Origin, 1861-1911⁵⁷

Year	British		Irish		French-Canadian		Other		Total
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	
1861	1,762	10.9	4,881	30.1	3,323	20.5	6,218 ⁵⁸	38.4	16,200
1871	4,169	22.4	9,283	49.8	4,492	24.1	242	1.3	18,639
1881	4,486	22.0	9,753	47.7	5,849	28.6	354	1.7	20,432
1891 ⁵⁹	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
1901	5,249	22.5	9,214	39.4	6,481	27.7	881	3.8	23,368
1911	6,061	28.9	6,466	30.8	6,082	29.0	2,383	11.4	20,999

Table 1.1 also shows a decline in the Irish population of St. Ann's Ward, both in absolute and relative terms after the 1870s. In 1871, the Irish reached their highest numbers in relative terms, as 49.8 per cent of the ward was either Irish-born or of Irish descent. In 1881, this group reached its highest numbers in absolute terms, as 9,753 Irish called St. Ann's Ward home. After this, however, the Irish population declined in both measures.

Whereas the Irish were in decline from the late nineteenth century on, the French-Canadians experienced a different phenomenon, demographically-speaking. As the Irish left St. Ann's Ward, French-Canadians (and the British) began to move in; the French-Canadian population grew from 4,492 in 1871 to 6,481 in 1901. And while the French-Canadians hit their absolute high in 1901, it was in 1911 that they reached their proportional high, comprising some 29 per cent of the population. This occurred during

⁵⁷ Source: Canada, Census of Canada, 1861-1911.

⁵⁸ The 1861 Census included a category for the non-Francophone, Canadian-born population, which totalled 5,733 for St. Ann's Ward that year. A good number of this group, judging by the size of the Irish compared to the British population, was of Irish descent.

⁵⁹ The 1891 Census did not categorise residents according to origin.

the general depopulation of the ward that began in that same first decade of the twentieth century.

That the population of St. Ann's Ward was Catholic, both French-Canadian and Irish, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries is clear from the census data. What is also obvious is that St. Ann's Ward was home to a good number of both Irish-Protestants and British Catholics. This can be calculated quite simply, based on the assumption that nearly all, if not all, of the French-Canadians were Catholic. The decline of Irish-Catholic Griffintown can also be seen in the geography of Irish-Catholic settlement in the neighbourhood around the turn of the twentieth century. Herbert Brown Ames' maps, which he compiled and published with his monumental *The City Below the Hill* in 1897, demonstrate this. The Irish-Catholics were collapsing around St. Ann's Catholic Church, at the corner of McCord and Basin streets, just off Wellington, and across from what became Gallery Square (see Map 1.1).⁶⁰ Irish-Catholics dominated that block, as well as the next three blocks to the east of McCord Street, ending at Prince Street, between Wellington and William streets. Much of the rest of Griffintown was dominated by the French-Canadians. In no part of Griffintown did the British comprise more than 29 per cent of the population of any given block; the two blocks where Anglo-Protestants comprised their highest concentration were primarily non-residential. The only other block where Anglo-Protestants existed in sizeable numbers was at the western end of Griffintown, bounded by rues des Seigneurs, Guy, Notre-Dame, and William

⁶⁰ Gallery Square was officially named on 30 November 1930, in honour of Daniel Gallery, the Irish-born former city councillor for St. Ann's Ward from 1898 to 1910. The street leading to Gallery Square from Basin Street, however, was named in Gallery's honour in 1898. See, "Répertoire historiques des toponymes montréalais," Ville de Montréal http://ville.montreal.qc.ca/portal/page?_pageid=1560.11245605&_dad=portal&_schema=PORTAL (rue de Square-Gallery) and http://ville.montreal.qc.ca/portal/page?_pageid=1560.11245605&_dad=portal&_schema=PORTAL (Square Gallery). (accessed 23 February 2008).

Street. Thus, Griffintown, even as late as 1897, was predominantly Irish-Catholic. This is supported by the reminiscences of Charlie Blickstead, an Irish-Catholic who grew up in Griffintown in the first decades of the twentieth century. Blickstead lived on Duke Street, on the east side of Griffintown, near Haymarket Square, in what he called a more “cosmopolitan” atmosphere than that which existed closer to St. Ann’s Church, where “the Irish-Catholics were pretty much the main body of the population.”⁶¹

Griffintown as Urban Slum: Sanitation, Over-Crowding, Crime & Poverty

As we have seen, Griffintown was destined to be an urban slum almost from the outset, owing to the high seigneurial rents demanded by the nuns, and the impetus on lease holders to construct cheap, shoddy housing, to say nothing of the propensity for flooding in the spring. It did not help that the Griff was located next to Montréal’s tough waterfront district, and offered cheap accommodations for newly-arrived immigrants, and transient workers. Griffintown was also the site of the beginnings of the Canadian industrial revolution in the 1830s and 40s. In short, Griffintown was a tough neighbourhood, one dominated by problems with health and sanitation, over-crowding, population density, crime, and chronic poverty. Thus, public commentary on Griffintown from reformers and city politicians reflected the slum discourse.

In the nineteenth century, Montréal as a whole was a particularly dirty city. A visitor from New York in 1881 was disgusted:

Yesterday, when up around Beaver Hall Hill, I was admiring some very fine residences when a puff of wind blew towards me an odor which rivalled the smell to be felt in the dead house of New York...The further

⁶¹ Herbert Brown Ames, *The City Below the Hill: The Slums of Montreal, 1897* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1972 (1897)), pp. 90-1. Charles Blickstead, in Burns, *The Shamrock & The Shield*, p. 54. Quotes taken from Blickstead in Burns, p. 54.

west I went in that direction, the more abominable the scent, until at length I had to proceed in a different direction. And yet the lane from whence the smell emanated was situated at the back of a mansion which rivalled the brown stone fronts of Fifth Avenue [in New York]... Victoria Square, where you have placed the statue of your young Queen,⁶² looks as if it had been neglected for the special reason of its presence there.⁶³

Owing to inadequate housing, there were serious problems with cleanliness in Montréal and, thus, with health and sanitation. Indeed, Terry Copp argues that the “connection between inadequate wages, poor housing conditions, and a mortality rate which marked Montreal as one of the unhealthiest cities in the western world was perfectly clear to many contemporary observers.”⁶⁴ Paul-André Linteau argues that,

[i]l existe vraiment deux Montréal, deux sociétés bien distinctes,⁶⁵ celle des riches que nous venons d'évoquer et celle du peuple qui ne jouit souvent d'aucun confort. Dans les quartiers populaires, en effet, aussi bien dans l'est que dans l'ouest, dans les secteurs anglophones que francophones, l'environnement est fort différent. Dans les zones industrialisées, la fumée des usines et la pollution industrielle couvrent les résidences ouvrières d'une grisaille généralisée... L'existence est dominée par des conditions de travail pénibles, dans un milieu insalubre dont est difficile de s'évader.⁶⁶

Griffintown was a particularly bad part of town, sanitation-wise. Whilst the water truck visited rue Notre-Dame on a daily basis, the side streets of the Griff were not so lucky. Garbage pickup was introduced to Montréal in 1877, but it remained a sporadic affair. Sewers were rare in Griffintown, as was indoor plumbing. Sidewalks were also a major problem, as they were, in this era, constructed of wood planking to allow

⁶² The statue of Queen Victoria was erected on Victoria Square in 1860, when she was 41 years old. In 1881, she was 62 years old.

⁶³ *The Post*, 16 May 1881.

⁶⁴ Terry Copp, *The Anatomy of Poverty: The Condition of the Working Class in Montreal, 1897-1929* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1974), p. 88.

⁶⁵ Robert Lewis confirms this in his research, arguing that the residential geography of Montréal was such that it was divided into two spheres, one for the working classes and another for the middle- and élite-classes. Robert D. Lewis, “The Segregated City: Class Residential Patterns and the Development of Industrial Districts in Montreal, 1861-1901,” *Journal of Urban History*, 17/2 (1991): 123-52.

⁶⁶ Paul-André Linteau, *Histoire de Montréal depuis la Confédération*, 2nd ed. (Montréal: Boréal, 2000 (1992)), p. 95.

pedestrians to escape the mud and dirt of the unpaved streets. But they were always in a state of disrepair. Cross reports a nineteenth century joke in Montréal: “when Toronto replaced its sidewalks, the old ones were floated down to Montreal for reuse.”⁶⁷ The annual flooding in Griffintown made the sidewalks an even more dangerous proposition, as they tended to float away, at worst, or become warped from the water, at best.

Griffintown was an over-crowded and densely-populated neighbourhood. Cross, however, is quick to note that “conditions [in Griffintown] were not as bad as the tenement slums of many American cities at that time.”⁶⁸ Whether or not this is true, it is not particularly helpful or illuminating. Griffintown was densely-populated and over-crowded in its own right. Statements such as Cross’ deflect attention away from Montréal’s slums. At any rate, she is contradicted by the reformers of the era.

The burgeoning slum conditions of Montréal led city leaders to invite “experts” from the United Kingdom and United States to come to the city to inspect these slums. The Secretary of the Philadelphia Housing Commission visited in 1913, and had this to say to the Canadian Club after a tour around Montréal:

Only this morning I went round your city. Where I saw a house that had the earmarks of a slum, I stopped and went in. What did I find? Stairs that had been trodden by rich men and women; yet there were whole families living in single rooms – in some eight beds in a room; rooms without windows, rooms where the plumbing was defective and the floor covered with filth. Families with six or nine children occupied three rooms in the house built upon the rear lot – and you have many of them.⁶⁹ I hesitate to say what I have seen here, lest I be thought to be discrediting your city. I

⁶⁷ Cross, “The Irish in Montreal,” p. 212.

⁶⁸ Cross, “The Irish in Montreal,” p. 205.

⁶⁹ For the most part, the rear tenements have long since been destroyed across Montréal, except, it seems, in Saint-Henri and Pointe-Saint-Charles. In Saint-Henri, many rear tenements still stand, in both the older sections, between rue Notre-Dame and the canal, as well as the areas built up in the late nineteenth century at the north end of the neighbourhood. In the north end of Saint-Henri, the rear tenements tend to be found in parts that have yet to be gentrified. In Pointe-Saint-Charles, however, many of the rear tenements have been gentrified. The rear tenements there tend to have been two-floor buildings, slightly larger than cottages. They have been renovated to become single-family homes.

went in one property here and found something I had never seen before: I saw toilets, old open toilets, seven of them in one narrow little court surrounded by houses occupied by ten families...Do you know you can go down St. Georges Street⁷⁰ and find almost every house has a cellar in which people are living, paying \$10 or \$12 for dark rooms? You must remember that children are born and develop there.⁷¹

Given the problems in Philadelphia with slum housing and over-crowding,⁷² it is certainly worth something that the Secretary of the Housing Commission from that city would be so appalled by conditions in Montréal.

Ames found that, in 1896,⁷³ population density and over-crowding were indeed problems in Griffintown. While he notes that St. Ann's Ward, as a rule, was not all that densely populated, averaging only 35 persons per acre, below the average for Montréal as a whole, the Irish-Catholic blocks of Griffintown tell a very different story. The three blocks to the east of McCord Street between William and Wellington streets contained 149, 113, and 102 persons per acre, which is well above the city-wide average of 40. Indeed, the block surrounded by Wellington, McCord, William, and Young streets was the most densely populated block in the City Below the Hill (and quite likely, Montréal as a whole). These blocks, as well as that upon which the church stood on McCord between Wellington and William, also each averaged over one person per room, which suggests serious over-crowding.⁷⁴

⁷⁰ The rue Saint-Georges has long since disappeared from the Montréal landscape, but it once ran between what is now rue Saint-Antoine to what is now boulevard René-Lévesque near boulevard Saint-Laurent.

⁷¹ As quoted in Copp, *The Anatomy of Poverty*, p. 71.

⁷² See, amongst others, Leonard U. Blumberg, *Skid Row and its Alternatives: Research and Recommendations from Philadelphia* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1973); Noel Ignatiev, *How the Irish Became White* (New York: Routledge, 1995); W.E.B. DuBois, "The Negro Problems of Philadelphia," "The Question of Earning a Living," "Color Prejudice, 1899," in *The City Reader*, 2nd ed., ed. Richard T. LeGates and Frederic Stout (New York: Routledge, 1996), pp. 56-62.

⁷³ Ames published *The City Below the Hill* in 1897, but his research was done the previous year, in 1896.

⁷⁴ Ames, *The City Below the Hill*, pp. 57-66.

In addition to population density and over-crowding in Griffintown, the housing stock itself left a lot to be desired, since basic amenities were lacking. Privies, in particular, caused problems, as noted by the Secretary of the Philadelphia Housing Commission. Privies sat in the court yards of the tenements, usually uncovered, though sheltered, and were rarely cleaned out. Indoor plumbing, most notably, flushing toilets, was a rarity in Griffintown. In 1896, only one family in four had access to such luxuries. As Linteau notes, “[c]ette situation contribue à polluer l’environnement des quartiers ouvriers.”⁷⁵ And those who did install indoor toilets in Griffintown oftentimes found themselves contending with water snakes.⁷⁶

The rear tenements were certainly a problem in Griffintown, contributing to high population density, as property owners sought to cram as much living space as possible onto their lots in order to maximise profits. This was especially true after the middle of the nineteenth century, owing to both the influx of Irish Famine refugees into Griffintown, and the end of the seigneurial system. *The Post* investigated the slum conditions of Griffintown in 1888 and reported back to its readers, who would have had an interest in Griffintown, given the newspaper’s Irish-Catholic ownership, editors, and readership:⁷⁷

The rear of this portion of Murray St. is lined with court yards, which in turn, are surrounded by tiny tenements, and one story dwelling places. The latter hardly allow a person of six feet to walk with ease. The yards and the approach from the street are one black mass of quagmire and pools of stagnant water. Foul vegetable and rotten fruit lay about here and there,

⁷⁵ Linteau, *Histoire de Montréal*, p. 103.

⁷⁶ Cross, “The Irish in Montreal,” p. 212.

⁷⁷ Cross, “The Irish in Montreal,” pp. 227-8. Cross downplays the importance of *The Post* and its predecessor *The Evening Post* within Montréal’s Irish-Catholic community owing to its low circulation. This, however, does not necessarily mean that the paper was of little import, as it is likely that copies of the newspaper were circulated amongst friends and co-workers.

and the aroma arising therefrom is not at all conducive to the good health of the many little blue eyed laddies and girls⁷⁸ that play about.⁷⁹

Cross dismisses this as excessively gloomy and argues “[w]here the bread winner of a family was fortunate enough to have regular employment, a decent life was possible.”⁸⁰

This misses the point. Families in Griffintown rarely had breadwinners with steady and decent employment, as Bettina Bradbury has shown.⁸¹ Terry Copp echoes this when he points out that between 1880 and 1930, the incomes of the working classes remained at the subsistence level and oftentimes dropped below it.⁸²

This was part of a vicious cycle for the working classes. The fact that the head of the household barely earned a subsistence wage meant that his wife, and quite often, his children, had to work as well to contribute to the family economy and to maintain solvency. But this, of course, had the unintended consequence of keeping the head of the household’s wages low and at the subsistence level, owing to the availability for employers of large numbers of women and children in the labour market, and at lower wages than the men. Upwards of 20 per cent of women in the City Below the Hill were in the paid labour market in 1896, mostly in either manufacturing or in domestic service.⁸³ As for children, Ames noted that they comprised 4 per cent of the work force in this district. While Ames’ data is reflected in the 1901 census, Copp argues that it may be misleading, as there was no clear delineation between children and teenagers working. As Louis Guyon, the Chief Factory Inspector for Québec, noted, the *Industrial Establishments Act* of 1893 had set the minimum age for factory work at 12 for boys, 14

⁷⁸ “Blue-eyed laddies and girls” is a reference to Irishness within the slums of Griffintown.

⁷⁹ *The Post*, 25 October 1888.

⁸⁰ Cross, “The Irish in Montreal,” p. 206.

⁸¹ Bettina Bradbury, *Working Families: Age, Gender, and Daily Survival in Industrializing Montreal* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1993), pp. 152-81, 215-20.

⁸² Copp, *The Anatomy of Poverty*, p. 44.

⁸³ Ames, *The City Below the Hill*, p. 36; Copp, *The Anatomy of Poverty*, pp. 44-7.

for girls. Thus, wrote Guyon in 1897, “[t]here have been very few infractions to note in regard to the employment of children under age; the limit of 12 years for boys being so low that there is hardly any desire to employ them younger.”⁸⁴

As the economy in Montréal grew, so too did the exploitation of child labour in the city’s bustling factories. Ultimately, in 1907, Québec raised the minimum age for boys to work in factories to be equal to that for girls, 14. In addition, 14-year olds seeking factory work were now required to take a literacy test, and those who were under 16 and failed the test were required to take night classes to become literate.⁸⁵ However, in the nineteenth century, “[i]l n’est pas rare de voir dans les usines des enfants de 8 ou 10 ans” and “l’emploi des enfants en usine se répand à Montréal dans les dernières décennies du 19^e siècle.”⁸⁶ In St. Ann’s Ward, Bradbury has found that, in 1871, 25 per cent of boys and 10 per cent of girls between the ages of 11 and 15 were employed. For those between the ages of 16 and 20, the numbers rose to 75 per cent of boys and 40 per cent of girls.⁸⁷

Notions of working class manliness were quite often tied up with the notion of the breadwinner; a true working-class man would earn enough to keep both his wife and children dependent upon him. Having his wife work was a challenge to his manliness. However, this was a luxury rarely afforded the working classes. As Bradbury notes, “[m]arried women’s work among the nineteenth-century working classes was crucial in

⁸⁴ As quoted in, Copp, *The Anatomy of Poverty*, p. 51.

⁸⁵ Ames, *The City Below the Hill*, p. 36; Copp, *The Anatomy of Poverty*, pp. 50-3.

⁸⁶ Linteau, *Histoire de Montréal*, p. 96.

⁸⁷ Bettina Bradbury, “L’économie familiale et le travail dans une ville en voie de l’industrialisation: Montréal dans les années 1870,” *Maîtresses de maison, maîtresses d’école : Femmes, famille, et éducation dans l’histoire du Québec*, ed. Nadia Fahmy-Eid and Micheline Johnson (Montréal: Boréal Express, 1983): 292-305.

shaping the standard of living and the degree of comfort of family life.”⁸⁸ Thus, working class men had to seek other avenues to construct, reinforce, and police the boundaries of their manliness.

Working class women in Griffintown developed various strategies for stretching their husbands’, as well as their own and their children’s, wages to allow for survival. Life was even more difficult for these women when their husbands drank excessively, gambled, or engaged in prostitution. In such cases, women were forced to stretch food for more meals, or find credit, or turn to their neighbours and family for assistance. The Catholic Church was also an option, as it was “au premier rang de la lutte contre la pauvreté.” Domestic violence was also a definite possibility in such instances, as Bradbury shows.⁸⁹

With what money they did have, women employed a variety of strategies, especially insofar as food was concerned. Buying food in Montréal was a sometimes hazardous proposition, owing to lax sanitation practices on the part of the producers, especially dairies.⁹⁰ One way around this was to have a small garden or to keep animals for milk and/or meat, when possible. Cows, in particular, were useful, given that they provided cheap, clean milk. Of course, cows were hardly easy to keep in a city, let alone in an industrial working class slum like Griffintown. Prior to the 1860s, “it was legal to keep pigs, sheep, cows, and other animals in the city.” After that, however, animals were gradually made illegal. Quite often, these by-laws were discriminatory in terms of class,

⁸⁸ Bradbury, *Working Families*, p. 153.

⁸⁹ Bradbury, *Working Families*, pp. 160-1; Linteau, *Histoire de Montréal*, p. 107. Quote taken from Linteau.

⁹⁰ Milk, in particular, was problematic, in part owing to the dairies’ refusals to pasteurise their milk, and in part owing to the unclean habits at the dairies in the packing and shipping of the milk. See, Copp, *The Anatomy of Poverty*, pp. 98-104.

as they only targeted working class districts. But, the by-laws were oftentimes ignored; after pigs were made illegal across the city in 1874, many continued to keep them. Chickens also now became more popular, and upon the first official count of chickens in 1891 by the Ville de Montréal, most were found in working class districts, demonstrating their importance to the economies of these working class families, allowing them to stretch their wages. The taking in of boarders was also a means of supplementing the family's wages.⁹¹

While poverty was both a symptom and a cause of hardship in Griffintown and contributed to its slum status, it is also clear that the problems identified by *The Post* in 1888, in particular, the stagnant pools of water, as well as the foul odours, were chronic. Two years earlier, in 1886, the *Montreal Herald* conducted a study of the city, especially the working class districts, after the sanitation police claimed to have thoroughly cleaned up the city following a massive spring flood. The *Herald* reporters found that

[t]here is perhaps no part of the city which is so badly in need of a thorough cleaning up as Griffintown. The negligence shown by the Board of Health and civic authorities in dealing with this quarter is something extraordinary and can only be realized by a visit through the district...Not one quarter of the refuse, dirt, and garbage accumulated during the winter and scattered all over the place by the water [from the flood of 1886] has been removed. Attempts have been made to clean up a few of the streets but the work was very unsatisfactorily done. Citizens are loudly demanding that the civic authorities should be awakened to a sense of duty, and clean up the whole Ward. The warm weather of the last few days [the article was written in early May 1886] made life almost unbearable in some of the streets, and if matters are to continue this way the residents are fearful that some great misfortune will fall upon them in the warm summer months.⁹²

The report went on to give particular details of the conditions in Griffintown, including 139 hen carcasses found on Dalhousie Street, as well as a dead dog which lay in the street

⁹¹ Bradbury, *Working Families*, pp. 164-7; 175-8. Quote taken from p. 166.

⁹² *Montreal Herald*, 7 May 1886.

for five days before a group of residents tossed the carcass into the canal. On Aqueduct Street, twenty barrels of scavenging sat for fifteen days before the city finally removed them. Near Haymarket Square, several yards on Nazareth Street were in dreadful need of a cleaning. The *Herald* concluded

On the whole, after the reporter had walked through the district for three hours, inspected everything that came in view and had conversed with many of the residents, he came to the conclusion that Griffintown is, for the most part, in a very filthy condition and much work will have to be done before it is placed in a fair sanitary state.⁹³

The squalor of Griffintown in May 1886 was, of course, in large part predicated by the massive floods of that spring which saw the entirety of Griffintown under water for several days during the spring run-off. However, while this may have been an extraordinary squalor, the neglect shown by the Board of Health and the civic authorities of Montréal can be seen as all the more disquieting. If this was the response of the authorities following a massive flood in Griffintown, one is left to wonder what their response was like during regular periods, when conditions were not quite so acute?

A glimpse of the status quo of public health in Montréal comes from the *Montreal Star* in 1880. Reporting on “More Bad Smells,” this time on the Plateau Mont-Royal, *The Star* noted that “[i]t will be remembered that a similar pool of still water last year existed in a certain part of Griffintown, and it was not till several deaths occurred that the neighbourhood were convinced of the danger.”⁹⁴ In short, then, it appears that stagnant water, foul smells, and squalor were part and parcel of the Griffintown experience, irrespective of floods, adding to the difficulties in living in the neighbourhood.

⁹³ *Montreal Herald*, 7 May 1886.

⁹⁴ *Montreal Star*, 4 June 1880.

Moreover, it is also clear that there was a pattern of neglect vis-à-vis Griffintown on the part of *hôtel de ville*.

Flooding was indeed a major problem in Griffintown, especially during the spring run-off on the St. Lawrence. And while this was an annual event, some years were worse than others. In particular, 1861, 1869, 1873, 1883, 1884, and 1886 were severe. The last of these floods was the worst, as the river rose by 44 feet, 6 inches, leaving all of the Pointe under water, and Griffintown “almost invisible.”⁹⁵ *The Post* reported that the “Bonaventure depot and yard”⁹⁶ could float the whole river craft. McGill, Notre Dame West, St. James West⁹⁷ out of the city limits,⁹⁸ a large portion of Craig and St. Antoine Streets, with all cross streets are under ten feet of water.” *The Post* called Victoria Square “a dirty lake.” No fewer than 12,000 people were flooded out in the spring of 1886.⁹⁹

The 1886 flood was foreshadowed in January of that year, during one of Montréal’s sudden winter thaws. On the morning of the eleventh, water levels out of the river rose very suddenly, leading to severe flooding in Griffintown and the Pointe. *The Post* reported on the damage on a human level, noting that this meant that starvation visited several homes in Griffintown, as the food, water, and coal supplies in cellars, such as they existed, were flooded out. The following day it was -15 and the Griff became a mass of ice, including the houses that were flooded out the previous day. By the time the

⁹⁵ Cross, “*The Irish in Montreal*,” p. 213.

⁹⁶ The Bonaventure train yards were located directly north of Griffintown along Peel Street in what was then known as “the Flats.”

⁹⁷ St. James Street is now the rue Saint-Jacques.

⁹⁸ In 1886, Griffintown was the western edge of the Ville de Montréal, as the independent Ville de Sainte-Cunégonde lay beyond Griffintown, with the Ville de Saint-Henri on the other side of Sainte-Cunégonde. Both Saint-Henri and Sainte-Cunégonde were swallowed up by the growing Ville de Montréal in 1905. Sainte-Cunégonde is now the neighbourhood of Little Burgundy. See, Lewis, *Manufacturing Montreal*, p. 41.

⁹⁹ *The Post*, 19 April 1886.

spring floods came in April, the homes of Griffintown had not had a chance to thoroughly dry out. Moreover, much of the wood used for framing the homes, to say nothing of the walls and floors, were warped by the flooding when they finally dried out in the spring.¹⁰⁰ These floods, both winter and spring, led to disease and pestilence in the Griff.¹⁰¹

One also has to think that the industry along the canal, in the Pointe and Griffintown, was none too pleased with the continual flooding, especially in the 1880s when there were regular and massive inundations. One can imagine the damage this flooding would have caused in, for example, the Redpath Sugar Refinery, and the losses this would have caused the company, insurance or none. The 1886 flood finally spurred the Ville de Montréal into action and work was undertaken along the bank of the St. Lawrence to prevent further flooding.¹⁰²

All of this combined to render Griffintown a dangerous place to reside, in terms of public health and sanitation. This was a problem that plagued all of Montréal in the late nineteenth century. Mortality rates in the working class districts of the city remained nearly double those of “l’autre Montréal.” And whereas medical science had advanced far enough to ensure the end of such diseases as gastroenteritis, tuberculosis, diphtheria, and typhoid in much of the western world by the late nineteenth century, in Montréal they continued to plague the working classes well into the twentieth century. To help combat this, the city created a Board of Health in 1876, based on the British model, instituted a year earlier. Both in Britain and Montréal disease prevention was based upon the idea of sanitary inspection.¹⁰³

¹⁰⁰ *The Post*, 11 January 1886; *The Post*, 12 January 1886.

¹⁰¹ Linteau, *Histoire de Montréal*, p. 106.

¹⁰² Linteau, *Histoire de Montréal*, p. 106.

¹⁰³ Copp, *The Anatomy of Poverty*, pp. 88-9.

The Board of Health appears to have had some success in Montréal, as death rates declined between 1877 and 1884. In the 1880s, this doctrine of public health was challenged by developments in bacteriology, which suggested that inoculations against infectious diseases were effective; indeed, inoculations against smallpox help to explain why the 1885 epidemic was so much less devastating in Anglophone quarters of the city, including Griffintown, than in French-Canadian ones, especially amongst the working classes. Working class French-Canadians tended to be suspicious of the practice.¹⁰⁴

Another problem facing Montréal was that this was the era before state intervention in Canada, and whilst the Québec government passed a *Public Health Act* in 1886, it was defective for a number of reasons, one of which was its reliance upon private agencies. According to Copp,

such institutions quickly developed a stake in the public health business and instead of serving as pressure groups to encourage the adoption of vigorous, metropolitan-wide services, the tendency was to expand their individual spheres of activity without much regard for co-ordination or gaps in services. Large, heavily-populated sections of the city were left without convenient access to public-health services.¹⁰⁵

Griffintown was one of these sections of Montréal, bereft of access to public-health services in any meaningful manner.¹⁰⁶ Thus, the complaints by the press that civic authorities were neglecting Griffintown were not all that surprising given the questionable régime of public health and sanitation in Montréal in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

¹⁰⁴ Copp, *The Anatomy of Poverty*, p. 89; Linteau, *Histoire de Montréal*, p. 103; Michael Bliss, *Plague: How Smallpox Devasted Montreal* (Toronto: Harper Perennial, 2002 (1991)), esp. ch. 8.

¹⁰⁵ Copp, *The Anatomy of Poverty*, p. 92.

¹⁰⁶ Peter DeLottinville recounts the attempts of Charles “Joe Beef” McKiernan, a legendary Montréal publican in the late-nineteenth century, to coax the Montreal General Hospital to send doctors and other medical staff down into the city’s waterfront and Griffintown, where McKiernan’s tavern was located. DeLottinville, “Joe Beef of Montreal.”

Griffintown had a high mortality rate; indeed, this could be said for Montréal as a whole. While Montréal's mortality rate fell some 40 per cent between 1873 and 1895, it still remained at 24.81 per thousand. This was higher than the Québec provincial rate for 1893, which was 19 per thousand, and for Canada as a whole, which stood at 14 per thousand. Montréal's death rate was higher than pretty much anywhere else in the Western world.¹⁰⁷ While St. Ann's Ward had a relatively low death rate in 1895, at 16.83 per thousand, Irish-Catholic Griffintown had a particularly high one. The block across the street from St. Ann's Church, which was also, as we have seen, the most densely- and over- populated block in Griffintown, had a death rate that was a staggering 31.15 per thousand. The next two blocks travelling east between Wellington and William streets had death rates of 19.95 and 21.31 per thousand, respectively, both above the provincial and national norms.¹⁰⁸

Given the squalor and poverty of Griffintown, civic authorities were also concerned with crime in the neighbourhood. To this end, in 1847, Police Station No. 7 opened up at 217 Young Street.¹⁰⁹ That the police station was opened in 1847 is significant. This was, of course, the year that Montréal was inundated with Irish Famine

¹⁰⁷ Ames, *The City Below the Hill*, pp. 80-6; Copp, *The Anatomy of Poverty*, p. 25.

¹⁰⁸ Ames, *The City Below the Hill*, pp. 80-6. The death rates as a whole varied greatly throughout the City Below the Hill; the low was 10.61 per thousand for the block in Pointe-Saint-Charles between rues Laprairie and Centre, the canal, and Shearer Street, which also contained St. Gabriel's Church, the Irish-Catholic parish of the Pointe. The French-Canadian parish church, Saint-Charles, had yet to be constructed in 1895. Ironically, this is also the block I lived on when finishing this dissertation. The second highest was a very alarming 40.7 per thousand, which could be found on a triangular block in the Flats, just north of Griffintown, bounded by rues Notre-Dame and Versailles and Albert Street. However, the worst block in the City Below the Hill was within Griffintown, in a predominantly non-residential area between the canal, William, Prince, and McGill streets at the extreme eastern end of the neighbourhood. Here the mortality rate was an astounding 44.34 per thousand. Ames, *The City Below the Hill*, pp. 82-4.

¹⁰⁹ Minutes of the Meeting of the Police Commission, 12 November 1847; Minutes of the Meeting of the Police Commission, 25 November 1847; Minutes of the Meeting of the Police Commission, 16 December 1847; Minutes of the Meeting of the Police Commission, 23 December 1847, AVM, Administration Municipale – Conseil Municipal, Procès Verbal, 1846-1848, Fonds de la Commission de Police, CD 5.

refugees, many of whom ended up in Griffintown. This was no coincidence, as crime rates in Griffintown crept up in 1847. The people who already lived there could barely make ends meet themselves as it was and they were now left to compete for meagre resources in terms of charity and employment with thousands of new arrivals. In addition, life in Griffintown was miserable that year, with disease, hunger, and sickness all making the rounds. The most common crime in Griffintown was public intoxication, which was viewed by civic authorities as a sign of disorder. By the autumn of 1847, city politicians and the police were concerned about these creeping crime rates in Griffintown, leading to the inauguration of the police station on Young Street on 22 December.¹¹⁰

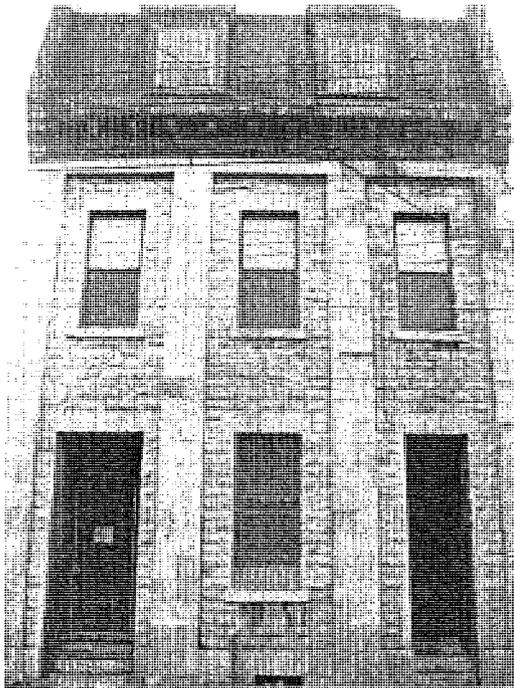


Figure 1.1: Former Police Station No. 7, 120 Young Street, Griffintown, 2006. Credit: Author

¹¹⁰ Minutes of the Meeting of the Police Commission, 12 November 1847; Minutes of the Meeting of the Police Commission, 25 November 1847; Minutes of the Meeting of the Police Commission, 16 December 1847; Minutes of the Meeting of the Police Commission, 23 December 1847, AVM, Administration Municipale – Conseil Municipal, Procès Verbal, 1846-1848, Fonds de la Commission de Police, CD 5; Cross, “The Irish in Montreal,” pp. 217-18, 307.

Despite this, *The Post*, as always sympathetic to the plight of the Irish-Catholic working classes, argued that “Griffintown was never notorious for deeds of violence.”¹¹¹ The evidence suggests otherwise. While the Griff was not completely lawless, it was certainly still a rough neighbourhood. This was, in part, owing to sectarian violence, such as the Gavazzi Riot in 1853. In June of that year, a defrocked Italian priest, Allesandro Gavazzi, was invited to speak at the Zion Church on Haymarket Square in Griffintown, on the subject of the evils of the papacy. When a large crowd of Irish-Catholics gathered outside the church to protest, the militia was called out by Montréal’s mayor, Charles Wilson,¹¹² himself a Catholic.

[I]n a sequence of events that was never fully explained, the soldiers fired on the crowd, killing upwards of sixteen bystanders and wounding many more. Simultaneously, a group of Protestant men emerged from the front of Zion Church and began firing their pistols into the crowd below.¹¹³

The Gavazzi Riot¹¹⁴ occurred within a larger context of sectarianism in the mid-1850s. After this period, however, sectarian tensions in Montréal diminished until 1876 when the Orange Order, which had existed in the city since the 1820s, decided to revive its Twelfth of July marches, provoking the Catholics. The following year, on 12 July, a young Orangeman, Thomas Hackett, was shot to death on Victoria Square in a gunfight with a group of Irish-Catholics. This led to heightened ethno-religious tensions between

¹¹¹ *The Post*, 16 June 1888.

¹¹² Charles Wilson also had connections to Griffintown, as he was married to Anne Tracey, who was Dr. Daniel Tracey’s sister. Daniel Tracy was the editor of the radical English-language newspaper, *The Vindicator*, in the 1820s and was allied with the Parti patriote. He was elected as the Member of the Legislative Assembly for Montréal West, which included Griffintown, in 1832. He died before he could take his seat, however, attending to victims of the 1832 cholera epidemic. See, Philippe Sylvain, “Wilson, Charles,” *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, on-line edition, <http://www.biographi.ca/EN/ShowBio.asp?BioId=39447&query=wilson> (accessed 3 March 2008); France Galarneau, “Tracey, Daniel,” *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, on-line edition, <http://www.biographi.ca/EN/ShowBio.asp?BioId=37297&query=tracey> (accessed 3 March 2008).

¹¹³ Horner, “A Barbarism of the Worst Kind,” pp. 1-2.

¹¹⁴ Gavazzi had delivered a similar speech three nights earlier in Québec. He had to be escorted out of that city by armed guard to Montréal.

Irish-Catholics and Orangemen in Griffintown.¹¹⁵ In the immediate aftermath of Hackett's death, Griffintown spawned two new street gangs, the Union, composed of Irish-Catholics, and the Young Britons. It is quite likely that the Young Britons were affiliated with the Orange Young Britons, a local branch of the Orange Order. Both the Orange Order itself and the Orange Young Britons had lodges named in Hackett's honour.¹¹⁶ In the spring and summer of 1878, especially, these two gangs were active, and violent, resulting in a few murders, assaults, and attempted murders. On 29 April 1878, for example, James Colligan, an Irish-Catholic, was shot to death by the Young Britons as he walked across the Wellington Street Bridge over the Lachine Canal. More gunplay erupted later that night, though it does not appear to have led to any injuries or deaths.¹¹⁷

The following year, of course, the most celebrated of Griffintown murders took place. On the night of 26 June 1879, Mary Gallagher, a prostitute, was beheaded by her best friend, and romantic rival, Susan Kennedy, also a prostitute, in a tenement flat at 242 William Street. In a jealous drunken fit, Kennedy attacked and killed Gallagher. She and Gallagher had picked up a young man, Michael Flanagan, that night, and Kennedy was enraged that he preferred the older Gallagher.¹¹⁸ Gallagher's murder went on to become a *cause célèbre*, with Kennedy being sentenced to die for the crime, though this was later commuted to life in prison. She died in custody in the Female Department of the Kingston Penitentiary of tuberculosis in 1890. Flanagan, ironically, was drowned to death in the Wellington Basin of the canal, at work storing barges for the winter, on 5

¹¹⁵ *True Witness and Catholic Chronicle*, 18 July 1877; Cross, "The Irish in Montreal," pp. 171-2.

¹¹⁶ Cross, "The Irish in Montreal," pp. 166-7, Appendix 16, p. 296.

¹¹⁷ *Montreal Star*, 30 April 1878; Alan Hustak, *The Ghost of Griffintown: The True Story of the Murder of Mary Gallagher*, (Montréal: Redlader Publishing, 2005), pp. 18-19.

¹¹⁸ Mary Gallagher was 38 at the time of her death. Kennedy was 26.

December 1879, the day that Kennedy was to have been hanged. Gallagher has become known as the “Ghost of Griffintown”; the legend is that her ghost returns every seven years to the site of her murder, looking for her head.¹¹⁹

Violent street gangs and murder aside, throughout the middle third of the nineteenth century, the Irish were the most likely ethnic group to find itself arrested in Montréal.¹²⁰ Most of this was owing to public intoxication and fighting, two activities which appear to have been almost sport on Saturday nights in Griffintown. To be fair, however, some of this activity was probably more concerned with the violent Montréal waterfront, which lay adjacent to Griffintown, rather than being owing to the residents of Griffintown itself.¹²¹ Montréal Chief of Police Penton complained that fights oftentimes broke out when his officers attempted to arrest drunken men; the police officers would then be attacked by the drunken man’s friends. Two of his officers were killed in Griffintown during drunken brawls there in the early 1870s, and a third met his maker in similar circumstances in 1885. In the latter case, Officer Joe Malone was killed in action on Murray Street, leading to an inquest at the Young Street Police Station. According to the testimony of Sylvas Paquette, a Griffintowner, Malone was killed after having been struck on the back of the head by “the prisoner Considine.” Malone had attempted to break up a brawl that had broken out in a courtyard off Murray Street. Ironically, Malone, like his murderer, Considine, was an Irish-Catholic Griffintowner.¹²²

¹¹⁹ See, Hustak, *Ghost of Griffintown*, pp. 91-7. See, also, Chapter 5 of this dissertation for the role of the Ghost of Griffintown in the commemoration and eulogisations of Griffintown in the late twentieth/early twenty-first centuries.

¹²⁰ Cross, “The Irish in Montreal,” p. 217, Appendix 22, p. 307.

¹²¹ See, *Montreal By Gaslight* (Montréal, 1889), for a unique account of Montréal’s waterfront and its international reputation in the late nineteenth century.

¹²² *Montreal Herald*, 11 August 1885.

Most of the crime in Griffintown appears to have arisen out of drunkenness, which is not all that surprising given the geography of alcohol in Griffintown. In 1870, there were no fewer than 106 licensed taverns in Griffintown, as well as at least 24 blind pigs, and this number is doubtlessly an underestimate. This means that a full one-quarter of Montréal's drinking establishments, licensed or not, could be found in Griffintown in 1870, despite the fact that less than 15 per cent of the city's population lived there. Chief Penton blamed much of the crime in Montréal as a whole, violent or not, on the plethora of options for the drinking man.¹²³

From this, it is clear that Griffintown was an inner-city urban slum. Life was hard for the Irish-Catholic working-classes of the neighbourhood. They were constantly harassed by unsuitable living conditions, over-crowding, and relatively high population density. At the same time, Griffintown was an incredibly unsanitary neighbourhood, quite the feat in nineteenth-century Montréal, one of the unhealthiest cities in the entire British Empire. Yet, despite this, Griffintown was a thriving, if not affluent neighbourhood. Griffintown was also central to the Irish-Catholic experience in Montréal. It was the first point of entry into the city for many of the Famine refugees in the mid-nineteenth century. And while a good number of the Irish immigrants of the nineteenth century managed to escape the slums of Griffintown, the Irish-Catholic population of the neighbourhood persisted throughout the century. The Irish-Catholics of

¹²³ Cross, "The Irish in Montreal," p. 218, Appendix 23, p. 307. 1870 appears to have been the high point of taverns, at least in numbers, in Griffintown. Many seem to have been the victim of the depression that hit Canada in the early 1870s. By 1875, there were only 47 taverns in the Griff, a nearly 60 per cent drop in five years, though the number of unlicensed establishments climbed to at least 32, which perhaps reflects the hard times, economically-speaking. By 1880, there were 65 taverns in Griffintown, but only 6 that could be identified as unlicensed. However, a total of 71 taverns in the relatively confined spaces of Griffintown is still rather impressive. In 1897, Ames found roughly one tavern for every 160 persons in Griffintown. Cross, "The Irish in Montreal," p. 307; P.F.W. Rutherford, "Introduction," in Ames, *The City Below the Hill*, p. xiv.

Griffintown not only created for themselves a strong, vibrant identity, but they also had a major impact on the tenor of Irishness in Montréal as a whole until the demise of the neighbourhood in the 1950s and 1960s.

Chapter 2: The Shamrock Lacrosse Club and its Fans, 1868-1885

I. Introduction

The Montreal Shamrock Lacrosse Club (L.C.) was a Griffintown-based team that rose to prominence in the second half of the nineteenth century, as lacrosse emerged as Canada's "national sport."¹ Indeed, so prominent were the Shamrocks that the *Montreal Herald* in 1885 termed them the "most finished exponents of lacrosse ever seen," noting that they were "world-renowned."² Their fame stretched around the United States and as faraway as England. In 1880, H.R.H. Prince Leopold, the eighth and youngest of Queen Victoria's children, wrote the Shamrock L.C. asking that he be added to the club's membership rolls.³ Although owned by the élite of Montréal's Irish-Catholic

¹ For a concise summary of the rise of lacrosse as Canada's 'national sport', see Don Morrow and Kevin B. Wamsley, *Sport in Canada: A History* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 2005), pp. 91-104. "National sport" is in quotations because, despite the propagandistic efforts of Dr. George Beers, a Montréal dentist, lacrosse was not enshrined as a national sport in Canada until 1994. Beers was the first to codify the rules of the sport of lacrosse and, therefore, can be said to have had a major role in the transition of lacrosse from game to sport in the middle third of the nineteenth century. Beers claimed that the sport had been enshrined as the national sport as one of the first acts of the new Dominion's parliament in 1867. However, there is no mention of lacrosse in Hansard for 1867, nor is there any record of any such legislation in either official records, nor in the Montréal papers for that year. Morrow and Wamsley note that the 1894 *Dictionnaire Canadien-Français* states that lacrosse became the national sport for the pre-Confederation Province of Canada on 1 January 1859. There is no mention of lacrosse in either the *Journals of the Legislative Council of the Province of Canada* or *The Canadian Parliamentary Proceedings and Sessional Papers* for 1858. At any rate, Beers also claimed that he was the first to suggest that lacrosse become the Canadian national sport in 1859, which would have been quite impressive as he was all of eighteen years of age. Morrow and Wamsley conclude that any attempts in 1859 or 1867 to enshrine lacrosse as Canada's national sport must have been "a figment of Beers's fervent imagination." Morrow and Wamsley, *Sport in Canada*, p. 94. Lacrosse was finally enshrined as Canada's national summer sport, with hockey as the national winter sport, by an Act of Parliament on 12 May 1994. See, *National Sports of Canada Act*, Chapter N 16.7, (assented to 12 May 1994), *Statutes of Canada* 1994, c. 16, Department of Canadian Heritage's website, <http://www.patrimoinecanadien.gc.ca/pgm/sc/legsltn/n-16-eng.cfm> (accessed 24 June 2007). See, also, J. Thomas West, "Beers, William George," *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, on-line edition, <http://www.biographi.ca/EN/ShowBio.asp?Biold=40079&query=beers> (accessed 24 June 2007).

² *Montreal Herald*, 13 July 1885.

³ *Montreal Herald*, 17 June 1880; *The Gazette*, 24 June 1880; *The Gazette*, 12 June 1880; *The Gazette*, 20 June 1881; *Montreal Herald*, 4 July 1885; *Montreal Herald*, 6 July 1885; *Montreal Herald*, 8 July 1885; Alan Metcalfe, "Working-class Physical Recreation in Montreal, 1860-1895," *Working Papers on the Sociological Study of Sports and Leisure*, Vol. 1, No. 2 (1978), p. 14.

community, the club drew its players and fans from the Griff.⁴ And these fans took their lacrosse seriously; they were “the first real fans in Canadian sport,” as they passionately followed the Shamrocks’ success on the field, “living and dying with their team’s fortunes.”⁵ Their devotion to their team is made clearer by *The Gazette*’s 1869 description of them:

a surging, moving, yellow,⁶ screaming mass, with eyes staring from their heads, hands clapping with convulsive movement, some laughing one moment and the next with a face as long as your arm, some jumping and shrieking to this one to give it to some one, and others shouting at the same one to give it to somebody else, while others are pale as death, and stand biting their lips, almost helpless from the tension of their nerves.⁷

Indeed, one is reminded of football fans in England, both then and now, when reading this description. English football fans, like the Shamrocks’ fans in Montréal, were predominantly working-class, and began to emerge around the same time as their counterparts across the Atlantic Ocean.⁸ In addition to their fanatical behaviour at the

⁴ Barbara S. Pinto, “Ain’t Misbehavin’: The Montreal Shamrock Lacrosse Club Fans, 1868 to 1884,” (MA thesis, University of Western Ontario, 1990), p. 7.

⁵ Alan Metcalfe, *Canada Learns to Play: The Emergence of Organized Sport in Canada, 1807-1914* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1986), pp. 192-203; Don Morrow, “Lacrosse as the National Game,” *A Concise History of Sport in Canada*, ed. Don Morrow, et al. (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1989), pp. 54-6; Pinto, “Ain’t Misbehavin’”; Colin D. Howell, *Blood, Sweat, and Cheers: Sport and the Making of Modern Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002), pp. 37-9. Quote taken from Howell, p. 38.

⁶ The choice of this word is rather interesting, and it is unclear as to what *The Gazette* is referring to here, whether the pigment of the Shamrock fans’ skin, or if it is a criticism of their character. “Yellow,” of course, was a nineteenth century insult for cowardice. If it is the latter *The Gazette* meant, this makes for an interesting analysis, as the newspaper was calling out the Shamrock fans for essentially being cowards in calling for their players to “give it to” their opponents, in essence, standing behind another man while he does their bidding. This is hardly manly behaviour. As we shall see, the Anglo-Protestant newspapermen of Montréal were even more critical when the Shamrock fans actually interfered with play to take care of the opposing players themselves. At any rate, if *The Gazette* is indeed calling out the Shamrock fans here as cowards, it is doing so for a reason, beyond a simple assault on their manliness, as the Shamrock fans broke all rules of decorum and proper behaviour at a sporting match through their fierce partisanship. I will return to this theme below.

⁷ *The Gazette*, 4 October 1869.

⁸ See, for example, Tony Mason, *Association Football and English Society, 1863-1915* (Sussex, UK: Harvester Press, 1981); Eric Hobsbawm, “Mass Producing Traditions: Europe, 1870-1914,” *The Invention of Tradition*, ed. Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983): 263-308; Allen Guttman, *Sports Spectators* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986);

lacrosse grounds, Shamrock fans gambled profligately on their club, mostly at Griffintown's Tansey House Tavern,⁹ owned by St. Ann's Ward city councillor Bernard Tansey, a member of the club's executive and himself a former player.¹⁰

As Alan Metcalfe notes, it is easy to over-emphasise the working-class roots of the Shamrock Lacrosse Club, given its middle- and upper- class management and ownership.¹¹ Thus, it is important to make clear that this chapter is concerned with the Shamrock players and their fans. These Shamrock players, and to a lesser extent, their fans, have come under the gaze of historians on numerous occasions, and the club is perhaps the most studied early sporting club in Canada. However, aside from Barbara Pinto's 1990 MA thesis,¹² most historians have cast only a peripheral gaze upon the club, usually in discussing the growth of lacrosse as the national sport in the last third of the nineteenth century.

The Shamrocks are usually pointed to as an example of the infiltration of lacrosse by the working-classes of Montréal. There are two problems with such an analysis.

First, the Shamrocks may have been examples of a working-class infiltration of the sport,

Nicholas Fishwick, *English Football and Society, 1910-1950* (Manchester: University of Manchester Press, 1989).

⁹ *The Gazette*, 4 October 1869; Pinto, "Ain't Misbehavin'," pp. 101-03.

¹⁰ Despite owning and operating a profitable tavern in Griffintown, Tansey and his family had capitalised on their business acumen and moved to Little Dublin, a fashionable district of Montréal located in the shadows of St. Patrick's Church on Beaver Hall Hill. In addition to his involvement with the Shamrock L.C., Tansey was also instrumental in the formation of the Shamrock Amateur Athletic Association (S.A.A.A.) and the Shamrock Hockey Club (H.C.) in the 1880s and 90s. His son, Frank, was a star pointman on the Shamrock H.C.'s Stanley Cup-winning teams of 1899 and 1900. Bernard and Frank were both long-standing, powerful members of Montréal's St. Patrick's Society as well. Bernard was temporarily removed from Montréal City Council in 1885 owing to corruption, though he quickly regained his seat and his standing in the city. *Montreal Herald*, 30 September 1895; *Lovell's City Directory*, 1898 and 1899; Dorothy Suzanne Cross, "The Irish in Montreal, 1867 to 1896," (McGill University: Department of History, unpublished MA thesis, 1969), pp. 59-60; John Matthew Barlow, "'Scientific Aggression': Irishness, Manliness, Class, and Commercialisation in the Shamrock Hockey Club of Montréal, 1894-1901," *Coast to Coast: Hockey in Canada before the Second World War*, ed. John Chi-Kit Wong (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, forthcoming).

¹¹ Metcalfe, "Working-class Physical Recreation," p. 14.

¹² Pinto, "Ain't Misbehavin'."

but they remained the only such example in the late nineteenth century. Secondly, a focus solely on the working-class nature of the Shamrocks leads to a rather one-dimensional analysis of the club and its fans, as class becomes the single means of analysis, or worse, description of the Shamrocks.¹³ Even Pinto only examines the alleged misbehaviours (as defined by Montréal's Anglo-Protestant bourgeois press) of the Shamrocks' fans within this light; she argues that these behaviours were reflective of a working-class definition of behaviour that stood at odds with more bourgeois definitions of proper comportment.¹⁴ The class background of the Shamrock players and fans is obvious, as is the potential for discord with their more genteel opponents and their backers, as well as the Montréal Anglophone press.

Class should only be an entry point to a study of the Shamrock players and fans. In order to properly situate them, and to grasp the full importance of the club for them, they, and the sport of lacrosse itself, must be seen within a postcolonial light. This allows us to clearly engage with issues such as class, gender, modernity, respectability, and ethno-religious identities. We thus gain a deeper understanding of Griffintown residents, and how they used the lacrosse club to give themselves both a sense of pride and place in Griffintown and Montréal as a whole. Their Irishness was a Griffintown-centric one. In addition, the fans also brought with them a concept of leisure that differed greatly from that of the middle- and élite- classes of the city. Indeed, they anticipated the rise of commercialised leisure for the working classes in Montréal.

¹³ See, for example, Metcalfe, "Working-class Physical Recreation," pp. 12-15; Metcalfe, *Canada Learns to Play*, pp. 192-203; Morrow, "Lacrosse," pp. 54-6; Pinto, "Ain't Misbehavin'"; Howell, *Blood, Sweat, and Cheers*, pp. 37-9; Morrow and Wamsley, *Sport in Canada*, pp. 96-8, 100-01.

¹⁴ Pinto, "Ain't Misbehavin'," esp. ch. 3.

This chapter, then, examines the Shamrock players and fans from 1868 to 1885, the period during which the Shamrocks found a great deal of success on the field.¹⁵ This period¹⁶ is important because it was then that the Shamrocks were most clearly aligned with the working-class residents of Griffintown, both players and fans. By the late 1880s, the club became less entwined with the Griff, as the class backgrounds of the players became more diverse. Indeed, this can be tied to the slow decline of Griffintown after the 1880s, as well as to the emergence of what was, effectively, a star system for the players. The best players found favour with ownership and the Shamrock Amateur Athletic Association (A.A.A.), which, in turn, allowed them to escape the crowded tenements and squalor of Griffintown. Finally, the separation of the Shamrock L.C. from Griffintown can also be linked to the unruly behaviour of the club's fans.

In this chapter, I expand on historians' earlier interpretations of the Shamrocks to take into account the postcolonial and, within that rubric, the various constructed identities of the players and fans of the club. Both the Shamrock players and fans had their own agendas for their involvement with the club. In the case of the players, it was a vehicle towards respectability. During this period, the skilled working-classes in Canada sought respectability as a means of forcing their interests onto the agenda in terms of labour relations.¹⁷ In the case of the fans, their interests were simpler; the Shamrocks

¹⁵ Pinto makes the argument that this was *the* most successful period of the Shamrocks' history. See, Pinto, "Ain't Misbehavin'," p. 10. This, however, is open to debate, as the Shamrocks remained a force to be reckoned with in Canadian lacrosse, as well as internationally, into the twentieth century. They won the Mann Cup, awarded to Canada's national senior lacrosse champions, in 1902, 1903, 1904, 1905, and 1907. Indeed, the only other club to win the Mann Cup in its first seven years of existence were the Ottawa Capitals in 1901 and 1906.

¹⁶ This period is also significant, according to Don Morrow and Kevin Wamsley, because this was the period that saw the development of lacrosse as Canada's "national sport", as well as the growing commodification of the sport. Morrow and Wamsley, *Sport in Canada*, pp. 95-6.

¹⁷ See, Lynne Marks, *Revivals and Roller Rinks: Religion, Leisure, and Identity in Late Nineteenth-Century Small-Town Ontario* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996). See, also, Roy

offered them commercialised leisure, and a source of entertainment that diverted their attention from daily life.

The Shamrocks were founded in 1868 by a coterie of prominent Irish-Catholics in Montréal. The records of the Shamrock L.C., like those of the Shamrock A.A.A., have long since been lost (probably upon the destruction of the Shamrock Lacrosse grounds and clubhouse in 1904). The lack of records makes it difficult to know the motivations of this Irish-Catholic élite of Montréal in establishing the Shamrock L.C., as well as the Shamrock A.A.A. and the Shamrock Hockey Club (H.C.) in 1894. Nonetheless, the most powerful Irish-Catholic men in Montréal were behind the founding of the club. Aside from City Councillor Bernard Tansey, the Shamrock L.C. boasted the other St. Ann's Ward City Councillor, and future mayor, James "The People's Jimmy" McShane, and prominent Montréal lawyer, and future federal cabinet minister, Charles J. Doherty, amongst its management cadre.¹⁸ Other élite-level Montréal-based lacrosse clubs had similar management, most notably the Montreal L.C., which was affiliated with the legendary Montreal A.A.A., as sport became fashionable amongst the city's English-speaking bourgeoisies in the middle third of the nineteenth century. The Shamrock L.C.,

Rosenzweig, *Eight hours for what we will: Workers and leisure in an industrial city, 1870-1920* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983); Joy Parr, *The Gender of Breadwinners: Women, Men, and Change in Two Industrial Towns, 1880-1950* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990).

¹⁸ James "The People's Jimmy" McShane was St. Ann's Councillor from 1868-73, 1874-81, 1883-7, and served as Mayor of Montréal from 1891-3. He was also St. Ann's representative in the legislature in Québec from 1878-92, representing the Liberals, and served in Honoré Mercier's cabinet as Minister of Agriculture and of Public Works. He also represented Montréal Centre for the Liberal Party in Ottawa. Doherty served as Conservative Member of Parliament for St. Ann's from 1908-21, serving as Sir Robert Borden's Minister of Justice from 1911-21. He was also a member of the Canadian delegation at the Versailles Peace Conference. See Chapter 3 for more on Doherty. C.J. Doherty to J.C. Walsh, n.d., New York Public Library, Humanities and Social Sciences Research Library, Joseph Cyrillus Walsh Papers, Box 1, DOHERTY, Charles; Metcalfe, "Working-class Physical Recreation," pp. 14-15; Robert Comeau, "McShane, James," *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, on-line edition, <http://www.biographi.ca/EN/ShowBio.asp?BioId=41721&query=mcshane> (accessed 8 July 2007); "Doherty, The Hon. Charles Joseph, P.C.," PARLINFO, Parliamentary File, Parliament of Canada website, <http://www2.parl.gc.ca/parlinfo/Files/Parliamentarian.aspx?Item=1d093884-066e-4154-90c4-5125c80965b9&Language=E> (accessed 29 June 2007); Barlow, "'Scientific Aggression.'"

thus, was an attempt to preserve management's Irish identity, as well as to smooth the entry of bourgeois Irish-Catholics into the larger Anglophone Montréal bourgeoisies, and to preserve their space there.¹⁹

As for the Shamrock players and fans, they were, of course, from Griffintown. According to the *Montreal Star*, the fans were the "impecunious spectators from Griffintown."²⁰ There are other more tangible links between the Shamrock L.C. and Griffintown, however. The annual picnic of the club was, prior to the mid-1880s, used as an opportunity to raise money for the Griffintown community, usually one of the religious orders at work there. For example, on 19 June 1880, a grand picnic was held on the Shamrock grounds on rue Sainte-Catherine for all of Montréal's Irish-Catholic community. The event was organised by Brother Arnold, a Christian Brother from Griffintown, and the profits were to go to the Brothers in order to build a new residence in the Griff.²¹

The Shamrock players also had a close relationship with the Christian Brothers. The Brothers operated the boys' school in Griffintown and would have educated many, if not all, of the Shamrock players, to say nothing of their male fans, and their sons. Thus, it is not surprising to learn that when the Shamrocks travelled to Toronto to play there, they were billeted by the Christian Brothers in that city.²²

¹⁹ See, Barlow, "'Scientific Aggression.'"

²⁰ *Montreal Star*, 1 August 1870.

²¹ The Christian Brothers are an order of male religious approved by the Catholic Church, but they do not accept holy orders. The order was founded in Reims, France, in 1680 by Saint Jean-Baptiste de la Salle and was dedicated to the education of young males, especially the poor. The Christian Brothers expanded to Montréal in 1837. They are not to be confused with another, similar order of Irish monks, the Christian Brothers of Ireland. See, "The Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools" and "Christian Brothers of Ireland," in *The Catholic Encyclopaedia*, on-line edition, <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/08056a.htm> and <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/03710b.htm>, respectively, (accessed 30 June 2007).

²² *Montreal Star*, 24 May 1873.

In 1885, in an attempt to capitalise on their fame, the Shamrocks travelled to Boston to take on an all-star team, chosen from the best players in New England, in a match played on the Boston Commons on 4 July, “for a flag to be presented by the citizens of Boston.” The Shamrocks outclassed their opponents, winning easily 11-1. Upon their return to Montréal on 5 July, the flag was put on display in the window of Ronayne Bros., a general merchant firm on Chaboillez Square, a commercial area of Griffintown.²³ In short, then, there was very clearly a connection between the Shamrock players and fans and Griffintown.

II. The Postcolonial & the Other

Not only were the Shamrocks and their fans the only working-class groups in elite-level senior amateur lacrosse in Montréal (and Canada, for that matter) during this period, they were also one of only two teams not of Anglo-Protestant stock. The other was the Iroquois Indian Lacrosse Club²⁴ from the Kahnawà:ke Indian reserve,²⁵ located just outside of Montréal. But whereas the aboriginals were obviously beyond the pale in terms of their ethno-racial identity, members of a clearly defined “Other” group, the Irish-Catholic players and fans of the Shamrocks existed in a more ambivalent and ambiguous state. This was largely owing to the legacy of British colonialism in Ireland, and the baggage from that relationship exported to Canada.

²³ *Montreal Herald*, 4 July 1885; *Montreal Herald*, 6 July 1885; *Montreal Herald*, 8 July 1885. Quote taken from 4 July.

²⁴ The lacrosse club from Kahnawà:ke was known as the Iroquois Indian L.C., though the people of the reserve are Mohawk, and part of the larger Iroquois Confederacy. They are usually referred to as “Mohawks” or “Indians” in the sources. When referring to the club itself, I use the club’s proper name, otherwise, I refer to the Mohawks.

²⁵ Kahnawà:ke Mohawk Territory is an Indian reserve located ten kilometres southwest of Montréal on the south shore of the St. Lawrence River. The reserve was known as the Caughnawaga Indian reserve for much of its history, but the use of this name has been discontinued as it is an Anglicisation of the place’s Mohawk name, Kahnawà:ke.

During the 1870s and 80s, when the Shamrocks were wildly successful, the most heated rivalry for the Shamrocks was with the Montreal L.C.²⁶ By the late 1870s, the Montreal L.C. had fallen on hard times, as first the Iroquois L.C. and then the Toronto L.C., emerged as the Shamrocks' most serious challengers. Yet the Montréal derbies²⁷ continued to draw in excess of 10,000 fans to the grounds of the clubs on Saturday afternoons.²⁸ The intensity of the rivalry between the Shamrocks and Montreals is important. Indeed, Pinto makes note of this in an almost casual manner, in a throwaway sentence at the end of a paragraph in the midst of her class analysis: "In addition, the S[hamrock] L.C. versus M[ontreal] L.C. matches provided a contest which pitted English against Irish, Protestant against Catholic, and mechanic against clerk."²⁹

These sentiments were echoed in the press. The Anglo-Protestant press tended to note that the Shamrocks had a physical advantage over their opponents, which can be read as a comment on their working-class status, as they relied upon their strength and dexterity at work.³⁰ *The Gazette* referred to the lacrosse field as a "battleground," emphasising the tension between Irish and English, Protestant and Catholic, mechanic and clerk.³¹ It is in this light that we must view the games between the Shamrocks and Montreals, to say nothing of the Shamrocks' matches against the Toronto L.C., another

²⁶ In the late 1890s, when élite-level senior amateur hockey was emerging as spectacle in Montréal, the sport's supporters in the Montréal Anglophone press attempted to capitalise on the long-standing rivalry between the Shamrocks and Montreals in lacrosse to boost ticket sales for matches between the Shamrock and Montréal Hockey Clubs, the latter of which was also affiliated with the M.A.A.A. See, Barlow, "Scientific Aggression."

²⁷ A derby is a sporting match played between two local rivals, usually within the same city or county. The term itself is English in genesis, but was part of the sporting lexicon of Montréal and Canada in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

²⁸ *The Gazette*, 25 August 1879; *The Gazette*, 7 June 1880; Pinto, "Ain't Misbehavin'," p. 56.

²⁹ Pinto, "Ain't Misbehavin'," p. 56.

³⁰ *The Gazette*, 22 June 1868; *Montreal Star*, 9 October 1874.

³¹ *The Gazette*, 4 October 1869.

Anglo-Protestant bourgeois outfit. Indeed, Martin Kirwan, editor of *The True Witness and Catholic Chronicle*,³² was especially clear about this:

There is no use in denying the fact that those Lacrosse matches [between the Shamrocks and the Montreal L.C.] are regarded as contests between the different nationalities. The English people of Montreal are, for instance, half crazed because the Montreal club won one game of three³³ when playing against the Shamrocks on Saturday last. On the ground bitter, and almost fierce, expressions might be heard against the gallant boys who sport the triple leaf of “old Erins [sic] native Shamrock.” When the Montrealers took the first game the English people present at the match went nearly crazed. They became as excited as “wild Irishmen.”³⁴

Kirwan was an Irish nationalist, and his commentary here is clear; he was remarking about the legacy of English colonialism. These “English” became “crazed” and “as excited as ‘wild Irishmen.’” Kirwan is playing upon the stereotype often applied by the Anglo-Protestant press of Montréal, if not against the Shamrock players themselves, then towards their fans and Irish-Catholics in general in the nineteenth century. In essence, Kirwan was attempting to turn Irish stereotypes on their head here and to use them against the “English.”

For the “b’hoys”³⁵ who cheered on the Shamrocks, a victory “in a championship lacrosse match was the acme of sport.”³⁶ In other words, whilst the point of the sport for

³² Pinto makes use of the *True Witness and Catholic Chronicle* as an example of an Irish-Catholics press in Montréal throughout her entire period of study, 1868-1884. This, however, is a mistake, as the *True Witness* was not all that concerned with Irish affairs, in either Ireland or Montréal, prior to the appointment of Martin Kirwan as editor in January 1877. With his appointment, Kirwan instituted a radical change in editorial policy for the *True Witness*. Prior to this, the paper had been published and edited by Scots Catholics. Under Kirwan, however, the paper “devoted itself to Irish-Catholics interests.” Cross, “The Irish in Montreal,” pp. 225-30.

³³ In the nineteenth century, sporting terminology was somewhat different than that of the latter twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. For our purposes here, it is worth noting that a lacrosse match in the late nineteenth century was composed of several “games,” what we would refer to today as “goals.”

³⁴ *The True Witness and Catholic Chronicle*, 31 October 1877.

³⁵ “B’hoys” and “g’hal,” were slang terms based on Irish pronunciations of “boy” and “gal,” and were especially prominent in the North American cities of New York, Boston, and Montréal. It is interesting to note that the Glasgow Celtic Football Club in Scotland is still referred to as the “b’hoys” today. Celtic F.C. is generally regarded as the (Irish) Catholic football team in Glasgow. Celtic also has a

the middle class players and fans was the game itself, the Shamrock fans had different ideas. Victory for them meant everything; a loss was crushing. Given this passion, Shamrock victories (which were the most common outcome) were symbolic victories for these working-class players and, especially, their fans, over the very men, or at least the symbolic stand-ins for the men, who dominated their lives, in the factories, shops, and mills of Griffintown. Montréal's Anglo-Protestant élites had an inordinate amount of control over the political and economic machinations at the municipal, provincial, and federal levels; thus they had regulatory control over many aspects of the lives of the working-classes of Griffintown.³⁷ A victory for the Shamrock players and their fans was a strike for the working-classes, for the dominated over their dominators. In this way, then, lacrosse operated as Richard Gruneau has suggested for sport as a whole, as cultural text.³⁸ By this, Gruneau means that sport *is* culture, and it is therefore a manifestation of the society from which it emerges. More than this, sport, as cultural text, functions as a dialectic between culture and the actors in it; sport's meanings are both embedded in and act upon the culture from which it emerges.

large following throughout Ireland. Celtic make up one half of the "Old Firm" of Scottish football, along with Glasgow Rangers F.C., the Protestant team of the city.

³⁶ *Montreal Herald*, 13 July 1885.

³⁷ Bettina Bradbury recounts the various attempts by the élites of Montréal to outlaw the ownership of livestock by the working-classes of the city. This was just one of the many means by which these working-classes sought to skirt around this regulatory control of their lives by the bourgeoisies. See, Bettina Bradbury, *Working Families: Age, Gender, and Daily Survival in Industrializing Montreal* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1993), pp. 164-7.

³⁸ Richard Gruneau, *Class, Sport, and Social Development* (Windsor, ON: Human Kinetics, 1999 (1983)), pp. 44-7.

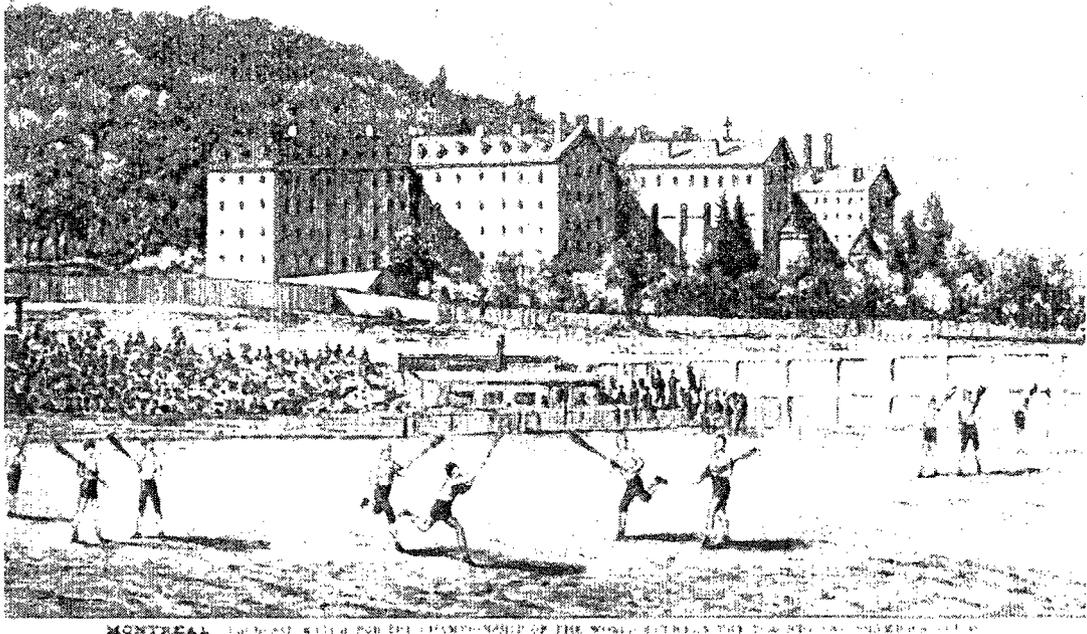


Figure 2.1: Shamrocks v. Toronto L.C. for world championship, 1879. Source: *Canadian Illustrated News*/Library and Archives Canada.

Therefore, in examining the relationship between the dominated and the dominators in the last third of the nineteenth century in Montréal, it is not a stretch to argue that there was a symbolic equation, though not equality, of a Shamrock victory over the Montreals as being akin to victories of colonised peoples over their colonisers in sport, such as Pakistan v. England in cricket, or the Maori v. England in rugby (or, for that matter, the Iroquois L.C. over the Montreals in lacrosse).³⁹ Lacrosse is recognised as a postcolonial sporting form by John Bale and Mike Cronin in their pioneering work on the subject. They compile a list of seven types of postcolonial sporting forms. Of particular interest here are: “2. Indigenous body-cultures [i.e.: sports] that were transformed into modern sports – *e.g. lacrosse*” and “3. Body-cultures that were

³⁹ See, Laura Fair, “Kickin’ It: Leisure, Politics, and Football in Colonial Zanzibar, 1900-1950s,” *Africa*, 67/2 (1997): 224-51.

‘invented’ by a former colony.”⁴⁰ Lacrosse, of course, was initially an aboriginal war game that was transformed into a modern sport, largely at the behest of Montréal dentist Dr. George Beers,⁴¹ in the middle decades of the nineteenth century.⁴²

Both sport and the postcolonial can be viewed as sites of resistance. Moreover, Homi K. Bhabha’s concept of hybridity is embedded in the emergence of organised sport in the Anglo-Atlantic world and its colonies in the mid-nineteenth century,⁴³ especially in the case of a sport such as lacrosse. The emergence of lacrosse can be equated with the emergence of Gaelic football in Ireland and Australian Rules football in that country, simultaneous processes all three. Roy Hay argues that Gaelic and Aussie Rules football are exactly those hybridised forms that Bhabha makes reference to, given their hybridisation of soccer forms with local contingencies and forms.⁴⁴ Similarly, lacrosse emerged out of a hybridised period and Beers, in particular, took his cue from cricket.

⁴⁰ John Bale and Mike Cronin, “Introduction: Sport and Postcolonialism,” *Sport and Postcolonialism*, ed. John Bale and Mike Cronin (New York: Berg, 2003). p. 4. Italics mine.

⁴¹ Beers was a member of the Montréal A.A.A. and its various member clubs, including the Montreal L.C., playing goal. He was also the goaltender in a lacrosse match played between a team of “gentlemen” from Montréal and a team of Mohawks before the Prince of Wales in Montréal in July 1860. Beers was also a path-breaking dentist in Montréal, and played a key role in the professionalisation and standardisation of that profession. Finally, he was amongst the founders of the Victoria Rifles Volunteers militia unit in the early 1860s, founded as a response to the Fenian raids. He retired from the military with the rank of captain in 1881. Morrow and Wamsley, *Sport in Canada*, pp. 91-9; West, “Beers,” *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, on-line edition.

⁴² While the Montreal Lacrosse Club was founded in 1856, the rules of the game were not codified by Beers until July 1867, when he had them published in *The Gazette*, two-and-a-half weeks after Confederation. The timing was not coincidental, as Beers was attempting to propagandise lacrosse and to establish it as Canada’s “national sport.” *The Gazette*, 17 July 1867; Morrow and Wamsley, *Sport in Canada*, pp. 91-3. See, also, fn. 1.

⁴³ Bale and Cronin, “Introduction,” pp. 7-8. See, also, Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1994).

⁴⁴ Roy Hay, “The Last Night of the Poms: Australia as a Postcolonial Sporting Society?” *Sport and Postcolonialism*, ed. Bale and Cronin, pp. 18-22, 25-6. Of course, those local contingencies differ greatly across Canada, Australia, on the one hand, and Ireland, on the other. Whereas Aussie Rules football and lacrosse emerged out of white European settler societies, Gaelic football emerged out of a colonised (albeit white European) society. As such, the cultural meanings attached to Gaelic football differed greatly from those attached to Aussie Rules and lacrosse (with the exception of the aboriginal players). Whereas the latter two were tied to nascent nationhood, the former was tied to colonial oppression and resistance. See, Patrick McDevitt, “Muscular Catholicism: Nationalism, Masculinity, and Gaelic Team Sports,” *Gender & History*, 9/2 (1997): 262-84.

He set up lacrosse as a Canadian sport in opposition to,⁴⁵ whilst at the same time taking part of, the British sport.⁴⁶

In this context, the postcolonial gaze is appealing in order to examine the Irish-Catholics of Montréal, and in particular here, the élite-level lacrossists⁴⁷ of Griffintown and their fans. The colonial relations of Ireland to Britain, of colonised to coloniser, were replicated in Canada for the Irish-Catholics, at least to some extent. This was especially true for the Irish-Catholic working-classes of Griffintown, operating under the legacy of both colonialism and capitalist exploitation. Moreover, this sense of distrust towards the British, owing to this legacy of colonialism, was transmitted and reinforced in Griffintown by the Irish immigrants there. The connection to Ireland was maintained by later generations, though, by the late nineteenth century, Ireland was largely an imaginary nation for the Griffintown Irish. Immigrants from the motherland were rare. This led to the development of a postcolonial, and diasporic, sense of Irishness. This distinct,

⁴⁵ Indeed, Beers wrote a good number of screeds against cricket during this time, praising lacrosse instead. See, in particular, George W. Beers, "A Rival to Cricket," *Chambers Journal*, 18 (6 December 1862): 366-8.

⁴⁶ Morrow and Wamsley, *Sport in Canada*, pp. 91-5. Interestingly, Anglo-Protestant bourgeois norms of behaviour at lacrosse matches were also borrowed from cricket. It is also worth pointing out that cricket remained a popular sport in Montréal during lacrosse's heyday, judging by the coverage of the sport in the Anglo-Protestant newspapers of the city, most notably the *Montreal Herald*. This, however, did not stop *The Herald* from criticising the staid nature of cricketers:

Cricketers do not, as a rule, crow over victory; nor do they, on the other hand, brood over defeat. Their game is, perhaps above all others, a good-humored one and affords few opportunities for unpleasantness. The hard hitter and heavy scorer who is dismissed for a "duck" harbours no thought of revenge against the lucky bowler who has taken his wicket or the lightning fielder whose snap-catch has sent him back to the pavilion minus the usual round of applause. It is the "fortune of war"; he resigns himself philosophically to his fate and is almost ready to cry, "Well played, sir!" to the man who causes his downfall.

Montreal Herald, 10 August 1885. Of course, it is interesting to note that *The Herald* lampoons cricket for its *politesse* in 1885, nearly two decades after the advent of the Shamrock L.C. and its fans, and the massive sea change they portended for the playing of sport and spectatorship in Montréal and, ultimately, in Canada.

⁴⁷ In the nineteenth century, sports writers in the Anglophone Montréal press did not refer to participants in a sport as "players." Rather, they were referred to through their sport, such as "lacrossists", or "hockeyist," and so on.

working-class, Griffintown-centric Irishness made the Irish-Catholics there different both from their non-Irish neighbours in the Griff, but also from both the Irish and non-Irish population of the rest of the city. Finally, in the case of the Shamrock players and fans, they were distinct from their opponents and their followers, owing to both class and ethnicity.

III. The Shamrocks' fans & class

There is no doubt something to the fact that the Shamrocks and their fans were both Irish-Catholic and working-class.⁴⁸ Indeed, in 1874, Morgan O'Connell, the Shamrocks' captain, responded to derogatory comments made about his club in no uncertain terms, "I hope this is not because we are only mechanics, and Irish-Catholics at that."⁴⁹ And while the fans and the players of the Shamrocks came from different castes within the working classes, similar concerns do not appear in the press about the fans of the Montreals, Mohawks, or Torontos. Their fans were not continually referred to as "loafers," "deadheads," "dirty," "ragged," "saucy," and "vulgar," amongst other things, in the Anglo-Protestant press, as was the case with the Shamrock fans.⁵⁰

The Anglo-Protestant press of Montréal was certainly disdainful of the Shamrock fans for their behaviour at the lacrosse grounds, to say nothing of their presence in the first place, given their working-class status. For the press, the Shamrock fans' class

⁴⁸ As Pinto and *The True Witness and Catholic Chronicle* both note, the Shamrocks were not the only club to draw working-class "friends", the Montreal L.C. also had a small share of working-class patrons, most likely from the Anglo-Protestant working-classes of the city. *The Evening Post*, 21 July 1879.

⁴⁹ As quoted in Metcalfe, "Working-class Physical Recreation," p. 14.

⁵⁰ *Montreal Star*, 19 September 1870; *The Gazette*, 19 September 1870; *The Gazette*, 9 July 1875; *The Gazette*, 23 September 1878.

status and behaviour were closely related. *The Star* makes itself clear in this account of a match in September 1870 between the Montreals and the Shamrocks, won by the latter:

If the Montreal Club had wished to have the field well filled with loafers and deadheads they could not have gone to a more ingenious device than the giving of badges at the gate as a means of admission, on payment of the 50 c.⁵¹

No sooner had those who purchased them, than they passed them through the cracks to their “chums” outside, who on presenting them at the gate were presently admitted, and so on, *ad infinitum*.⁵²

Five years later, *The Gazette* echoed these sentiments in coverage of another Montréal derby, again won by the Shamrocks:

The crowd behaved in its usual outrageous manner, at the conclusion of each game⁵³ rushing into the field and getting in the road in the most zealous manner; the unwashed who came in over the fence trampling on the toes of those who came in by the talismanic “quarter”⁵⁴ through the gate.⁵⁵

These kind of behaviours by the “unwashed” masses led to problems for the Montréal lacrosse clubs, as well as for the sport in general. In the mid-1870s, attendance at lacrosse matches in the city began to decline, even for the derbies. A Montreal/Shamrock derby in July 1875 drew a scant 2,000 fans, most of whom had some kind of connection to the clubs.⁵⁶ Montréal, opined *The Gazette* in 1878, “is becoming famous for her unruly crowds, and the fact is never more clearly noticeable than upon an

⁵¹ The price of admission was undoubtedly set this high for a reason: to discourage the Griffintowners from coming. Fifty cents was anywhere from about one-third to one-half of what an unskilled labourer could expect to earn daily in 1870. Cross, “The Irish in Montreal,” pp. 202-03.

⁵² *Montreal Star*, 19 September 1870.

⁵³ Or, upon the scoring of a goal.

⁵⁴ I.e.: those who paid the 25 c admission fee.

⁵⁵ *The Gazette*, 9 July 1875. See, also, *The Gazette*, 23 September 1878.

⁵⁶ *The Gazette*, 9 July 1875.

occasion such as that Saturday afternoon,” for a local derby.⁵⁷ The swarming of the field after a goal was, apparently, unique to Montréal.⁵⁸

Much of this consternation was, as Pinto notes, owing to the fact that Beers, through the Montreal L.C., had attempted to instil a sense of British bourgeois etiquette on the Montréal sporting landscape. A central component of this was playing the game-for-the-game’s-sake.⁵⁹ Within this rubric, then, the working-classes were not all that welcome. In the 1840s, horse racing had become popular in Montréal and Halifax, but the genteel proponents of the sport began to be crowded out by the “roughs” invading the track grounds. This led to a rather simple response: the tracks were removed to outlying areas.⁶⁰ In Montréal, the Blue Bonnets Race Track, now known as the Hippodrome de Montréal, was built in 1872 well outside of the Montréal city limits, in what is today Ville Saint-Laurent. This made it practically impossible for the working-classes to take part in horse racing.

As far as the bourgeois enthusiasts of lacrosse were concerned, the behaviour of the Shamrock fans was problematic. The Shamrock and Montreal grounds were fenced in for a reason; the clubs charged admission to the matches to not just cover costs, but to earn a profit. We have already seen *The Star* complaining about the “loafers and deadheads” sharing their admission badges with their “chums outside” in order to gain admission to a local derby in 1870.⁶¹ Indeed, the Shamrock fans were quite creative in their means of gaining access to the grounds, often by methods that were not entirely

⁵⁷ *The Gazette*, 23 September 1878.

⁵⁸ *The Gazette*, 28 October 1878.

⁵⁹ Pinto, “Ain’t Misbehavin’,” p. 53.

⁶⁰ P.L. Lindsay, “A History of Sport in Canada, 1807-1867,” (PhD dissertation, University of Alberta, 1969), pp. 208-09.

⁶¹ *Montreal Star*, 19 September 1870.

legal. Gaining admission through subterfuge was the most common means. This, however, is not all that surprising, given the cost of admission. In most cases, twenty-five cents was required to get into the match. This was enough to heat a house for three to four days in winter, and constituted anywhere from one-sixth to one-quarter of the daily income of an unskilled labourer.⁶² Thus, it was necessary for the Griffintowners to come up with more creative means of admission if they were going to watch their heroes play.

To this end, it was not uncommon to find Shamrock fans lining the top of the fences enclosing the grounds, to say nothing of nearby trees, flats, rooftops, or telegraph poles. They could also be found trying to peer through knotholes in the fences, though this was not always the best means to watch the match given the crowd inside the grounds. In 1870, *The Gazette* reported that “[t]here was also the usual complement of roughs on the outside, peering through the knotholes or seated on the fence, watching the players with one eye, and the mounted policemen with the other.”⁶³ The Shamrock fans, however, should have considered themselves lucky, as the police in Montréal only tended to chase them off; in Québec, a spectator was shot and killed by the police in 1874 when he refused to climb down from his position atop a fence at a lacrosse match.⁶⁴

Another means of avoiding the admission fee was simply to sneak into the grounds. This was a common tactic of the “outside committee.”⁶⁵ Thus, the Shamrock fans would dig under the fence, climb over it, or simply remove and re-attach planks of it to gain access to the grounds, to say nothing of passing the admission badges through the

⁶² Cross, “The Irish in Montreal,” pp. 202-03.

⁶³ *The Gazette*, 19 September 1870.

⁶⁴ *Montreal Star*, 19 July 1870; *The Gazette*, 9 August 1870; *The Gazette*, 19 September 1870; *Montreal Star*, 7 July 1874; *The Gazette*, 9 August 1880; Pinto, “Ain’t Misbehavin’,” pp. 80-2.

⁶⁵ *The Gazette*, 11 October 1876.

fence to their friends outside. In some instances, when finessing their way in would not do, they simply swarmed the grounds, quite often with the police looking on.⁶⁶

Once they gained admission, the Shamrock fans remained under the critical gaze of the Anglo-Protestant press for several reasons. One was the blatant partisanship of the Shamrock fans, which was not acceptable at a sporting match. Spectators were supposed to be neutral in applauding both teams.⁶⁷ Nonetheless, the Shamrock fans more often than not acknowledged the opposition at the end of the match.⁶⁸ As Pinto notes, however,

most often the S[hamrock] L.C. was the victor, so acknowledging a loser was not terribly difficult [for the Shamrock fans]. Winning was of utmost importance, hence the Shamrock fans were not gracious when defeat was theirs, nor did they desire to be.⁶⁹

Victory was the ultimate goal for not just the Shamrock players, but also for their fans. A Shamrock victory was a means of levelling the playing field for the Irish-Catholic fans of Griffintown, no matter how fleeting, temporary, or ultimately, practically useless, this victory may have been.

Interference with play on the field was also a problem. The Shamrock fans even invaded the pitch, to both help their heroes and disrupt the opposition. While Pinto suggests that they did so just to flaunt authority, in reality, they did so to confuse the Shamrocks' opponents during the course of the game, or else to congratulate their heroes upon scoring a goal.⁷⁰ Not surprisingly this was not viewed all that favourably by either

⁶⁶ *Montreal Star*, 25 May 1875; *The Gazette*, 9 July 1875; *The Gazette*, 11 October 1876.

⁶⁷ See, for example, *The Gazette*, 19 September 1870; *The Gazette*, 30 June 1871; *The Gazette*, 11 October 1876; *The Gazette*, 25 August 1879; *The Gazette*, 18 October 1881.

⁶⁸ See, for example, *Montreal Star*, 5 October 1869; *Montreal Star*, 9 October 1874; *The True Witness and Catholic Chronicle*, 25 July 1881; *Montreal Star*, 5 September 1881.

⁶⁹ Pinto, "Ain't Misbehavin'," p. 92.

⁷⁰ *Montreal Star*, 20 June 1870; *Montreal Star*, 20 September 1870; Pinto, "Ain't Misbehavin'," p. 92.

the Shamrocks' opponents or the press and, on at least one occasion, the ownership of the Shamrock L.C., which took action to deal with the problem. Whereas the Montreal L.C. merely had a rope around the playing field to separate it from the audience, the Shamrocks, upon realising that the rope, "which the gamins could laugh at and step over at their pleasure,"⁷¹ was useless, called out the police for assistance.⁷² Not that this helped, as the police were inclined to be spectators of the field invasions themselves, refusing to get involved owing to the fact that they were massively outnumbered. *The Gazette's* solution was simple: hire more police.⁷³

Field invasions remained a problem throughout the 1870s, leading *The Gazette* to complain in 1878 that

[w]e have witnessed baseball matches in Chicago, New York, Boston, and elsewhere, and lacrosse matches in Toronto, but have never seen a crowd swarm upon a field in the manner which is becoming customary here. The sooner this sort of thing is stopped, the better for athletic sports, and lacrosse especially.⁷⁴

In other words, according to *The Gazette*, if field invasions were a problem in elite-level senior amateur lacrosse, it was not solely the fault of the Shamrock fans. Indeed, in a match between the two Montréal clubs in July 1879, it was the Montreal fans who invaded the field, successfully holding up play.⁷⁵

The Evening Post was quick to point out that the Shamrock fans were not the only ones to swarm the field. In 1878, the newspaper noted that Toronto fans had recently taken "possession of the field and refused to leave it when it was understood that the

⁷¹ *The Gazette*, 28 October 1878.

⁷² *The Gazette*, 9 July 1875; Pinto, "Ain't Misbehavin'," p. 112.

⁷³ *Montreal Star*, 20 June 1870; *The Gazette*, 25 May 1875; Pinto, "Ain't Misbehavin'," p. 82.

⁷⁴ *The Gazette*, 28 October 1878.

⁷⁵ *The Gazette*, 21 July 1879.

referee had ordered the game to go on.”⁷⁶ *The True Witness*, for its part, noted in sarcasm that while field invasions on the part of the Shamrock fans were grounds for criticism, this was not the case when it came to the partisans of the other clubs.⁷⁷

Aside from the obvious reading of this commentary, speaking to stereotypes of Irishness, there is also a classed and gendered nature. To be manly in the late nineteenth century was to be in control of one’s emotions and to be rational in one’s behaviour. This idea of manly comportment tended to be tied up in not just ethno-religious identity (in the case of late nineteenth century Montréal, being Anglo-Protestant), but also class, as this was a bourgeois ideal of behaviour.⁷⁸ Thus, when the Shamrock fans misbehaved at the lacrosse grounds, invading the field and interfering with the play, Anglo-Protestant bourgeois commentators in the press felt that they had the right, and responsibility, to call out these fans. What is interesting, though, is that we also see that ethno-religious identities cut across class boundaries, at least in this example, within the Irish-Catholic community of Montréal. The bourgeois editors of both *The Post* and *The True Witness* sided with their working-class brethren, rather than with the Anglo-Protestant bourgeois press.

⁷⁶ *The Evening Post*, 29 October 1878.

⁷⁷ *The True Witness and Catholic Chronicle*, 31 October 1877.

⁷⁸ See, for example, David Roediger, *Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working-class* (New York: Verso, 1991); R. W. Connell, *Masculinities: Knowledge, power, and social change* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1995); Gail Bederman, *Manliness and Civilization: A Cultural History of Gender and Race in the United States, 1880-1917* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995); Noel Ignatiev, *How the Irish Became White* (New York: Routledge, 1995); Kirk Savage, *Standing Soldiers, Kneeling Slaves: Race, War, and Monument in Nineteenth Century America* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997); Nancy M. Forestall, “Bachelors, Boarding Houses, and Blind Pigs: Gender Construction in a Multi-Ethnic Mining Camp,” *A Nation of Immigrants: Workers, Women, and Communities in Canadian History, 1840s to 1960s*, ed. Franca Iacovetta, et al. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998): 251-89; John Matthew Barlow, “Fear and Loathing in Saint-Sylvestre: The Corrigan Murder Case, 1855-58,” (MA thesis, Simon Fraser University, 1998); Dana D. Nelson, *National Manhood: Capitalist Citizenship and the Imagined Fraternity of White Men* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1998); John F. Kasson, *Houdini, Tarzan, and the Perfect Man: The White Male Body and the Challenge of Modernity in America* (New York: Hill & Wang, 2001).

This gendered critique of the Shamrock fans by the Anglo-Protestant press, however, does not mean that the Shamrock fans were not manly (or womanly, in the case of the women who patronised lacrosse matches).⁷⁹ Pinto argues that when it comes to class, the criticisms of the Anglo-Protestant press of Montréal failed to take into account the fact that the working-class Irish-Catholics of Griffintown had their own ideas of proper comportment. Thus, these misbehaviours⁸⁰ reflected an alternate code of behaviour,⁸¹ reflecting working-class mores. In essence, these working-class men and women adhered to different gender ideals than did their bourgeois compatriots.⁸²

⁷⁹ Women did indeed attend lacrosse matches in Montréal, and it is apparent that there were women amongst the general crowd for Shamrock matches, in addition to the “ladies” in the grandstand. However, women only seem to have attracted the attention of the newspapermen at the matches when their behaviour was outrageous. Their presence alone was not worth more than a simple comment, other than editorialising about what constituted the proper environment at a lacrosse match for a lady. Thus, it is somewhat difficult to get a sense of the role of women in the crowd at Shamrock matches, unfortunately. See, *Montreal Star*, 20 June 1870; *Montreal Herald*, 20 June 1870; *The Gazette*, 20 June 1870; *The Gazette*, 20 September 1870; *The Gazette*, 5 July 1871; *The Gazette*, 9 October 1874; *The Gazette*, 23 September 1878; *The Evening Post*, 21 July 1879; *The Gazette*, 25 August 1879; *The Gazette*, 9 August 1880; *The Gazette*, 20 June 1881; *The Post*, 3 September 1881.

⁸⁰ Pinto identifies ten kinds of misbehaviours engaged in by the Shamrock fans: trespassing, vandalism, partisanship, verbal assault, alcohol abuse, gambling, play and player interference, field invasions, physical assault, and theft. See, Pinto, “Ain’t Misbehavin’,” ch. 4.

⁸¹ This, however, does not prevent Pinto from some ethnic stereotyping of her own vis-à-vis the Griffintown Shamrock fans: “Griffintowners were built of tensions, passions, triumphs, and defeats. *By nature*, Griffintowners were rowdy, flamboyant, spontaneous, and boisterous; *by nature* they had acted in this manner while at lacrosse matches.” Pinto, “Ain’t Misbehavin’,” p. 132, italics mine.

⁸² The Australian sociologist R.W. Connell argues that in each society there are competing masculinities and that patriarchy, whilst universal in its oppression of women, does not benefit all men at all times equally. Drawing upon Gramscian hegemony theory, Connell argues that there is such a thing as hegemonic masculinity, which is then used to marginalise other masculinities, usually along class lines. This can be extended, and made more subtle, in the case of femininities as well. If it is true that patriarchy is universal in that it oppresses all women at all times, there are varying degrees of control within that rubric, as clearly some groups of women have greater influence and control in society than others. As with masculinities, the case of hegemonic femininities is tied to class. It is essential, however, to remain mindful of the fact that all femininities, whether hegemonic or not, operate within the overall rubric of patriarchy. Not that this means that all women are subservient to all men, as Peter DeLottinville shows (albeit unconsciously, given his is an argument based on class) in his discussion of middle class reformers and Joe Beef in Montréal in the 1870s and 1880s. See, Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, trans. and ed. Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith (New York: International Publishers, 1971), p. 12; Peter DeLottinville, “Joe Beef of Montreal: Working-class Culture and the Tavern, 1869-1889,” *Labour/Le Travailleur*, 8-9 (1981-2): 9-40; T.J. Jackson Lears, “The Concept of Cultural Hegemony: Problems and Possibilities,” *American History* (1985), p. 568; Connell, *Masculinities*.

Nonetheless, these working-class masculinities and femininities were beyond the pale of their bourgeois compatriots, and marginalising such identities was very clear in media accounts of Shamrock matches. For example, according to *The Star*, a mêlée at the June 1870 derby match was begun when

Hinton [of the Montreals], tripped by some ragamuffin, fell against the fence, the men thought this extremely good, and yelled accordingly. Hinton, rendered rather wild by this and the injury received from his fall, struck a little widely for the ball and barked the shins of *a burly coward* who instantly struck down Hinton by a frightful blow with a stick on the head, just above his right ear.⁸³

Note the language used by *The Star* here. Aside from the sarcasm in recounting the cheers from the Shamrock fans when Hinton went down, his role in the mêlée is minimised. Hinton was “rendered rather wild” by the tumble he took when tripped, causing him to strike just “a little widely” for the ball, leading him to “bark the shins” of a Shamrock fan, “a burly coward.” This is a familiar rhetorical strategy. Hinton, tripped in the midst of play, is made entirely the victim; the fall left him wild and caused him to strike widely for the ball. In constructing the narrative in this manner, it was easy for *The Star* to label the Shamrock fan a coward. In striking back, however, the Shamrock fan was not acting in a cowardly manner, at least not according to his point-of-view. Rather, given that Hinton had hit him, the fan was entirely within his rights to protect himself from assault with a lacrosse stick.

Thus, seen in this light, the alleged misbehaviours of the Shamrock fans were more complicated. They were not simply tied to class, as Pinto argues,⁸⁴ but they were

⁸³ *Montreal Star*, 20 June 1870. Italics mine.

⁸⁴ Pinto, “Ain’t Misbehavin’,” ch. 3.

also fundamentally tied up with the gendered identities of the Shamrocks' "friends."⁸⁵ Moreover, these gendered and classed identities were used by the Shamrock fans themselves as a means of challenging hegemonic bourgeois ideals of behaviour at lacrosse matches. In this way, Saturday afternoon lacrosse matches in Montréal became contested spaces, symbolic of a larger struggle between the working-classes and bourgeoisies.

IV. The Commodification of Lacrosse

Don Morrow and Kevin Wamsley note that the period from 1868 to 1885 was pivotal to the growth of lacrosse in Canada, as it was then that the sport was institutionalised, with the creation of the National Lacrosse Association (NLA). Moreover, with the promotion of the sport as the "national game", the level of play improved, championship banners were donated by a wealthy Montréal businessman, William Claxton, and there was an increased focus on winning,⁸⁶ something anticipated by the Shamrock fans. This led to the commercialisation of the sport, and a growing recognition by the management of the lacrosse clubs that sport could be treated as a commodity, especially as the costs of operations skyrocketed.⁸⁷

⁸⁵ The Anglophone press of Montréal tended to refer to the "friends" of the various clubs; "fans" was not a term that appears in the press for this era.

⁸⁶ Morrow and Wamsley, *Sport in Canada*, pp. 95-6.

⁸⁷ There were increased costs of transportation, as clubs outside of Montréal began to compete, to say nothing of the costs involved in putting on a show at the games. Clubs had to pay for crowd control, and not just because of the Shamrock fans, as well to put on a spectacle for the fans. To this end, they hired bands, produced programmes, and also installed telegraph connections to encourage the press. Vendors also had to be hired to sell refreshments to the crowds on hot Montréal afternoons in the summer. Morrow and Wamsley, *Sport in Canada*, pp. 96-7. See, also, John Chi-Kit Wong, *Lords of the Rinks: The Emergence of the National Hockey League, 1875-1936* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005), chs. 2-4.

Though the players remained amateurs, by the 1880s, the clubs themselves were run by professional administrators, as experienced businessmen operated the clubs like businesses.⁸⁸ And this only furthered the development of lacrosse as Canada's first spectator sport. Indeed, Morrow and Wamsley note that this was a major success of senior-level amateur lacrosse, its spectator appeal: "Not only was it fast-paced, colourful, and easy to understand, but it was a rugged body-contact sport that led to disputes and rough or violent play."⁸⁹

As Paul Braganza notes in his history of baseball in Montréal, the press had a major impact upon the spread and commercialisation of that sport. He argues that "[i]f covering games and creating rivalries could increase interest, the newspaper would profit – and if this meant lying about attendance or creating an imagined excitement, so be it."⁹⁰ A similar process can certainly be seen in the coverage of lacrosse matches in the Montréal Anglophone press. *The Gazette*, *Montreal Star*, *Montreal Herald*, *The True Witness* and *Catholic Chronicle*, and *The Post* are all full of gushing descriptions of the play of the lacrossists. When it came to promoting matches, especially the Montréal derbies, it was not uncommon for the newspapermen to refer to such matches as being for "the championship of America," which in and of itself was strange, given that lacrosse was hyped as Canada's national sport. Other times, the Montreals and Shamrocks were called "the two best clubs in the Dominion."⁹¹

In the midst of this commercialisation, however, the Shamrocks had a problem: their fans. The Shamrock L.C. began to recognise that the behaviour of the fans, from the

⁸⁸ Morrow and Wamsley, *Sport in Canada*, p. 96.

⁸⁹ Morrow and Wamsley, *Sport in Canada*, pp. 96-7.

⁹⁰ Paul Braganza, "The Montréal First Nine: A Study of Nineteenth Century Baseball in Montréal," (MA thesis, Concordia University, 2005), p. 4.

⁹¹ *Montreal Star*, 22 June 1868; *The Gazette*, 4 August 1869; *Montreal Star*, 18 June 1870.

sneaking into the grounds to the field invasions, were damaging the club's bottom line. This was especially the case in the mid-1870s as lacrosse crowds temporarily dwindled. This led to the divorce of the Shamrocks from Griffintown.

By the mid-1880s, the lower orders of the working-classes were excluded from the official functions of the club, most notably the annual picnic, to "ensure an enjoyable trip to all who may take part."⁹² Whereas in the 1870s, *The Post* took the side of the fans when aspersions were cast upon them, by the 1880s, it took up the side of the Shamrocks' management, thus betraying the class cleavages within the Montréal Irish-Catholic community. The lower working-classes were excluded from the picnic first by limiting the number of tickets for official functions, and making sure they ended up in the right hands. Then admission to the Shamrock grounds was raised to \$1.00, equal to a full day's wage for the unskilled working-classes.⁹³ This separation of the Shamrocks from Griffintown culminated with the opening of the club's new grounds in 1892. Following the Blue Bonnets example, the Shamrocks' new ground was beyond the northern limits of the city, on the site of today's Marché Jean-Talon.⁹⁴ This made getting to the Shamrocks' matches close to impossible for the working classes from the Griff. The move backfired on the Shamrock L.C., however. The club soon came to realise that it depended upon the Griffintowners' patronage to make money. Thus, the club's management was forced to use its political connections to inveigh upon the Montreal

⁹² *Montreal Daily Post*, 19 July 1884.

⁹³ *Montreal Daily Post*, 19 July 1884.

⁹⁴ See, Metcalfe, "Working-class Physical Recreation," p. 15. Les marches publics de Montréal, "Abécédaire des marchés publics de Montréal: Amusez-vous donc à dérouler l'abécédaire de « a » jusqu'à « z »..." <http://www.marchespublics-mtl.com/>. (accessed 24 June 2007) Avenue Shamrock remains next to Marché Jean-Talon today, a remnant of the old lacrosse grounds and Shamrock AAA clubhouse once located there (see figure 2.2).

Streetcar Company to run a route from Griffintown to the Shamrock grounds on game days.

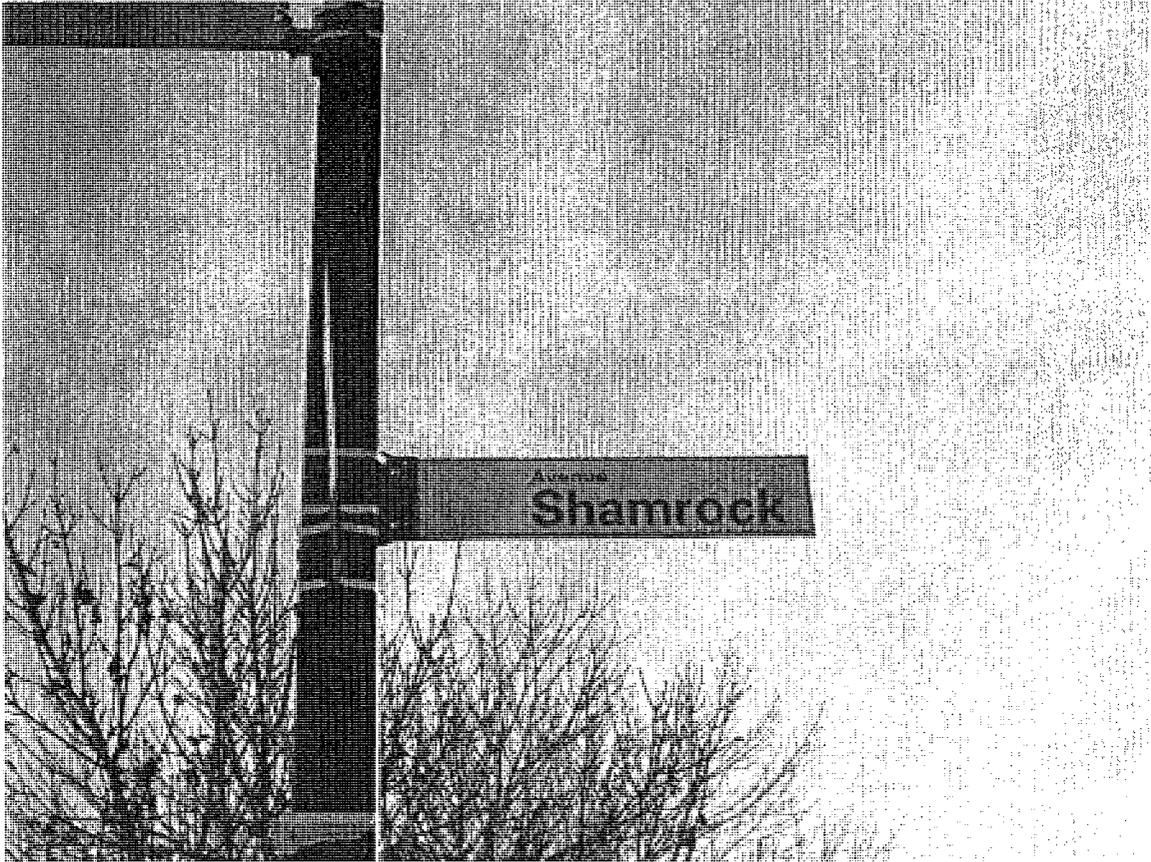


Figure 2.2: avenue Shamrock, across the street from Marché Jean-Talon, January 2009. Credit: Author.

The working-class Shamrock fans from Griffintown, then, were central to the commodification of élite-level senior amateur lacrosse in Montréal. Moreover, they anticipated the rise of commercialised leisure forms for the working-classes at the end of the nineteenth century. Finally, we can see exactly what Metcalfe meant in calling them the first real sports fans in Canada. The rise of spectator sports was intimately tied to commodification and commercialisation.⁹⁵

⁹⁵ Wong, *Lords of the Rinks*, pp. 17-20.

V. Shamrock fans & gambling

Gambling also became a contested behaviour surrounding Shamrock matches. Press commentary on gambling around Saturday afternoon lacrosse matches in Montréal is ambivalent at best. On the one hand, commentators did not appear to be all that concerned, irrespective of the class background of the gamblers. For example, in July 1869, the *Montreal Star* reported that in order to produce a “faithful and true description” of the activity surrounding a lacrosse match, it was impossible not to refer to the gambling.⁹⁶ A few months later, in its coverage of a Montreal/Shamrock derby, *The Gazette* reported that: “Both clubs had enthusiastic friends, who were confident to such an extent that they were willing, and in many cases did, back them to heavy amounts.”⁹⁷

By the late 1870s, however, ideas on gambling had shifted in the Anglo-Protestant press. For example, in reporting on a match between the Shamrocks and Toronto in July 1879, *The Star* complained that “[t]he advice of ‘betting men’ – those parasites upon athletic sports – should be thrown to the winds on all such occasions, and manly fair play substituted.”⁹⁸ The gendered meaning here is also clear: betting men were not manly, especially when compared to the strong, powerful lacrossists.⁹⁹ As “parasites,” the betting men made their living off of other men’s labours, even if it was sport, and this was dishonest. The fact that their behaviour was a reflection of speculative capitalism did not seem to matter.

If the press was ambivalent in its stance on gambling, this was not the case with the NLA. At its 1870 General Assembly, the league adopted a resolution banning

⁹⁶ *Montreal Star*, 31 July 1869.

⁹⁷ *The Gazette*, 4 October 1869.

⁹⁸ *Montreal Star*, 7 July 1879.

⁹⁹ Indeed, in July 1874, *The Star* had compared the body of the lacrossist with that of a Greco-Roman wrestler. *Montreal Star*, 9 October 1874.

gambling at lacrosse grounds. Henceforth, anyone caught engaging in gambling on the grounds would be ejected.¹⁰⁰ Clearly, this by-law was either not enforced or was unenforceable, nor is it entirely clear if it was of much use. Much of the betting around lacrosse matches was carried out off-site, in the taverns. In the case of the Shamrock fans, it was the Tansey House Tavern where gambling appears to have been the most common. The toothlessness of the NLA's by-law is perhaps most clearly seen in the fact that the Tansey House was owned by a member of the Shamrock L.C.'s executive.

Suzanne Morton notes that gambling was seen as a "vice" in the nineteenth century and that, while vices may have had criminal consequences, "they also have social, moral, spatial, and political dimensions." Moreover, she reminds us that gambling, as a vice, was gendered and "a predominantly male activity."¹⁰¹ Indeed, the fact that it was a masculine behaviour is exactly what allowed gambling to occupy this ambivalent space in modernised, late-nineteenth-century culture, both accepted and condemned. However, if gambling was, for the most part, accepted, it was also expected to take place according to the rational strictures of late nineteenth century manliness. As John C. Burnham argues, the ultimate problem with gambling in the nineteenth century was that it "undermined the [Protestant] work ethic and embodied the danger of addiction." Burnham also notes that, for many bourgeois men, gambling was inherently embedded in the capitalist economy, most notably in the stock market.¹⁰² This, however,

¹⁰⁰ Christine A. Burr, "The Process of the Evolution of Competitive Sport: A Study of Senior Lacrosse in Canada, 1844-1914," (MA thesis, University of Western Ontario, 1986), p. 85.

¹⁰¹ Suzanne Morton, *At Odds: Gambling and Canadians, 1919-1969* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2003), pp. 6-9.

¹⁰² John C. Burnham, *Bad Habits: Drinking, Smoking, Taking Drugs, Gambling, Sexual Misbehavior, and Swearing in American History* (New York: New York University Press, 1993), pp. 146-9. Quote taken from p. 146.

only applied to the middle- and élite- classes.¹⁰³ As Morton notes, “gambling was acceptable for élites that possessed both money and ‘self control’ but was dangerous for working-class Canadians.”¹⁰⁴

Nevertheless, gambling was part and parcel of working-class culture, and not just in Montréal, but across the Anglo-Atlantic world and its colonies.¹⁰⁵ The working-class Irish-Catholic Griffintowners who cheered on the Shamrocks were certainly no exception to this. Griffintown was home to a disproportionate number of taverns, and it was in these taverns that the majority of the gambling on the Shamrocks took place. In July 1881, upwards of \$15,000 changed hands at the Tansey House *alone* on a Montreal/Shamrock match.¹⁰⁶

The major problem with the working-classes gambling, in the eyes of the bourgeoisies, was not just that they did not have the disposable income to do so, but also the manner in which the Shamrock fans gambled. They did not engage in a scientific balancing of factors prior to a match in order to come to a dispassionate decision as to which side to back, they gambled on only one outcome: a Shamrock victory.¹⁰⁷ *The Gazette* commented upon this in relation to an 1877 Montréal derby, noting that

¹⁰³ See, also, Kevin B. Wamsley, “The Public Importance of Men and the Importance of Public Men: Sport and Masculinities in Nineteenth Century Canada,” *Sport and Gender in Canada*, ed. P. White and K. Young (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1999): 24-39.

¹⁰⁴ Morton, *At Odds*, pp. 12-13. Quote taken from p. 12.

¹⁰⁵ See, for example, Nicola Beisel, “Class, Culture, and Campaigns Against Vice in Three American Cities, 1872-1892,” *American Sociological Review*, 55/1 (1990): 44-62; Andrew Davis, “The Police and the People: Gambling in Salford, 1900-1939,” *The Historical Journal*, 34/1 (1991): 87-115; Kevin B. Wamsley, “State Formation and Institutionalized Racism: Gambling Laws in Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Century Canada,” *Sport History Review*, 29 (1998): 77-85.

¹⁰⁶ *The Gazette*, 4 October 1869; *Montreal Star*, 11 July 1881.

¹⁰⁷ This is not all that different than the African American heavyweight boxing champion Jack Johnson throughout his career from the 1890s to the 1910s. Johnson made a good bulk of his fortune betting on himself in his matches. Johnson, it should be noted, was from the working-classes of Galveston, Texas. See, Geoffrey C. Ward, *Unforgivable Blackness: The Rise and Fall of Jack Johnson* (New York: Vintage, 2006).

[t]he Shamrocks were supremely confident of success, and their friends and admirers backed them heavily to win, 3 to 5, 2 to 1, and odd cases of 5 to 1 having been laid on them. It is difficult to imagine where all this confidence came from, in view of the performance of the Montreal men with such a club as the Toronto champions, whom they defeated upon the Montreal grounds first by 3 to 2 games, and by 3 to 1 upon the Toronto grounds. Only one thing can account for such betting – the enthusiasm which marks the Shamrock sympathizers at all times; men backed their wishes rather than their opinions *formed upon sound judgement*.

The Gazette went on to crow that “[t]he result proved the truth of our surmises – that there was nothing in the calibre in either of the opposing teams to merit such odds.” The match was drawn at two when play was halted owing to darkness.¹⁰⁸

To have used “sound judgement” in determining which club to back, the Shamrock fans would have had to conform to the strictures of bourgeois manliness in late nineteenth century Montréal. That they did not do so shows us two things. The first is that there might have been more institutional space within the Catholic Church vis-à-vis gambling than was the case with the mainline Protestant churches. Suzanne Morton argues that mainstream Protestant emphasis on self-control and reason did not necessarily extend to the Catholic Church.

[T]he rigid institutional regulation associated with the Catholic church corresponded to political cultures less interested in criminalizing ‘sin.’ Within Catholicism there was theological and cultural space to recognize passion and to accept that loss of control was part of human nature.¹⁰⁹

This meant that, at least within French-speaking Québec, gambling was not met with the same approbation as in Anglo-Protestant circles.¹¹⁰ And while Morton frames this as a French Catholic/Anglo-Protestant debate, it is quite likely that Catholic institutional and

¹⁰⁸ *The Gazette*, 29 October 1877. Italics mine.

¹⁰⁹ Morton, *At Odds*, p. 9.

¹¹⁰ There certainly was less of a concern, both formal and informal, amongst the French-Canadian population of Montréal towards gambling, something which can especially be seen surrounding *barbotte* games. Morton, *At Odds*, pp. 9, 49, 84-6.

theological ideas concerning gambling and human nature translated across ethno-linguistic lines to the Irish-Catholics of Griffintown.

Secondly, we are witness to different concepts of money, leisure, gender, and gambling according to class. Wray Vamplew argues that betting appealed to the working-classes for the very reasons that it appeared to be disastrous to bourgeois reformers; it gave working-class men some degree of control over their financial destiny, so long as they won.¹¹¹ The problem with this explanation, at least for our purposes here, is that Vamplew argues that it was the skill used in choosing the winning side employed by the gambler that allowed him to gain this measure of control. With the Shamrock fans, it had nothing to do with skill or picking the winning side, it was simply blind allegiance to the Shamrocks. Yet, betting on the Shamrocks afforded Griffintowners to engage in a form of working-class 'self help,' especially if the Shamrocks won. In this way, the gambling Shamrock working-class fans found a means of combating the general insecurity of their daily lives, at least when they won.

Alan Metcalfe points to a different cultural meaning attached to money by the working-classes, which is reflective of a culture of instant gratification. Money is a means to an end, not the end itself, as in more sober middle class culture. In other words, "it was the process of gambling that was important and not the prize per se."¹¹² Leisure, for the working-classes, was a commodity to be purchased with whatever small amount of disposable income one had at hand. Indeed, the rise of commercial leisure forms, themselves tied to the rise of modernity, were catered towards the industrial working-

¹¹¹ Wray Vamplew, "Unsporting Behaviour: The Control of Football and Horse-Racing Crowds in England, 1875-1914," *Sports Violence*, ed. Jeffrey Goldstein (New York: Springer-Verlag, 1983), p. 22.

¹¹² Alan Metcalfe, "Leisure, Sport, and Working-Class Culture: Some Insights from Montreal and the North-East Coalfield of England," *Leisure, Sport, and Working-class Culture: Theory and History*, ed. Hart Cantelon and Robert Hollands (Toronto: Garamond Press, 1988), p. 69.

classes in both Canada and the United States.¹¹³ Finally, as Pinto notes, somewhat cynically, gambling “also often ensured financial benefits more quickly and more easily than working.”¹¹⁴ It was not simply that gambling was easier than working, it was also that it was both more fun and its potential payoff was certainly greater than a day’s (or even a week’s) work. Moreover, the winnings from gambling on the Shamrocks could be seen, in essence, as “free money,” akin to winning the lottery.

Middle class reformers often criticised working-class men and women for gambling away their (meagre) wages. This, however, misses the point. Bettina Bradbury has paid attention to the non-wage forms of economic survival engaged by the working-classes of nineteenth century Montréal. For the most part, Bradbury focuses on more quotidian means of survival, as well as the more feminised.¹¹⁵ Gambling was a masculinised means of economic survival, and one that was both more exhilarating and dangerous, if one lost one’s wage packet for the week on Saturday afternoon’s lacrosse match. As Vamplew notes, however, the working-class gambler did not expect to lose because his bet was based upon his skill and expertise in picking the right side (or horse) to win. With the Shamrock fans, it was not *their* skill that gave them the confidence; it was the skill of their team. Quite simply, they did not expect the Shamrocks to lose. And thus, as Pinto notes, “[i]n a society which was structured according to wealth, a

¹¹³ See, for example, John F. Kasson, *Amusing the Millions: Coney Island at the Turn of the Century* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1978); Kathy Peiss, *Cheap Amusements: Working Women and Leisure in Turn-of-the-Century New York* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1986); Michael Denning, *Mechanic Accents: Dime Novels and Working-class Culture in America* (New York: Verso, 1987); David Nasaw, *Going Out: The Rise and Fall of Public Amusements* (New York: Basic Books, 1993); Carolyn Strange, *Toronto’s Girl Problem: The Perils and Pleasures of the City* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995); Richard Ohmann, *Selling Culture: Magazines, Markets, and Class at the Turn of the Century* (New York: Verso, 1996); Marks, *Revivals and Roller Rinks*; Keith Walden, *Becoming Modern in Toronto: The Industrial Exhibition and the Shaping of a Late Victorian Culture* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997).

¹¹⁴ Pinto, “Ain’t Misbehavin’,” p. 103.

¹¹⁵ Bradbury, *Working Families*, ch. 5.

successful bet brought the Griffintowners prestige,”¹¹⁶ at least temporarily and at least within their community.

More than this, it was not just that the successful gambler was (temporarily) rich, it also meant that he was a winner. And this is one of the reasons why the working-class denizens of Griffintown backed their lacrosse club so passionately: the Shamrocks were winners. For a brief few hours on Saturday afternoons, these Griffintowners exchanged their money for either admission to the match, or for gambling winnings, that allowed them to forget, if only temporarily, their lot in life. In this way, then, gambling served much the same purpose as did drink for working-class men, as a diversionary tactic. And while the middle class reformers categorised such behaviours as “vice” and argued that vices needed to be eradicated, especially amongst the working-classes, the targets of their reforming impulses saw things differently.¹¹⁷

Moreover, both the Shamrocks and gambling served a greater purpose; gambling, and winning, allowed the working-class man to gain control of his life, even if temporarily. The working-classes of the late nineteenth century lived proscribed lives; they were carefully regulated by the bourgeoisies, the élites, and, in the case of the Irish-Catholics of Griffintown, the Catholic Church. By patronising the Shamrock matches, and asserting themselves on the lacrosse grounds, the Shamrock fans could essentially evade control and regulation, at least for those few hours. Meanwhile, collecting on a successful bet allowed for at least some measure of financial independence, however fleeting.

¹¹⁶ Pinto, “Ain’t Misbehavin’,” p. 103.

¹¹⁷ See, DeLottinville, “Joe Beef of Montreal.”

VI. Scientific play: The Shamrock players, class & gender

Colin Howell argues that bourgeois responses to the Shamrocks were class-based:

Middle-class commentators were inclined to exaggerate the rowdiness of working-class Irish-Catholics. Fearful that the diffusion of sport across the social spectrum would lead to a breakdown of the social order, middle class newspapers like the *Montreal Star* often commented on the crude language and raucous behaviour of the Shamrock supporters and their team's ungentlemanly play.¹¹⁸

There are several problems with this assertion, however. First, while it is true that the Montréal Anglophone press had a lot to say about the alleged misbehaviours of the Shamrock fans, criticism of the Shamrock players was not nearly as ubiquitous as Howell would have us believe. Criticisms of the Shamrock players tended to be veiled, and not necessarily concerned with ungentlemanly play. Most often, the Shamrocks were criticised for not playing as “scientifically” as did the Montréal or Toronto clubs. But when it came to excessively violent play, the Shamrocks did not come under any greater scrutiny than any of the other clubs.

Second, Howell misses the mark in terms of the diffusion of sport across the social spectrum. It was not the case that middle class commentators were fearful of a breakdown of the social order owing to the diffusion of the sport. Rather, the concern lay in the fact that sport did not turn out to be the means of social control that middle class reformers had hoped it would be. The working-classes used sport as a means of evading regulation and control by their social betters. Sport could be used in this subversive manner by the working-classes as a means of levelling the playing field. And even if this levelling was limited temporally, it came to be used as a platform by the Shamrock

¹¹⁸ Howell, *Blood, Sweat, and Cheers*, p. 38.

players, all skilled members of the working-classes, as a means of establishing their respectability.

The Shamrocks reached their apogee of success at a crucial time for the Canadian working-classes, as the 1870s and 80s were a time of change for working-class culture. Peter DeLottinville charts this evolution from the celebration of rough working-class culture, as demonstrated through the legendary Joe Beef's Canteen on the Griffintown waterfront, to a more institutionalised message of self-help and "elevation" for the working-classes, as demonstrated through vehicles of "respectability" such as the Knights of Labor and the Salvation Army.¹¹⁹ Respectability became the goal of the skilled working-classes. This meant projecting an image of industry, sobriety, rational behaviour, and, in many cases, religiosity.¹²⁰ The sporting field was also a vehicle towards respectability.

In Griffintown, both the Catholic and the various Protestant churches made attempts to reach out into their communities to preach their messages of moral reform for the working-classes.¹²¹ For the Irish-Catholics, St. Ann's Church was central. The St. Ann's Total Abstinence & Benefit Society was founded in 1868, the same year as the

¹¹⁹ DeLottinville, "Joe Beef of Montreal."

¹²⁰ See, Bryan D. Palmer, *Culture in Conflict: Skilled Workers and Industrial Capitalism in Hamilton, Ontario, 1867-1914* (Montréal: McGill-Queens University Press, 1979); Gregory S. Kealey, *Toronto Workers Respond to Industrial Capitalism, 1867-1892* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991 (1980)); Gregory S. Kealey and Bryan D. Palmer, *Dreaming of what might be: The Knights of Labor in Ontario, 1880-1900* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1982); Marks, *Revivals and Roller-Rinks*, esp. pp. 81-107.

¹²¹ The Protestant efforts in Griffintown were made somewhat surreal as, at the same time, the Protestant churches were pulling up their stakes and moving uptown, seeking wealthier parishioners. In their stead, these Protestant congregations left behind missions, such as the Nazareth Street Mission, to minister to the faithful and those in need of help. The Knights of Labor do not appear to have made all that much headway amongst the Irish-Catholics of Griffintown, probably simply owing to their Catholicism. Certainly the YMCA, another radical Protestant reformist group, tended to ignore Catholic neighbourhoods of Montréal. Indeed, it appears as though Catholic and Protestant religious leaders had at least an unofficial agreement to tend to their own flocks in Montréal. See, Trigger, "The Role of the Parish"; Rosalyn Trigger, "God's Mobile Mansions: Protestant Church Relocation and Extension in Montreal, 1850-1914," (PhD dissertation, McGill University, 2004).

Shamrocks. Indeed, the St. Ann's Total Abstinence & Benefit Society remained central to parish life in Griffintown for the rest of the nineteenth century and was integral to the temperance cause in Montréal in general. The parish also had a multitude of societies, groups, and organisations through which the pious young man could educate and elevate himself towards respectability.¹²² In addition to the Catholic Church, the athletically-inclined members of the skilled working-classes also had access to the Shamrocks L.C. as a vehicle towards respectability.

As T.W. Acheson notes, the rise of the idea of respectability must be viewed within the “ideological world-view provided by evangelicalism. And that world-view was one that redefined the very notion of respectability – replacing status, position, or class with attitude and behaviour.”¹²³ “Respectability” was a largely middle class concept borrowed by the skilled working-classes as a means for advancing their interests, most of which were tied to labour relations. Moreover, middle class respectability was identified with more than just sobriety and industriousness, but also with a particular brand of manliness and behaviour. Thus, when the skilled working-classes borrowed the concept of respectability for their own purposes, there was a fundamental shift in notions of skilled working-class manliness and identity. They became more congruent with bourgeois notions, and less defined by their physical strength and toughness. And in so doing, they left behind the un- and semi- skilled working-classes, whose ideals and notions of manliness remained rooted in “rough” culture. Indeed, we see this exact

¹²² Special Meeting, Montreal St. Patrick's Total Abstinence Society, 23 January 1891, Concordia University Archives (CUA), P.109: St. Patrick's Total Abstinence & Benevolent Society fonds, Proceedings of the Montreal St. Patrick's Total Abstinence Society, 1883-1886; Annual Report of the St. Patrick's Total Abstinence Society, 6 December 1898, CUA, P.109: St. Patrick's Total Abstinence and Benevolent Society fonds, Proceedings of the Montreal St. Patrick's Total Abstinence Society, 1896-1900;

¹²³ T.W. Acheson, *Saint John: The Making of a Colonial Urban Community* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1985), p. 159.

process at work vis-à-vis the Shamrock players and fans. Both followed different codes of manly behaviour and comportment. That the Anglo-Protestant press of Montréal did not call out the Shamrocks for ungentlemanly play speaks to their success, as skilled working-class men, at integrating into bourgeois notions of proper manliness and comportment on the playing field. On the other hand, the Shamrocks were continually reminded that their claim to respectability was tenuous. Montréal's Anglo-Protestant press was not as willing to admit that the Shamrocks could play the sport in a dispassionate, scientific manner.

If, as Acheson suggests, evangelicalism was central to the concept of respectability, we must take two things into account when it comes to Catholicism. First, respectability was simply grafted onto Catholicism, a religion that was not particularly evangelical in nineteenth century Canada. In the wake of the Fenian Crisis of the 1860s¹²⁴ within the Irish-Catholic community of Montréal, the Catholic Church re-asserted itself and attempted to regain control of its flock. While the Church had varying degrees of success, it was successful in entering the lives of its parishioners.¹²⁵ This was especially the case in St. Ann's Parish, as we shall see in subsequent chapters.

Second, we must expand Acheson's concept here to consider muscular Christianity. This was an idea imported from England, where it was developed in the

¹²⁴ The Fenians were an Irish nationalist group in the mid-nineteenth century, with a large North American following, based primarily in New York, though Montréal was also a hotbed of Fenian activity. Amongst their plans was an invasion of Canada in order to hold it hostage in return for Ireland's independence from Britain. This led to an abortive raid on Canada in June 1866. Battles were fought in Ontario and New Brunswick, as well as along the Québec/Vermont border. In addition to the failed invasions, the Fenians in Montréal, with a strong Griffintown presence, endeavoured to take over the city's St. Patrick's Society, and engaged in open, public hostilities with Thomas D'Arcy McGee, the Conservative Member of Parliament for St. Ann's, and Father of Confederation. Indeed, according to David Wilson, it was this battle between McGee and the Fenians within the Irish-Catholic community of Montréal that led to McGee's assassination on 7 April 1868 in Ottawa. See, David A. Wilson, "The Fenians in Montreal: Invasion, Intrigue, and Assassination," *Eire/Ireland*, 38/3-4 (2003).

¹²⁵ Trigger, "The Role of the Parish."

1850s and 60s in the hopes of energising the Church of England and, thus, the British Empire as a whole. In Canada, muscular Christianity was adopted for local contingencies, which included the construction of a new nation and nationality in the Confederation decade. There the concept was centred around basic middle class Christian principles such as physical courage, self-reliance, self-restraint, and a love of sport. Indeed, these very principles came to be built into the mores of the bourgeoisies who promoted lacrosse competitively in Montréal. George Beers' proselytising role in the spread of lacrosse was intimately tied up in notions of muscular Christianity.¹²⁶

Patrick McDevitt has argued that in Ireland, the Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA) seized upon the notion of muscular Christianity and imbued it with a strong sense of Catholicism, tying it to Irish national identity and, thus, to the emancipatory (and hybridised) politics of the GAA.¹²⁷ In the case of the Shamrocks in Montréal, something similar occurred within the Irish-Catholic community there. The Shamrock players, with their close ties to St. Ann's parish,¹²⁸ engaged in this muscular Catholicism, and used it as a vehicle towards manly respectability in Montréal.

The Shamrock players, then, sought respectability when they put on their uniforms and stepped onto the lacrosse field on Saturday afternoons. Yet, at the same time, they also challenged middle class notions of respectability and its unattainability on the part of the working-classes. The lacrosse field, just like the workplace and other locations, became a site of struggle for the working-class Irish-Catholics playing for the

¹²⁶ Clifford Putney, *Muscular Christianity: Manhood and Sports in Protestant America, 1880-1920* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001), pp. 1-10; Morrow and Wamsley, *Sport in Canada*, pp. 180-1; West, "Beers, William George," *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, on-line edition.

¹²⁷ McDevitt, "Muscular Catholicism."

¹²⁸ See, for example, *Montreal Star*, 26 May 1880; *Montreal Star*, 16 June 1880; *The Gazette*, 21 June 1880; *Montreal Herald*, 24 May 1883.

Shamrocks. The response of the Anglo-Protestant press was fundamentally ambivalent. The bourgeois commentators were not quite as willing as the Shamrocks' opponents to accommodate them. This being said, the press was quite careful to separate the Shamrock players from their fans in this commentary. Thus, while the fans may have engaged in disreputable behaviour, in the eyes of the newspaper men, the Shamrock players were never condemned alongside, or because of, their fans. In several instances the press went out of its way to support the Shamrocks, especially *The Star*, the newspaper Colin Howell calls out for its unfair treatment of the Shamrocks.¹²⁹

This does not mean, however, that the Shamrock players were accepted on an equal footing with their more genteel opponents; their claims to respectability were on shakier ground. This is particularly true when it comes to the discourse surrounding “scientific” play. The trope of “scientific” play was connected with the rise of industrial capitalism in Montréal in the latter nineteenth century, a period when massive industrial concerns began to dot the city’s landscape, including Griffintown. “Scientific” management principles were applied to the business world,¹³⁰ which led to the concomitant emergence of new configurations of bourgeois masculinity, which took into account the sedentary existence of the middle class manager at his job. He relied on his mind, rather than his body at work. In the case of sport, this led to the rise of the idea of “scientific” play. With lacrosse, scientific play suggested that it should be a sport of skill and grace, and, ultimately, teamwork, rather than one of individual play and excessive

¹²⁹ See, Howell, *Blood, Sweat, and Cheers*, p. 38. As for *The Star*'s support for the Shamrocks, see, for example, *Montreal Star*, 31 July 1869; *Montreal Star*, 9 August 1869; *Montreal Star*, 20 September 1870; *Montreal Star*, 7 July 1879; *Montreal Star*, 10 August 1879.

¹³⁰ Parr, *The Gender of Breadwinners*, pp. 140-64; Robert Lewis, *Manufacturing Montreal: The Making of an Industrial Landscape, 1850 to 1930* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), pp. 78-99.

violence. A lacrossist should use his mind to remain rational. Indeed, this discourse of scientific play surrounding lacrosse in the latter half of the nineteenth century can be tied to the rise of modernity, expressed through the rise of consumer culture and industrial capitalism.

That the Anglo-Protestant press of Montréal only begrudgingly admitted that the Shamrocks were capable of scientific play, and that it would never accord such respect to the Iroquois L.C., speaks volumes. In the case of the Mohawks, their inability to play scientifically was tied up with notions of the “wild” or “noble savage.” In the case of the Shamrocks, it came down to class; rather than praising their scientific skill, the Anglo-Protestant press oftentimes commented on the physical size of the Shamrock players, their physical fitness, or lack thereof.



Figure 2.3: Montréal Shamrock L.C., World Champions, 1871. Credit: *Canadian Illustrated News*/Library and Archives Canada.

For example, after the Shamrocks lost to the Montreals in 1868, *The Gazette* pointed out that whilst the Shamrocks looked strong and confident on the field, they lacked the “ability for self-abnegation” which was necessary for strong team play. Similarly, in 1876, *The Gazette* suggested that the Shamrocks lacked the team play and discipline necessary to win the championship. Finally, after a 3-2 victory over the Montreals in July 1879, *The Gazette* pointed out that the Shamrocks, whilst individually “well-versed in the science” of the game, lacked the “scientific play and energy” of their opponents. Moreover, the Shamrocks just did not look physically fit on the field.¹³¹

Commentary such as this was very much tied up with familiar tropes surrounding colonialism and the “wild Irishman,”¹³² as well as with the general liberal bourgeois idea that the problem with the working-classes was that they lacked discipline. Thus, at least in the eyes of the Anglo-Protestant bourgeois press, the Shamrocks lacked the discipline, self-abnegation, and scientific play necessary for team success. In pointing this out, the Anglo-Protestant press of Montréal was reminding the Shamrock players of just how tenuous their grasp on respectability was.

Yet if the press was reticent about praising the Shamrocks for their scientific play, examples of accusations of dirty or unfair play on their part in the press were rare, especially in Montréal derbies. Indeed, the most violent matches tended to be between either of the Montréal clubs and the Iroquois L.C. The Shamrocks and the Mohawks faced off twice in July 1871. The first match took place on Dominion Day and *The Star* reported that

¹³¹ *The Gazette*, 22 June 1868; *The Gazette*, 11 October 1876; *The Gazette*, 21 July 1879. Quotes taken from 22 June 1868 and 21 July 1879.

¹³² *The True Witness and Catholic Chronicle*, 31 October 1877.

[i]t was soon noticeable that rough play was to be the rule. In a few instances, we noticed that the lacrosses¹³³ were used *a la* shillelagh... The odium of this conduct is attributable by the Shamrocks to the roughness and violence of their opponents, but to an observer unbiased by any feeling of partisanship, it seemed as if neither side were wholly free from blame.¹³⁴

The description of the lacrosse sticks being used as shillelaghs is of note, given the ethnic background of the Shamrocks, to say nothing of the stereotypes of Irish violence, themselves a legacy of colonialism, brought across the Atlantic.¹³⁵ *The Star* was drawing upon this trope of Irish violence to describe a match involving an Irish Canadian club. However, when it came to explaining the reasons for the violent play, the newspaper accepted the Shamrocks' version of events, which is not surprising given the colour of the skin of the Mohawks. *The Star* was nonetheless careful to remind the Shamrocks of their tenuous grip on gentlemanly, and therefore, respectable status. The Shamrocks' version of events did carry the day, as in the return match three weeks later, two of the Mohawk players, including their best player, Keraronwé, were banned from

¹³³ In the nineteenth century, the lacrosse stick was referred to simply as the "lacrosse" or "la crosse."

¹³⁴ *Montreal Star*, 3 July 1871. Italics in original.

¹³⁵ See, amongst others, H. Clare Pentland, "The Lachine Canal Strike of 1843," *Canadian Historical Review*, Vol. 29, No. 3 (1948): 255-77; Michael S. Cross, "The Shiners' War: Social Violence in the Ottawa Valley in the 1830s," *Canadian Historical Review*, Vol. 54, No. 1 (1973): 1-26; Ronald Hyam, *Britain's Imperial Century, 1850-1914: A study of empire and expansion* (London: Batsford, 1976); H. Clare Pentland, *Labour and Capital in Canada, 1650-1850*, ed. Paul Phillips (Toronto: James Lorimer & Co., 1980); Acheson, *Saint John*; Dale T. Knobel, *Paddy and the Republic: Ethnicity and Nationality in Antebellum America* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1986); J.K. Johnson, *Becoming Prominent: Regional Leadership in Upper Canada, 1791-1841* (Montréal: McGill-Queens University Press, 1989); Scott W. See, *Riots in New Brunswick: Orange Nativism and Social Violence in the 1840s* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994); Barlow, "Fear and Loathing in Saint-Sylvestre"; David O'Hara, "'From Ireland is Everyday Expected Some Remarkable Thing': News, Propaganda, and the Irish Rebellion of 1641," *Proceedings of the Seventh Annual History in the Making Conference Held at Concordia University, Montréal, 17 March 2001*, ed. J.M. Barlow, et al. (Montréal: Concordia University, 2002).

playing. The Shamrocks had insisted upon this, arguing that they were “too rough in their play.”¹³⁶

In August 1879, the two clubs met up again. This time, however,

[t]he play of Saturday was very good, not so neat and scientific as the Montreal-Shamrock match, but more an exhibition of strength. The Indians in the first and second games played very roughly, and in the following two the Shamrocks followed suit. The falls were numerous and severe, and there was a good deal of “body-checking;” while more than one deliberate foul was made by the Indians. The Shamrocks, however, *retained their good humor, and with but one exception made no complaint.* If the patronage and presence of ladies is to be retained, however, players must act as gentlemen, and not go so far as to forget themselves as to throw down their lacrosses and resort to “fisticuffs” because an opponent displays superior strength. Even if the Indian broke lacrosse rules and played roughly, that was no excuse for an exhibition of “rowdyism.”¹³⁷

Here, *The Gazette* engaged in notions of sportsmanship and the gentlemanly ideal. The Shamrocks were declared as victors in this sense (they won in the practical sense, too, 3-1), withstanding the violent play of the Mohawks with good humour and not engaging in violent play in response.

Nonetheless, the match was an “exhibition of strength,” despite the Shamrocks’ easy victory. Both teams were beyond the pale of scientific play. Here, *The Gazette* was drawing upon different tropes, at least when it came to the Shamrock players. Rather than noting their inherent violent tendencies, as *The Star* seemed to be doing in the 1871 example above, *The Gazette* engaged in a class-based commentary, as the Shamrock players, men who worked with their bodies rather than their minds, were bigger men.¹³⁸ Against the Mohawks, the advantage their strength gave them came to the fore in a way it did not necessarily against the Montreals or Torontos. The Mohawks, by their very

¹³⁶ *Montreal Star*, 24 July 1871.

¹³⁷ *The Gazette*, 25 August 1879. Italics mine.

¹³⁸ *The Gazette*, 25 August 1879. See, also, *The Gazette*, 22 June 1868; *Montreal Herald*, 21 July 1879.

aboriginality, could not engage with the Shamrocks on a scientific level.¹³⁹ They could only try to meet the strength of the big Shamrock men with their own strength and speed.

It was not simply that the Montreal L.C. was beyond reproach. Indeed, when the Mohawks travelled to the Montreals' grounds on rue Sherbrooke for a match on Saturday, 4 May 1886,

[s]ome two or three minutes after the [fourth] game was started McNaughton [of the Montreals] was seen to fall as if tripped by one of the Indians. Then one of the Montrealers was seen to strike an Indian with his stick; then an Indian was seen kicking a Montrealer, and in less time than it takes to write it a pitched encounter between members of both teams ensued. Friends of the sides interfered¹⁴⁰ and for a few minutes sticks were flying around somewhat like shillelaghs at an Irish fair.¹⁴¹

The Herald could not resist making light of the violence in this match by drawing on those familiar tropes of Irish violence, as if, for a moment anyway, both the Anglo-Protestant Montreals and the Mohawks forgot their civility and devolved into Irishmen. This also speaks to the ambivalent, and precarious, place of the Irish-Catholic working-classes in the construction of civility and respectability in late nineteenth century Montréal.

The entire discourse surrounding excessively violent play must obviously be considered within the light of masculinity, and more particularly, codes of manliness that dominated in the nineteenth century. Gail Bederman makes a useful distinction between “masculinity” and “manliness.” She argues that “masculinity” was not a term in common usage prior to about 1890; instead, it was “manliness” that men possessed. This is not to say, however, that the two terms are interchangeable. Manliness, unlike masculinity,

¹³⁹ Indeed, Beers argued that the aboriginal played “mainly by instinct . . . but the Indian never can play as scientifically as the best white players.” As quoted in West, “Beers, George William,” *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, on-line edition.

¹⁴⁰ Note here the lack of commentary on a field invasion by partisans of the Montreal L.C.

¹⁴¹ *Montreal Herald*, 16 May 1886.

carried with it a moral dimension: to be manly in the case of lacrosse was to follow a code which encompassed all that Victorians, on both sides of the Atlantic, admired in men. Masculinity, on the other hand, described the male role, was not limited to an ideal, and was used “to refer to any characteristics, good and bad, that all men had.”¹⁴² In other words, to be manly was to be in control of one’s emotions, to play dispassionately, and to play, in essence, for the sake of playing. The lacrossist was to be a gentleman on the field of play, despite the inherent violence of the sport. What was preferable, at least for bourgeois commentators was what happened around a match between the Shamrocks and Toronto L.C. on Labour Day weekend, 1881.¹⁴³ Following the match, won 3-0 by the Shamrocks,

[a]n adjournment was then made to the Windsor Hotel,¹⁴⁴ where both teams were entertained at luncheon by the President of the Shamrock Club, Mr. James McShane, M.P.P.¹⁴⁵ Several speeches were delivered by members of both teams, in which sentiments of good feeling between the two clubs were expressed. After three rousing cheers had been given for the Toronto men, the national anthem was sung and the party broke up. The Toronto team and their friends left for home by Saturday night’s express, being “sent off” by a large crowd, who cheered themselves hoarse as the train steamed out of the station.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴² Bederman, *Manliness and Civilization*, pp. 17-19, quote taken from p. 18. See, also, E. Anthony Rotundo, *American Manhood: Transformations in Masculinity from the Revolution to the Modern Era* (New York: Basic Books, 1993), pp. 10-30.

¹⁴³ It is perhaps fitting that a championship lacrosse match between the Shamrocks and Toronto be played on Labour Day weekend, given that the holiday was created to celebrate the achievements of the organised labour movement in the late nineteenth century. While Labour Day was celebrated as far back as the late 1870s, it was not actually made a national statutory holiday until 1894. See Steven Penfield and Craig Heron, *The Worker’s Festival: A History of Labour Day in Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005).

¹⁴⁴ The Windsor Hotel, on Dominion Square in downtown Montréal, was once the crown jewel of hotels in the city. It was opened in 1878 and closed in 1981 following a fire which destroyed a large part of it. Today, the remaining portion of the building has been renovated as an office building complex, known as “Le Windsor.” Jean-Claude Marsan, *Montreal in Evolution: Historical Analysis of the Development of Montreal’s Architecture and Urban Environment* (Montréal: McGill-Queens University Press, 1990 (1974)), pp. 296-7.

¹⁴⁵ See fn. 18, above, for a brief biography of McShane, a prominent Griffintown politician.

¹⁴⁶ *Montreal Star*, 5 September 1881.

Certainly, this was a welcome change from the aftermath of a match between the two clubs two years earlier, when a Toronto player was injured and had to come off. The Torontos did not have any spare players, yet the Shamrocks refused to take one of their own off, resulting in the undermanned Toronto club losing 3-0 in short order. Whilst the Shamrocks, as *The Star* pointed out, were entirely within their rights according to the rules of the sport, the captain of the Torontos, John Massey, was furious with the Shamrocks and their “want of manliness” in refusing to take a man off.¹⁴⁷ The Toronto L.C.’s 1881 visit to Montréal was more in keeping with accepted notions of gentlemanliness in sport. Similarly, the previous year the Cornwall L.C. visited Montréal to take on the Shamrocks. After the match, also won by the Shamrocks, the Cornwalls publicly thanked their hosts for their accommodations “and courtesies extended to them” during their visit.¹⁴⁸

In short, then, the equation of the Shamrocks and violence is not as simple as Howell would have us believe. It is not the case that the middle class commentators in the Anglo-Protestant press of Montréal exaggerated the violent play of the Shamrocks to either deflect attention away from the mounting losses of the Montreals to the Shamrocks, or simply to emphasise the class differences. Rather, the question of the Shamrocks and violence is an ambiguous one. In some cases, the Shamrocks were criticised for their violent play, usually when they played the Mohawks; in others, they were praised for their gentlemanly play. This ambiguity reflected the subtlety of the Anglo-Protestant press’ critiques of the Shamrock players, their ethno-religious background, and their class in terms of their play.

¹⁴⁷ *Montreal Star*, 7 July 1879.

¹⁴⁸ *Montreal Star*, 29 May 1880.

A subtly gendered critique of the Shamrocks, based on class, is clear in the Anglo-Protestant press' coverage of lacrosse, through the discourse of modernism and "scientific" play. There was a very clear hierarchy insofar as "scientific" skill and play, as well as discipline, were concerned, at least in relation to the Montréal-area clubs. The Montreal L.C., not surprisingly, was at the pinnacle of this hierarchy, playing the most disciplined and "scientific" game of all clubs. This was especially clear when the Montreals played the Shamrocks, who tended to win these matches, despite playing a less scientific, and thus, less honourable and less manly style than their more bourgeois opponents. The Shamrocks, however, were still able to occasionally rise to the level of scientific play, no doubt by virtue of their skin colour, something that always remained beyond the grasp of the Iroquois L.C.¹⁴⁹

The basic fundamental violence of lacrosse, however, is a complex issue. It is not enough to state that the working-class Shamrocks, or the aboriginal Mohawks, engaged in excessively violent play and the Anglo-Protestant bourgeois Montreals and Torontos did not. Nor is it enough to state that the bourgeois Anglo-Protestant press of Montréal abhorred the violence of the game. Indeed, it is clear from the press coverage that the violence of lacrosse was precisely what made it so attractive. What the newspapermen wished to see, however, was fair play and a "clean" match;¹⁵⁰ they wanted this violence to become and remain ritualised. Michael Robidoux argues that the violence of lacrosse is exactly what allowed it to emerge as Canada's national sport in the mid-nineteenth

¹⁴⁹ See, for example, *The Gazette*, 19 September 1870; *The Gazette*, 11 October 1870; *Montreal Star*, 3 July 1871; *Montreal Star*, 24 July 1871; *The Gazette*, 23 October 1878; *The Gazette*, 21 July 1879; *The Gazette*, 23 August 1879.

¹⁵⁰ See, for example, *Montreal Star*, 18 June 1870; *Montreal Star*, 3 July 1871; *Montreal Star*, 24 July 1871; *Montreal Star*, 19 July 1879; *The Gazette*, 7 August 1880; *The Gazette*, 9 August 1880; *Montreal Star*, 5 September 1881; *Montreal Herald*, 27 July 1885.

century, as its violence (as well as hockey's later in the century) afforded Canadians the means to differentiate themselves from the British, primarily, but also from the Americans. The brutal violence of lacrosse, argues Robidoux, tied the “national sport” to the harsh conditions of life in Canada, both in the summer (with the oppressive heat, humidity, and bugs) and in the winter (when the land is frozen).¹⁵¹ Robidoux, however, overstates his case, as violent sport was not something that was unique to Canada. Instead, violent sport was endemic to the middle-class experience in the nineteenth century in Britain, most notably via rugby,¹⁵² if not in the United States.¹⁵³ At any rate, it is clear that the ritualised violence of lacrosse was in and of itself part of its attraction as it appealed to the masculine ethos of both working- and middle- class men.

As for sportsmanship, itself intimately wrapped up in manly behaviour, the Shamrocks do not appear to have come under any more scrutiny than the other clubs for their behaviour by the Anglo-Protestant press of Montréal. Indeed, in some cases, the press supported the Shamrocks in those instances where aspersions were cast upon them. Late in the 1885 season, for example, the Toronto L.C. refused to travel to Montréal to

¹⁵¹ Michael A. Robidoux, “Imagining a Canadian Identity Through Sport: A Historical Interpretation of Lacrosse and Hockey,” *Journal of American Folklore*, 115/456 (2002): 209-25.

¹⁵² Rugby was popularised in the mid-nineteenth century by Headmaster Thomas Arnold of Rugby School. Rugby, according to one popular saying in England, is a thug’s game played by gentlemen, whereas football (soccer) is a gentlemen’s game played by thugs. See, for example, John Nauright, “Sustaining Masculine Hegemony: Rugby and the Nostalgia of Masculinity,” *Making Men: Rugby and Masculine Identity*, ed. John Nauright and Timothy J.L. Chandler (London: Frank Cass, 1996): 227-44.

¹⁵³ Interestingly, American sporting forms in the mid-nineteenth century were dominated by baseball, though it would be a mistake to assume that more violent sports such as rugby and lacrosse were not played. Indeed, in terms of lacrosse, the Shamrocks made several trips to the United States to play exhibition matches with teams in Brooklyn, Boston, Baltimore, and Chicago, and at least once hosted the Brooklyn club in Montréal. *The Gazette*, 14 June 1880; *The Gazette*, 24 June 1880; *The Gazette*, 5 July 1880; *The Gazette*, 19 July 1880; *The Gazette*, 20 June 1881; *Montreal Herald*, 4 July 1881; Metcalfe, “Working-class Physical Recreation,” p. 14; Allen Guttmann, *A Whole New Ball Game: An Interpretation of American Sport* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1988).

play the Shamrocks owing to the smallpox epidemic.¹⁵⁴ The Chief Medical Officer of Toronto threatened to quarantine the Toronto team upon its return. The Torontos offered to meet the Shamrocks in either Ottawa or Toronto and to give the Shamrocks the gate, minus their bare expenses. The Shamrocks refused and the matter was turned over to the NLA for arbitration.¹⁵⁵ Perhaps in a bit of civic boosterism, *The Herald* refused to criticise the Shamrocks for their clearly unsportsmanlike refusal to meet the Torontos in either Ottawa or Toronto, even if the Toronto L.C. had a valid reason not to travel to Montréal.¹⁵⁶

In another instance, the Shamrocks were even cast as the victims of the Montreal L.C.'s poor sportsmanship. Prior to the construction of the Shamrocks' grounds on rue Sainte-Catherine in the early 1870s, the club was without a ground of its own. For the most part, the Shamrocks used the Montreal L.C.'s grounds on rue Sherbrooke for its matches, though this arrangement was on an ad-hoc basis. Thus, in July 1869, the Shamrock L.C. asked the Montreal L.C. for use of its grounds for a match against the Iroquois L.C. The Montreal Club agreed, but imposed rather stringent conditions. These included: demanding a full half share of the gate receipts, a ban on the sale of refreshments, the denial of the use of the Montreal L.C.'s shed, and that members of the Montreal L.C. be admitted free of charge upon the presentation of their badge at the gate. This last stipulation meant that the Shamrocks would be hard pressed to earn anything from the gate receipts, especially if they had to be shared equally with the Montreal L.C.

¹⁵⁴ For details of the 1885 smallpox epidemic in Montréal, see Michael Bliss, *Plague: A Story of Smallpox in Montreal* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 2002 (1991)).

¹⁵⁵ *Montreal Herald*, 3 September 1885; *Montreal Herald*, 26 September 1885.

¹⁵⁶ It is worth noting, however, that the smallpox epidemic was by-and-large confined to the poorer east end French-Canadian neighbourhoods owing to child-rearing practices of the French-Canadians. The city's Anglophone population, including the working-class Griffintowners, largely escaped the consequences of the epidemic. See, Bliss, *Plague*.

The Star was appalled by these demands, and published a copy of the Montreal Club's secretary's letter to the Shamrocks, wherein these conditions were laid out, and then editorialised that

[t]his reminds us of a little story we once heard. When some star was making a most exorbitant engagement with his manager, something on Macready's¹⁵⁷ principle of three-thirds of the gross receipts and a benefit every night, his friend, as soon as the haggling was over, remarked: You have forgotten one thing. What's that? asked the star. Why you have left him his watch. We do not think that the M.L.C. will earn much good-will amongst their city *confreres* by this liberal offer to assist in popularizing the game.¹⁵⁸

Clearly, here at least, the poor sports were the Montreals, not the Shamrocks. In the aftermath of this dispute, a member of the Montreal L.C., whom *The Star* identified as Charles H. Thompson,¹⁵⁹ wrote a letter to the newspaper criticising it for taking the Montreal Club to task. He included a few backhanded swipes at the abilities of the Shamrocks, and virtually every other club in Québec, to play the sport properly. *The Star* attacked Thompson in a lengthy response to his letter, noting that "When a man forgets that he is a gentleman and tries to bully or over-reach, -- then we shall speak out, confident in the support of the sporting community." This support did come, from another member of the Montreal L.C., "one of its staunchest old members,"¹⁶⁰ who wrote to the paper, arguing that Thompson's "contemptuous expressions with regard to the Shamrock Club" should not be taken

¹⁵⁷ Macready was the Secretary of the Montreal Lacrosse Club.

¹⁵⁸ *Montreal Star*, 31 July 1869.

¹⁵⁹ Thompson had written to *The Star* under the pen name "Flags", meant to demonstrate the Montreal Club's dominance of lacrosse, as holders of the Claxton Flags, the championship trophy, as it were, donated by a prominent Montréal merchant.

¹⁶⁰ Interestingly, in the case of Thompson, *The Star* declared that "it is not our custom to insert anonymous letters," yet it did not identify this staunch, old member of the Montreal Lacrosse Club, who also happened to agree with *The Star's* position. Moreover, *The Star* made no attempt to publicly identify him.

as the sentiments of the Montreal Club. The Shamrock men and their friends have, even if there were grounds for reproach once, behaved like gentlemen ever since [*The Star*] pitched into them. Against them no unprejudiced man can now allege anything.¹⁶¹

VII. Conclusion

The 1870s and 80s was the period when Irish-Catholic Griffintown was at its peak, both demographically and culturally. The residents of the neighbourhood involved with the Shamrock L.C., either as players or fans, were unambiguous in the shaping of their identities and the manner in which they used the club for their own purposes. For the players, it was a self-conscious attempt at gaining, and maintaining, respectability. For the fans, the club was used for entertainment purposes; in this manner, they anticipated the rise of commercialised leisure forms for the working-classes at the *fin-de-siècle*.

Both groups, players and fans, were clear in their identities as working-class Irish-Catholics from Griffintown, even if they were split along caste lines. The club, the players, and the fans were all closely aligned with Griffintown in the period between 1868, when the club was founded, and 1885. This allowed for the unambiguous display of working-class Irish-Catholic identity on the part of the players and fans. These caste lines within the working-classes were also starkly marked by the differing norms of comportment on the part of the players and fans.

Both the players and fans of the Shamrock L.C. proudly displayed their own brand of Irishness at the lacrosse grounds on Saturday afternoon. The fans were especially boisterous in so doing. But for both groups, their Irishness was tied up with

¹⁶¹ *Montreal Star*, 9 August 1869; *Montreal Star* 10 August 1869.

their classed and gendered identities as well. By the 1870s and 80s, the immigrant generation was dying off, and affairs “back home” in Ireland were not of great concern for the Griffintown Irish. Tangible connections to Ireland were disappearing for the Irish-Catholics of the Griff; Ireland was becoming an increasingly imagined nation. At the same time, the working-class fans and players of the Shamrocks were wrapped up in helping to forge a new Canadian identity tied to the sport of lacrosse in the nascent nation.

In short, the Griffintown Irish had become diasporic. As the twentieth century dawned, however, these allegiances to Canada and an imagined Ireland became difficult with the rise of a new wave of Irish nationalism in Ireland, one that had a major impact in the diaspora, including Montréal. The ambiguities that grew out these complicated allegiances are the subject of the next chapter.

Chapter 3: Nation and Nationalism in Griffintown, 1900-17

I. Introduction

The early twentieth century saw Irish-Catholic Griffintown on the brink of a fundamental demographic and cultural shift. As the nineteenth century drew to a close, Irish-Catholic Griffintown was on the decline, demographically-speaking. This continued into the early decades of the twentieth century. According to the 1901 Canadian Census, Irish-Catholics comprised some 39.4 per cent of St. Ann's Ward, and were still the largest ethnic group. But the first decade of the twentieth century saw the Irish population drop significantly. By the 1911 Census, the Irish comprised a mere 30.8 per cent of the St. Ann's population; the British and French Canadian populations, moreover, now comprised 28.8 and 29 per cent of the population, respectively. In other words the three groups were relatively equal by 1911 in St. Ann's Ward.¹ The Irish-Catholics were leaving Griffintown. Indeed, this upward social mobility of working-class Irish-Catholics is the focus of Sherry Olson and Patricia Thornton's work on the Irish-Catholic population of Montréal as a whole in the late nineteenth century.²

Olson and Thornton, however, over-emphasise the gentrification process of the Irish-Catholics, as can be seen in the persistence, even in diminished form, of Irish-Catholic working-class neighbourhoods such as Pointe-Saint-Charles and Griffintown well into the twentieth century. Thus, it is important to note that Griffintown's Irish-Catholic population was on the decline at the start of the twentieth century, collapsing around St. Ann's Church on Gallery Square. But, Griffintown's Irish-Catholics

¹ Canada, Census of Canada, 1901 and 1911.

² Sherry Olson and Patricia Thornton, "The Challenge of the Irish-Catholic Community in Nineteenth-Century Montreal," *Histoire Sociale/Social History*, 35/70 (2003): 333-62.

continued to display a strong, and even defiant, Irishness in the early years of the twentieth century. This Irishness was fuelled by a combination of events within the Montréal Irish community and the Irish diaspora, all of which played out in the crisis of World War I.

Yet, the meaning of this Irishness underwent significant change in the first two decades of the twentieth century. If, in the previous chapter we saw a local Irish-Catholic identity in Griffintown vis-à-vis the Shamrock L.C. players and fans, the early twentieth century provides us with an opportunity to examine a more cosmopolitan version of Irishness in Griffintown. During this period, events in Ireland and the British Empire had a major impact on the Irish in Canada, including in Griffintown. The early twentieth century saw the height of agitation for Irish Home Rule, and echoes of this agitation played out in the diaspora. And perhaps owing to this, the meaning of Irishness for the Griffintowners moved closer to that held by the more bourgeois sections of the Irish-Catholic community of Montréal.

At the same time, the effects of acculturation and the Canadianisation of the Irish of Griffintown were clear by the first decades of the twentieth century. Griffintown's Irish-Catholics were increasingly Canadian by this period. Indeed, we saw part of this process in the previous chapter through the lens of lacrosse, championed as Canada's "national sport" during the Confederation Era. This process continued into the early twentieth century with the further reduction of the immigrant generation in Griffintown. Thus, tangible links to Ireland were becoming harder and harder to find in the Griff; the connection to the physical landscape and culture of the homeland was disappearing. As a result, the Irish-Catholics of Griffintown had at times competing, at times

complementary, loyalties to both Canada and Ireland. This led to a fundamental, postcolonial, ambivalence in their behaviour.

The early twentieth century saw the Irish-Catholics of Montréal begin to abandon their position as the third cultural community in the city between the French Canadian and Anglo-Protestant “majority” populations.³ Irish-Catholics were increasingly successful at infiltrating the Anglo-Protestant bourgeois and élite communities, especially in the business world of Montréal, the Canadian metropole. This can be seen in the Montréal Shamrock Hockey Club (H.C.) at the *fin-de-siècle*. The Shamrock H.C. was, like the lacrosse club, affiliated with the Shamrock Amateur Athletic Association. However, unlike the lacrosse club, the hockey club was thoroughly middle- and élite-class. The men who played for the club, which won the Stanley Cup in 1899 and 1900, were graduates of Loyola College and McGill University, and went onto careers as lawyers, physicians, and businessmen. They were successful in infiltrating the Anglo-Protestant business and cultural *milieus* of Montréal. More to the point, however, the ethno-religious status of the Shamrock players, the only Irish or Catholic club in élite-level amateur men’s hockey at the time, was never made a point of contention; their Irishness did not matter to their opponents or commentators in the press. Of course, this does not mean that their Irishness did not matter to them, as they did play for an Irish-Catholic club.⁴

³ For the Irish-Catholics as a third cultural community in Montréal in the nineteenth century, see, Olson and Thornton, “The Challenge of the Irish-Catholic Community.”

⁴ See, Simon Jolivet, “Les deux questions irlandaises du Québec, 1898-1921: des considerations canadiennes-françaises et irlandais-catholiques,” (PhD dissertation, Concordia University, 2008); John Matthew Barlow, “‘Scientific Aggression’: Irishness, Manliness, Class, and Commercialisation in the Shamrock Hockey Club of Montreal, 1894-1901,” *Coast to Coast: Hockey in Canada to the Second World War*, ed. John Chi-Kit Wong (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, forthcoming, 2009).

This chapter, then, examines the development of an ambivalence on the part of the working-class Irish-Catholics of Griffintown in the early twentieth century. If the period between 1868 and 1885, examined in the previous chapter, was the zenith of Irish-Catholic Griffintown, this early twentieth century period was one of retrenchment in the face of demographic decline for the community. As they collapsed around St. Ann's Church, the Irish-Catholics of Griffintown continued to display and perpetuate a strong and defiant sense of Irishness. Thus, the early twentieth century gives us a glimpse of the decline of Irish-Catholic Griffintown, a process which ultimately led to the death of this community, a process I examine in the next chapter. At the same time, we also get a sense of a fully diasporic sense of Irishness within the Griffintown community, and the symbiotic relationship between their identities as being both Irish and Canadian.

II. The Ancient Order of Hibernians

In the last decade of the nineteenth century, a radical, apparently republican, brand of Irish nationalism began to emerge in Montréal, and Griffintown in particular, in the form of the Ancient Order of Hibernians (AOH). The AOH was not the first group of radical Irish nationalists in Montréal; they were preceded by the Fenians in the 1860s.⁵ But the AOH was much more successful and had a much greater long-term impact than did its ancestors. Whereas the Fenians managed to take over the St. Patrick's Society, and be involved in the assassination of Thomas D'Arcy McGee in 1868, they lacked a concerted, long-lasting impact on Montréal's Irish-Catholic community. The AOH, on the other hand, had a massive impact on Irish-Catholic Montréal in the 1890s and

⁵ For a detailed discussion of the Fenians in Montréal, see David A. Wilson, "The Fenians in Montreal: Invasion, Intrigue, and Assassination," *Eire/Ireland*, 38/3-4 (2003): 109-33.

opening decades of the twentieth century and maintains a presence in the city to this day. Indeed, the AOH was one of the most successful groups in the Irish-Catholic community of Montréal during this period. Rosalyn Trigger argues that the AOH succeeded because it was largely a parish-based organisation, reflecting the power of the Irish-Catholic Church in Montréal, and that this parish-based organisation lent the AOH to clerical supervision.⁶ What Trigger overlooks, however, is that the AOH, despite its ultra-Catholicism, was regarded as a secret society by the Catholic Church, and had a rather complicated relationship with the Church in Montréal. In 1879, Fr. Dowd of St. Patrick's wrote to his counterpart at St. Patrick's Cathedral in New York, enquiring about the AOH. When he was told that it was a secret society, Dowd followed the lead of St. Patrick's in New York and forbade known members from receiving the sacraments of their faith.⁷

The AOH was founded in New York City around 1836, in response to the nativist Know-Nothing movement in the United States. The Order arose out of New York's St. Patrick's Fraternal Society, which included former United Irishmen, Defenders, Whiteboys, and Rightboys, who had fled Ireland following the failed United Irishmen Rising of 1798.⁸ In Canada, the AOH emerged sometime in the late 1870s in Montréal, and the Canadian AOH sent its first delegate to the annual AOH convention in 1880, held that year in Philadelphia. By 1898, there were at least four branches of the AOH in

⁶ Rosalyn Trigger, "The Role of the Parish in fostering Irish-Catholic Identity in Nineteenth-Century Montreal," (MA thesis, McGill University, 1997), p. 71.

⁷ Fr. Wm. Brien, to Fr. Dowd, 7 July 1879, St. Patrick's Basilica (Montréal) Archives (SPBMA), Correspondence of Fr. Dowd. See, also, Peggy Regan, "Montreal's St. Patrick's Day Parade as a Political Statement: The rise of the Ancient Order of Hibernians, 1900-1929," (BA (Hons.) thesis, Concordia University, 2000), pp. 10-12.

⁸ John O'Dea, *History of the Ancient Order of Hibernians and Ladies' Auxiliary, Vol. II* (Philadelphia: National Board of the AOH, 1923), pp. 831, 860-90.

Montréal alone.⁹ In 1903, the Canadian AOH, which was based in Montréal, received its charter from the federal government. Peggy Regan concludes that this suggests that the government was unaware of the AOH's republicanism;¹⁰ however, it is more likely that the AOH's support for John Redmond and his Irish Parliamentary Party (IPP), which advocated Home Rule, swayed the government's decision. The brand of Home Rule that Redmond agitated for was based on Canada's Dominion status within the British Empire, at least according to his public declarations. However, as Joseph Finnan argues,

Home Rule fell short of dominion status, a fact necessitated by Ireland's close proximity to Great Britain... One is tempted to conclude that the leaders of the Irish Party, who almost certainly would have led a Home Rule government, intended to expand Ireland's autonomy gradually – even within the context of empire – perhaps even as far as eventual dominion status. Redmond, however, gave no such indications and the parallels he drew between Ireland and the dominions emphasized the principle of self-government, not the specific powers of the dominion parliaments.¹¹

As early as 1893, the AOH had emerged as a force to be reckoned with in the Montréal Irish community, especially insofar as the annual St. Patrick's Day celebrations were concerned. That year, the St. Patrick's Society ceded control of the organisation of the annual parade to a new body, the Irish-Catholic Committee, comprised of representatives from all of the Irish-Catholic parishes of Montréal, and the various parochial organisations, as well as the AOH.¹² By 1899, the AOH had assumed pride of place in the parade.¹³ From this position of power, the AOH situated itself as the arbiter of authentic Irishness surrounding St. Patrick's Day. In 1907, upset with the proliferation

⁹ *The True Witness and Catholic Chronicle*, 7 May 1898.

¹⁰ Regan, "Montreal's St. Patrick's Day," p. 14.

¹¹ Joseph P. Finnan, *John Redmond and Irish Unity, 1912-1918* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2004), pp. 42-3.

¹² St. Patrick's Society of Montreal, Meeting Minutes, 11 February 1893, Concordia University Archives (CUA), P026: St. Patrick's Society of Montreal fonds, Box HA 1540, Minute Book of the St. Patrick's Society of Montreal, 1873-1901.

¹³ Regan, "Montreal's St. Patrick's Day parade," p. 31.

of ragtime music in the parade, the AOH specifically demanded that only Irish-themed music be played. The following year, the AOH targeted “the exhibition in certain shop windows of picture postcards caricaturising the Irish race.” In 1912, the Order placed a notice in *The Gazette* asking for all members to join in the parade and the celebrations of St. Patrick’s Day because “[p]resent events show plainly that the burden of sustaining and improving the proper celebration of the day rests almost entirely on the shoulders of the Ancient Order of Hibernians.” Finally, in 1914, the AOH was concerned that there be no young men of questionable character riding horses of a shabby nature in the parade.¹⁴

While Peggy Regan has studied the AOH and its role in Montréal’s St. Patrick’s Day parade, what is less clear is the geographic and/or class basis of the AOH in the city. Mike Cronin and Daryl Adair note that “zealous [Irish] Republicans were more likely to be found among the AOH, while steadfast advocates of Home Rule were more prominent among the St. Patrick’s Society.”¹⁵ This suggests a class division within the Irish community of Montréal vis-à-vis Irish nationalism in the city: the St. Patrick’s Society was a bourgeois outfit; the AOH was working class. The AOH did indeed have an outwardly republican stance, but, at the same time, the AOH in both Canada and the United States, at least prior to World War I,¹⁶ supported Redmond and Home Rule. Of

¹⁴ Irish-Catholic Committee, Minutes of Special Meeting, 15 March 2008, SPBMA, Irish-Catholic Committee Meeting Minutes Book; Irish-Catholic Committee, Minutes of Annual Meeting, 12 February 1914, SPBMA, Irish-Catholic Committee Meeting Minutes Book; Irish-Catholic Committee, Minutes of Annual Meeting, 16 February 1917, SPBMA, Irish-Catholic Committee Meeting Minutes Book; *The Gazette*, 16 March 1912.

¹⁵ Mike Cronin and Daryl Adair, *The Wearing of the Green: A History of St. Patrick’s Day* (New York: Routledge, 2002), p. 88.

¹⁶ While supporting Redmond over the Irish Republican Brotherhood (IRB) may make sense for the Canadian branch of the AOH, the Fenians in the 1860s were also an outlaw organisation, thus questions of treason against the British Empire do not really seem to factor in the AOH’s support of Redmond. It was not until World War I, and the attendant suspension of negotiations for Home Rule and the rise of discussions of the partition of Ireland that the AOH, both in Canada and the United States, began to

course, in so doing, the AOH was following the lead of their Irish cousins, as most of the republicans there also supported Redmond, at least prior to 1916. Thus, it is perhaps not quite as cut and dry as Cronin and Adair would have us believe. Nonetheless, it is also clear that the AOH, like the Fenians before them, had greater appeal amongst the working-classes of Montréal than amongst the middle- and élite-class Irish-Catholics of the city.

At the turn of the twentieth century, at least four of the six branches of the AOH held their meetings in the Griffintown/Pointe-Saint-Charles area. Division No. 2 met at St. Gabriel's Church on rue Centre in the Pointe, whilst Division No. 3 met at Hibernia Hall, 242, rue Notre-Dame, at the corner of Canning Street in Sainte-Cunégonde,¹⁷ a few blocks west of Griffintown. Division No. 4 met at 1113, rue Notre-Dame, between Colborne (now Peel) and Young streets in Griffintown.¹⁸ Finally, division No. 5 met at the Royal Bank Building, at the corner of rues Notre-Dame and des Seigneurs, which is the northwestern corner of the Griff.¹⁹

Division No. 3, despite meeting in Sainte-Cunégonde, had a very clear Griffintown connection in that its president was Daniel Gallery, who represented St. Ann's Ward on city council, and was also the Member of Parliament for St. Ann's from 1901 to 1906. While his offices were a half block away from the meeting hall on rue

develop serious reservations about Redmond and the IPP. O'Dea, *History of the Ancient Order, Vol. III*, pp. 1499-1500, 1504-05. See, also, Regan, "Montreal's St. Patrick's Day," pp. 23-5.

¹⁷ Sainte-Cunégonde was, until 1905, an independent suburb of Montréal. It, along with Saint-Henri and Saint-Gabriel, were swallowed up by the expansionist Ville de Montréal in 1905. Saint-Gabriel is now the western portion of Pointe-Saint-Charles and Sainte-Cunégonde is the neighbourhood of Little Burgundy.

¹⁸ *The True Witness and Catholic Chronicle*, 7 May 1898.

¹⁹ *The True Witness and Catholic Chronicle*, 12 March 1904.

Notre-Dame, Gallery lived at 202 Colborne Street in Griffintown.²⁰ Gallery's political and business connections meant that the No. 3 division was able to make use of the very toney Windsor Hall, attached to the Windsor Hotel on Dominion Square in downtown Montréal, for its soirées. The Windsor was perhaps the most prestigious hotel in Canada in the early twentieth century.²¹

At any rate, the AOH was clearly a predominantly working-class organisation in Montréal. Even Gallery's presence reflects this. While he was a member of the Irish-Catholic élite of Montréal, both as a Member of Parliament and a city councillor, Griffintown was his powerbase. Gallery rose to prominence owing to business connections he made through his family's bakery in the Griff. Moreover, it was not just that the AOH was working-class in nature, but that it was based in Montréal's *sud-ouest*, in Griffintown and Pointe-Saint-Charles.

Outwardly, the AOH in both Ireland and North America continued to support Redmond in the years leading up to the 1916 Easter Rising in Dublin. That being said, however, there was a martial organisation to the group that belied this apparent constitutionalism. In Canada, the AOH's martial organisation appears to have been kept quiet until after it had received its charter; the first Hibernian Knights and Hibernian Rifles brigades were not organised in Montréal until 1906.²² In Ireland, however, the AOH was involved with the Irish Republican Brotherhood (IRB), recruiting and training young men for the Irish Volunteers in the pre-World War I era. The Volunteers were

²⁰ *The True Witness and Catholic Chronicle*, 17 March 1905. *Lovell's Montreal Directory, 1904-05*, on the Bibliothèque et archives nationales du Québec's website, <http://bibnum2.bnquebec.ca/bna/lovell/index.html> (16 June 2008).

²¹ *The True Witness and Catholic Chronicle*, 10 March 1900; *The True Witness and Catholic Chronicle*, 9 March 1901; *The True Witness and Catholic Chronicle*, 21 March 1903.

²² O'Dea, *History of the Ancient Order*, Vol. III, p. 1391.

initially been formed in November 1913 by republicans in Ireland as a defensive response against the formation of the Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF), a unionist army. As Roy Foster notes, one of the responses to the formation of the UVF in January 1913 was that “if parliamentary government was being threatened by a private army in the north, there could be no logical objection to the formation of a rival force in the south, ostensibly to protect the rule of law. And this was the genesis of the Irish Volunteers.” The constitutionalist Redmond was initially opposed to the Volunteers. However, after a long, acrimonious set of negotiations with the IRB, he was given the right to nominate the majority of the positions on the Provisional Council of the Volunteers. This led Redmond to support the Volunteers and use them for his own purposes.²³ Thus the AOH displayed a fundamental ambivalence vis-à-vis its position on Irish independence and the form it should take, at least in the years prior to World War I.

III. St. Patrick’s Day in Griffintown

The feast of the patron saint of Ireland in Montréal, as throughout the diaspora, was a chance for the Irish-Catholic population of the city²⁴ to celebrate its presence and strength, as well as to call attention to the plight of its compatriots back in the old country. For the Irish-Catholic clergy of Montréal, St. Patrick’s Day was also a means to remind parishioners of their Catholic duties and to re-enforce the tying of Irish-

²³ R.F. Foster, *Modern Ireland, 1600-1972* (Toronto: Penguin, 1989 (1988)), pp. 467-8. Quote taken from p. 468.

²⁴ Irish-Protestants were pushed out of the celebrations of St. Patrick’s Day in Montréal around the same time that they were expelled from the St. Patrick’s Society in 1856. For the next century, Irish-Protestant participation in the official St. Patrick’s Day celebrations in Montréal were spotty at best. Cronin and Adair, *The Wearing of the Green*, pp. 83, 140.

Catholicism to Irish identity, if not the Irish nation and nationality, especially in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.²⁵

The most obvious manifestations of the celebration of St. Patrick and Irishness in Montréal was, of course, the parade, one of the oldest,²⁶ and largest, such parades in the world. The Irish-Catholics of Montréal used it as a vehicle to assert both a local Irish-Catholic identity, and to draw attention to the plight of Ireland. The parade was also used to paper over differences within the Irish-Catholic community of Montréal, both political and economic, to present a united face to the rest of the city.²⁷ This can be seen in the formation of the Irish-Catholic Committee in 1893 which, as noted above, had representation from all of the Irish-Catholic parishes of the city, as well as the AOH, and was charged with the organisation of the parade. The formation of the Irish-Catholic Committee served to democratise the organisation of the parade, and to give voice to all of the church-affiliated Irish-Catholic groups in Montréal in that organisation. This point was made clearer in a 1914 debate within the Irish-Catholic Committee over the parade route, when one group argued that “[t]he Irish were not parading for themselves and for

²⁵ See, Rosalyn Trigger, “Irish Politics on Parade: The Clergy, National Societies, and St. Patrick’s Day Processions in Nineteenth-century Montreal and Toronto,” *Histoire Sociale/Social History*, 37/74 (2004), pp. 173-4.

²⁶ The first St. Patrick’s Day parade was held in Montréal in 1824. The United Irish Societies of Montréal, the body that is responsible for the parade today, claims that the parade has been held continuously since 1824, though there is controversy surrounding the 1918 parade, as it was officially cancelled by the Irish-Catholic Committee, though the St. Ann’s Young Men’s Society and the AOH carried out their own procession through the streets of Griffintown. Thus, the United Irish Societies can make the claim that the parade has been held continuously since 1824. Irish-Catholic Committee, Emergency Meeting, 10 March 1918, SPBMA, Irish-Catholic Committee Meeting Minute Book; *The Gazette*, 18 March 1918; James Mennie, “Being Irish: It’s All in the Lobes,” *The Gazette*, 10 March 2004; Regan, “Montreal’s St. Patrick’s Day parade,” p. 29; Don Pidgeon, “The Continuity of St. Patrick’s Day Parades in Montreal,” United Irish Societies of Montréal website, <http://www.montrealirishparade.com/history> (accessed 23 July 2007). Peggy Regan concurs with Don Pidgeon’s conclusion that the 1918 adventures of the St. Ann’s Young Men and the AOH can be counted as a parade. See, Regan, “Montreal’s St. Patrick’s Day parade,” p. 29.

²⁷ See, Trigger, “Irish Politics on Parade,” pp. 173-4.

their own but rather to advertise their numbers and influence, and strengths to the other branches of the Community.’²⁸

Rosalyn Trigger argues that the period between 1875 and 1895 was one in which Home Rule messages dominated the St. Patrick’s Day parade.²⁹ This continued into the twentieth century when the long shadow of John Redmond cast itself across the majority of the Irish-Catholic community of Montréal in the years prior to the 1916 Easter Rising in Dublin. Redmond and his Irish Parliamentary Party were adamant in their agitation for Home Rule for Ireland, and Montréal’s Irish-Catholics supported this, especially within the St. Patrick’s Society.³⁰ Indeed, in 1913, during a debate over Home Rule in the House of Commons in London, an argument broke out over whether, first, Canada was a good model of government for Ireland, and secondly, whether Canadians would support Irish nationalists, as the IPP claimed, or the Unionists, as Edward Carson, their leader, claimed. Joseph Devlin, IPP Member of Parliament for Co. Fermanagh, Ireland, noted that the Irish in Canada had been amongst the most zealous in their support for Home Rule, including on a practical, financial level.³¹ This is confirmed by Simon Jolivet in his research on support for Home Rule in Québec in the pre-World War I era.³²

²⁸ Irish-Catholic Committee, Annual Meeting Minutes, 12 February 1914, SPBMA, Irish-Catholic Committee Meeting Minutes Book.

²⁹ Trigger, “Irish Politics on Parade,” p. 173.

³⁰ See, for example, St. Patrick’s Society of Montreal, Monthly Meeting Minutes, 3 March 1903, CUA, P026, Box HA 1540, Committee Meetings Book, St. Patrick’s Society of Montreal, 1902-06; St. Patrick’s Society of Montreal, Monthly Meeting Minutes, 4 March 1912, CUA, P026, Box HA 1540, Committee Meetings, St. Patrick’s Society, Montreal, 1909-16; St. Patrick’s Society of Montreal, Monthly Meeting Minutes, 1 April 1912, CUA, P026, Box HA 1540, Committee Meetings, St. Patrick’s Society, Montréal, 1909-16.

³¹ United Kingdom, House of Commons Debate, *Hansard*, 10 June 1913, v. 53, Catholic Church, 1463-589, accessed on-line at: <http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/commons/1913/jun/10/government-of-ireland-bill> (accessed 29 June 2008).

³² Jolivet, “Les deux questions,” pp. 129-33.

In the period between 1895 and the First World War, this continued message of support for Home Rule in the parade was augmented with a declaration of strength by the Irish-Catholic community of Montréal. Concomitant with that was a message of solidarity that came from the Irish-Catholic Committee. Indeed, in 1914, *The Gazette* reported that the parade was

a decidedly imposing demonstration of the solidarity of the Irish people of Montreal, as well as of their numbers, and many visitors who happened to be in the city for the day expressed amazement that there should be so many Irish people in this Canadian metropolis.³³

Together, the twin messages of strength and solidarity on the part of the Irish-Catholic community of Montréal were then used to demonstrate support for Redmond and Home Rule.

In the years preceding World War I, the Irish-Catholic Committee spent a great deal of effort in emphasising Irish history, as summarised by a *Gazette* headline in 1911: “Erin’s Sons Remembered Yesterday’s Celebrations Honoring the Traditions of Their Race.” The point of this history lesson was to draw attention to the plight of Ireland under British rule, “[e]verything spoke of the dawn of a new day of hope for those that remain in the old land, and with whom remain the hearts of those who left her shores long ago.”³⁴ That year, a Paulist priest from New York City,³⁵ Rev. Fr. Burke, delivered a sermon on the time of St. Patrick himself in Ireland, arguing that a “deep lesson of freedom might be drawn from St. Patrick’s life and work.” Fr. Burke went on to argue that the Catholic faith in Ireland had been founded in freedom and that “[t]o the Irish

³³ *The Gazette*, 16 March 1914.

³⁴ *The Gazette*, 18 March 1911.

³⁵ The Missionary Society of St. Paul the Apostle, otherwise known as the Paulist Fathers, are an evangelical Catholic order founded in New York City in 1858.

people St. Patrick left the legacy of an apostle introducing his faith through exile and that same faith has spread throughout the world to a remarkable degree by the exiled race of Erin.”³⁶ Along with supporting Redmond and Home Rule, rhetoric such as this was also used to re-enforce a sense of Irishness in the younger generation of Irish Montrealers, who do not appear to have been all that interested in their ancestral culture or history in the first decade of the twentieth century. Indeed, throughout the first years of the twentieth century, the St. Patrick’s Society had trouble luring young men to join up. This led to a lot of discussion and hand-wringing over how to entice younger men to join the Society.³⁷

Yet, in the midst of this nationalist discourse, parade organisers were also very careful to cast the parade within a light of loyalty to Canada and the Empire. For example, in 1875, an ornate display of flags had the red ensign, at the centre, surrounded by the Irish,³⁸ French, and American flags. Atop St. Patrick’s Hall, but one flag flew, the red ensign. Cronin and Adair are mindful of the carefully constructed message of the parade: “This very visible demonstration of Irish loyalty to Britain was, of course, a counterpoint to accusations in the mid-1860s [i.e.: during the Fenian era] of Irish – particularly Irish-Catholic – support for an overthrow of Canada.”³⁹ Cronin and Adair, however, are only half correct here; it was not just loyalty to Britain on display, but also loyalty to Canada. Prior to 1965, the red ensign was Canada’s flag.

³⁶ *The Gazette*, 18 March 1911.

³⁷ See, for example, St. Patrick’s Society of Montreal, Minutes of Annual Meeting, 12 April 1912, CUA, P026, St. Patrick’s Society of Montreal Meeting Minutes, 1909-16.

³⁸ It should be pointed out that the Irish flag on display was not the familiar flag of the modern-day Irish Republic, the orange, white, and green tricolour. Rather, the pre-republican flag of Ireland was a blue flag with the Irish harp in the middle.

³⁹ *The Gazette*, 18 March 1895; Cronin and Adair, *The Wearing of the Green*, pp. 84-5. Quote taken from Cronin and Adair, pp. 84-5.

In the years prior to World War I, the Irish-Catholic Committee very carefully balanced a sense of Irishness in Montréal and concern for the plight of the old country within a message of loyalty to Canada. In part, this was in order to maintain, protect, and project a strong sense of Irish-Catholic identity in Montréal. We have already seen this in *The Gazette's* coverage of the last pre-World War I parade in 1914. It is clear that, along with the very strong Home Rule stance taken by the Irish-Catholic community of Montréal around the parade, there was also a certain defensiveness concerning this Irish identity. Montréal's Irish-Catholics were becoming acculturated into a new Anglo Montréal community during this period that they forged with the Anglo-Protestants of the city. With the bourgeoisies of the two communities coming together, then, it became important for the Irish-Catholics to maintain a sense of Irishness; to maintain their ethnic identity as they became acculturated and, eventually, absorbed into Anglo Montréal. This process can be seen in the perpetuation of several Irish-Catholic societies and institutions in the early twentieth century, such as the St. Patrick's Society and the Shamrock Amateur Athletic Association.

Meanwhile, some members of the Irish-Catholic working classes were experiencing upward social mobility which threatened Irish-Catholic ethno-religious identity in Montréal, because it meant the dissolution of solidly Irish-Catholic neighbourhoods and communities. Newer neighbourhoods, such as Verdun and Notre-Dame-de-Grâce, did not necessarily repeat the ethnic settlement patterns of older neighbourhoods like Pointe-Saint-Charles and Griffintown.⁴⁰ Without the cohesive

⁴⁰ Walter Van Nus, "A Community of Communities: Suburbs in the Development of 'Greater Montreal,'" *Montreal Metropolis, 1880-1930*, ed. Isabelle Gournay and France Vanlaethem (Montréal: Centre Canadien d'Architecture, 1998), p. 64.

residential solidarity that these older neighbourhoods had provided, Irish-Catholic ethno-religious identity began to fragment; hence the defensiveness we have seen on the part of the organisers of the St. Patrick's Day parade vis-à-vis Irishness and the strength of the Irish-Catholic community of Montréal in the early twentieth century. Thus, through these discordant processes of the gentrification of the Irish-Catholic population and the persistence of working-class neighbourhoods, the period prior to World War I was one of loss and retrenchment for the Irish-Catholics of Montréal insofar as ethno-religious identity is concerned.

And yet, if the Irish-Catholic Committee was unanimous in the need to project an image of the strength of the local community combined with a concern for the plight of Ireland in the St. Patrick's Day parade, this unanimity did not extend to the route of the parade. The traditional route for the parade was one that went from St. Patrick's Church through what is now Vieux-Montréal to Place D'Armes and back. In the 1850s, following the construction of St. Ann's Church in Griffintown, the Young Men's St. Patrick's Association decided to continue on with their own march through Griffintown, where it was based.⁴¹ For the next several years, the dispute between the Young Men and the St. Patrick's Society simmered, with the Young Men continuing to insist upon the Griffintown route. By the 1860s, the feud had been settled with the Young Men being invited to join the senior society and, for a short time at least, a compromise was reached whereby one year the parade went through Vieux-Montréal and the other it followed a

⁴¹ Despite their name, the Young Men's St. Patrick's Association was Griffintown-based and affiliated with St. Ann's Church. Prior to 1867, when St. Ann's was erected canonically as a parish, it was a branch church of St. Patrick's.

route through Griffintown.⁴² By the last quarter of the nineteenth century, however, this compromise was forgotten and the parade traversed a route through downtown and Vieux-Montréal, with St. Patrick's as its starting and ending point.⁴³ The various parish-based organisations from Griffintown and the Pointe, as well as the AOH, marched in procession up Beaver Hall Hill to take part in the parade.

There was a point to this, aside from the fact that St. Patrick's was the spiritual home of Montréal's Irish-Catholic population. The St. Patrick's Day parade in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was a hybrid, part religious procession, part popular parade. In discussing the Fête-Dieu procession in Québec during this period, Ron Rudin notes that the route of the procession was carefully planned. The route of the Fête-Dieu procession usually formed a loop, "so as to consecrate the space thereby enclosed."⁴⁴ With the St. Patrick's Day parade in Montréal, it was not so much to consecrate the enclosed space that the parade wound its way back to St. Patrick's, but rather to claim it for the Irish-Catholics of the city. This was the period when the city's Irish-Catholic bourgeoisies were making common cause with their Anglo-Protestant counterparts, and otherwise easing their way into the city's business and cultural élites. Thus, the parade claimed the centre of the business district of Montréal, as well as Place D'Armes, for the Irish-Catholics. Place D'Armes, of course, was the centre of the old downtown of Montréal, and the location of the grand Cathédral Notre-Dame, the home parish church of all Catholics in Montréal.

⁴² See, Trigger, "The Role of the Parish," pp. 115-20.

⁴³ See, for example, *The Gazette*, 19 March 1900.

⁴⁴ Ronald Rudin, *Founding Fathers: The Celebration of Champlain and Laval in the Streets of Quebec, 1878-1908* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2003), p. 38.

In 1902, however, owing to the large presence of marchers from the Griff and the Pointe, the route of the parade was altered to pass through Griffintown, though it avoided St. Ann's Church, perhaps to avoid recognising the significance of the Griffintown church.⁴⁵ From 1902 to 1906, the parade varied from the traditional downtown/Vieux-Montréal route to head down the hill and into Griffintown and, eventually, the Pointe. The exception was in 1905, when the parade detoured into the east end parish of St. Mary's.⁴⁶

The deviation of the parade from the traditional route in the first decade of the twentieth century is both interesting and significant. That the parade wound its way through the commercial centre of Montréal, as well as the first middle-class Irish-Catholic neighbourhood of the city, Little Dublin,⁴⁷ is no surprise. In addition to claiming this space for the Irish-Catholic population of the city, it was also a prominent stage upon which to make pronouncements on Ireland, Irish history, and the Irish-Catholic community of Montréal. However, the decision to extend the parade into Griffintown and Pointe-Saint-Charles, to enclose those neighbourhoods within the space of the parade, tells us something about the importance of these neighbourhoods to the Irish-Catholics of Montréal. The Griff and the Pointe were, after all, the home of Irish identity in the city.

⁴⁵ *The Gazette*, 16 March 1902.

⁴⁶ *The Gazette*, 18 March 1903; *The Gazette*, 18 March 1904; *The Gazette*, 17 March 1905; *The Gazette*, 17 March 1906.

⁴⁷ Little Dublin did not start as a middle-class neighbourhood; it was where many of the first Irish immigrants to Montréal settled in the 1810s, 20s, and 30s. As this group established itself in Montréal, Little Dublin began to reflect the socio-economic standing of its residents. Thus, St. Patrick's was built in Little Dublin, opening on 17 March 1847. By the end of the nineteenth century, however, Little Dublin was decimated with the construction of large warehouses, and the Southam Paper Company's operations across the street from St. Patrick's.

Tension over the route of the parade can be seen in the discussions held to plan the 1914 version. One group, the members of which remain unidentified in the minutes of the meeting,⁴⁸ argued passionately that there was a need for the

wide and central streets in the upper portion of the city, where the route of the parade would spread itself to advantage and where people from the remotest sections of Montreal would be more apt to congregate to witness the display.⁴⁹

This, it should be noted, reflected the idea that the parade in the pre-World War I era was designed and staged not only just to draw attention to the plight of Ireland, but to emphasise the size and strength of the Irish-Catholic community of Montréal.

At any rate, this point of view was countered and the meeting became bitterly divided. The opposing position was eloquently defended by Daniel Gallery, who was representing the Home Rule Young Irishmen, and E.H. Quirk of the St. Patrick's Society,⁵⁰ who

⁴⁸ Peggy Regan asserts that this was the AOH. The Secretary of the meeting recorded this dissenting group rather unhelpfully as “[t]he other section of the Meeting.” They were opposed by Daniel Gallery of the Young Irishmen and E.M. Quirk of the St. Patrick's Society. The Young Irishmen were a Home Rule group. However, the AOH was also a Home Rule group. As for Gallery, as we have already seen, he was president of the No. 3 Division of the AOH, based in Griffintown. In 1914, he was hardly “young;” he was 55 years old. At any rate, the identification of Gallery and Quirk does not necessarily mean that the “other section of the Meeting” was necessarily the AOH, as various parochial organisations from St. Ann's, St. Gabriel's, St. Mary's, and other Irish-Catholic parishes were also present at the meeting. And while it is also possible that one could be both a member of these parochial organisations and the AOH (or, for that matter, the Young Irishmen and the AOH, in Gallery's case), there is simply not enough evidence to support Regan's claim. Irish-Catholic Committee, Annual Meeting Minutes, 12 February 1914, SPBMA, Irish-Catholic Committee Meeting Minutes Book; Regan, “The Montreal St. Patrick's Day parade,” p. 38; Parliament of Canada website, “Parliamentarian File – Federal Experience – Gallery, Daniel,” <http://www2.parl.gc.ca/Parlinfo/Files/Parliamentarians.aspx?Item=c2bdccdc-4bf7-488a-a812-d0156eae2e79&language=E&MenuID=Lists.Members.aspx&MenuQuery=http%3A%2F%2Fwww2.parl.gc.ca%2FParlinfo%2Flists%2FMembers.aspx%3FParliament%3D%26Riding%3D%26Name%3Dg%26Party%3D%26Province%3D%26Gender%3D%26New%3DFalse%26Current%3DFalse%26Picture%3DFalse> (accessed 16 June 2008).

⁴⁹ Irish-Catholic Committee, Annual Meeting Minutes, 12 February 1914, SPBMA, Irish-Catholic Committee Meeting Minutes Book.

⁵⁰ Quirk went on to serve as the president of the St. Patrick's Society in 1916. Gallery, of course, was the city councillor for St. Ann's Ward, and had been the Liberal Member of Parliament for the riding from 1902-06. And while Gallery was Griffintown-based, he and Quirk represented the élites of the Irish-

advocated the lower portion of the city and St. Ann's Ward as the most desirable location for our annual demonstration – it was there that the Irish of Montreal practically sprung from. There that they had lived for years, and although the district was rapidly changing and being commercialised, it was still regarded as the House of the Irish.⁵¹

In the end, the argument for “the House of the Irish” won out, and the 1914 parade went through Griffintown.⁵²

While the losing side of the 1914 meeting claimed that the Irish were not parading for themselves, the truth is a bit more complicated. The Irish were indeed parading for themselves, to reinforce their Irish-Catholic ethno-religious identity which allowed them to present a strong, united front to the rest of the city, which, in turn, made it easier to make their argument vis-à-vis Home Rule for Ireland. When the parade made the trip down the hill and into Griffintown and Pointe-Saint-Charles, it was a chance for those who remained in the “House of the Irish” to be recognised for their contributions to Irish identity in the city, and it was a means of bringing the old neighbourhoods into the mainstream of Irish-Catholic Montréal. Indeed, Peter Goheen makes a similar argument in relation to the funeral cortège of Thomas D'Arcy McGee in Montréal in 1868. Marchers carefully stuck to Anglophone (and Irish) sections of the city, confident of being able to stake a claim to the space of these neighbourhoods. There is, then, a dialectic surrounding parades and processions, between organisers and the audience. As Rudin notes, there is nothing natural to the organisation of a parade.⁵³ The Griffintown

Catholic community here. St. Patrick's Society of Montreal, Regular Meeting Minutes, 4 April 1916. CUA, P026, Box HA 1540, St. Patrick's Society of Montreal Meeting Minutes, 1916-19.

⁵¹ Irish-Catholic Committee, Annual Meeting Minutes, 12 February 1914, SPBMA, Irish-Catholic Committee Meeting Minutes Book.

⁵² Irish-Catholic Committee, Annual Meeting Minutes, 12 February 1914, SPBMA, Irish-Catholic Committee Meeting Minutes Book.

⁵³ Peter G. Goheen, “Symbols in the Streets: Parades in Victorian Urban Canada,” *Urban History Review*, 18/ 3 (1990), pp. 237-40; Ronald Rudin, “Marching and Memory in Early Twentieth-Century

audience, then, would have a different reaction, knowledge, and response to the parade in its own neighbourhood than would have been the case had the parade been viewed downtown or in the old city.

The parade, however, was less an expression of Irishness in Griffintown, irrespective of the route it followed, than a pan-Montréal statement of Irishness. Griffintown's voice, expressed through St. Ann's parish and its various organisations, as well as, at least to some extent, the AOH, was just one of many on this stage. Moreover, as we have seen, the Irish-Catholic Committee was interested in making a statement of Irish-Catholic unity in Montréal in order to then make pronouncements vis-à-vis the plight of Ireland. Nevertheless, the Griffintown community had its own means of expressing its Irishness and celebrating the patron saint of Ireland. The most obvious manifestation came through the annual pageant and play of the St. Ann's Young Men's Society,⁵⁴ which not only represented this celebration of Irishness and Catholic culture back to the Griffintown community, but also captured the imagination of the larger Anglophone community of Montréal.

Each year at the Théâtre Monument-National on the lower Saint-Laurent Main, the St. Ann's Young Men put on a play and *spectacle* on St. Patrick's Day, with both matinée and evening performances, and each year, they played to a packed house. To be sure, the St. Ann's Young Men left no doubt as to the focus of their attention in the pre-World War I era: Ireland. What is also interesting is that the plays they performed tended

Quebec: La Fête-Dieu, la Saint-Jean-Baptiste, and le Monument Laval," *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association*, 10/1 (1999), pp. 210-12.

⁵⁴ The St. Ann's Young Men's Society was founded in 1885 by the Rev. Fr. Strubbe of St. Ann's Church. The Society was founded "for the promotion of a Catholic spirit among young men and the moral and mental improvement of its members." *The True Witness and Catholic Chronicle*, 7 May 1898; *The Story of One Hundred Years: The Story of St. Ann's Church, Montreal* (Montréal: no publisher, 1954). Quote taken from *The True Witness and Catholic Chronicle*.

to be written in-house by a member of the society, James Martin. Table 3.1 shows the titles of the Young Men's productions from 1900-11, as well as the author of the play, when known.

Table 3.1: St. Ann's Young Men's Society St. Patrick's Day productions, 1900-11⁵⁵

Year	Title	Author
1900	<i>The Hero of Limerick</i>	James Martin ⁵⁶
1901	<i>The Pride of Killarney</i> ⁵⁷	James Martin
1902	<i>The Abbott of Dungarvon</i>	James Martin
1903	<i>The Irish Patriot</i>	Unknown
1904	<i>O'Rourke's Triumph</i>	James Martin
1905	<i>Galway Law</i>	Unknown
1906	<i>The Pride of Killarney</i>	James Martin
1907	<i>The Rebel of 1798</i>	James Martin
1908	<i>The Siege of Limerick</i>	Unknown
1909	Unknown	Unknown
1910	Unknown	Unknown
1911	<i>Home Rule for Ireland</i>	St. Ann's Young Men's Society

As we can see, there was a decided Irish focus to the St. Ann's Young Men's Society productions, which also reflected the larger thrust of the Montréal Irish-Catholic community in the pre-World War I era. Prior to 1911, all the plays, whilst strongly Irish in theme, were either historic (such as *The Hero of Limerick* in 1900, or *The Rebel of 1798* in 1907), or else reflected Irish culture and life, or at least a romanticised version thereof. However, as *The True Witness and Catholic Chronicle* pointed out in commenting upon the production of *The Hero of Limerick*, there was a present-day point to the production. In praising the Young Men's choice of play, the newspaper reported

⁵⁵ Sources: *The Gazette*, 19 March 1900; *The Gazette*, 19 March 1901; *The Gazette*, 16 March 1902; *The Gazette*, 18 March 1902; *The Gazette*, 14 March 1903; *The Gazette*, 18 March 1903; *The Gazette*, 18 March 1904; *The Gazette*, 17 March 1905; *The Gazette*, 15 March 1906; *The Gazette*, 19 March 1907; *The Gazette*, 18 March 1908; *The Gazette*, 14 March 1911; *The Gazette*, 18 March 1911.

⁵⁶ James Martin was a member of the St. Ann's Young Men's Society and was employed as a book-keeper. He lived at 95 McCord Street in Griffintown, across the street from St. Ann's Church. *The Gazette*, 19 March 1900; *Lovell's Montreal City Directory*, 1899-1900, on the Bibliothèque et archives nationales du Québec's website, <http://bibnum2.bnquebec.ca/bna/lovell/index.html> (accessed 18 June 2008).

⁵⁷ Amazon.com's United Kingdom subsidiary, Amazon.co.uk, had a single copy of *The Pride of Killarney* for sale in the autumn of 2007. See, <http://www.amazon.co.uk/Pride-Killarney-domestic-drama-four/dp/B0014MH10>, accessed 18 October 2007.

that “‘The Hero of Limerick’ is not only a model play in every sense, but from a national point of view, it is one of the strongest condemnations of the anti-Irish Irishman, whose presence has been too general of late years.”⁵⁸ The anti-Irish Irishman, of course, was the man who did not take up the national cause of the homeland. More to the point, such a comment speaks to the process of acculturation and Canadianisation of the Irish-Catholic community of Montréal at the start of the twentieth century, as well as to the formation of Anglo Montréal. This, in turn, led to both the beginning of the breakdown of Irish-Catholic identity in the city, and the retrenchment in response to it that we have seen throughout this chapter.

The Young Men’s productions followed familiar tropes of the stage Irish, a mode of Irish performance that straddles the line between the humourous and the sentimental.⁵⁹ The stage Irish is, according to Terry Eagleton, a literary convention that arose in the eighteenth century in the works of Irish dramatists, “their humourous plays spreading laughter in the world of English puritan gloom.” The stage Irish was based upon what was originally the construction of the Irish on the part of the English colonisers in Ireland. Indeed, the stage Irish today is central to a postcolonial reading of Irish, and Irish North American, history and literature. The English constructed the Irish, in the stereotype of Paddy, as the anti-Enlightenment figure: infantile, feminine, barbarous, and with a bad drinking problem. Thus, the English were in Ireland to civilise. And it was

⁵⁸ *The True Witness and Catholic Chronicle*, 17 March 1900.

⁵⁹ There is another dimension to the stage Irish that has developed in the late twentieth century. Not content to wallow in the sentimental, the stage Irish of the modern era has perfected the art of black humour as a means of dealing with often traumatising events related in the stories. This, in a way, feeds Sinéad O’Connor’s argument that the Irish are a nation suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder. O’Connor feels that this arises out of a cultural memory of the Famine, but this can be generalised to a broader conceptualisation of history and memory arising out of the interstices of post-colonial Ireland with the Celtic Tiger economy of the 1990s. Sinéad O’Connor, “Famine,” *Universal Mother* (Chrysalis/Universal Records, 1994).

this stereotype that the Irish playwrights played upon in constructing the stage Irish character of the eighteenth century. This trope has, for better or worse, been employed by the Irish and their opponents on both sides of the Atlantic since.⁶⁰ In North America, the melodramatic and sentimental Paddy of the stage Irish is most common.⁶¹ There, the stage Irish became a means of looking back to the homeland and creating an imagined, and lost, Ireland for the diaspora in North America, as well as to make light of the trials and tribulations of Paddy in a foreign land.

The stage Irish is clearly at work according to the reportage of the St. Ann's Young Men's Society's productions at the Théâtre Monument-National in *The Gazette*, which rapturously covered these *spectacles*.⁶² The productions of the early twentieth century very clearly reflect an Irish diasporic construction of an imagined Ireland and Irish culture, as viewed through the nostalgic eyes of the local community in Griffintown. For example, in 1903, as the curtain rose on the stage for a production of *The Irish Patriot*, "the stage exhibited... an illuminated harp and shamrocks, worked out with green electric lights, [which] added not a little to the scene."⁶³ In 1904, the Young Men put on *O'Rourke's Triumph*, a play drenched in the sentimental and maudlin tropes of the stage

⁶⁰ Dale Knobel, for example, argues that this characterisation was successfully exploited in a stereotyped version of the Irish in the United States by nativists in the antebellum era there. More recently, Brad Kent argues that the plays of Martin McDonagh, in particular, his *The Beauty Queen of Lenane*, and Conor McPherson, capitalise on this trope today. See, Dale T. Knobel, *Paddy and the Republic: Ethnicity and Nationality in Antebellum America* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1986); Declan Kiberd, *Inventing Ireland* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996); Terry Eagleton, *Crazy John and the Bishop* (Cork, IE: Field Day/University of Cork Press, 1998); Brad Kent, "McDrama: The Sentimental in Martin McDonagh's *The Beauty Queen of Lenane* and Conor McPherson's *The Weir*," *Canadian Journal of Irish Studies/Revue canadienne d'études irlandaises*, 28-9/1-2 (2002-03): 30-45. Quote taken from Kent, p. 36.

⁶¹ See, Knobel, *Paddy and the Republic*, pp. 68-103.

⁶² Whilst *The Gazette* also covered the productions and activities of the other Irish-Catholic groups in Montréal on St. Patrick's night, it reserved its most glowing reviews for the St. Ann's Young Men. For example, in 1901, *The Gazette* reported that the Young Men's production of *The Pride of Killarney* was "the best the young men have ever put on. It included several who have helped to make the dramatic club of the Young Men a very creditable organisation." *The Gazette*, 19 March 1901.

⁶³ *The Gazette*, 18 March 1903.

Irish. *The Gazette* reported that “[t]hough the plot is cast upon familiar lines it contains enough originality to bring out the good humour and generosity of the Irish character.”⁶⁴

Two years later, the Young Men staged *The Pride of Killarney*, a “domestic drama, illustrative of the simple rustic life of the Irish people.”⁶⁵ This was followed in 1907 with *The Rebel of 1798*. *The Gazette* was not a big fan of this play, complaining that “the more serious parts of the plot are now and then overdrawn.” Happily, though, since it was an Irish play, “the native wit that breaks out keeps up the interest.”⁶⁶

The Irish themes of the performances at the Monument-National were supplemented by accompanying productions, usually of minstrel shows and song. The ancillary productions tended to be under the direction of P.J. Shea, one of the “the foremost Irish musicians in Montreal.”⁶⁷ These productions, too, tended towards the stage Irish. In 1903, the production at the Théâtre Monument-National was a three-part *spectacle*, and between the opening minstrelsy act and the main production of *The Irish Patriot*,

the Coughlan Sisters appeared in musical specialties and dances. The little ladies were given a hearty reception, which they quite deserved. Another speciality was Thos. Lyons in step dancing, in which he was joined by members of the company in a good old-fashioned reel.⁶⁸

Three years later, in 1906, the musical programme contained several Irish-themed productions, such as “The Wearing of the Green,” performed by Eddie Ryan, a young lad from Griffintown. He was followed by a series of “Irish Melodies” and Ed. Jackson’s

⁶⁴ *The Gazette*, 18 March 1904.

⁶⁵ *The Gazette*, 15 March 1906.

⁶⁶ *The Gazette*, 19 March 1907.

⁶⁷ *The True Witness and Catholic Chronicle*, 10 March 1900. P.J. Shea was listed in *Lovell’s* as a “musician” and lived at 154 Fulford, which was located in Sainte-Cunégonde, to the northwest of Griffintown. *Lovell’s Montreal City Directory*, 1899-1900, on the Bibliothèque et archives nationales du Québec’s website, <http://bibnumb2.bnquebec.ca/bna/lovel/index.html> (accessed 18 June 2008).

⁶⁸ *The Gazette*, 18 March 1903.

rendition of “Paddy’s Day,” before the musicals were ended with a quartette singing “the songs of the Irish counties.”⁶⁹

That the St. Ann’s Young Men and its supporting cast would be performing Irish-themed productions on St. Patrick’s Day is not all that surprising, of course. Indeed, Cronin and Adair note that St. Patrick’s Day can be seen as “a metaphorical window through which to gain insights into the Irish and their diaspora.” Moreover, they argue, 17 March is a day that does not necessarily project the Irish as they *were* historically, but as they wished to be seen.⁷⁰ This is exactly the point: St. Patrick’s Day allowed the Irish-Catholic Griffintowners, as represented by the Young Men and their fans at the Monument-National, to present their Irishness to the rest of the Irish-Catholic community of Montréal, with whom they had to share the parade. It also allowed these working-class Irish-Catholic men to step on the stage of the city as a whole to make a strong declaration of Irish identity. The fact that the Young Men packed the Monument-National every year is significant. Given the plethora of entertainment options available for the Irish-Catholics of Montréal on St. Patrick’s night,⁷¹ it is apparent that non-Griffintowners and even non-Irish-Catholics went to the Monument-National for the St. Ann’s Young Men’s productions.⁷²

⁶⁹ *The Gazette*, 18 March 1906.

⁷⁰ Cronin and Adair, *The Wearing of the Green*, pp. xv-xvi.

⁷¹ Whilst various other societies and their entertainment options on St. Patrick’s night came and went over the years, both the St. Patrick’s Society and the AOH had their own evenings of entertainment, both at the Windsor Hotel on Dominion Square. The St. Patrick’s Society had an annual dinner and ball, whilst the AOH had a banquet and a series of entertainments.

⁷² In 1902, *The Gazette* reported that there was “not even standing room” available at the Monument-National. In 1907, “[t]he crush at night was equal to that brought out by the best artists that come to Montreal. There was hardly a vacant chair in any part of the house.” *The Gazette*, 18 March 1902; *The Gazette*, 19 March 1907.

The Monument-National productions were a chance for the Irish-Catholics of Griffintown to display their Irishness both back at themselves as well as to the rest of the community, and, finally, to the city as a whole. The brand of Irishness on display is important. With the start of the demographic and cultural decline of Irish Griffintown in the 1880s and 90s, the landscape of the neighbourhood changed quite dramatically, especially insofar as residential patterns were concerned. According to Herbert Brown Ames' 1897 study of the "city below the hill," Irish-Catholics remained the majority in the core of Griffintown, west of Colborne Street, "the proportion steadily increasing as one approaches St. Ann's Parish Church;"⁷³ Irish-Catholic Griffintown was collapsing around the church.

Yet, despite the decline of Irish-Catholic Griffintown during this period, the Young Men's Society continued to portray a strong sense of Irishness through its annual St. Patrick's Day productions. This Irishness was strongly diasporic in nature; it reflected an Ireland that was steeped in history and was beginning to disappear by the turn of the twentieth century. Their imagined Ireland was largely based on stories and reminiscences of the old Irish immigrants, and reflected an Ireland that was predominant in the middle of the nineteenth century. It is also not surprising that this imagined Ireland was one that was largely based on the tropes of the stage Irish, melancholic and tinged with a sense of loss. Indeed, part of what marks Irish culture in the diaspora is nostalgia for the homeland, even if it is one that has never been seen. This sense of loss can be seen in the bevy of plays rooted in the great historical defeats of the Irish in their struggle

⁷³ Herbert Brown Ames, *The City Below the Hill: The Slums of Montreal, 1897* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1972 (1897)), p. 88.

with the British, such as the Siege of Limerick,⁷⁴ in 1690,⁷⁵ or the 1798 United Irishmen Rising.⁷⁶ Events such as the siege, and defeat, of Limerick can be seen as, on the one hand, feeding the melancholic and sentimental vision of Ireland, part and parcel of the stage Irish. On the other hand, this was exactly the sort of romanticised imagery used by Pádraig Pearse, a leader of the IRB and also a member of the Irish Volunteers, and other melancholic nationalists in the early twentieth century in Ireland.⁷⁷ More than this, however, the plays of the Young Men at the Monument-National in the pre-World War I era also very clearly represent a simplified, and romanticised, vision of Ireland that is quite consistent across the diaspora.⁷⁸ Finally, what made these productions so successful is that they struck a chord with their audiences; they were readily consumed by the masses at the Théâtre Monument-National each 17 March.

If, however, the productions of the St. Ann's Young Men in the years prior to World War I projected this romanticised, stereotyped stage Irish vision of Ireland, matters changed rather dramatically around 1911, with the production of another James Martin

⁷⁴ *The Hero of Limerick* was centred on the character of Patrick Sarsfield, a Jacobite commander at both sieges of Limerick in 1690 and 1691 during the Williamite War in Ireland. This play was performed in 1900. *The Siege of Limerick*, centred around the same events, was performed in 1908. Both were penned by James Martin.

⁷⁵ Limerick was, in fact, under siege twice during the Williamite Wars of 1690-1. In 1690, the siege ended when William of Orange's forces withdrew owing to inclement weather. In 1691, however, the Williamites were able to negotiate a peaceful settlement to the siege of Limerick, whereby the Catholic general, Sarsfield, was allowed to flee with his army to France, the "Flight of the Wild Geese." The terms of the treaty negotiated between Sarsfield and the Williamites, which guaranteed freedom of conscience for the Catholics, amongst other things, was rejected by the Irish Parliament in Dublin. This body, of course, was Protestant. Foster, *Modern Ireland*, pp. 156-63. In some ways, the siege of Limerick can be cast against the legend of the siege of Derry during the same war. In Derry, an entire mythology surrounding the siege there has emerged on the Protestant side. Derry was put under siege by the Jacobite forces in 1689. Derry has become known as the Maiden City because its walls have never been breached. This is made all the more interesting given the fact that Derry is today the only centre with a Catholic majority within Northern Ireland.

⁷⁶ *The Rebel of 1798* was performed in 1907, and was also authored by James Martin.

⁷⁷ See, Elaine Sisson, *Pearse's Patriots: St. Enda's and the Cult of Boyhood* (Cork, IE: University of Cork Press, 2004).

⁷⁸ See Chapter 5 for further discussion of a diasporic Irish identity as it centres around the post-history and memory of Griffintown in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries.

play, the unambiguously-titled *Home Rule for Ireland*. This play reflected activity in Ireland and throughout the diaspora, as the agitation for Home Rule was reaching a peak, as negotiations between the British Prime Minister, Herbert Asquith, and Redmond over new a Home Rule Bill had begun.⁷⁹ Martin's play reflected the general will of Montréal's Irish-Catholic community. In 1910, the St. Patrick's Society banquet and ball at the Windsor Hotel featured a speech by the guest of honour, Sir Thomas Shaughnessy, President of the Canadian Pacific Railway Company. Shaughnessy, born in Milwaukee to Irish immigrants before emigrating to Canada himself,⁸⁰ gave a lengthy address on the plight of Ireland and its right to self-government, which he couched in terms of loyalty to the British Empire. Like Redmond in Ireland, Shaughnessy pointed to the *British North America Act* as a model for Irish Home Rule.⁸¹ Meanwhile, St. Ann's Member of Parliament, Charles J. Doherty⁸² presented a letter to Shaughnessy from Redmond himself, which led to three cheers for Redmond and Home Rule by the St. Patrick's Society and its guests.⁸³

⁷⁹ Foster, *Modern Ireland*, p. 462; Neil Garnham, "Home Rule," *The Oxford Companion to Irish History*, ed. S.J. Connolly (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), pp. 254-6.

⁸⁰ Theodore D. Regher, "Shaughnessy, Thomas George, First Baron of Shaughnessy," *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, on-line edition, http://www.biographi.ca/009004-119.01-e.php?&id_nbr=7967&interval=25&&PHPSESSID=p4ikru8hem0aqhq76525oacjs4 (accessed 10 April 2008).

⁸¹ The *BNA Act* did not, of course, grant Canada full independence upon its passage in 1867. Rather, it confirmed responsible government for the confederated provinces of Québec, Ontario, New Brunswick, and Nova Scotia. Canada gained control over its foreign affairs in 1931, with the passage of the *Statute of Westminster* by the British government. Canadian citizenship was created on 1 January 1947, and the following year, the Supreme Court of Canada became the highest court of appeal in the land, replacing the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council in London. Finally, it was not until 1982 that the Canadian Constitution was patriated from the United Kingdom,

⁸² Doherty was elected to represent St. Ann's in 1908, but he lived in downtown Montréal, at 282 Stanley Street. He went on to become the Minister of Justice in Sir Robert Borden's Conservative government upon its election in 1911. *Lovell's Montreal City Directory, 1909-10*, on the Bibliothèque et archives national du Québec's website, <http://bibnum2.bnquebec.ca/bna/lovell/index.html> (accessed 18 June 2008).

⁸³ *The Gazette*, 18 March 1910.

The 1910 celebrations of the St. Patrick's Society suggest a ramping up of local agitation in Montréal for Home Rule. The St. Ann's Young Men's Society's production of *Home Rule for Ireland* the following year is equally unambiguous. According to *The Gazette*, the play showed "the various vicissitudes through which [Ireland] has passed, but in the final act the present day promises of better things to come is anticipated into home rule accomplished, the scene ending with general rejoicing."⁸⁴ In this sense, then, the Young Men of St. Ann's Parish, as well as their audiences, were in-step with the rest of the Irish-Catholic community of Montréal in their support of Home Rule for Ireland.

Amusements.

“HOME RULE FOR IRELAND”

PRESENTED BY

St. Ann's Young Men's Society

AT THE MONUMENT, NATIONAL,

St. Patrick's Day, March 17, 2.15 & 8.15 P.M.

Prices: Matinee, 15c and 25c. Evening, 25c, 50c, and 75c. Boxes, \$4 & \$5.
 J. L. FOLEY, Secretary.

Plan of theatre on view, and tickets on sale at Ald. THOS. O'Connell's,
 corner Ottawa and Murray. (Phone, M. 3833.)

GOD SAVE IRELAND.

Figure 3.1: Advertisement of St. Ann's Young Men's Society production of *Home Rule for Ireland* on St. Patrick's night, 1911. Source: *The Gazette*, 14 March 1911.

⁸⁴ *The Gazette*, 18 March 1911.

IV. World War I in Griffintown

The onset of World War I in the late summer of 1914 massively altered the landscape for the Irish in Ireland and, by extension, across the diaspora. In the spring of 1914, Redmond was at the peak of his powers and support. He was adored throughout Ireland and the diaspora. The 1914 St. Patrick's Day parade in Montréal was, in essence, a mass demonstration for Home Rule for Ireland.⁸⁵ Redmond was so popular because after years of agitation and several failed attempts,⁸⁶ a new Home Rule Bill was introduced into the House of Commons in London in April 1912 by Prime Minister Asquith, with Redmond's support. Success looked to be inevitable. For the next two years, however, the bill was caught up in negotiations, wrangling, and various threats from the Ulster Unionists, with the prospect of partition arising even as early as 1911. In May 1914, the bill finally passed, though in a compromised form and with the door left open to partition.⁸⁷ And when hostilities broke out on the continent in August, Home Rule was postponed, despite the best efforts of Redmond. As Roy Foster notes, with the war, Redmond and the IPP could

⁸⁵ *The Gazette*, 16 March 1914. See, also, Cronin and Adair, *The Wearing of the Green*, p. 111.

⁸⁶ The first attempt to enact legislation for Irish Home Rule came in 1886, by British Prime Minister William Gladstone. Gladstone, however, was outflanked by his own Liberal Party; the renegade Liberals, led by Joseph Chamberlain, sided with the Conservatives to defeat the bill, prompting Gladstone's resignation. Gladstone was back in office by 1892. The following year, he made a second attempt to bring about Home Rule for Ireland. This time, he ran into the veto power of the House of Lords. Again, he resigned, bringing to an end his long tenure as leader of the Liberal Party, during which time he was Prime Minister four times between 1868 and 1894. In 1911, the House of Commons reduced the Lords' veto power to a simple power to delay legislation and Liberal Prime Minister Herbert Asquith, who required the support of Redmond to remain in power, finally introduced a new Home Rule Bill in April 1912. See, Foster, *Modern Ireland*, p. 462; Garnham, "Home Rule," pp. 245-6.

⁸⁷ Foster notes that the bill as it existed upon passage by the House of Commons allowed for the opting out of Home Rule on a county-by-county basis, which was meant to give the power to the six Protestant-dominated counties of Ulster to do so: Down, Antrim, Londonderry, Tyrone, Fermanagh, and Armagh. This right to opt out was initially meant to only last for six years, however. The House of Lords modified the bill to extend the right to opt out to all nine Ulster counties, for perpetuity. This gave the Catholic Cos. Donegal, Cavan, and Monaghan the right to join Unionist Ulster. Foster, *Modern Ireland*, pp. 462-71.

take the opportunity to demonstrate lofty independence, or it could prove that Home Rule was fully compatible with loyalty to the Crown and Empire. Redmond chose to bet heavily on the latter strategy, and given that he had extracted a Home Rule bill from Asquith he may not have felt he had much choice. He offered his full support for the war effort, and suggested that all [Irish] troops [serving in the British Army in Ireland] be withdrawn for active service [on the continent].⁸⁸

In Montréal, Redmond's position was very well-received. This should not be all that surprising. The Irish of Montréal had the potential to be caught between competing loyalties to Canada and Ireland with the war. More than this, there were suspicions of Irish loyalty to the British/Canadian war effort in general given the agitations in Ireland for Home Rule, which was perceived by some in the Anglo-Protestant community of Montréal as being an attempt to remove Ireland from the British Empire.⁸⁹

Unlike the Irish in Ireland, who enlisted in the British Expeditionary Force, the Irish of Montréal were not fighting for Great Britain in the war; instead, the Montréal Irish were fighting for their own country, Canada, itself part of the British Empire.⁹⁰ Moreover, the majority of Montréal's Irish recognised that, despite being within the British Empire, Canada had long offered them opportunities that might not have been so readily available in Ireland. In Canada they had, by-and-large, escaped the worst of the ravages of imperialism, and, in Montréal, as we have seen, by the early twentieth century, the Irish-Catholics, at least the middle-classes and the élites, were integrating with the Anglo-Protestants of the city. Thus, the decision to be made in Montréal at the outset of World War I was not whether to support Ireland or the British Empire, whether those two

⁸⁸ Foster, *Modern Ireland*, p. 472.

⁸⁹ *The Gazette*, 12 September 1929.

⁹⁰ In September 1929, the 199th Overseas Battalion, Irish Canadian Rangers, a unit formed by the Irish of Montréal during World War I (more on this below) held a reunion in the city. Major M.J. McCrory, who fought in the Rangers, noted that one of the primary reasons for the formation of the unit was to prove the loyalty of the Irish to Canada. *The Gazette*, 12 September 1929.

loyalties were compatible or not, but, rather, how one would support Canada and its war efforts whilst still maintaining a loyalty to Ireland.⁹¹ Redmond provided the Montréal Irish-Catholics with a safe and easy route with his suspension of the campaign for Home Rule and his decision to support the war effort. The Montréal Irish had the best of both worlds, their loyalty to Canada would not and could not come into conflict with their loyalty to Redmond, the IPP, and/or Ireland. Indeed, the minutes of the St. Patrick's Society are full of declarations of support for Redmond and the IPP at the outbreak of World War I.⁹²

Meanwhile, the AOH was gaining in power and influence in both Canada and Ireland at the start of the second decade of the twentieth century. Whilst the AOH in Ireland was closely aligned with Redmond (like the North American branches), there was also a branch of the Irish AOH that was secretly assisting the IRB in the recruitment and training of the Irish Volunteers to defend the principle of Home Rule against the UVF, which advocated Unionism.⁹³ Officially, at least, the AOH continued to support Redmond.⁹⁴ The Montréal AOH, still centred in Griffintown and the Pointe, followed suit. As Regan notes, with “their swelling number of supports and members [after 1914],

⁹¹ *The Gazette*, 28 July 1916; *The Soldier's Gazette*, 3 August 1916; *The Gazette*, 3 July 1917.

⁹² See, for example, St. Patrick's Society of Montreal, Meeting Minutes, 1 May 1916, CUA, P026, Box HA 1540, St. Patrick's Society of Montreal Meeting Minutes, 1916-19.

⁹³ The UVF was formed in January 1913 as a paramilitary group opposed to Home Rule. At the very least, the UVF advocated partition, recognising that a campaign against Home Rule for all of Ireland would not gain much support in the Catholic south. With a membership of roughly 90,000, Alvin Jackson notes that the UVF was not just a physical threat, but a formidable political tool for Ulster Unionists. See, Foster, *Modern Ireland*, pp. 466-9; Alvin Jackson, “Ulster Volunteer Force,” *Oxford Companion*, ed. Connolly, pp. 563-4.

⁹⁴ John O'Byrne Ranelagh, *A Short History of Ireland* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp. 132-5.

both the Knights and Hibernians, testified to an active recruitment effort and a public statement of significant weight in support of Home Rule.”⁹⁵

The AOH’s ambivalence vis-à-vis republicanism had the potential to complicate matters for the Order, especially in Canada. Thus the AOH’s leadership went out of its way to demonstrate its loyalty to Canada. A week after a march in remembrance of the Manchester Martyrs⁹⁶ that attracted 1,200 Hibernians and their fellow-travellers in November 1915, the AOH leadership declared it was considering a break from the American AOH owing to the latter’s openly pro-German policy.⁹⁷ Just to make sure it was understood, in the 1916 St. Patrick’s Day parade, the AOH ensured that the red ensign was featured prominently. *The Gazette* sniffed that “in past years [the red ensign] had been conspicuous by its absence.”⁹⁸

Thus, by and large, the onset of the war and the shelving of Home Rule for its duration had not damaged Redmond’s stature in either Ireland or Montréal. He continued to receive support from both the more bourgeois St. Patrick’s Society and the working class AOH. A “mass meeting” at St. Ann’s Hall in support of both Redmond and the Canadian war effort on 12 September 1914, six weeks after the outbreak of war, demonstrates this. It was presided over by Charles J. Doherty, the federal minister of

⁹⁵ Regan, “Montreal’s St. Patrick’s Day parade,” p. 46.

⁹⁶ The Manchester Martyrs were William O’Meara Allen, Michael Larkin, and William O’Brien, hanged in Manchester in November 1867. They were arrested, tried, and convicted of murder arising from a daring attempt to break two Fenians, Thomas Kelly and Timothy Deasy, out of jail whilst being transported from the courthouse to the jailhouse in Manchester. Kelly and Deasy were freed, but an unarmed police sergeant accompanying them was killed in the raid. Neil Garnham, “Manchester Martyrs,” *Oxford Companion to Irish History*, ed. Connolly, p. 343.

⁹⁷ *The Gazette*, 22 November 1915; *The Gazette*, 2 December 1915. The American AOH was openly pro-German prior to the United States’ entry into the war on the side of the Allies in November 1917. See, O’Dea, *History of the Ancient Order, Vol. III*, p. 1504, for an example of the American AOH’s pro-Germanism.

⁹⁸ *The Gazette*, 20 March 1916.

Justice and Member of Parliament for St. Ann's. A smattering of Irish Canadian politicians, as well as a former mayor of an unnamed Irish city, were also on the dais.⁹⁹

The leadership of Montréal's Irish-Catholic community was also eager to clarify its loyalty to Canada in the war. In the immediate aftermath of the declaration of war, many Irish Montrealers of all class backgrounds enlisted in the Canadian Expeditionary Force (CEF), "[b]ut alas! through the perversities of the past and through reasons that few can explain, the Irish, the finest fighting race on the earth, had not a single regiment in the land."¹⁰⁰ To this end, at the close of August 1914, several weeks after the declaration of war on 4 August, a twelve-man committee was formed by the leadership of Montréal's Irish community to explore a means of filling this lacuna.

The committee was led by legendary Irish hockey player, and captain of the Montréal Shamrocks' two Stanley Cup-winning teams in 1899 and 1900, Harry Judah Trihey. Trihey, now 36 years old, was a successful Montréal lawyer, with a practice on Great St. James Street in the business core of Montréal.¹⁰¹ Doherty was also on the committee.¹⁰² The Canadian government, no doubt encouraged by Doherty, granted permission almost immediately to form a regiment. Trihey, who was to become the commanding officer, decided that the new regiment would be known as the 55th Regiment, Irish Canadian Rangers. Its Irishness would be unmistakable; the regimental badge featured shamrocks and harps, as did the caps and collars of the uniform.

⁹⁹ *The Gazette*, 14 September 1914.

¹⁰⁰ *The Irish Canadian Rangers* (Montréal: The Gazette Publishing Co., Ltd., 1916), p. 10.

¹⁰¹ See, Barlow, "'Scientific Aggression'" for greater detail about Trihey's biography and his hockey-playing career.

¹⁰² The full committee was composed of: Trihey, Doherty, M.J. McCrory, C.F. Smith, Rev. Gerald McShane of St. Patrick's (Rev. McShane was the son of former Montréal mayor and Griffintown politician, James "The People's Jimmy" McShane), W.M. Weir, W.P. O'Brien, James McCrory, Edgar Reynolds, W.P. Kearney, J.S. Dolan, and E.J. Mullally. *The Irish Canadian Rangers*, p. 12.

Moreover, Irish ancestry “shall be absolutely sine qua non. There will be no religious or other lines drawn, but the Regiment will be purely Irish Canadian in the best sense of the word.”¹⁰³ Finally, upon the advice of Rev. Fr. McShane of St. Patrick’s, the 55th Regiment would be used entirely for home defence.¹⁰⁴ Fr. McShane, for his part, preached Redmond’s message from the pulpit at St. Patrick’s each week, urging his parishioners to enlist for a just war.¹⁰⁵ As for Home Rule, Trihey and the organising committee, as well as the volunteers for the 55th, accepted that it was to be postponed until after the war.¹⁰⁶

The leaders of the Irish community of Montréal, most notably the clergy and the leadership of the 55th Regiment, continually exhorted their compatriots to enlist for this just war. And this they did. In 1915, the Irish Canadian Rangers formed a company for overseas service for the 60th Battalion of the CEF, “C” Company, commanded by E.H. Knox-Leet, a Dubliner who was a major in the 55th. The rate of recruitment for “C” Company matched that of the Victoria Rifles, Grenadier Guards, and the Westmount Rifles, three predominantly Anglo-Protestant regiments in Montréal raising companies for the CEF. The Rangers also contributed men to the Montréal Home Guard, which was comprised of men from all of the local regiments to guard strategic locations and installations in and around the city.¹⁰⁷

The experience in raising a unit for “C” Company convinced the leadership of the Irish-Catholic community of Montréal, including those involved in the 55th Regiment, in

¹⁰³ *The Gazette*, 2 September 1914.

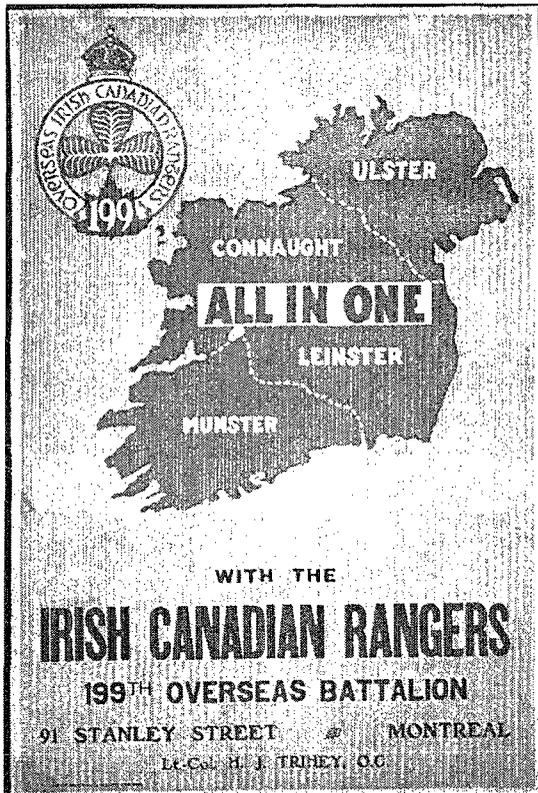
¹⁰⁴ *The Gazette*, 8 September 1914.

¹⁰⁵ Robin B. Burns, “The Montreal Irish and the Great War,” *Historical Studies* (1985), pp. 68-9.

¹⁰⁶ Terence J. Fay, *A History of Canadian Catholics: Gallicanism, Romanism, and Canadianism* (Montréal: McGill-Queens University Press, 2002), p. 172.

¹⁰⁷ *The Gazette*, 24 June 1915; Burns, “The Montreal Irish,” p. 69.

late 1915, that it was time to raise a battalion for service in the CEF. Authorisation was granted by the Canadian government in February 1916 for the 199th Overseas Battalion, Irish Canadian Rangers, to be formed. Like the 55th, the 199th was designed to be a non-sectarian Irish-Canadian battalion. Indeed, a “monster demonstration” was held at Windsor Hall by both the St. Patrick’s Society and the Irish-Protestant Benevolent Association in support of the 199th’s recruitment drive. The non-sectarianism of the 199th can be seen in one of its first recruitment posters (figure 3.2), which shows a map of all of Ireland, with the four provinces identified and the text “All in One” across the top. Like the 55th Regiment, the 199th Battalion was to be commanded by Trihey, who had attained the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel by now.¹⁰⁸



¹⁰⁸ *The Irish Canadian Rangers*, pp. 24-5. Quote taken from p. 24.

Figure 3.2: Recruitment poster for the 199th Overseas Battalion, Irish Canadian Rangers, 1916.
Credit: Library and Archives Canada, Acc. No. 1983-28-888.

The 199th Battalion was then set to begin its recruitment campaign in the spring of 1916. Burns notes that if the campaign were to have had a “theme, it was Irish unity, the unity that had been achieved by Irishmen in Canada.” Indeed, the meeting between the St. Patrick’s Society and the Irish-Protestant Benevolent Association at Windsor Hall in January 1916 to raise funds for the 199th was the first time the two groups had met together in nearly sixty years.¹⁰⁹

The recruitment poster in Figure 3.2 was also directed at Ireland itself, a message from Canada to the homeland, about the need for unity during wartime. Indeed, this did nothing more than echo Redmond’s mantra as the war dragged on and Home Rule was continually postponed. Redmond’s weakness, however, was the IRB’s strength and its leadership capitalised on its power, leading to the 1916 Easter Rising in Dublin. The Rising, which began on Easter Monday, 24 April, lasted for six days before Pádraig Pearse called upon his troops to surrender. The Rising caused an impressive amount of casualties, with the rebels suffering 64 deaths, as compared to 132 British soldiers and policemen. But 318 civilians, more than the combined total of combatants, were killed in the crossfire and the pounding of the General Post Office (GPO), which was the centre of the rebellion, with heavy artillery by the British.¹¹⁰ Following the surrender of the rebels, the British response was quick and brutal; martial law was imposed and the leaders of the

¹⁰⁹ *The Gazette*, 14 April 1916; *Montreal Star*, 14 April 1916; *Montreal Star*, 22 April 1916; *Montreal Star*, 24 April 1916; *The Gazette*, 18 July 1916; Burns, “The Montreal Irish,” p. 72.

¹¹⁰ David Fitzpatrick argues, rather crankily, that “[t]he main victims of the ‘proclamation of the Irish Republic were thus unarmed civilians, whose suffering was compounded by the wreckage of central Dublin, widespread looting, disruption of employment, and interruption of postal service.” David Fitzpatrick, “Ireland Since 1870,” *The Oxford History of Ireland*, ed. R.F. Foster (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), p. 198. What Fitzpatrick overlooks, however, is that the heavy artillery was primarily that of the British, not the rebels. As well, the “widespread looting” was carried out not by the British or rebel soldiers, but by the civilians themselves.

insurrection were executed, oftentimes in brutal fashion.¹¹¹ Perhaps this is not so surprising, given that the rising had come in the midst of war. But what the Easter Rising had done was to radically change the political-nationalist landscape of Ireland and large parts of the diaspora.¹¹² And Montréal was no different.

The 199th Overseas Canadian Battalion, Irish Canadian Rangers, began its public recruitment campaign, by coincidence, on Monday, 24 April 1916, as the drama was unfolding in Dublin. News of the rising hit Montréal the next day. Montréal's Irish-Catholics responded immediately. On Wednesday, 26 April, the *Montreal Star's* headline screamed: "Few Rebels are Only Small Part of Irish Race – Local Irishmen Deprecate Action of a Few Renegades in Dublin – Irishmen at Front Tell the True Story."¹¹³ Right above this headline was an editorial cartoon of Kaiser Wilhelm of Germany as a snake being held up by a hand with "Ireland" cufflinks, showing the harp

¹¹¹ The socialist leader James Connolly, for example, had been gravely wounded in the fighting at the GPO. In order to be executed by firing squad at Kilmainham Jail, he had to first be strapped to a chair as he was unable to stand up. Peter Collins, "Connolly, James," *The Oxford Companion to Irish History*, ed. Connolly, p. 111.

¹¹² Fitzpatrick, "Ireland Since 1870," pp. 198-201.

¹¹³ This last point was taken up by Irish novelist Sebastian Barry, whose 2005 novel, *A Long, Long Way* (shortlisted for the Man Booker Prize) tells the story of Private Willie Dunne, a Catholic lad from Dublin who enlisted in the BEF in 1914 and served overseas in Belgium and France in the Royal Dublin Fusiliers. One of the subplots of the novel follows Willie as he tries to make sense of the apparently sudden rise of nationalism from his vantage point on the continent. Home on a furlough in April 1916, he is pressed into action against the rebels at the GPO whilst on his way back to the Dublin harbour before being shipped back to France. Willie is thoroughly confused at the actions at the GPO, he does not understand the rebels, nor why he is being made to fight and kill them. Back at the front on the continent, Willie spends a good deal of time trying to understand what happened in Dublin and why he is fighting on the continent, and what this new nationalism in Ireland means. In the end, Willie becomes completely ambivalent towards the rapidly changing situation in Ireland, sympathetic to the nationalists (which alienates him from his father, who was the Chief Superintendent of the Dublin Police and lived in the Dublin Castle), whilst at the same time remaining loyal to the cause of a just war against the Germans. Barry dedicated the novel to Roy Foster, and it is not hard to see why, given Barry's ambivalent view of Irish nationalism and the IRB in the World War I era, and even if Willie comes around to have some sympathy for this view by the end of the novel, Barry's apparent suspicion remains clear throughout. Sebastian Barry, *A Long, Long Way* (Toronto: Penguin, 2005).

of the Irish flag. The snake dangles between the Irish and British flags. The caption reads: “A snake has been found in Ireland at last.”¹¹⁴

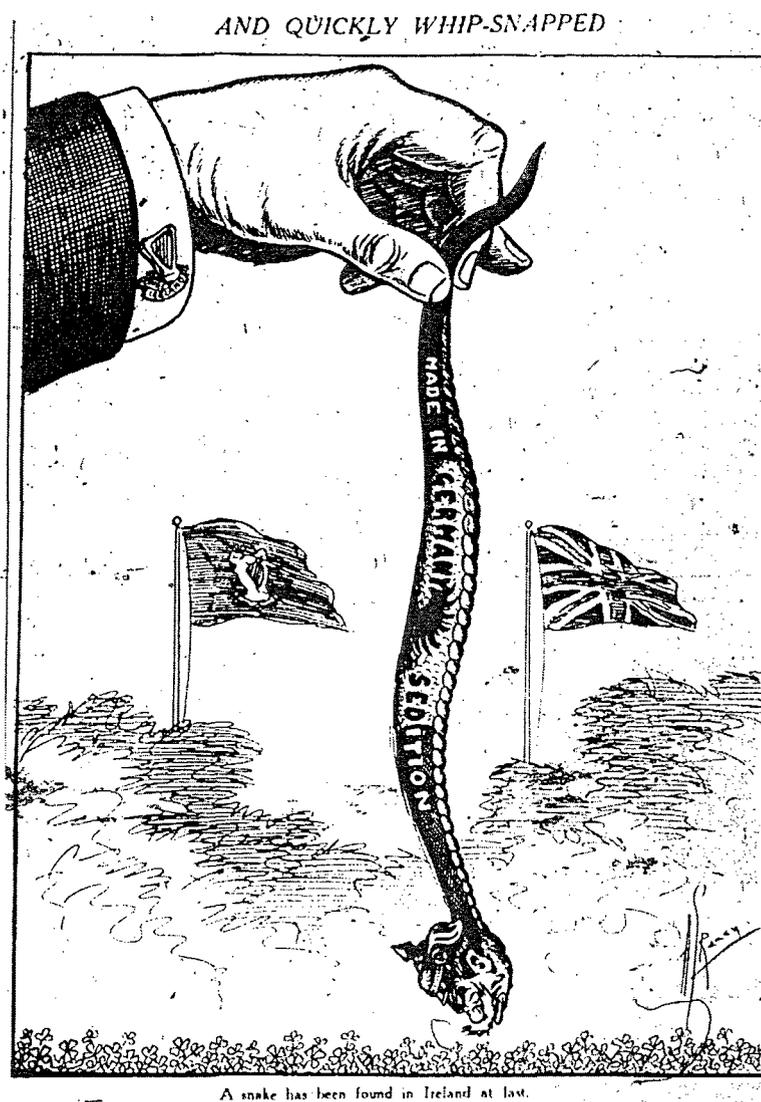


Figure 3.3: Editorial cartoon on front page of *Montreal Star*, 26 April 1916, two days after the Easter Rising began in Dublin.

Meanwhile, Montréal’s Irish-Catholic community attempted to distance itself from the actions of the IRB in Dublin. A public meeting was held at Windsor Hall on 26 April, where “representative Celts,” including Charles Doherty and J.J. Guerin, spoke out

¹¹⁴ *Montreal Star*, 26 April 1916.

against the rebels.¹¹⁵ The St. Patrick's Society convened an emergency meeting to express its support of Redmond. There was a split of opinion, with many speakers advocating that the society proceed slowly and cautiously in these dangerous times. Indeed, E. Curry noted that "[w]e have only heard one side of the affair [i.e.: the British]." Others, such as T.P. Tansey, however, were less measured: "Let us voice our feelings now. Tonight – but in a way which no Irishman shall suffer for what we shall say. John Redmond wants us to send a message now, not next week." Finally, the society appointed a three-man committee to draft and send the cable.¹¹⁶

But this was the response of the more genteel sections of the Irish-Catholic community of Montréal. The AOH, at its national convention in Boston that summer, withdrew its support from Redmond and the IPP, feeling that Home Rule was no longer a viable option in the wake of the Easter Rising.¹¹⁷ And, of course, as we have already seen, a faction of the AOH in Ireland (and by implication, the AOH in Canada and the United States) had worked with the IRB in training and arming its members.¹¹⁸ In Griffintown, however, the response was one of decided ambivalence.

¹¹⁵ *The Soldier's Gazette*, 27 April 1916.

¹¹⁶ St. Patrick's Society of Montreal, Meeting Minutes, 1 May 1916, CUA, P026, Box HA 1540, St. Patrick's Society of Montreal Meeting Minutes, 1916-19; *The Soldier's Gazette*, 4 May 1916.

¹¹⁷ In the aftermath of the GPO Rising, Asquith, attempting to out-manoeuvre his rival, David Lloyd George, for power, left the latter to come up with, and push through Parliament, a new Home Rule settlement. Lloyd George proposed a Home Rule Bill which would see the exclusion of the six Protestant counties of Ulster for the duration of the war. Lloyd George told Redmond that this was a temporary situation, whilst he told Edward Carson, the leader of the Ulster Unionists, that it was an indeterminate exclusion from Home Rule for the six counties. This won the support of Carson and the Unionists. And whilst the Catholic Church, especially in the north, was opposed, for perhaps obvious reasons, this imperfect version of Home Rule gained the support of both northern nationalists and Ulster Unionists. It was scuttled, however, when southern unionists, led by the Marquess of Lansdowne, opposed. This led to the collapse of Lloyd George's Home Rule plans, and ultimately, to the collapse of the IPP, to say nothing of the British government's desire to settle the Irish question before the end of the war. Fitzpatrick, "Ireland Since 1870," p. 200.

¹¹⁸ Ranelagh, *Short History*, pp. 132-5. See, also, Regan, "Montreal's St. Patrick's Day parade," p. 44.

In total, some 1,040 men volunteered to serve with the 199th Overseas Battalion, Irish Canadian Rangers. Of these, attestation papers can be found in the National Archives for 926 volunteers, 716 of whom were from Montréal. The remainder gave home addresses in Ireland, England, the United States, and various locations around Montréal, including the Eastern Townships and Ottawa. Of those who gave home addresses in Ireland and England, it is apparent that they had been in Montréal for some time, as they tended to have already enlisted in the 55th Regiment. It is also worth noting that over 13 per cent of the enlistees from Montréal gave either “Montreal, Quebec” or the barracks of another battalion in the city as their home address. Nonetheless, close to 25 per cent of the Montréal recruits from the 199th hailed from Griffintown and Pointe-Saint-Charles. Another 10 per cent came from Little Burgundy and Saint-Henri. Moreover, whereas the ranks of the 199th were filled out by a good number of Englishmen, as well as Scots, French Canadians, and four Jews, the enlistees from Griffintown and the Pointe all had Irish surnames, except for two French Canadians, one each from the Griff and Pointe-Saint-Charles.¹¹⁹ In addition, the 199th was overwhelmingly working-class in nature. Of the Montréal-based enlistees, no fewer than 78 per cent were working-class, meaning they performed manual labour, including all but three of the enlistees from the Griff and Pointe-Saint-Charles. The bulk of the rest were lower middle-class, predominantly clerks. Thus, the working-class Irish-Catholics of Griffintown appear to have come out in support of the Canadian war effort.

¹¹⁹ The attestation papers of the men who enlisted for the 199th Overseas Battalion, Irish Canadian Rangers, can be found at the LAC, RG 150, Accession 1992-3/166. The records were found using the LAC’s on-line search engine of the records of the soldiers of the First World War, accessible at: <http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/databases/cef/001042-100.01-e.php> (accessed 14 August 2008).

These numbers also do not take into account the over one thousand men who were rejected for medical reasons by the 199th by July 1916. In part, the high rejection rate arose out of the 199th's insistence upon recruiting only men of the highest physical condition, at least according to the battalion's propaganda.¹²⁰ Owing to the rate of rejection, and mindful of the sensibilities of working-class manliness, the 199th began to distribute buttons that said "I Offered To Serve" to rejected applicants. These buttons, however, were handed out discriminately, "only to those who pass all other examinations except as to medical fitness." By the autumn, upwards of 75 per cent of all volunteers were being rejected.¹²¹ This rate of rejection reflects the general ill-health of the working class in Montréal. Indeed, the city's working-class slums such as Griffintown had, amongst other things, a death rate that was more than double that of the more genteel parts of the city.¹²²

When the 199th opened up its recruiting stations at the end of April 1916, three of them were located in the west end of downtown, in addition to the barracks on Stanley Street. The fourth, and final, recruiting station was at 35 Chaboillez Square, Griffintown.¹²³ A recruiting tent was also erected on Victoria Square, on the northeastern

¹²⁰ See, *The Soldier's Gazette*, 4 May 1916; *The Soldier's Gazette*, 18 May 1916; *The Soldier's Gazette*, 1 June 1916; *The Soldier's Gazette*, 8 June 1916; *The Soldier's Gazette*, 15 June 1916. The reality is more likely that the 199th was not so judicious in its selection of volunteers, especially in the latter stages of recruitment. Following basic training at Valcartier in the autumn of 1916, the CEF's Inspector-General was not impressed by the 199th, concluding that "[o]n the whole the unit is only fit for drafts [meaning that the men would be plugged into other units as needed on the frontlines] and will require a lot of work to make them fit at that." "Report of the Annual Inspection, 1916, of the 199th Overseas Battalion, C.E.F.," 21 November 1916, LAC, RG 150, Series 1, Vol. 103.

¹²¹ *The Gazette*, 31 July 1916; *The Soldier's Gazette*, 3 August 1916; Burns, "The Montreal Irish," pp. 74-5.

¹²² Terry Copp, *The Anatomy of Poverty: The Condition of the Working Class in Montreal, 1897-1929* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1974), pp. 88-102.

¹²³ *The Gazette*, 29 April 1916.

fringe of Griffintown, in May 1916.¹²⁴ All of this suggested that Griffintown was important to the recruiting strategy of the 199th Overseas Battalion. It should also be noted that the other three recruiting stations, as well as the barracks, were a short walk up the hill from Griffintown.



Figure 3.4: Recruitment poster for the 199th Overseas Battalion, *Irish Canadian Rangers*, 1916. Source: *Library and Archives Canada, Acc. No. 1983-28-886*.

The 199th also travelled into Griffintown often in its recruiting campaign. The first such sortie occurred on the first day of the recruitment campaign, Easter Monday 1916, as fighting erupted at the GPO in Dublin. On this day, the recruiting agents for the 199th visited the Fairyland Theatre in Griffintown. Indeed, the Fairyland became a

¹²⁴ *The Soldier's Gazette*, 25 May 1916.

popular location for recruitment speeches by the officers of the 199th.¹²⁵ St. Ann's Hall on Ottawa Street in the Griff was also central to the recruitment campaign. Four days after the 199th began recruiting, it and the St. Ann's Young Men's Society held a "smoker," "an athletic and musical entertainment in St. Ann's Hall, Ottawa street."¹²⁶ Figure 3.4 shows a recruitment poster the Rangers used to entice "sportsmen" to join its ranks, claiming to be the "Sportsmen's Company."

A few months later, in July 1916, a mass rally was held on Gallery Square, across from St. Ann's Church. A crowd of 4,000, predominantly women and children, gathered in front of the dais, but things did not go so well at first. The crowd was hostile to the 199th, continually interrupting the speakers, and nearly shouting down Doherty, their Member of Parliament. The discussion centred not around recruiting for the 199th and the Canadian war effort, but Home Rule for Ireland. The meeting, which was to serve as a farewell for Trihey before he left for training at Valcartier, was saved by Charles Fitzpatrick, the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Canada. Fitzpatrick argued, quite passionately, that the best means for attaining Home Rule was through the democratic process and that the best thing an Irish Canadian could do was to volunteer and fight at the front against German oppression and belligerence. And, he also noted that Canada had been good to the Irish, pointing to himself, an Irishman as Chief Justice. Trihey, when he took the microphone, noted that the 199th remained understaffed, not through a want of courage on the part of the Irish of Griffintown, but owing to a lack of understanding of the need for men to fight. This rally, then, was to persuade the women who attended to convince their brothers, husbands, sons, and friends of their men, to

¹²⁵ *The Soldier's Gazette*, 27 April 1916; *The Soldier's Gazette*, 4 May 1916.

¹²⁶ *The Gazette*, 29 April 1916; *The Soldier's Gazette*, 4 May 1916.

enlist.¹²⁷ The outcome of the meeting also indicates the level of politicisation in Griffintown vis-à-vis the war and Home Rule for Ireland, as it was the women who attended the meeting who shouted down Doherty.

The rest of the history of the 199th Overseas Battalion, Irish Canadian Rangers, is not a particularly happy one. Britain's Colonial Secretary, Andrew Bonar Law, who was born in New Brunswick, required that Canadian Prime Minister Borden send the Rangers on a tour of Ireland to boost recruiting efforts there. The 199th left for England, first, in December 1916, before continuing on to Ireland in late January 1917. By then, Lt.-Col. Trihey had learned that his battalion was going to be broken up and fed into the front lines as reinforcements, rather than serving together, as both he and the Canadian government had been promised by the British, who had ultimate control over the CEF and its battalions. This was not a policy directed at the 199th; rather, it reflected British policy towards all new battalions by late 1916. Trihey, though, was furious; he resigned his commission¹²⁸ and returned home to Montréal.¹²⁹ Meanwhile, the enlisted men were transferred to the 22nd and 23rd Reserve Battalions of the CEF and fed into the front lines as necessary.¹³⁰

Upon his return to Montréal, Trihey remained incensed at the British. He published a scathing letter to the editor in the *New York Post* upon a visit to Manhattan in

¹²⁷ *The Gazette*, 28 July 1916; *The Soldier's Gazette*, 3 August 1916.

¹²⁸ Bonar Law to Borden, 30 October 1916, LAC, MG 26 H, Vol. 85, File OC418; Borden to Bonar Law, 2 November 1916, LAC, MG 26 H, Vol. 85, File OC418; *The Gazette*, 3 July 1917; Burns, "The Montreal Irish," pp. 75-6.

¹²⁹ Trihey's Westmount home at 667 Belmont burned down shortly after he and the 199th left for England in December 1916. He returned home to find his wife and children living in a set of suites at the Ritz Carlton Hotel until their home could be rebuilt. *Lovell's Montreal City Directory*, 1915-16 and 1918-19, on the Bibliothèque et archives nationales du Québec's website <http://bibnum2.bnquebec.ca/bna/lovell/index.html> (accessed 18 June 2008); Burns, "The Montreal Irish," p. 75.

¹³⁰ "Report: Irish-Canadian Rangers," n.d., LAC, RG 24, C-8, Vol. 4461, pt. 1.

1917, which was eventually republished in *The Gazette* and in translation in *Le Canada*. In it, Trihey blasted the British decision to split up the 199th and noted that Irish Montrealers had enlisted in the battalion, even after learning of the outcome of the 1916 Rising in Dublin and the brutal British response. He went on:

Today the Irish-Canadian knows of the Irish-Canadian regiment, that Irish-Canadian loyalty organized to symbolize itself in Canada's effort for the freedom of small nations. He realizes what he formerly heard, but did not appreciate[:] that Ireland is under martial law, and is occupied by an English army. He reads in the press that English soldiers in Dublin and Cork with rifle and machine gun fight those of his kinsmen who believe Ireland to be a small nation worthy of freedom. He wonders if the conscripting of 100,000 more Canadians would still be necessary if the 150,000 men comprising the English army in Ireland were sent to fight, in France. He also wonders where Canadians now may best maintain the war purpose vital to Canada – small nations must be free.

Trihey, perhaps in an attempt to be conciliatory, concluded that “[i]f conscription becomes law of course Irish-Canadians will loyally observe the law, for they are Canadians.”¹³¹ Nonetheless, Trihey's words were incendiary in Canadian political circles. The military authorities in Ottawa thought his commentary to be seditious and moved to prosecute. Fortunately for Trihey, however, he had friends in high places and Doherty intervened to prevent any legal action from being taken.¹³²

Trihey's diatribe, however, is interesting for more than its seditious sentiment, not the least of which is that he initially submitted his letter to a New York paper. This suggests that he had some idea as to the controversial nature of his commentary; but he also had to know that it would be picked up and re-printed in Montréal. But what is more important is how Trihey characterises the Irish of Canada, and his former soldiers, many of whom hailed from Griffintown. They were Canadian first and foremost, though they

¹³¹ *The Gazette*, 3 July 1917.

¹³² Burns, “The Montreal Irish,” p. 77.

still had a very firm interest in Ireland and Irish affairs. He notes that despite the brutality of the British response to the Easter Rising, Irish Montrealers had still enlisted, or tried to, in the 199th Overseas Battalion. But Trihey also connects the Montréal Irish back to the imagined (and suddenly very real for the men of the battalion) Ireland and the plight of their “kinsmen” there. More than this, however, Trihey wonders how the Irish Canadian feels knowing that there were 150,000 *English* (as opposed to British) soldiers in Ireland, subduing the rebellion, when the Canadian government was about to enact conscription in order to raise 100,000 more men to fight in France and Belgium.

The multiplicity of identities of the (male) Irish Montrealer seem pretty clear here: he was first and foremost a Canadian, but his ties back to the homeland were undeniable. In short, the Irish of Montréal, including these working-class men of the 199th and their families and friends back home in the Griff, were in a spot that encouraged ambivalence. They were not necessarily caught between competing loyalties to two nations, but there was also a symbiotic relationship between their identities as both Irish and Canadian; each informed the other. The Irish were no longer an immigrant group, they were Canadians. And even if Trihey was a member of the Irish-Catholic élite of Montréal, his letter reflected a common point-of-view of the Irish in Montréal. And this common view was formed through the common experience in the Irish-Canadian Rangers, in the interaction between the Commanding Officer and the enlisted men, many of whom came from Griffintown.

V. Conscription & the 1917 General Election in Griffintown

In a rather ironic twist, Charles Doherty, the federal Minister of Justice, intervened to save his friend, Trihey, from prosecution for sedition for, in part, questioning the wisdom of conscription in Canada. The irony lay in the fact that, as Minister of Justice, the member for St. Ann's was responsible for both introducing the conscription bill into Parliament, as well as for its enforcement upon passage. When Liberal leader Sir Wilfrid Laurier refused to join Borden in a Unionist government, largely owing to the overwhelming opposition to conscription from French-speaking Québec, an election was called for 17 December 1917. The Liberals split, with the majority of them from outside of Québec joining up with Borden and the new Unionist government, whilst the rump of the Liberal party contested the election on an anti-conscription platform, under Laurier's leadership.

In St. Ann's, Doherty represented the Unionists. The Liberals, perhaps reflecting the disorder in that party, initially had two candidates in the riding. The first was former Liberal Member of Parliament for St. Ann's, and former city councillor (and at least one-time member of the AOH), Daniel Gallery. The second was J.J. Guerin, a physician and former mayor of Montréal. In fact, Guerin, who was mayor from 1910-12 was the last Anglophone mayor of the city. The Liberals, however, ultimately refused to recognise Gallery's nomination and backed Guerin. Gallery then campaigned under a "Labour-Liberal" banner but was, for all intents and purposes, an independent.¹³³

The election campaign in St. Ann's and, especially, Griffintown was carried out against the backdrop of events in Ireland, which saw David Lloyd George come to power in Britain, supported by Edward Carson and the Ulster Unionists, with the latter in

¹³³ *The Gazette*, 26 November 1917; Burns, "The Montreal Irish," p. 78.

cabinet.¹³⁴ This led to further discussions of partition in Ireland which, no doubt, caught the eye of the Montréal Irish.¹³⁵ Meanwhile, the AOH was emboldened. In 1917, the AOH had refused to enter St. Patrick's on St. Patrick's Day because Fr. McShane had the red ensign on display, arguing, oddly, that it was a symbol of imperialism. The AOH also protested against the presence of the 55th Regiment, Irish Canadian Rangers, in the parade because they were in uniform. Regan notes that such militancy on the part of the AOH should not be all that surprising, given that it had withdrawn support for Redmond the year before: "The objection to a Canadian (and therefore British Imperial) presence in the parade was consistent with the now militantly republican position of the Order."¹³⁶ Not only that, but the AOH would also have seen these Irish-Canadian soldiers as being antithetical to the cause of an independent Ireland; they were the anti-Irish Irishmen in the eyes of the AOH.

Radicals in the Montréal community would also have been encouraged in the aftermath to the death of Redmond's younger brother, William, in action in Belgium. William Redmond had been the Member of Parliament for East Clare in Ireland, and in the by-election to replace him in the summer of 1917, the seat was won by Eamon de Valera of Sinn Féin. De Valera had been amongst the rebels at the GPO the previous spring,¹³⁷ and his 1917 election was the third successive by-election victory for Sinn Féin

¹³⁴ Despite being an Ulster Unionist, Carson was Dublin-born and represented a Dublin riding for most of his parliamentary career, from 1892-1918. From 1918-21, he represented a riding in Belfast. Carson was the First Lord of the Admiralty from December 1916 to July 1917, when he joined Lloyd George's cabinet as Minister Without Portfolio. He resigned from cabinet in January 1918 when he learned that Lloyd George was working on a Home Rule Bill for all of Ireland. Foster, *Modern Ireland*, p. 465, n.

¹³⁵ Burns, "The Montreal Irish," p. 78.

¹³⁶ *The Gazette*, 26 March 1917; Regan, "Montreal's St. Patrick's Day parade," p. 47. Quote taken from Regan.

¹³⁷ De Valera had been the commander at Boland's Mills in Dublin at Easter 1916 and the last of the rebel commanders to surrender. He was imprisoned, tried, convicted, and sentenced to death. His

in Ireland, which also reflected the decline of the elder Redmond and constitutional nationalism in Ireland in general. And it also reflected a radicalisation of at least part of the Irish population, which benefitted Sinn Féin.¹³⁸

Lloyd George's inclusion of Carson in his government, and the continued talk of partition in Ireland, as well as Lloyd George's repeated failure to deliver on a Home Rule Bill for Ireland riled the Irish-Catholics of Montréal, especially in Griffintown. In the spring of 1917, a mass meeting was held at St. Ann's Hall, where resolutions were passed calling upon Borden, then in England attending to imperial war matters, to deliver a message of the great disappointment of the Griffintown Irish in Lloyd George to the man himself.¹³⁹

The 1917 election campaign in St. Ann's Ward was a rowdy one, even by Griffintown standards.¹⁴⁰ Candidate meetings were broken up with regularity by armed goon squads. When the candidates did get to speak, they were routinely shouted down and insulted, all three of them. A police presence was required for nearly all meetings, not that this was always helpful. Mindful of Griffintown's reputation as a tough neighbourhood, the police oftentimes stood by helplessly when violence broke out. Aside from the Irish context, the campaign in Griffintown was carried out against the backdrop of massive public disapproval for conscription in Montréal and Québec as a

death sentence, however, was commuted, and he was released from prison in 1917, just in time to contest the East Clare by-election. Foster, *Modern Ireland*, p. 485.

¹³⁸ Foster, *Modern Ireland*, pp. 488-90.

¹³⁹ *Ireland*, 7 May 1917.

¹⁴⁰ Griffintown, which had previously been part of the riding of Montréal West, had been home to two of the most brutal election campaigns in Canadian history, in 1832 and 1867. Most election campaigns in Griffintown in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries involved some degree of violence and skulduggery, at least if "Banjo" Frank Hanley is to be believed. Hanley was the city councillor for St. Ann's Ward and its Member of the National Assembly in Québec for most of the middle decades of the twentieth century. "Banjo" Frank Hanley, in *Ghosts of Griffintown: Stories of an Irish Neighbourhood*, DVD, Richard Burman, dir., Burman Productions, 2003.

whole, especially in francophone ridings, which surrounded Griffintown and St. Ann's. Indeed, on 24 May 1917, before the election campaign had begun, a massive riot against conscription broke out in downtown Montréal, when some 15,000 protesters turned violent, breaking windows, looting, and assaulting soldiers.¹⁴¹

Doherty argued that conscription was necessary in order to raise enough men to finish the job fighting the Germans that had begun in 1914. If conscription were not enacted, Doherty warned, Canada would have to withdraw before the job was done. In French Canada, an ambivalent tone was struck in response. Indeed, Henri Bourassa argued that “Le Canada aurait pu intervenir comme nation, lié à l’Angleterre par des attaches politiques, et à la France par des motifs de sentiment et d’intérêt, sans compromettre en rien son état politique,” though there was nothing in this debate which meant that Canada had “aucune sorte d’obligation morale ou légale de participer à la guerre [et] tenir compte des conditions particulières, des intérêts vitaux qu’il doit sauvegarder comme pays d’Amérique avant lier sort à celui des nations d’Europe.”¹⁴² In Irish-Catholic Griffintown, the matter was seen somewhat differently.

Guerin, for his part, maintained his loyalty to Laurier. Casting doubts on Borden’s *bona fides* as a Canadian patriot, and capitalising on a familiar trope of Canadian politics, Guerin suggested that Borden took his marching orders from 10 Downing Street, London. According to Guerin, conscription was being introduced in Canada because Lloyd George had demanded it. Guerin, appealing to the working-classes of the riding, argued that the Liberal Party of Canada was the party of the people

¹⁴¹ J.M. Bumsted, *The Peoples of Canada: A Post-Confederation History*, 2nd ed. (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 2004), p. 197.

¹⁴² *Le Devoir*, 5 August 1916. See, also, Yvan Lamonde, *Histoire sociale des idées au Québec, Tome II: 1896-1929* (Montréal: Fides, 2004), p. 40.

and that the Conservatives protected the bosses. The colonial context was also raised by Guerin, who compared Laurier's principled anti-conscription stand, even if it meant the loss of the election, to that of Redmond in Ireland. Moreover, one of Guerin's Liberal colleagues suggested that Borden's conscription policy was akin to British coercion in Ireland.¹⁴³

Finally, there was Daniel Gallery. Lacking the support of a national party, and running as an independent, Gallery was left to focus on local issues and to try to fall back on his record as a public servant in Griffintown/St. Ann's. On the campaign trail, he recalled his term as Member of Parliament for St. Ann's fondly, noting his public service and work for his constituents. This allowed him to mock Doherty as being too distracted and too focussed on national issues as Minister of Justice to focus on the riding. He also supported Laurier's anti-conscription platform. However, Gallery was frequently heckled on the campaign trail. He was accused of taking money from the Unionists to run against Guerin to split the vote, a charge he vehemently, and repeatedly, denied. At one rally, Gallery stated that "[w]hen you build a house you need an architect." A voice in the back of the crowd yelled, perhaps not understanding the process of constructing a house, "You need a foundation first," whilst another yelled "Not in Griffintown!"¹⁴⁴

Gallery was never a credible candidate in St. Ann's in 1917, despite his long service to the community and his long-time residence in Griffintown. In fact, Gallery was the only one of the three candidates to actually live in the riding.¹⁴⁵ He was never a

¹⁴³ Burns, "The Montreal Irish," p. 79.

¹⁴⁴ *The Gazette*, 26 November 1917.

¹⁴⁵ Doherty lived on St. James Street, Guerin on Dorchester Boulevard (now boulevard René-Lévesque), whilst Gallery lived at 162 Young Street in the Griff. *Lovell's Montreal City Directory, 1917-18*, on the Bibliothèque et archives nationales du Québec's website, <http://bibnum2.bnquebec.ca/bna/lovell/index.html> (accessed 18 June 2008).

threat to split the anti-Unionist vote. He garnered a scant 319 votes on 17 December 1917. Guerin collected 4,416, but the riding was Doherty's going away, as he collected almost 4,000 more votes than Guerin, for a total of 8,436.¹⁴⁶ This was his largest-ever margin of victory.¹⁴⁷

This leads Robin Burns to conclude that:

St. Ann's, the Montreal constituency popularly associated with the Irish of that city, voted for the Unionist government and conscription in 1917. It became one of three ridings in Quebec to elect Unionists in the most divisive of Canadian general elections.¹⁴⁸

Burns goes on to ask rhetorically

[h]ad the Montreal Irish really voted for the Union government and conscription? With only 16% of the constituency¹⁴⁹ could their votes be identified? According to the *Montreal Gazette* they could. In a poll-by-poll, street-by-street analysis, the newspaper claimed that Guerin had obtained the bulk of his support from French Canadian areas and that Doherty won the Irish vote.¹⁵⁰

Burns, however, is quick off the mark here. *The Gazette* does not state that Guerin received the French Canadian and Doherty the Irish vote. Rather, the newspaper reports that Guerin had done well in "the three polls in the stronghold of the French Canadians in

¹⁴⁶ Parliament of Canada's website, "History of Federal Ridings since 1867," <http://www.parl.gc.ca/information/about/process/house/hfer/hfer.asp?Language=E&Search=Det&Include=Y&rid=1263> (accessed 18 April 2008).

¹⁴⁷ Granted, however, that Doherty had won the riding in a 1911 by-election by acclamation after a disputed campaign during the 1911 general election that saw him win the riding by 753 votes. In 1908, when he was first elected, he had a majority of only 70 votes. See, Parliament of Canada's website, "History of Federal Ridings since 1867," <http://www.parl.gc.ca/information/about/process/house/hfer/hfer.asp?Language=E&Search=Det&Include=Y&rid=1263> (accessed 18 April 2008).

¹⁴⁸ Burns, "The Montreal Irish," p. 80. The other two Unionists elected in Québec were Sir Herbert Brown Ames in Saint-Antoine, a toney riding up the hill from St. Ann's, and C.C. Ballantyne in Saint-Laurent-Saint-Georges, on the Plateau Mont-Royal in Montréal. Both Saint-Antoine and Saint-Laurent-Saint-Georges were predominantly Anglophone ridings in 1917. Brian Young and John A. Dickinson, *A Short History of Quebec*, 3rd ed. (Montréal: McGill-Queens University Press, 2003), p. 254.

¹⁴⁹ Acknowledging that only 16 per cent of St. Ann's riding was Irish is rather disingenuous on the part of Burns, as it contradicts his earlier contention that the riding was Irish.

¹⁵⁰ Burns, "The Montreal Irish," p. 80.

the old section of St. Ann's, located in Barre, Seigneurs, and West Notre Dame street."¹⁵¹

This area, of course, is the extreme western end of Griffintown.

St. Ann's Ward had been gerrymandered in 1917,¹⁵² and a large section of St. Gabriel's ward (the western portion of Pointe-Saint-Charles) and Verdun were added to the riding. These two sections voted massively in favour of Doherty.¹⁵³ In the old riding of St. Ann's, which more or less comprised St. Ann's Ward, largely Griffintown, Pointe-Saint-Charles, as well as Goose Village and the Flats, Guerin won, though by a scant 164 votes over Doherty, before the military votes are factored in. Gallery failed to mount a serious challenge at all, "even in his old stronghold of Griffintown."¹⁵⁴ In Griffintown proper, Guerin carried the vote, according to *The Gazette*. There, Guerin outpolled Doherty by a margin of 1,356 votes to 647, with Gallery mustering the majority of his votes in the election in Griffintown, 197. In the core of Irish-Catholic Griffintown, on the

¹⁵¹ *The Gazette*, 18 December 1917.

¹⁵² Gerrymandering was one of the set of dirty tricks carried out by the Bordenites in 1917. In the lead up to the election, Borden's Unionists promised to exempt farmers' sons from conscription, a promise that was immediately broken. Then the *Military Voters Act* gave the vote to all members of the CEF and armed forces, irrespective of gender, length of residence in Canada, or even citizenship. Finally, the *Wartime Voters Act* gave the vote to all female relatives (mothers, daughters, sisters, wives) who had reached the age of majority of men in the CEF and disenfranchised all conscientious objectors and immigrants who had arrived in Canada since 1902, irrespective of citizenship. Margaret Gordon, a physician and president of the Canadian Suffrage Association, charged that "it would have been more direct and at the same time more honest if the bill simply stated that all who did not pledge themselves to vote Conservative would be disenfranchised." See, Alvin Finkel, Margaret Conrad, and Veronica Strong-Boag, *History of the Canadian Peoples, Vol. II: 1867 to Present* (Toronto: Copp, Clark, Pitman, 1993), p. 297.

¹⁵³ First, *The Gazette* reports that Doherty collected 6,339 votes to Guerin's 4,255 and Gallery's 323. The official tallies of the vote on the Parliament of Canada's website, however, report the following: 8,346 for Doherty, as compared to 4,416 for Guerin and 319 for Gallery. What this shows, aside from corrections made for official tallies is that Doherty polled some 2,007 more votes than *The Gazette* reported, and Guerin 161 more. These votes, of course, were those of the soldiers and others attached to the CEF, whether in Canada or overseas, many of whom had been enfranchised for the election. Clearly this shows that, whilst Doherty would have won without the military votes, the enfranchisement of this group accomplished what Prime Minister Borden intended: they almost entirely voted Unionist. *The Gazette*, 18 December 1917; Parliament of Canada website, "History of Federal Ridings since 1867," <http://www.parl.gc.ca/information/about/process/house/hfer/hfer.asp?Language=E&Search=Det&Include=Y&rid=1263> (accessed 18 April 2008).

¹⁵⁴ *The Gazette*, 18 December 1917.

block across the street from St. Ann's Church on McCord Street, Guerin thumped Doherty 108-17, with Gallery picking up 12 votes.¹⁵⁵ Thus, Doherty did not win the vote of the Griffintown Irish; he won the riding by-and-large owing to gerrymandering and the military vote. The gerrymandering also diluted the voice of the poor of St. Ann's in the riding, as both Saint-Gabriel and Verdun were more comfortable neighbourhoods.¹⁵⁶

While Burns claims that the Irish-Catholics of Griffintown and St. Ann's voted for Doherty and, thus, for conscription, we see something else at work here. The Irish-Catholics of Griffintown voted resoundingly against Doherty. However, it is overly simplistic to equate, as Burns does, a vote for or against Doherty as a vote for or against conscription. As Burns himself notes, there were local issues at work in St. Ann's, not the least of which was the one that Guerin had raised: the Conservatives/Unionists had long been seen as the party of the rich and powerful. This same issue had been brought up in 1867, when the supporters of the Conservative candidate, Thomas D'Arcy McGee, attempted to intimidate the working classes of the riding to vote for him rather than the Liberal candidate, Bernard Devlin, by threatening their economic livelihood. In that case, too, the Irish-Catholics of Griffintown had voted for the Liberal candidate,¹⁵⁷ opting for the candidate who was more likely to champion their voice in the House of Commons in

¹⁵⁵ *The Gazette*, 18 December 1917.

¹⁵⁶ Gerrymandering such as this, as a means of diluting the voice of the poor, was a common tactic in Montréal ridings. For example, Saint-Henri, one of the poorest working-class districts of the city, shared a federal riding with Westmount, the richest neighbourhood in Montréal, for much of its history.

¹⁵⁷ Indeed, in 1867, the *Montreal Herald*, in reporting on the vote in Griffintown, sniffed that "the persons who voted against McGee were not those who are usually called the respectable classes." *Montreal Herald*, 7 September 1867; *The Gazette*, 7 September 1967; *Montreal Herald*, 9 September 1867; *The Gazette*, 9 September 1967; *The Gazette*, 10 September 1867; Wilson, "The Fenians in Montreal," pp. 122-4; Parliament of Canada's website, "History of Federal Ridings since 1867," <http://www.parl.gc.ca/information/about/process/house/hfer/hfer.asp?Language=E&Search=Det&Include=Y&rid=1263> (accessed 9 August 2007).

Ottawa. In 1917, it is just as possible that the poor working-class Irish-Catholics of Griffintown were voting economically rather than for or against conscription.

Burns, who spends a good deal of time pointing out how St. Ann's was no longer an Irish stronghold by 1917 spends just as much contradicting himself in stating that the riding was Irish. That being said, he is correct to note that the riding was only 16 per cent Irish in 1917, but that was owing to the gerrymander. Burns is most interested in the Irish of the riding, a group that was largely centred in and around Griffintown. The Irish of Griffintown, as we have seen throughout this chapter, displayed a strong sense of Irishness throughout the early twentieth century. Yet, Burns erroneously concludes that "[t]hose who lived below the hill responded much less enthusiastically to the call to arms in 1916, though whether because of events in Ireland or the cost of living is impossible to say."¹⁵⁸ First, this conclusion comes directly after he (erroneously) concludes that the Irish-Catholics of Griffintown *did* vote for conscription in re-electing Doherty in 1917. Second, the Irish-Catholics of Griffintown *did*, as we have seen, respond to the call to arms; the men of the neighbourhood enlisted, or at least tried to, in the 199th Overseas Battalion, Irish Canadian Rangers, to say nothing of other units formed prior to the Rangers.

Thus we are left with the rather ambivalent situation of the Irish-Catholics of Griffintown, whose sons signed up to fight the Germans, but who also voted against the Unionist government of Sir Robert Borden in 1917. It is impossible to say that they voted against conscription so much as against the Conservatives. Or perhaps they were voting against the Unionists out of anger at the plight of the 199th Battalion which, of

¹⁵⁸ Burns, "The Montreal Irish," pp. 80-1.

course, had been broken up upon arrival overseas and the men plugged into other units along the front lines. Or perhaps they had indeed just voted against conscription.

At any rate, Burns is mistaken in attempting to find a simple conclusion regarding the behaviour of the Irish-Catholics of Griffintown during the war. There is not one. The Irish-Catholics of Griffintown, by World War I, were Canadians first and foremost. And yet, as we have seen throughout this chapter, to say nothing of the fact that they had enlisted in the *Irish-Canadian* Rangers, they held onto their Irish identity and maintained an interest in Irish affairs throughout this period.

VI. Conclusion

Throughout the early twentieth century, the Irish-Catholics of Griffintown had the potential to be caught between their nation, Canada, and their ancestral homeland, Ireland, insofar as their identities and loyalties were concerned. This, however, did not happen, as the Irish-Catholic Griffintowners maintained a sense of ambivalence with respect to these potentially competing loyalties. Ireland, and its plight, remained central to their concerns throughout this period, as we saw through the plays of the St. Ann's Young Men's Society prior to World War I. However, that concern with Ireland was tempered with an interest in Canadian affairs and an acknowledgement that, finally, the Irish-Catholics of Griffintown were Canadian. This can be seen in the enlistment of the men of the community in the 199th Overseas Battalion, Irish Canadian Rangers. At the same time, however, the form of Irishness put forth in Griffintown was not, as was the case surrounding the Shamrock Lacrosse Club in the 1870s and 80s, distinct from that offered by the more bourgeois sectors of the Irish-Catholic community of Montréal. In

the early twentieth century, as agitation over Home Rule in Ireland took root in the entire Irish diaspora, including Montréal, the working classes, as well as their social betters, became more concerned with presenting a united front to the wider community of Montréal to make a strong and forceful argument vis-à-vis Irish Home Rule.

But the rhetorical strength of Irish-Catholic Griffintown belied the fact that the neighbourhood was in decline. Between 1901 and 1911, the Irish population of St. Ann's Ward, centred in Griffintown, fell by an astonishing 30 per cent, as these people moved on to more genteel neighbourhoods, such as the newly developed suburbs of Verdun and Notre-Dame-de-Grâce. St. Ann's Ward itself lost over 10 per cent of its population in that first decade of the twentieth century, largely owing to the depopulation of Griffintown.¹⁵⁹ As Griffintown began to die, so, too did the Irish-Catholic community there. If, in Chapters 2 and 3 of this dissertation I have shown the strength and continuity of the Irish-Catholics of Griffintown, in Chapter 4, I will turn my attention to the period between 1930 and 1970 when Irish-Catholic Griffintown, to say nothing of the neighbourhood itself, went into deep decline, and died.

¹⁵⁹ Canada, Census of Canada, 1901 and 1911.

Chapter 4: The Death of Griffintown, 1930-70

I. Introduction

Griffintown died during the middle decades of the twentieth century. What had once been a vibrant, if not exactly thriving, neighbourhood was, by 1970, a depopulated, deindustrialised landscape. The neighbourhood was killed through a combination of forces, from both without and within. From the outside, Griffintown was the victim of various administrative, bureaucratic, and institutional forces. These include the construction of Canadian National Railway's (CNR) elevated viaduct through Griffintown in the late 1920s, the opening of the St. Lawrence Seaway in 1959 and the attendant devastation of industry and shipping along the Lachine Canal.¹ The housing stock of the Griff began to fall into disrepair, especially after the corner of Shannon and Ottawa streets was devastated when a Royal Air Force (RAF) Liberator Bomber crashed there shortly after takeoff from Dorval on 26 April 1944. In 1963, the neighbourhood was re-zoned as "light industrial," and then the Autoroute Bonaventure was built straight through Griffintown and Goose Village in the mid-1960s in preparation for Expo '67 (see Map 4.1).

Griffintown's demise was also owing to the process of urban reform, or in French, *rénovation urbaine*, which swept across the entirety of Montréal's *arrondissement sud-ouest* in the 1950s, 60s, and 70s. Whilst all the other slum neighbourhoods surrounding Griffintown were targeted by zealous *rénovationistes* eager to eradicate the problem of the slum in Montréal, Griffintown somehow managed to escape their notice. Rather than

¹ The Lachine Canal was finally closed to shipping in 1970, completing the devastation of industry in the old canal-side neighbourhoods of Montréal.

were only 840 people left in the Griff.³ As for the Irish, they had been leaving Griffintown since the late nineteenth century. But in the first half of the twentieth century, the Irish flight from the Griff escalated. In 1911, there were still over 6,000 people of Irish heritage in St. Ann's Ward. By 1951, there were fewer than 1,400. This number fell even further, to fewer than 250 Irish, by 1971.⁴ People left Griffintown as the housing stock of the neighbourhood was devastated owing to the neglect of the landlords and perhaps, just as importantly, because the Irish-Catholics of Griffintown *chose* to move out. Indeed, the bulk of the Irish community of Griffintown left in the first half of the twentieth century, prior to the infrastructural onslaught of the neighbourhood. Thus, by the 1950s, the decade that saw the end of Irish-Catholic Griffintown, there was but a rump of the old Irish community of the neighbourhood, largely centred around St. Ann's Church in the southwestern corner of the Griff.

The middle decades of the twentieth century also saw the completion of the formation of Anglo Montréal, a process that had begun around the turn of the century. The process was sped up in the mid-twentieth century with the rise of *québécois* nationalism from the 1950s onward. In this climate, ethnic and religious differences, especially amongst the old-stock British Isles descendants,⁵ became less important than

³ Statistics Canada, Statistics Canada, 1971 Census of Canada: Population and Housing Characteristics by Census Tracts – Montreal, Series A (Ottawa: The Queen's Printer, 1973), Figures 1 and 2.

⁴ The census data for 1951 and 1971 is somewhat problematic in that the Irish are lumped in with the rest of the British Isles population. Nonetheless, one must assume that the majority of the British Isles population of St. Ann's Ward was Irish. Canada, Department of the Interior, *Census of Canada, 1911, Vol. 2*, pp. 292-3; Canada, Dominion Bureau of Statistics, *9th Census of Canada, 1951: Housing and Population Characteristics by Census Tracts – Montreal* (Ottawa: The King's Printer, 1953), p. 4; Canada, Statistics Canada, *1971 Census of Canada*, Figures 1 and 2.

⁵ While Italians, Greeks, Ukrainians, and Portuguese were able to, at least to some degree, gain access to Anglo Montréal, Jews and blacks have a more ambivalent relationship with Anglo Montréal, not being entirely welcome within this community, depending upon the political context. See, Ronald Rudin, *The Forgotten Quebecers: A History of English-Speaking Quebec* (Québec: Institut québécois de recherche

the fact that they all spoke English. Thus, whereas religion had been the primary means of defining identity in Montréal prior to the mid-twentieth century, language now became the central focus of identity.⁶

As for Irish-Catholic identity in the city, it was on the decline, in part owing to the breakdown of old Irish-Catholic working-class neighbourhoods like Griffintown. When people left the Griff, they did not necessarily replicate the ethnic residential patterns in their new neighbourhoods.⁷ By the middle decades of the twentieth century, there was no longer such a pressing need to protect an Irish identity as had been the case in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Rather, Canadianess and an identity as an Anglo Montrealer became more important. Thus, the (Anglo) Canadianisation of the Irish-Catholics of Montréal was complete. Journalist Sharon Doyle Driedger, who grew up in Griffintown, reflects on this in an article published in *Maclean's* magazine in 2003, noting that she and other former Griffintowners are “solidly Canadian now.”⁸

II. The Last Stand of Irish-Catholic Griffintown, 1930s-60s

At the onset of the Depression in 1929, Griffintown still had the appearances of a thriving, if not affluent, urban industrial working-class neighbourhood. This, however, masked signs of the steep decline of the neighbourhood, a process that had begun as early as the 1880s. If, in chapters 2 and 3, I spoke of how a strong, Irish-Catholic working-

sur la culture, 1985), pp. 151-74; Marc V. Levine, *La reconquête de Montréal*, trans. Marie Poirier (Montréal: VLB Éditeur, 1997 (1991)), pp. 97-145; Dorothy Williams, *The Road to Now: A history of blacks in Montreal* (Montréal: Véhicule Press, 1997); Joe King, *From the Ghetto to the Main: The story of the Jews in Montreal* (Montréal: Montreal Jewish Publication Society, 2000).

⁶ Levine, *La reconquête de Montréal*, pp. 75-115.

⁷ Walter Van Nus, “A Community of Communities: Suburbs in the Development of ‘Greater Montreal,’” *Montreal Metropolis, 1880-1930*, Isabelle Gournay and France Vanlaethem, eds. (Montréal: Centre Canadien d’Architecture, 1998), p. 64.

⁸ Sharon Doyle Driedger, “The Pluck of the Irish,” *Maclean's*, 17 March 2003, p. 41.

class identity in Griffintown was created, reinforced, policed, and, indeed, announced to the rest of the city, in the era between Confederation and World War I, I also pointed to the beginnings of the demographic decline of Griffintown. This was a process that sped up in the mid-twentieth century, precipitating the death of the neighbourhood. Just as in earlier periods, however, Irish-Catholic identity remained strong and vibrant, even as the neighbourhood around it was decaying.

Griffintowners maintained a clear Irish-Catholic, working-class identity, with a clear sense of place and community, and a pride in their neighbourhood, despite their hard-scrabble existence and poverty. This belies the slum discourse that emerged around Griffintown in the twentieth century. Whilst bureaucrats at the CNR, *hôtel de ville*, the Canadian Corporation for Expo '67, and the provincial government, to say nothing of journalists, looked at Griffintown and saw a slum, the residents of the neighbourhood tell us a different story. Theirs is one of a sense of community and solidarity; they took care of and protected each other. More fundamentally, what is clear from the remembrances of the former Griffintowners is that the neighbourhood was, quite simply, home. It was not row upon row of slum dwellings that were of no consequence when it came to Montréal's mid-twentieth century growth and development.

This was the last stand of not just Irish-Catholic Griffintown, but the neighbourhood as a whole. By 1941, Irish-Catholics were no longer the dominant group in the Griff; that honour now belonged, however briefly, to the French Canadians. The general trend of depopulation in Griffintown that had been set in motion in the 1890s was temporarily stanchied by the Depression, but resumed quickly in the aftermath of World War II. There is a certain wistfulness and nostalgia in the memories of the former

Griffintowners upon whose stories this section is based.⁹ This nostalgia, though, is not an entirely new thing vis-à-vis Griffintown. In 1954, St. Ann's Church celebrated its centenary; the proceedings and official history of the parish produced for the celebrations were tinged not with a rosy outlook for St. Ann's, but with a melancholy nostalgia as the past took centre stage. The proceedings spoke of the history of the parish, but ignored the present, preferring to not get into details about its decline in the post-World War II era.¹⁰ By 1954, the writing was on the wall for St. Ann's Parish and for Griffintown itself.

At the outset of the Depression, Griffintown was a community that still carefully protected and celebrated its Irish-Catholic ethno-religious identity. It was a

⁹ For the most part, I rely upon the remembrances of former Griffintowners collected in two major sources, Patricia Burns' oral history of the Irish in Montréal, *The Shamrock & The Shield: An Oral History of the Irish in Montreal* (Montréal: Véhicule Press, 1997) and Richard Burman's documentary film, *The Ghosts of Griffintown: Stories of an Irish Neighbourhood*, DVD, Burman Productions, 2003. I do, however, supplement these sources with Doyle Driedger's article in *MacLean's*, as well as various archival and news media sources. When I began my research for this dissertation, I considered conducting oral history interviews. In the end, however, I decided against doing this for several reasons. Most importantly, in the next chapter, I examine how Irish-Catholic collective memory is formed in Griffintown, deconstructing the recollections and remembrances of former Griffintowners to understand how a reductivist, standardised version of the neighbourhood's history has been formed. This version of Griffintown stands in stark contrast to the image of the neighbourhood that emerges in the first four chapters of the dissertation. Given the manner in which I am interested in deconstructing memory vis-à-vis Griffintown, it struck me as awkward and perhaps unethical to gain the trust of former Griffintowners, collect their remembrances and stories, only to then deconstruct them for the purposes of the next chapter. Thus, I chose to rely upon published, and public, remembrances of Griffintown. That being said, however, this reliance on Burns and Burman raises the question of representativeness. There is no simple answer to this question, nor is there any guarantee that putting a call out to former Griffintowners through the Irish community of Montréal or the Centre for Canadian Irish Studies at Concordia would give me a more representative sample of former Griffintowners willing to talk about their experiences living there. In the end, what Burns and Burman present may or may not be entirely representative of former Griffintowners; in my experience in talking informally with former residents of the neighbourhood, it is mostly those who fondly recall the neighbourhood who are most willing to discuss living there. I have talked with people who do not recall growing up in an inner-city slum with such fondness, but they are also not as willing to have their versions of history recorded for posterity. Thus, I am left with Burns and Burman. As to my reliance on, to a large degree, the same set of memories for both this re-creation of life in Griffintown in the mid-twentieth century in this chapter, and a deconstruction of the formation of collective memory of the neighbourhood in the next, I am looking at different aspects of the community in each chapter. Whereas here, I am more interested in community structure, community feeling, and a sense of the struggles of the Depression and post-World War II deindustrialisation, in Chapter 5, I examine how certain aspects of the neighbourhood and life there are standardised through the recollections of former residents of Griffintown.

¹⁰ Rev. John S. Gallagher, CSrR, *The Centenary of Old St. Ann's* (1954); "Programme for the Centenary of St. Ann's Church, 1854-1954," Archives of the Chancery of the Archdiocese of Montréal (ACAM), A-13: St. Ann's Parish Records.

neighbourhood dominated by a strong sense of community, one where the Catholic Church was still very present in people's lives and, most interestingly, a community that was both insular and self-contained. Griffintown was, in many ways, an island unto itself, protected from the outside world by a combination of St. Ann's Parish and its Catholicism, its Irishness, as well as by the very thing that defined Griffintown for outsiders: its poverty.

Charlie Blickstead, who grew up in Griffintown, is very clear about the role of the church in the lives of the Irish-Catholics of Griffintown:

St. Ann's Church, this was the centre of Griffintown. This was our church and the centre of our civilisation. And I could almost kiss the ground where these saintly men came in and out [of the presbytery]. I'm not exaggerating when I say these people were saintly men, these priests. They were the kindest people I ever met in my life, those Redemptorist Fathers.¹¹

Don Pidgeon recalls the priests of St. Ann's in the community. In particular, Fr. Francis Kearney, who walked around the neighbourhood with his cane, talking with his parishioners, having tea with them in their kitchens.¹² Ruth Davie remembers Fr. Kearney teasing her as she and her younger brothers walked by the church on their way to play in Basin St. Park.¹³ Davie, Thelma Pidgeon, Kay Peachey, and Betty Bryant all point to the importance of the parish in their childhood and upbringing. Thelma Pidgeon recalls being at the church every night of the week as a child, helping out with benedictions, with the novenas to the Mother of Perpetual Help on Tuesday nights, cleaning the rectory, and so on. "Father Sullivan kept us very busy to keep us out of

¹¹ Charles Blickstead, in, *The Ghosts of Griffintown*.

¹² Don Pidgeon, in, Burns, *The Shamrock & The Shield*, pp. 197-8, 200.

¹³ Ruth Davie, in, *The Ghosts of Griffintown*.

trouble.” Peachey remembers bazaars and bingos in St. Ann’s basement.¹⁴ Dennis Daugherty sums it up best, “Well, the bottom line was, if you lived in Griffintown, the church was the big focal part of the community.”¹⁵

Yet, the involvement of Ruth Davie, Thelma Pidgeon, Kay Peachey, and Betty Bryant in the Church also tells us something else of significance. Boys and girls were educated separately in St. Ann’s Parish; boys at the St. Ann’s School for Boys, operated by the Christian Brothers at the corner of Young and Ottawa streets, whereas the girls were educated at the lofty sounding St. Ann’s Academy by the nuns from the Congrégation Notre-Dame, up the block from the church. As this indicates, space within the Catholic Church in St. Ann’s Parish was gendered, as men and women, boy and girls, had different spaces and roles within the parish. Men had access to such groups as the St. Ann’s Young Men’s Society and the Young Irishmen’s Society. The various sporting teams affiliated with St. Ann’s Parish were, of course, masculinised spaces for the boys of the parish to play and be socialised.

While feminised spaces were limited, the Parish Sodality was an organisation that came to be female-dominated. Peachey recalls her involvement in the Sodality, which “started having card parties, plays, and bingos to help the church. We also had sleigh rides and after we’d come back to the church for beans and brown bread.” She went from the Sodality to joining the Catholic Women’s League in Montréal, an organisation she remained involved with for the rest of her life.¹⁶ Together with the Sodality, St. Ann’s also had a Women’s Club, which ran the bazaars that Fr. Fee introduced to the parish

¹⁴ Ruth Davie, Thelma Pidgeon, Betty Bryant, in, *The Ghosts of Griffintown*; Kay Peachey in, Burns, *The Shamrock & The Shield*, p. 148. Quotation taken from Thelma Pidgeon.

¹⁵ Dennis Daugherty, in, *The Ghosts of Griffintown*.

¹⁶ Kay Peachey, in, Burns, *The Shamrock & The Shield*, pp. 148-9.

upon his arrival in the 1950s, amongst other activities. During the 1950s and 60s, the St. Ann's Women's Club raised some \$5,000 for the parish. This is all the more impressive given that it was during these two decades that Irish-Catholic Griffintown, and St. Ann's Parish, died.¹⁷

As Lynne Marks argues for the late nineteenth century, the greater likelihood for women to join and be involved with parish organisations was reflective of gender ideals of the era. Women were thought to be more moral, spiritual, and thus, more religious, than men.¹⁸ Moreover, women, more so than men, especially in the working classes, were socially conditioned to be more submissive; a good woman was supposed to be obedient to her father, brothers, husband, and, ultimately, to God. The fact that parish organisations such as the Sodality became feminised spaces is not all that surprising. These spaces within the Catholic Church also provided women with an opportunity for leisure time and socialising. Working-class women and girls in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries generally had less time for leisure than did their male counterparts, especially if they had to work to contribute to the family economy. Marks' argument, then, still has resonance for the mid-twentieth century. The Parish Sodality and the Women's Club, as feminised leisure spaces (with the exception of the priests in charge), offered the women of Griffintown a space to recreate and socialise.

The former Griffintown residents who grew up in the 1930s, 40s, and 50s have a positive recollection of the Catholic Church in their lives; they are the ones who remember the activities of Fr. Kearney, the Parish Sodality, and the parish in general.

¹⁷ Al Palmer, "Two Old Parishes in City Face Extinction," *The Gazette*, 15 November 1961; Harold Poitras, "End of an Era in Griffintown: St. Ann's Church," *Montreal Star*, 4 July 1970.

¹⁸ Lynne Marks, *Revivals and Roller-Rinks: Religion, Leisure, and Identity in Late-Nineteenth-Century Small-Town Ontario* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996), p. 29.

They also have fond recollections of the Redemptorist Fathers making their way through Griffintown on their missions, as we saw with Charlie Blickstead. But whereas the men are more likely to just fondly recall parochial life in general, or point out that the church was important for Irish-Catholic Griffintowners, women are more likely to recall parochial life in detail. This further emphasises the feminised space within the parish.

The imagined geography of Irish-Catholic Griffintown was tied directly to the Catholic Church. This can be seen, for example, in Jimmy Burns' recollections of his childhood after his father lost a leg in an industrial accident.

My father's accident dictated my whole existence. We first lived at two different locations on McCord Street [now the rue de la Montagne] near the church. Then we moved to Eleanor Street where we had a very nice house. From there we moved to Ottawa Street where we had a small house, and it was there the family broke up. My mother took my younger brother, Harold, and moved to St. Mary's Parish in the east end.¹⁹

Burns situates his family's homes in Griffintown in relation to their proximity to St. Ann's, and when his mother and brother moved to the east end, he situates them in St. Mary's Parish.²⁰ Blickstead, in discussing the depopulation of Griffintown, notes both that people were moving to Notre-Dame-de-Grâce and to St. Michael's Parish.²¹

Burns also recalls the insularity of the neighbourhood. "In Griffintown with its mainly Catholic population, we were protected to some extent" from the wider Anglophone world of Montréal.²² This sense of protection afforded by St. Ann's Parish

¹⁹ James Lawrence Burns, in, Burns, *The Shamrock & The Shield*, p. 31.

²⁰ St. Mary's Church stood at the corner of Craig (now rue Saint-Antoine) and Panet streets in the east end of Montréal. The cornerstone was laid on 12 June 1879 and the church was opened on 6 November 1881. Dorothy Suzanne Cross, "The Irish in Montreal, 1867-1896," (MA thesis, McGill University, 1969), p. 106. The former site of St. Mary's is today a parking lot adjacent to the Autoroute Ville-Marie and the Maison Radio-Canada on the other side of rues Saint-Antoine and Viger.

²¹ St. Michael's Parish was located in the north end of the city in Parc Extension. Charles Blickstead, in, Burns, *The Shamrock & The Shield*, p. 63.

²² James Lawrence Burns, in, Burns, *The Shamrock & The Shield*, p. 35.

was central to the formation and reinforcement of a sense of community amongst the Irish-Catholics of Griffintown. While it is clear on one hand that sociability amongst neighbours in Griffintown was common, St. Ann's and its various parochial organisations were also sites of recreation and sociability for parishioners.

Griffintown was a trying place to live, given the un- and under- employment, poverty, over-crowding, poor sanitation, and so on. Indeed, this poverty and the attendant social problems also helped to form and reinforce community solidarity in the Griff. Charlie Blickstead recalls his neighbourhood on Duke Street between Wellington and Ottawa streets:

It was a very warm neighbourhood in that everyone knew everyone else and it was very friendly. Very helpful, too. People were very kind when one was sick. The neighbours would always come in and do things for my mother or whoever was sick on the block.²³

Patricia McDonnell McLeod echoes this; she also recalls the neighbourhood women cooking meals for other families when the mother was sick, "Everybody helped everybody."²⁴

This sense of community and communal life was especially clear during the Depression, when everyone in Griffintown suffered. Cliff Sowery, who was the co-director of the Griffintown Boys' and Girls' Club with Miss McCunn,²⁵ at the corner of Ottawa and Shannon streets (across Ottawa Street from the site of the Liberator Bomber crash in 1944), recalls,

You'll never realise what people went through during the Depression. We built a coffin for this Irish guy when his little three-year old daughter died

²³ Charles Blickstead, in, Burns, *The Shamrock & The Shield*, p. 53.

²⁴ Patricia McDonnell McLeod, in, Burns, *The Shamrock & The Shield*, p. 182.

²⁵ Miss McCunn's first name appears to have been lost to history. She is always referred to as "Miss McCunn" and never by a first name.

and he couldn't afford the twenty-five dollars for the coffin. We stayed up till two o'clock in the morning and made a nice white pine coffin. That was Griffintown. You took part in everything.²⁶

Kay Peachey recalls an incident from when she was a child during the Depression; she was sent to Murphy's grocery store for \$5.00 worth of sugar. When she turned around to leave the store, she promptly dropped the sugar all over the floor. Murphy, the ubiquitous proprietor, replaced the sugar for the sobbing child free of charge.²⁷

"Banjo" Frank Hanley²⁸ recalls the generosity of his fellow Griffintowners during the Depression and World War II: "They were all good people. If somebody was working, it was nothing for them to share."²⁹ In the recollections of the Depression, community was important, and for those who were working, they were very aware that it could just as easily have been them on relief, working for the Ville de Montréal. Peachey recalls her father working for the CNR during the Depression, and having his salary and hours continually cut, and being made to work the graveyard shift. Yet, she says, he put up with it, recognising that he was lucky to have a job at all. Working for the city on relief was never a winning proposition, as the foreman always tried to spread around the work, which was not plentiful enough to start with, so that every man got at least a bit of money.³⁰ Hanley was one of those working for the city on relief and it was the shoddy

²⁶ Cliff Sowery, in, Burns, *The Shamrock & The Shield*, p. 41.

²⁷ Kay Peachey, in, Burns, *The Shamrock & The Shield*, p. 145.

²⁸ Apparently Hanley ended up with this nickname despite not knowing how to play the instrument. Alan Hustak, "Tough politician battled for the poor: Obituary of Frank Hanley," *The Gazette*, 24 January 2006.

²⁹ As quoted in Doyle Driedger, "The Pluck of the Irish," p. 40.

³⁰ Kay Peachey, in, Burns, *The Shamrock & The Shield*, pp. 143-5.

treatment of the workers from the bosses that led him to a career in politics.³¹ His parents were also on relief during the Depression.³²

Hanley served as the city councillor for St. Ann's Ward for nearly the entire period under consideration in this chapter, from 1940-70. He was also the Member of the National Assembly for St. Ann's from 1948 until he was defeated by former Montréal Alouettes place-kicker, George Springate, in 1970. When asked what he did for his constituents during his long period in office, Hanley responded:

Feed them, clothe them, fuel in wintertime for many people at that time, in times of stress. Forget about politics – livelihood. There were no hours, I had no hours, I'm not boasting now. It was just that type of time. They would ring the bell, oh yeah, 1, 2, 3, 4am, "My husband's in jail", "My son has been arrested for disturbing the peace." I had a tough job. I couldn't say no. I don't know what they would've done to me. That was the tradition. "Get Frank." You worked 24 hours a day, a servant of the people.³³

Hanley did indeed work hard for his constituents; he was an old school populist politician. William Weintraub, author of a history of Montréal's seedier side in the 1940s and 50s, writes that,

after [Hanley] became a city councillor he could usually find a bit of money, somewhere or other, for constituents³⁴ who came to him in desperate need. He had the skills of an old-style ward heeler, listening patiently to tales of woe and offering solutions to every kind of problem. He attended every funeral and many christenings, and he used his influence with the police to get drunks out of jail. People would say that,

³¹ Lynda Steele, "Interview with Frank Hanley, MNA," *Canadian Parliamentary Review*, 91/1 (1986).

³² Frank Hanley, in Burns, *The Shamrock & The Shield*, pp. 86-7; Doyle Driedger, "The Pluck of the Irish," p. 41.

³³ Frank Hanley, in, *The Ghosts of Griffintown*.

³⁴ At least part of this money was donated by other constituents for both Hanley's use and for distribution to the needy. At one point, he says, he was handing out upwards of \$100 per week. This led to problems with Revenue Canada, which claimed that he owed some \$32,000 in back taxes, and then threatened to take his house at 500 Dublin Street in Pointe-Saint-Charles. This led his constituents to proclaim the "Republic of Hanley" in his front yard. *Montreal Star*, 3 June 1967; Steele, "Interview with Frank Hanley"; *Lovell's Montreal City Directory, 1966-7*, on the Bibliothèque et archives nationales du Québec's website, <http://bibnum2.bnquebec.ca/bna/lovell/index.html>. (accessed 26 September 2008).

if, in the course of his largesse, the odd dubious dollar found its way into Frank Hanley's own pocket, nobody could have any objections.³⁵

Hanley also provided entertainment for his constituents, primarily by holding outdoor concerts and boxing matches³⁶ in the massive Parc Marguerite-Bourgeoys on Wellington Street in the Pointe, a fifteen minute walk from St. Ann's Church and a block away from Hanley's own home. Quite the man about town, Hanley drew upon his connections in the sporting and entertainment worlds in order to hold these mass *spectacles* in the Pointe "to entertain the people who didn't have money to go out for entertainment." He even managed to convince the American comedian and entertainer, Jimmy Durante, to turn up for a *spectacle*-cum-election campaign rally one night in the park. His hard work for the community made Hanley well-known and well-loved by his constituents, who continually re-elected him until his retirement from city politics³⁷ in 1970.³⁸

³⁵ William Weintraub, *City Unique: Montreal Days and Nights in the 1940s and 50s* (Toronto: Robin Brass Studios, 2004 (1996)), p. 158.

³⁶ Hanley himself was a former boxing champion at the flyweight (112lb) division in the 1920s. Hanley, in, *The Ghosts of Griffintown*; Hustak, "Tough politician."

³⁷ His departure from provincial politics was not entirely Hanley's decision. Recalling his loss to Springate in the 1970 provincial election, Hanley says, "I only slipped once during my campaigns and that was against George Springate of the Liberals [Hanley was officially an independent, but tended to side with the governing party]. Fear of separatism was the main issue at that time and George worked hard on that theme. I was not that worried about it; I thought the election would be a cinch, but the people were scared. I guess I was just over-confident. So, when the people threw their support behind Springate, I lost." Steele, "Interview with Frank Hanley."

³⁸ Hanley's means of election and re-election were not entirely on the up-and-up, it must be noted. Recalling his activities, he said, "Did I ever hear of dead people voting? Oh, I think I'd have to be paid for such secrets. Actually, I'd be the first to do it and I'd have fun. It's called telegraphing.: They all telegraphed. You'd go up to the cemetery and look at the tombstones and get a list of names. At that time, the returning officer would have a meeting with the chief returning officer, and they'd take the ballot boxes home. They'd pack the boxes at night at home...the box was half-filled before the election started. I can't give you more than that. I didn't say I would do that. Let's just say most of them would." Frank Hanley, in Burns, *The Shamrock & The Shield*, p. 87. Recalling the dirty election campaigns in St. Ann's Ward in *The Ghosts of Griffintown*, Hanley reports that "[t]hey were always rough elections at that time. You had to have the wrecking crew. That's what they called it, the wrecking crew. The wrecking crew wrecked the store where they met, where they had their meetings...Anyway, you, we, could get a vote, not we, they, I would never be implicated in that, you know. I wouldn't do a think like that. I'd steal a ballot box, not a vote." Hanley, in, *The Ghosts of Griffintown*. Of course, what differentiated Hanley from the other

As Hanley indicates, the Irish-Catholics of Griffintown had their leisure outlets beyond the realm of the Catholic Church and St. Ann's Parish. Not surprisingly, for the most part, these leisure outlets were, like the parish and its organisations, gendered. In particular, the local tavern(s) were a masculinised space, as women were forbidden from entering.³⁹ And while the Griffintown of the mid-twentieth century was not quite so liquor-sodden as the Griffintown of the late nineteenth century, when close to one-quarter of all taverns in the city were in the Griff,⁴⁰ in one six square block radius in the east end of Griffintown, there were six taverns. Thomas Seivewright recalls the taverns in his area growing up:

My dad would come home from the pub, there was a pub on the corner there, Izzy Moore's.⁴¹ But his favourite pub was two pubs down on Nazareth street, and they were both Irish. One was O'Connell's, and the other was Murphy's.⁴² And they were close enough, the width of this street. People would get half-cut at Murphy's and if they didn't like the waiter, or they had an argument, they would just cross the street and go into O'Connell's. It was back and forth. So they had a roaring trade between the two pubs.⁴³

Charlie Blickstead also recalls the tavern geography of the Griff, noting Paddy Carroll's tavern, his local, at the corner of Duke and Wellington streets, a block east of Izzy Moore's. A block north of Carroll's, at Duke and Ottawa was the union house, MacNiece's, and finally, at the corner of rue Saint-Paul and ruelle Dupré was Hennessy's

politicians, at least in his mind, was that, "All politicians are crooks. The difference between me and the rest of them is that the rest of them take 90 per cent, and give 10 per cent to their constituents. Me, I take 10 per cent, and return 90 per cent to my constituents." Frank Hanley, in, Burns, *The Shamrock & The Shield*, p. 87; Frank Hanley, in, *The Ghosts of Griffintown*; Hustak, "Tough politician." Quotes taken from *The Ghosts of Griffintown* and from Hustak, "Tough politician."

³⁹ Women were not allowed in taverns. In the late 1970s, the liquor licensing régime was changed in Québec, creating the new category of *brasserie*. *Brasseries* are allowed to admit women.

⁴⁰ Cross, "The Irish in Montreal," p. 307.

⁴¹ Izzy's stood at the corner of Nazareth and Wellington Streets.

⁴² O'Connell's and Murphy's stood across the street from each other at the corner of Nazareth and William streets, two blocks north of Izzy Moore's.

⁴³ Thomas Seivewright, in, *The Ghosts of Griffintown*.

Saloon.⁴⁴ Kay Peachey also recalls the multitudinous taverns and blind pigs and wonders if Griffintown was not looked down upon by outsiders owing to this geography of alcohol.⁴⁵

And yet, despite the near ubiquity of alcohol in Griffintown, it occupies a strange space in the recollections of the former Griffintowners. Whilst alcohol is discussed in their recollections, many of those who discuss the drink are very careful in talking about alcoholism, clearly condemning the man who left his pay packet with the tavern-keeper on a Friday night. Take Blickstead, for example, who discusses his nights drinking at Paddy Carroll's on his way home from work:

In those days, there were no liquor commission stores [i.e.: the SAQ] – you bought your booze right there on the counter or it was served to you neat. They'd stand up at the bar and it was a sign of manhood if you could drink the other guy under the table. However, if you left your salary there with the innkeeper, the kids couldn't eat for the next week.⁴⁶

When it comes to discussing actual alcoholism in the Griff, the most common sort of remembrance is that of daughters of their fathers' struggles with the bottle. Sybil Brown Morse, for example, is full of bitterness towards her father, Walter, who drank away all her insurance money after her mother died in a freakish accident at a young age.⁴⁷ Ruth Davie recalls having to drop out of school at the age of thirteen after her mother died to look after her younger brothers to keep them out of the orphanage because

⁴⁴ Charles Blickstead, in, Burns, *The Shamrock & The Shield*, p. 61.

⁴⁵ Kay Peachey, in, Burns, *The Shamrock & The Shield*, p. 145.

⁴⁶ Charles Blickstead, in, Burns, *The Shamrock & The Shield*, p. 61.

⁴⁷ Brown Morse's mother was killed by falling ice outside of a grocery store on rue Notre-Dame shortly before her thirtieth birthday. Brown Morse, largely owing to Walter's alcoholism (and it is interesting that she refers to her father by his first name throughout her remembrances), was shipped off an orphanage at a young age, an experience that left her scarred for life, not surprisingly. Sybil Brown Morse, in, Burns, *The Shamrock & The Shield*, pp. 63-5.

her father spent all his time in the tavern.⁴⁸ Denis Delaney is the only man to recall his father's alcoholism and the attendant poverty, more than likely because he is himself a recovering alcoholic, and open about his struggle with the disease.⁴⁹

That men's struggle with the drink is what is discussed in the remembrances of former Griffintowners is not that surprising. While certainly women had their own struggles, women's drinking was done in private, in the kitchens of the neighbourhood. The men did their drinking in the taverns, in public. At any event, whilst a few of those who provide their recollections of life in the Griff do discuss the drink and alcoholism, given the geography of alcohol in Griffintown, one is surprised that the remembrances of the drink are not as ubiquitous, except when connected with poverty.

Brown Morse, after her father drank away her insurance money, was placed in the St. Patrick's Orphanage. Davie had to drop out of school to keep her brothers out of the orphanage when her mother died. Delaney recounts stories of his mother buying food in bulk, bags of potatoes and dried beans for when "the old man didn't bring home any money."⁵⁰ Cliff Sowery is even more blunt: "What ruined a lot of people in Griffintown was booze. They couldn't control it...Poverty was the main reason, you know...That was what caused them to go to booze. Hard work and no money. You had to drown your troubles in some way."⁵¹

Despite Sowery's sympathy, there was still a questioning of the manliness of someone who drank away his wage packet week after week and neglected to look after

⁴⁸ Ruth Davie, in, *The Ghosts of Griffintown*.

⁴⁹ Delaney has been dry and sober since 1968. Denis Delaney, in, Burns, *The Shamrock & The Shield*, pp. 191-6; Denis Delaney, in, *The Ghosts of Griffintown*.

⁵⁰ Denis Delaney, in, Burns, *The Shamrock & The Shield*, pp. 192-5.

⁵¹ Cliff Sowery, in, Burns, *The Shamrock & The Shield*, pp. 44-5.

his family. To this end, the priests of St. Ann's did their part. Patricia McDonnell

McLeod recalls:

I know of some cases where the husband would get paid on Friday and not come home with his pay. He'd go to some tavern and then his wife would just get in touch with the priest, Father Maguire, especially. He was a huge man, a big, strong Irishman and he would go to the tavern, grab hold of him and he'd drag him home to his wife.⁵²

And then there was the fighting. Frank Hanley, a former boxer, was asked where he picked up his fighting skills. Without skipping a beat, he responded,

St. Ann's School, and on the sidewalks. St. Ann's School was a terrific school for education. The brothers were there and they were tough. The brothers would let you have one on the jaw if you were acting up. Oh yeah, and don't go home crying to your mother.⁵³

Cliff Sowery taught boxing at the Griffintown Boys' and Girls' Club, something for which Thomas Seivewright was grateful.

Griffintown produced some damn good boxers. But we had a good teacher, Cliff Sowery was a good coach. You don't learn how to go out and beat up some kid that's 20 pounds lighter than you and 6 inches shorter. It's an art of self-defence. I think it was good training. I took it for awhile, I was a pretty good boxer, I wasn't a pro, I never came near to being, but I didn't want to become a pro fighter. My dad was a tough old Scot, "If ye cannae defend yersel', doan' expect me to get ou' an' defend ye. Ye'll no be mae bairn if ye doan' know how ta look a'ter yersel," he said, "Do ye unnerstan that?" I said, "Yes, dad."⁵⁴

It may seem self-evident that drinking and fighting would go hand-in-hand in Griffintown, a tough neighbourhood. Indeed, journalist William Weintraub, after summing up a typical Saturday night at the appropriately-named Bucket of Blood Tavern on Wellington Street in Pointe-Saint-Charles, states that "[i]f 'the Point' was tough, the

⁵² Patricia McDonnell McLeod, in, Burns, *The Shamrock & The Shield*, p. 183.

⁵³ Frank Hanley, in, *The Ghosts of Griffintown*.

⁵⁴ Thomas Seivewright, in, *The Ghosts of Griffintown*.

Griff was tougher.”⁵⁵ Not only was Griffintown a working-class slum, it was also adjacent to the Port de Montréal⁵⁶ and the notorious Montréal waterfront, legendary for being not just rough and tough,⁵⁷ but also mob-infested.⁵⁸ The seepage from the Port-de-Montréal, combined with the geography of alcohol in Griffintown and the Pointe, created a lively night life in the Griff. Ruth Davie, who grew up near the Peel Basin of the Lachine Canal, recalls babysitting her brothers when she was a girl, and being terrified of the drunken sailors outside, afraid they might break in.⁵⁹

Many of the men who grew up in Griffintown reflect proudly on the tough reputation of their neighbourhood. Don Pidgeon notes that, “It was part of the Irish sentiment to be strong and to be tough. To survive in Griffintown, it helped if you were tough.” Bill Greenberg confirms this, at least the part about being tough on the mean streets of Griffintown.⁶⁰

It helped to be tough because of the gangs on the corner of Griffintown. Dennis Daugherty recalls one gang in particular, which hung around the corner of Colborne (now Peel) and Ottawa streets; even the police were reluctant to disturb it.⁶¹ Charlie Blickstead was, in his youth, part of these gangs. He recalls, “That’s what we did. Go to work all

⁵⁵ Weintraub, *City Unique*, p. 153.

⁵⁶ The Port-de-Montréal moved from its location in Vieux-Montréal out to the east end in 1978, in part as a means of reviving business in the wake of the opening of the St. Lawrence Seaway in 1959. Port-de-Montréal, “A Trip Through Time,” http://www.port-montreal.com/site/1_0/1_7.jsp?lang=en. (accessed 21 November 2008); Société du Vieux-Port-de-Montréal, “Historique,” <http://www.vieuxportdemontreal.com/fr/profil/historique.aspx>. (accessed 21 November 2008).

⁵⁷ See, Peter DeLottinville, “Joe Beef of Montreal: Working Class Culture and the Tavern, 1869-1889,” *Labour/Le Travailleur*, 8-9 (1981-2): 9-41.

⁵⁸ The Port-de-Montréal remained in the control of the city’s West End Gang, a Notre-Dame-de-Grâce-based, Irish-controlled mob that originated in Griffintown in the early twentieth century, until at least 2004. That year, the leader of the West End Gang, Gerry Matticks and his son, Donald, who worked at the Port-de-Montréal, were arrested for allegedly operating a drug-smuggling ring out of the port, in connection with both the Italian Mafia and the Hells Angels of Montréal. Paul Cherry, “Younger Matticks rejected for parole,” *The Gazette*, 2 August 2007.

⁵⁹ Ruth Davie, in, *The Ghosts of Griffintown*.

⁶⁰ Bill Greenberg; Don Pidgeon, in, *The Ghosts of Griffintown*.

⁶¹ Dennis Daugherty, in, *The Ghosts of Griffintown*.

day – those who had jobs – go home, have supper, wash up, put on our peak caps, blue shirts, and our tan shoes and hang around the candy store – all dressed up.”⁶²

In studying black and Latino gangs in post-World War II New York City, Eric Schneider has argued that working-class masculinity was under attack owing to deindustrialisation, which served to erode the masculine culture of the shop floor. This culture had helped to structure and police the identity of working-class men in previous generations. The Bronx, Brooklyn, and Manhattan all experienced a flight of white families to the outer boroughs and the suburbs during this period. Thus, Schneider argues that street gangs stepped into this void of instability in the inner-city of New York to bolster masculinity and masculine identity there.⁶³ The decline of working-class masculine culture predominated in the mid-twentieth century in Griffintown, and even before, back into the inter-war period. And like New York City, the inner-city of Montréal, including Griffintown, experienced a flight of the more affluent to the suburbs, though, in Montréal, of course, this was not a white flight in the same sense. Nonetheless, inner-city neighbourhoods like Griffintown experienced instability in the inter- and post- war period owing to a combination of deindustrialisation and depopulation, which led to a decline in resources (both in terms of jobs and housing) in Griffintown for those who remained. Thus, it is not surprising that working-class youth turned to the streets to find and defend their honour.⁶⁴

⁶² As quoted in Doyle Driedger, “The Pluck of the Irish,” p. 40.

⁶³ Eric C. Schneider, *Vampires, Dragons, and Egyptian Kings: Youth Gangs in Postwar New York* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999).

⁶⁴ Schneider, *Vampires, Dragons, and Egyptian Kings*.

Andrew Diamond argues that each and every attack or fight, or even act of intimidation by a gang, is meant to render the victim angry and/or degraded.⁶⁵ Emile Leacock, an African Canadian who grew up in downtown Montréal recalls such experiences whenever he was unfortunate enough to venture into the Griff or Pointe-Saint-Charles in the 1950s.⁶⁶ At the same time, protecting the women of Griffintown was part of the *modus operandi* of the Griffintown street gangs.⁶⁷ Indeed, according to historian Andrew Davis, the protection of women and girls deemed to be within a gang's territory was part and parcel of the masculine identities of the gang members.⁶⁸

While the young men of the Griff appeared to amuse themselves on the streets of the neighbourhood, others preferred other entertainment options. The middle decades of the twentieth century were a period when the residents of Griffintown oftentimes had to find their own means of entertainment owing to their poverty. We have seen how Hanley provided mass *spectacles* in Parc Marguerite-Bourgeoys in the Pointe, and men frequented the Griff's multitudinous taverns. Other forms of entertainment abounded; Rita Pidgeon and her friends would sit out on the front stoop in warmer months on Friday night, waiting for the neighbours to get drunk and start fighting.⁶⁹ More common in the summer months, though, was for people to gather in the streets, on their front stoops, and the sidewalks of the Griff, because there were no greenspaces in the neighbourhood. People lived in the streets in the summer months owing to the oppressive heat and

⁶⁵ Andrew Diamond, "Rethinking Culture on the Streets: Agency, Masculinity, and Style in the American City," *Journal of Urban History*, 27/5 (2001), p. 677.

⁶⁶ Debbie Parkes, "The Face of Racism: Montrealers tell how it has profoundly shaped their lives," *The Gazette*, 18 March 1991.

⁶⁷ Annie Wilson, in, *The Ghosts of Griffintown*.

⁶⁸ Andrew Davis, "Youth Gangs, Masculinity, and Violence in Late Victorian Manchester and Salford," *Journal of Social History*, 32/3 (1998), p. 350.

⁶⁹ Rita Pidgeon, in, *The Ghosts of Griffintown*.

humidity of a Montréal summer. Blickstead recalls an anomaly in his backyard growing up: a tree. He claims that this was the only tree outside of the yard of St. Ann's Church in all of Griffintown, and it attracted crowds to the Blicksteads' back yard.⁷⁰ Otherwise, though, it was the streets. People congregated, exchanged news, gossiped, and entertained each other. The priests, out for their evening stroll, might stop by for a cup of tea or something stronger. And they all watched out for the children playing. Those who could afford it escaped the heat of the summer, heading to Châteauguay, better known as "Shadagee" to the Irish, on the south shore, not yet a suburban development.⁷¹

Denis Delaney and his friends engaged in a bit of petty larceny as youngsters, stealing a pie or two from the baker's wagon, or some coal to heat the family home in winter. They also took their health (and their lives) in their own hands and dove into the massively polluted Lachine Canal in the summer. Tom Rowe called the canal Griffintowners' "swimming and diving facility." Indeed, sport was central to the masculine experience of growing up in Griffintown.⁷²

Delaney, Blickstead, and Don Pidgeon recall that most quintessential of Canadian sports in the cold Montréal winters: hockey. Delaney and his mates played the game feverishly on cold winter days, at least until suppertime, when everyone broke and ran home for food. Meanwhile, Blickstead and Don Pidgeon remember playing hockey with the Christian Brothers on the outdoor rink constructed every winter on the baseball diamond in Basin Street Park. Blickstead recalls the Brothers hooking "up their soutanes and stick[ing] them under their belts to skate. They were rough and they'd knock you

⁷⁰ Charles Blickstead, in Burns, *The Shamrock & The Shield*, p. 55.

⁷¹ James Lawrence Burns; Charles Blickstead; Patricia McDonnell McLeod, in Burns, *The Shamrock & The Shield*, pp. 28, 55, 182.

⁷² Tom Rowe; Denis Delaney, in Burns, *The Shamrock & The Shield*, pp. 154, 192-4.

down.” It seems, though, that the Brothers got as good as they gave; Don Pidgeon recalls sending one flying over the boards with a hip check when he was fourteen.⁷³

The twentieth century was also the height of modernity and mass forms of leisure became common place. During the 1930s, 40s, and 50s, new, modern forms of entertainment began to dominate working-class leisure forms in Montréal,⁷⁴ and the Irish-Catholics of Griffintown were no exception. Jimmy Burns, who was 26 when the Depression hit in 1929, remembers dancing, particularly in the big dance halls of the city. These included the Majestic on rue Guy, or the Wood Hall in Verdun, the Stanley on Stanley Street, and the massive dance hall on rue de Bleury in the east end of downtown. The Irish-Catholics parishes, according to Burns, did not miss out on the opportunities to let out their meeting halls for dances as well.⁷⁵

That the Catholic Church would allow its parishes to let out their meeting halls for dances may seem to be rather counter-intuitive at first. Even more so when we consider the recollections of Thelma Pidgeon,

[t]hey started having dances up on the top floor of the boy’s school where our stage was. And that was in the early Forties. And I remember Cardinal Léger, or one of them anyway, they had forbid us to dance close together and they brought in barn dancing. This went over like a lead balloon. That didn’t last too long, with the dancing up there, plus there were monitors watching us, and if you go too close, they would go in an

⁷³ Denis Delaney; Charles Blickstead, in, Burns, *The Shamrock & The Shield*, pp. 56, 194; Don Pidgeon, in, *The Ghosts of Griffintown*. Quote taken from Blickstead.

⁷⁴ Indeed, Gabrielle Roy, in her *Bonheur d’occasion*, paints a vivid picture of the lives and struggles of the working classes in Saint-Henri at the onset of World War II. Along rue Notre-Dame in Roy’s Saint-Henri, one could find a movie house, a coffee house/record store, and a Five & Dime, which had a coffee counter. The young men and women at the centre of the story in *Bonheur d’occasion* entertain themselves at these various establishment, as well as a bar on rue Saint-Ambroise adjacent to the canal. They also occasionally ventured downtown, usually on dates, to the rue Sainte-Catherine, and its restaurants, theatres, and other attractions. Gabrielle Roy, *Bonheur d’occasion* (Montréal: Éditions Pascal, 1945). Leisure for the working-class youth of Griffintown does not appear to have been all that different than what Roy describes in her semi-fictional Saint-Henri.

⁷⁵ James Lawrence Burns, in, Burns, *The Shamrock & The Shield*, pp. 35-6.

separate you and all this stuff. That didn't last very long, we didn't go back to the dances there.⁷⁶

Pidgeon, however, is recalling the amorous embraces of teenagers, something quite different, at least morally, than what consenting adults might get up to in the dance halls of Montréal, especially if those consenting adults were married. Suzanne Morton reminds us that the Catholic Church's notion of morality is not as stringent as that of the Protestant mainline churches. Catholic theology is centred around the fallibility of humanity, hence the need for Confession and penance.⁷⁷ Finally, the dances held in Catholic Church halls were undoubtedly different in terms of licentiousness from what happened in the dance halls downtown, and part of the priests' thinking in letting out their halls for these dances was exactly that: they could monitor the behaviour of their parishioners and discourage immorality.

In 1908, Griffintown got its own movie theatre, when the Fairyland opened up on rue Notre-Dame at Inspector, on Chaboillez Square. Following the Laurier Palace fire on 9 January 1927,⁷⁸ rather than ensure that all movie houses were in accordance with fire regulations, the Québec government did the next best thing. It banned all children under the age of sixteen from movie theatres province-wide.⁷⁹ While some of the younger patrons, such as the teenaged Denis Delaney and his mates, engaged in tricks such as putting shoe polish cans in their shoes to make them look taller, it appears that no one at the Fairyland was all that concerned with the ages of its patrons on a Saturday afternoon

⁷⁶ Thelma Pidgeon, in *The Ghosts of Griffintown*.

⁷⁷ Suzanne Morton, *At Odds: Gambling and Canadians, 1919-1969* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2003), pp. 9-10, 91-2.

⁷⁸ The Laurier Palace Fire occurred on 9 January 1927 at the ubiquitous theatre on rue Sainte-Catherine Ouest. There were 800 children watching a film in the theatre that day, and during the crush to escape the flames, 78 of them perished. Paul-André Linteau, *Histoire de Montréal depuis la Confédération*, 2nd ed. (Montréal: Boréal, 2000 (1992)), p. 398.

⁷⁹ Linteau, *Histoire de Montréal*, p. 398.

by the 1940s. It was not long before the programming at the Fairyland came to reflect the interests of this illicit clientele.⁸⁰ Admission to the theatre was 12 cents, which got the consumer two full-length movies, and a Movietone News Reel – four hours of entertainment. Denis Delaney recalls his first movie, *Desert Fury*,⁸¹ and being fascinated by the colours. Tom Rowe recalls *The Perils of Pauline*⁸² and the more prosaic *Clancy of the Mounted*,⁸³ the latter a twelve-segment serial that ran for a dozen consecutive weeks.⁸⁴

Griffintown teenagers also began to discover the modern wonders of the city beyond the borders of their neighbourhood. Tom Rowe recalls trekking up to Mont-Royal and Fletcher's Fields (now Parc Jeanne-Mance) on the eastern slope of the mountain. There, he and his friends would cross-country ski or toboggan in winter. He recalls two ways of getting to the mountain, either walking directly up Peel Street from the Griff to av. des Pins and into Parc Mont-Royal, or, if they could afford it, there was a streetcar up the Côte-des-Neiges side of the mountain. Kay Peachey and her friends took advantage of the CNR's liquidity problems during the Depression, which led to the

⁸⁰ Tom Rowe; Fr. Tom McEntee; Denis Delaney, in, Burns, *The Shamrock & The Shield*, pp. 155, 169-70, 194.

⁸¹ *Desert Fury* stars Burt Lancaster and Lizabeth Scott and is a 1947 *film noir* centring around a bordello and casino in the Nevada desert, just as Las Vegas was being developed as a sin city in the desert. The casino owner's daughter had been a runaway; but she returns, around the same time that a murky gangster is accused of murdering his wife. Plot synopsis taken from the Internet Movie Database, <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0039311/plotsummary>. (accessed 3 August 2007).

⁸² *The Perils of Pauline* was a 1947 production by director George Marshall, starring Betty Hutton and John Lund. It follows the travails of Pauline, a young actress, and her rise to fame in the silent movie era. It is based on the legendary silent movie serial, also entitled *The Perils of Pauline*. Taken from RottenTomatoes.com, http://www.rottentomatoes.com/m.1016152-perils_of_pauline. (accessed 3 August 2007).

⁸³ *Clancy of the Mounted* (1933) is, as the title suggests, a serial about a Mountie in the Canadian North assigned to bring in his brother, framed for the murder of a mine operator in the Yukon. Officer Clancy is left to wrestle with his conscience, his dedication to the Mounted Police, and his loyalty to his brother. Taken from the Internet Movie Database. <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0023894>. (accessed 3 August 2007).

⁸⁴ Tom Rowe; Denis Delaney, in, Burns, *The Shamrock & The Shield*, pp. 155, 194.

halting of construction on the new Gare Central in downtown Montréal. Peachey and her friends tobogganed in the huge icy crater on the construction site.⁸⁵

Aside from Christmas, two days in particular stand out in the memories of former Griffintowners as having been special, St. Patrick's Day and Corpus Christi, or in French, the Fête-Dieu.⁸⁶ Dennis Daugherty recalls people out in the streets for Corpus Christi, sweeping the streets and sidewalks, painting the fire station and their own front doors green, and "literally wash[ing] the sidewalks in front" of the procession.⁸⁷ Fire Station No. 3, on Ottawa at the corner of Young Street, was a central component of the Corpus Christi procession. It was here that a repository, or street altar, was erected. Each year, the priests halted the procession outside of the fire station, in front of the repository, where a benediction was held.⁸⁸

As Ron Rudin notes, "[e]verything about the Fête-Dieu procession was designed to convey a message." The procession was meant to delineate the boundaries of the parish, to enclose the sacred space of St. Ann's, and to re-enforce the Catholicity of the Griffintowners. More than this, however, the religious procession had a much different function than a secular parade. In the case of the former, there is not meant to be a differentiation between procession and audience, procession and audience are meant to be

⁸⁵ Tom Rowe; Kay Peachey, in, Burns, *The Shamrock & The Shield*, pp. 148-9, 154.

⁸⁶ Corpus Christi is meant to celebrate the Eucharist, or last supper of Jesus Christ. Indeed, its proper name in the Catholic Church is the Solemnity of the Body and Blood of Christ. It is celebrated the Thursday after Trinity Sunday, though it is a moveable feast and is oftentimes moved to the Sunday following Sunday of the Holy Trinity. As such, it is usually celebrated nine weeks following Easter Sunday in the liturgical calendar of the Roman Catholic Church, usually in early June, though Corpus Christi's date can vary between May and June.

⁸⁷ Dennis Daugherty, in, *The Ghosts of Griffintown*.

⁸⁸ Kay Peachey, in, Burns, *The Shamrock & The Shield*, pp. 146-7; Don Pidgeon, in, *The Ghosts of Griffintown*.

one single body.⁸⁹ In the Griff, the route the procession followed was designed to both enclose this sacred space, and to publicly display the Catholicity of the parishioners. From St. Ann's Church, the procession travelled up McCord (now the rue de la Montagne) street to William Street. Then it travelled along William to Fire Station No. 3 where the benediction was held. From there, the procession travelled to Colborne (now Peel) Street, where it turned right, towards Wellington Street, travelling west to rue Rioux to Basin Street Park, where an outdoor mass was said, before then travelling east on Basin Street back to St. Ann's Church.⁹⁰

The Corpus Christi procession was one that was conceived of and designed by the Catholic Church as a means of reinforcing the social hierarchy within the parish. The centre of the procession was the host, symbolising the body of Christ. Mervyn James notes that the central component of not just the procession but its symbolism was the Body, both that of Christ and that of the parish. It was designed to reflect the functioning of society, and the segregation of class therein. As Rudin summarises it, "the Corpus Christi procession was designed to show that it was possible for a divided body [i.e.: the parish society] to function as a whole."⁹¹

This is clearly seen in the procession itself, and how it was arranged. Whereas in secular parades, the most important marchers are given pride of place at the head of the parade, the Corpus Christi procession saw the holy host, and its conveyors, firmly entrenched in the centre of the procession. Outward from there, the marchers declined in importance, as if all the other processionists were there to protect the host. In

⁸⁹ Ronald Rudin, *Founding Fathers: The Celebration of Champlain and Laval in the Streets of Quebec, 1878-1908* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2003), p. 38, 81-2. Quote taken from p. 38.

⁹⁰ Kay Peachey, in, Burns, *The Shamrock & The Shield*, pp. 147-8.

⁹¹ Mervyn James, "Ritual Drama and Social Body in Late Medieval English Towns," *Past & Present*, 98 (1983), pp. 6-9; Rudin, *Founding Fathers*, p. 38.

Griffintown, the host was conveyed by the Redemptorist fathers of St. Ann's Church, surrounded by the Christian Brothers of the boys' school and the Congrégation Notre-Dame nuns of the girls' school. They were themselves surrounded by the St. Ann's Young Men's Society, the young women of the Sodality and of the Children of Mary, then the sanctuary boys, altar boys, the children of the boys' and girls' schools, with the first communion children heading the procession.⁹²

If the Corpus Christi procession in St. Ann's was one of solemnity and religiosity, it was also parochial in nature. It was designed to be limited to St. Ann's Parish, delineating its boundaries and confirming its Catholicity. The annual St. Patrick's Day parade was something else entirely. The feast day of the patron saint of Ireland was a day of celebration for Irish-Catholic Griffintowners in the mid-twentieth century, much as had been the case in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. However, St. Patrick's Day celebrations were city-wide in nature, and not limited to Griffintown. When the Irish from the neighbourhood travelled up the hill to celebrate downtown, they left their enclave and entered onto the stage of the city as a whole.

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the St. Patrick's Day parade was carefully used by the Irish-Catholic community of Montréal, including the various parochial organisations, as a means of establishing a public discourse on the plight of Ireland under British rule. Following Irish independence and the civil war there in the early 1920s, Ireland more or less disappeared from view in the community in Montréal, despite the on-going issue of partition in Northern Ireland. It was during this period in

⁹² Kay Peachey, in, Burns, *The Shamrock & The Shield*, pp. 146-7.

the mid-twentieth century that the parade regained its ecumenical nature.⁹³ This coincides with the ceding of control over the parade by the Ancient Order of Hibernians (AOH) to the newly-formed United Irish Societies of Montreal (UISM) in 1929, which included the AOH within its membership. The UISM retains control over the parade to this day. Thus, the 1929 parade was first about reintegrating the marginalised sections and groups of Irish Montréal, including the St. Patrick's Society and St. Patrick's Church. And, for the first time in thirty years, since the outset of the republican struggle for Irish liberation, the Irish-Protestant Benevolent Association marched in the parade.⁹⁴

In the 1930s, the parade branched out beyond the Irish community of Montréal. In 1937, Montréal's other "founding peoples" participated in the St. Patrick's Day celebrations for the first time in memory. The following year, Montréal Mayor Adhémar Reynault took the opportunity on St. Patrick's Day to unveil the city's new coat of arms, upon which "will appear the fleur-de-lys, the shamrock, the rose, and the thistle, the national emblems of the four great races which have contributed to the development of Montreal."⁹⁵ In the 1940s, non-Irish national societies were welcomed to march in the parade, around the same time that women were for the first time permitted to march.⁹⁶

⁹³ Prior to the sectarianism in Montréal and Canada as a whole in the mid-nineteenth century, the national celebrations of the each of the four main groups in Montréal were celebrated in communion: St. Patrick's for the Irish, St. George's for the English, St. Andrew's for the Scots, and Saint-Jean-Baptiste for the French Canadians. Moreover, prior to the 1856 split of the St. Patrick's Society with the expulsion of the Protestants (and the subsequent formation of the Irish-Protestant Benevolent Association), both Catholic and Protestant Irish were members and participated in the celebrations of Ireland's patron saint. See, Kevin James, "Dynamics of Ethnic Associational Culture in a Nineteenth-Century City: Saint Patrick's Society of Montreal," *Canadian Journal of Irish Studies/Revue canadienne d'études irlandaises*, 26/1 (2000): 47-67.

⁹⁴ See, Chapter 3. See, also, Peggy Regan, "Montreal's St. Patrick's Day Parade as a Political Statement: The Rise of the Ancient Order of Hibernians, 1900-1929," (BA (Hons) thesis, Concordia University, 2000); Mike Cronin and Daryl Adair, *The Wearing of the Green: A History of St. Patrick's Day* (New York: Routledge, 2002), p. 140.

⁹⁵ *The Gazette*, 17 March 1937; *The Gazette*, 21 March 1938. Quote taken from 1938.

⁹⁶ Cronin and Adair, *The Wearing of the Green*, p. 160.

As all of this suggests, St. Patrick's Day in Montréal was becoming a major day of celebration in the city, for people of all nationalities, and the parade began to move to the A-list of Montréal's social calendar. In 1934, close to 25,000 men and boys marched in the parade. Upwards of 100,000 people were on hand in 1937. The importance of the parade to Montréal becomes clear when we consider the route: along rue Sainte-Catherine in the downtown commercial core of the city. The parade has followed this route since at least the mid-1930s. The growing ecumenicalism of the parade, combined with the increased commercialisation of St. Patrick's Day in general, led to critiques from within some parts of the Irish community by the 1950s that the event was losing its "authentic" Irish nature.⁹⁷

This commercialisation also contributed to and reflected the breakdown of a separate Irish-Catholic identity and culture in Montréal in the mid-twentieth century, as St. Patrick's Day became less about Irishness and celebrating a unique Irish identity in Montréal as it became a major social event. The parade also, in the postwar years, became an opportunity for celebration, something which was officially encouraged by the various levels of government. After nearly sixteen years of Depression and war, public celebrations such as the St. Patrick's Day parade aided in the psychological and economic recovery of the city and nation. In this way, then, Montréal's St. Patrick's Day parade came to be a tourist attraction, not just for Montrealers, but for Canadians from Ontario

⁹⁷ *Montreal Star*, 19 March 1934; Cronin and Adair, *The Wearing of the Green*, p. 160. This is an interesting critique of St. Patrick's Day, especially as it exists in North America, in particular, in Boston, New York City, and Montréal, the site of the three largest St. Patrick's Day parades in North America, if not the world. Over the course of the twentieth century, the parades became increasingly commercialised and a sort of "plastic Paddy" or "shamroguery" emerged around the parades, complete with specialised marketing on the part of Guinness Breweries and a bevy of "Irish" trinkets. This has rendered St. Patrick's Day less a celebration of Irish culture and society, at least in the mainstream, or even Irish Canadian/American culture, than a day of celebrating the stereotypes of Irishness: heavy drinking, violence, and maudlin behaviour. See, Cronin and Adair, *The Wearing of the Green*, pp. 231-41.

and the Maritimes, and also Americans, especially those from Boston and New England.⁹⁸

But if this is what the St. Patrick's Day parade meant for the city as a whole, it remained something else for the Irish-Catholics of Griffintown. St. Patrick's Day remained a day of celebration of Irishness, though now in full diasporic version, concerned with Irishness as it existed in Montréal and not at all with the events in the home country. St. Patrick's Day remained a highlight of the social calendar in Griffintown. Charlie Blickstead has fond memories of St. Patrick's Day, recalling the Griffintown horses being used in the parade, and how they would race around on Ottawa Street before being taken up the hill to rue Sainte-Catherine for the parade, decked out in green and white livery, the jockeys in emerald green.

The St. Ann's Young Men's Society were always very prominent and I remember that they all wore the silk hats – what they use to call stovepipe hats – and all loaded down with shamrocks. They were a fine looking band of young men. The priests always attended, of course, and the boys from the school.⁹⁹

Patricia McDonnell McLeod's father ran the dépanneur and coffee shop across the street from St. Ann's Church, and she remembers the pots of shamrocks they would sell every 17 March, and all of the men of St. Ann's rushing into the store to decorate their hats with the flowers after mass before heading up the hill for the parade. "The St. Ann's men always looked so grand in the parade," she recalls.¹⁰⁰

There was a definite pride in the St. Ann's contingent as St. Patrick's Day was a chance for the working-class Irish-Catholics of Griffintown to level the playing field

⁹⁸ Cronin and Adair, *The Wearing of the Green*, pp. 148-9.

⁹⁹ Charles Blickstead, in, Burns, *The Shamrock & The Shield*, p. 60.

¹⁰⁰ Patricia McDonnell McLeod, in, Burns, *The Shamrock & The Shield*, p. 182.

somewhat. The men and boys of St. Ann's took great care in their appearance for the parade, dressed in their finery. On this day, at least, the people of St. Ann's were able to escape their poverty and to march proudly with the leaders of the Irish community of Montréal. Thus, for them, St. Patrick's Day, through the parade, retained its importance as one of celebration of Irishness and Irish culture, even if that was increasingly out-of-step with the larger point of the patrician celebrations in Montréal.

And if the St. Patrick's Society had a monopoly on its exclusive dinner and ball at the Windsor Hall on St. Patrick's night, the St. Ann's Young Men's Society still had domain over the Théâtre Monument-National on the lower Saint-Laurent Main, as it had since the late nineteenth century. Hannah Moriarty, who performed in the pageants in the mid-twentieth century, recalls them fondly,

[t]he Monument National was a beautiful theatre and the place used to be jammed. You couldn't get a seat. People came from all over the city. There would be a play with three acts and in between the acts they would have a singer or a dancer. It started at eight and usually ended at eleven. After the play, a gang of us used to go to Mother Martin's Restaurant and have a drink and sing songs while somebody played the piano.¹⁰¹

For those who were not the theatre-going types, there were also parties back in Griffintown. Annie Wilson was legendary for her gatherings. She recalls,

after the St. Patrick's Day Parade, first of all, we'd have all the beer in the bathtub, it was piled high. And if we didn't have enough room there, we'd shove it out in the snow in the backyard. And then we'd have all the boys and girls come in from the parade on a Sunday afternoon. We'd have everything set up and all the sandwiches, the food, the drinks. We had a great time, they'd all be singing Irish songs, it was jam-packed...never had any trouble, everybody enjoyed it, it was always a singing session. Always, always, everybody singing. We had Mickey McCambridge singing and who was the other? He was a real rebel, Danny

¹⁰¹ Hannah Moriarty, in, Burns, *The Shamrock & The Shield*, p. 129.

McCambridge, he was a real rebel. He was the one up there with all the rebel songs.¹⁰²

Thus, it is clear that St. Patrick's Day remained important for the Irish-Catholics of Griffintown. It was a day to display and celebrate their Irishness, for themselves, to the rest of the Irish community of the city, and to Montréal as a whole. And so, in the midst of deindustrialisation, depopulation, and a concerted physical attack on the neighbourhood on the part of industry, bureaucrats, and politicians, Griffintown continued to be a strong, proud Irish neighbourhood. But this was the end for Griffintown. In the years following World War II, all of these forces combined to render the neighbourhood uninhabitable.

III. *Les rénovations urbains, the slum discourse & the death of Griffintown*

The end of Griffintown was well underway by the end of World War II. Indeed, UISM historian Don Pidgeon acknowledges that the Griff was on the decline when he was growing up there during the 1940s.¹⁰³ The Irish-Catholics were moving out. Charlie Blickstead offers us some hint as to why, noting, amongst other things, the lack of indoor plumbing in many of the cold water flats of Griffintown. Indeed, the lack of amenities is a common refrain of former Griffintowners, recalling trips to the public baths on Haymarket Square, or even to the canal, to bathe.¹⁰⁴ Blickstead goes on:

Living in Griffintown eventually became a chore for the people. The new generation wouldn't put up with the old houses. They got the education and the better jobs and saw how other people lived. Verdun and NDG

¹⁰² Annie Wilson, in, *The Ghosts of Griffintown*.

¹⁰³ Don Pidgeon, in, Burns, *The Shamrock & The Shield*, p. 197.

¹⁰⁴ See, for example, Charles Blickstead; Tom Rowe; Denis Delaney, in, Burns, *The Shamrock & The Shield*, pp. 59, 153, 193-4; Thomas Seivewright, in, *The Ghosts of Griffintown*.

were developing. St. Michael's Parish, too. The younger generation moved to better themselves socially (maybe that's an imaginary thing) and the girls wanted their boyfriends to come home to a more modern house because some of the houses were falling apart. When I married, I lived in Côte St. Paul and when we saved enough money we bought a house in NDG. It took us seven years but I moved to NDG for one particular reason – to get my kids close to Loyola.¹⁰⁵

Indeed, many did the same thing; they moved out of Griffintown to more modern parts of town. Blickstead's commentary about the "younger generation [seeing] how other people lived" is interesting, as it reflects both the poverty and insularity of Griffintown before the Second World War. The tenement row houses of Griffintown were no longer considered acceptable in an affluent, modern nation such as Canada, let alone the Canadian metropolis, in the mid-twentieth century.

And thus Griffintown was dying. In 1952, the Griffintown Boys' and Girls' Club was shuttered and the building and assets sold off; the building itself was torn down a year later. The Fairyland Theatre closed in 1955 for a want of patrons. That same year, the Christian Brothers closed down the St. Ann's School for Boys and pulled out of St. Ann's parish. According to Fr. Edward Baldwin, then *curé* of St. Ann's, the 1950s were disastrous for his parish. The population of Griffintown collapsed, falling 41.5 per cent from 4,858 to only 2,686 as over 1,000 families fled the Griff in the 1950s alone.¹⁰⁶ In 1961, Fr. Baldwin noted that attendance at the parish schools (the Redemptorists stepped in to educate the boys when the Christian Brothers left in 1955) had dropped by some 75

¹⁰⁵ Charles Blickstead, in Burns, *The Shamrock & The Shield*, pp. 59-60. Blickstead is referring to Loyola High School, a private, Jesuit-run school for boys at the west end of Notre-Dame-de-Grâce. It is now located across the street from Concordia University's Loyola campus. In Blickstead's time, however, it was on the same campus as Loyola College, a Jesuit-run classical college affiliated with the Université de Montréal. In 1974, Loyola College became one of the two founding institutions of Concordia University.

¹⁰⁶ Canada, Dominion Bureau of Statistics, Ninth Census of Canada, 1951; Canada, Dominion Bureau of Statistics, Tenth Census of Canada, 1961: Population and Housing Characteristics by Census Tracts: Montreal (Ottawa: The Queen's Printer, 1963).

per cent since 1940. He was losing his parishioners because of a lack of suitable housing in Griffintown. Indeed, Fr. Baldwin stated that “the parish probably would not be here today were it not for former parishioners who return to St. Ann’s for weddings and, of course, for Tuesday Devotions.”¹⁰⁷ He predicted that St. Ann’s would be gone within a generation.¹⁰⁸

The postwar era was a carefully engineered and planned period in Canada, during which the federal government minutely managed the economy and transition to a peacetime one, driven in part by the memory of the post-World War I recession and the Depression a decade later. The postwar interventionism eventually led to a bevy of consumer items, household appliances, and technology flooding the market, some derived from wartime usage.¹⁰⁹ Joy Parr argues that the gendered nature of consumerism in the postwar era is clear, and Blickstead hints at this when he notes that it was women who drove the exodus from Griffintown in their search for a nice, modern home. Parr argues that there was a chain of gendered distinctions which linked the economic and aesthetic:

masculine engineering, feminine styling, his productive and necessary purchasing, her gratuitous and non-productive shopping. Thus was the chronology of postwar commodity culture understood as descent from the solid functionality of manly “high” modernism to the decorative femininity of consumer decadence.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁷ The Tuesday Devotions to Our Lady of Perpetual Help were begun at St. Ann’s during the Depression, but proved to be so immensely popular, they were continued afterwards. When St. Ann’s was demolished in 1970, the Devotions were moved to St. Patrick’s.

¹⁰⁸ Palmer, “Two Old Parishes”; Cliff Sowery, in, Burns, *The Shamrock & The Shield*, pp. 44-5. Quote taken from Palmer, “Two Old Parishes.”

¹⁰⁹ Parr, *Domestic Goods*, pp. 22-32.

¹¹⁰ Parr, *Domestic Goods*, pp. 8-9.

And while Parr is discussing consumerism and consumer items and appliances *in* the home, not the home itself,¹¹¹ such an analysis can also be applied to the home, as described by Blickstead, as easily as its contents.

Government officials, managers, industrialists, designers, and artists, Parr argues, saw this transition as a prime opportunity to transform Canada as a whole into a modern nation. An exhibit at the Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto, entitled *Design in Industry*, in May and June 1945 put this explicitly:

The greatness of a country does not depend upon the extent of its natural resources but upon its capacity to make effective use of them.¹¹² Canada is a large country with a small and scattered population. Its industries cannot in consequence hope to prosper greatly by mass production. Its natural resources must be exported or primarily processed for others to finish or it must develop high quality but small quantity manufacturers capable of competing in design, in workmanship and in material with those of other countries.¹¹³

Thus, the exodus from Griffintown was conducted within this framework, especially in light of official attention placed upon the inner-city in the post-World War II era. It was during this era that new, single-family homes and duplexes were being built with an eye to the working classes in the northern stretches of Verdun, as well as in Ville Saint-Pierre, Ville LaSalle, Ville Saint-Laurent, Côte-Saint-Paul, and Notre-Dame-de-Grâce. These houses had modern amenities such as indoor hot water, fully functional bathrooms and kitchens, and central heating. Home ownership was even made possible

¹¹¹ What is interesting is that Laura Jamieson, a CCF Member of the Legislative Assembly in British Columbia, wrote a pamphlet entitled “Women Dry Those Tears,” a proposal to the CCF Women’s Council of British Columbia, in which she laid out her plans for modernity and a new domestic order and the transition from a wartime to a peacetime economy. In it, she compared rural Western Canada to impoverished parts of the American South (she was from downtown Vancouver), looking, in particular, to the New Deal Tennessee Valley Authority, which had made power and household appliances affordable there. She argues that this could be easily replicated in Canada, where electrification had yet to arrive in many rural areas after World War II. Parr, *Domestic Goods*, pp. 33-9.

¹¹² Clearly this was an attempt to transform the Canadian *leitmotif* from a comfortable image of Canadians as drawers of water and hewers of wood.

¹¹³ As quoted in Parr, *Domestic Goods*, p. 42.

during this period by the creation of the Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC), with its mandate to oversee the postwar settlement of veterans and their families. In Montréal, this was combined with a housing shortage, if not crisis, and whilst Paul-André Linteau points out that this did not work so well for the French-Canadian population of Montréal, there were some benefits for the Anglophones and the working classes of both communities.¹¹⁴

The depopulation of Griffintown and the development of the CMHC and the new housing facilities in the *sud-ouest* of Montréal were wrapped up in the discourse of modernity, and its careful management by the federal government in Canada after World War II. Within Montréal itself, a push towards modernity accompanied the mayoralty of Jean Drapeau, who was first elected in 1954 and then re-elected in 1960 until his retirement in 1986. In this modern era, slums like Griffintown were made to be even more problematic than they had been in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In that period, the urban slum was problematised for sanitation, health, and moral reasons. In the mid-twentieth century, all of those problems remained, especially surrounding health and sanitation. However, they were now mixed up with a new language and aesthetic, that of modernism. Indeed, one could even suggest that the continued presence of neighbourhoods such as Griffintown on the urban landscape mocked the city and its pretensions of modernity.¹¹⁵ Neighbourhoods such as Griffintown became especially problematic for Montréal during this period, as the city

¹¹⁴ Linteau, *Histoire de Montréal*, pp. 505-15. See, also, Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation, "History of the CMHC." <http://www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/en/corp/about/hi/index.cfm>. (accessed 30 June 2007).

¹¹⁵ Stephen Leacock, *Montreal: Seaport to City* (New York: Doubleday, 1942), p. 187.

sought to present itself as a modern, twentieth-century metropolis, not just to its own citizens and to Canadians, but to the world.

Thus, the mid-twentieth century was an exciting time for urban reformers in Montréal. Whilst there had been a contingent of urban moral reformers at the *fin-de-siècle* in Montréal, they had a limited impact. This was largely owing to the fact that they were Anglophone and Protestant in a city that was predominantly francophone and Catholic.¹¹⁶ Moreover, Montréal bucked the North American trend in urban planning during the Age of Reform in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Annick Germain and Damaris Rose argue that “urban planning was hardly at the forefront of Montreal’s municipal politics during this time – nearly a century would pass before the city adopted its first master plan.”¹¹⁷

These new urban reformers of the mid-twentieth century were more successful than their nineteenth century predecessors, in large part because they were French-Canadian. They also had one more weapon in their arsenal than did their predecessors: the state. Inspired by the American New Deal, together with the massive expansion of the Canadian state, the era of the Depression and World War II brought with it the professionalisation and rationalisation of the state’s bureaucracy. And these urban

¹¹⁶ Indeed, Michael Bliss points out that working-class French-Canadians, in particular, were suspicious of Anglo-Protestant moral reformers in the late nineteenth century. The 1885 Smallpox Epidemic in Montréal struck in predominantly French-Canadian Catholic working-class neighbourhoods in the east end of the city. Bliss argues that this was owing to these working-class French Canadians being suspicious of reformist Anglo-Protestants and the burgeoning medical field of epidemiology. Thus, the French-Canadian working-classes were far less likely to allow themselves and their children to be inoculated against smallpox than was the case for the Anglophone working-classes, whether Catholic or Protestant. Meanwhile, Sherry Olson and Patricia Thornton note that French-Canadian working-class mothers weaned their children at a far younger age than was the case amongst the Anglophone population, which left the children more susceptible to illness. See, Sherry Olson and Patricia Thornton, “A Deadly Discrimination among Montreal Infants, 1860-1900,” *Continuity & Change*, 16/1 (2001): 95-135; Michael Bliss, *Plague: A Story of Smallpox in Montreal* (Toronto: Harper Collins, 2002 (1991)).

¹¹⁷ Annick Germain and Damaris Rose, *Montréal: The Quest for a Metropolis* (Chichester, UK: John Wiley & Sons, Ltd., 2001), p. 35.

reformers situated themselves within this realm quite easily, touting expert knowledge on *les rénovations urbains*. Whereas the urban reformers of the late nineteenth century had been driven primarily by notions of morality, health, and sanitation (as they saw all three as being intimately connected),¹¹⁸ the mid-twentieth century saw a boom in the discourse of public health and sanitation combined with an interventionist state.

In the midst of this burst of modernism, the end of World War II, and the buoyancy of the Canadian economy, the mid-twentieth century in Montréal was a heady time. A sense of renewal and reform gripped the city as a whole in the 1950s and 60s, emerging out of the Caron Inquiry in the early 1950s. This inquiry, which launched the career of the young Jean Drapeau,¹¹⁹ sought to ferret out vice and corruption in the city, especially on the police force and at *hôtel de ville*.¹²⁰ Indeed, Griffintown's own city councillor, "Banjo" Frank Hanley, was caught up in the Caron Inquiry's web. Called before the inquiry, Hanley

very much the man about town, presented a picture of serene ignorance about the very tough neighbourhood he represented. "On my oath, Your Honour," Hanley said at one point, "I swear there was never a brothel operated in my district."

¹¹⁸ Herbert Brown Ames made the connection between poverty and high death rates in his study of the slums of Montréal, *The City Below the Hill*. Ames, however, was unique amongst late nineteenth century reformers in that he did not focus on morality as a cause, or consequence, of poverty, being more interested in structural issues. At any rate, it was obvious to many observers that Montréal, was one of the most unhealthy cities in the western world around the turn of the twentieth century. However, it remains that health and sanitation oftentimes came second to questions of morality, the argument being that weak morals is what led the poor to be poor. Indeed, in many cases, the working classes were blamed for being poor and unhealthy because the reformers saw them as lazy. See, Herbert Brown Ames, *The City Below the Hill: The slums of Montreal, 1897* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1972 (1897)), pp. 79-86; Copp, *The Anatomy of Poverty*, ch. 6; Bliss, *Plague*, ch. 1.

¹¹⁹ Drapeau was one of the two lead counsel for the inquiry, the other being Pacifique "Pax" Plante, who had worked for the Recorder's Court of Montréal as a lawyer before becoming the head of the Montréal's police department's Morality Squad, though he was fired in 1948 after running afoul of the new Chief of Police, Albert Langlois. In response, Plante penned a series of articles in *La Presse* entitled, "Montréal sous le règne de la pègre" in the winter of 1949-50. This led to the establishment of the Caron Inquiry by the provincial government in 1950. Weintraub, *City Unique*, pp. 72-86; Linteau, *Histoire de Montréal*, pp. 532-3.

¹²⁰ For a history of Montréal and its seedy side in the 1940s and 50s, see, Weintraub, *City Unique*.

“It’s your oath,” said Judge Caron, “I’m glad it’s not mine.”¹²¹

Whilst the Caron Inquiry did nothing to hurt Hanley’s career, it did lend the city a sense of renewal, especially when it launched Drapeau into the mayor’s seat in 1954.¹²²

Drapeau’s election was “une nouvelle page de l’histoire politique de la métropole.”¹²³ The Drapeau era, which really began with his rise to prominence with the Caron Inquiry in 1950, did not end until his final retirement from politics in 1986.

Drapeau lost the 1957 election to Sarto Fournier, but following his return to the mayoralty in 1960, he forged an alliance with Lucien Saulnier, the President of the Executive Committee of Montréal. Together,

Drapeau et Saulnier sont en mesure de moderniser et de rendre plus efficace la gestion de la ville et d’amorcer des réformes que les Montréalais réclament depuis longtemps. Fort de sa majorité, le tandem Drapeau-Saulnier peut se dégager d’une gestion à la petite semaine et penser à long terme un développant une stratégie pour Montréal. Cette stratégie vise à faire de la métropole une grande ville moderne... La stratégie de développement est alors canalisée vers la réalisation de grand projet, en particulier la construction du métro, inauguré au 1966, et celle d’Expo 67.¹²⁴

When Drapeau was elected, Montréal was still the Canadian metropole, and “[u]nderlying his every action was the vision of Montréal as a world-renowned modern metropolis.”¹²⁵ Montréal, however, had been in decline since the Depression, when the Toronto Stock Exchange took over from that of Montréal as the primary exchange in Canada. By the 1960s, the city was well into decline. With foreign capital already being

¹²¹ Weintraub, *City Unique*, pp. 82-3.

¹²² Weintraub, *City Unique*, pp. 268-72; Linteau, *Histoire de Montréal*, pp. 531-40.

¹²³ Linteau, *Histoire de Montréal*, p. 533. By the time of his retirement from politics in 1986, however, Drapeau had lost most of his lustre, given the decline of the city in the 1970s and 80s, to say nothing of the massive debt left by the 1976 Summer Olympics.

¹²⁴ Linteau, *Histoire de Montréal*, p. 534.

¹²⁵ Germain and Rose, *Montréal*, p. 67.

diverted towards Toronto and Ontario, the rise of separatism made Montréal and Québec a less attractive site of investment. And Toronto, by the 1960s, had more head offices in its downtown core than did Montréal, of both foreign and domestic firms.¹²⁶

Nonetheless, Drapeau ushered in a new era at *hôtel de ville*, and enabled a radical redevelopment of the city at many levels, including the administration of the poorer neighbourhoods of the *arrondissement sud-ouest*, what Herbert Brown Ames had called in 1897, the “city below the hill.”

At the same time, the geography of industrialisation in Montréal was undergoing a radical, fundamental shift, on account of the opening of the St. Lawrence Seaway in 1959. The Seaway, as Germain and Rose note, meant “the erosion of [Montréal’s] historical location advantages as a water and rail transshipment hub.”¹²⁷ Almost instantaneously, traffic on the Lachine Canal, which the Seaway was meant to bypass, dropped precipitously. This led to problems for the factories and mills along the canal, which had long taken advantage of their proximity to shipping routes. Moreover, many of these factories and mills were already facing financial and economic problems, as Montréal’s economy was stumbling.

This caused fundamental problems of deindustrialisation, unemployment and dislocation in Montréal’s canal-side neighbourhoods, including Griffintown.¹²⁸ In an attempt to bolster the economy and to lure industry back to the *arrondissement sud-ouest*,

¹²⁶ Rudin, *The Forgotten Quebecers*, pp. 213-14; German and Rose, *Montréal*, pp. 28-32.

¹²⁷ Germain and Rose, *Montréal*, p. 129.

¹²⁸ The process of deindustrialisation and economic uncertainty was proved by Montréal documentary film-maker Sylvain L’Espérance in his 1992 film, *Les printemps incertains*, which focuses on Saint-Henri, the Pointe, and Griffintown, thirty years after Hubert Acquin’s landmark documentary, *Le 5 septembre à Saint-Henri*. Whereas *Le 5 septembre* examined life in Saint-Henri on the first day of school in 1962, *Les printemps incertains* examines the plight of the canal-side neighbourhoods in the wake of deindustrialisation and economic dislocation.

Drapeau's *hôtel de ville* rezoned it as "light industrial" in 1963. This meant that all new constructions in the *sud-ouest*, including Griffintown, had to be constructed for light industrial purposes, meaning that new housing stock could not be built. However,

[t]he existing buildings and establishments erected or established according to the provisions of the by-laws now repealed but not meeting the requirements of the present by-law to the sectors where they are located *may be maintained, upkeep, repaired*. They may not be enlarged or affected to other ends than those authorized in the sectors in question.¹²⁹

Thus, the housing stock of Griffintown could be maintained. Indeed, this is exactly what happened with the row housing on McCord Street (now the rue de la Montagne) across from St. Ann's Church in 1967. That year, Norton Steel, the buildings' owner, spent some \$40,000 renovating the cold water flats, including installing toilets, showers, and bathtubs, creating what Frank Hanley called "a little bit of Westmount in Griffintown."¹³⁰ Nevertheless, the re-zoning was still another blow to an already reeling neighbourhood, as most of the housing stock was allowed to fall into disrepair by the landlords.

The landscape of Montréal's *sud-ouest* was, up until the middle decades of the twentieth century, one dominated by industrial developments, slum-like tenement housing, and the evidence of Montréal's status as a transportation hub. This was especially evident in the plethora of railway tracks that cut across Saint-Henri, Little Burgundy, Pointe-Saint-Charles, and Griffintown. These tracks served the CNR's three massive train yards: the Turcot Yards at the western end of Saint-Henri, down the escarpment from Notre-Dame-de-Grâce, and once the largest rail yards in North America; the Bonaventure yards, just north of Griffintown, leading into the CNR's

¹²⁹ Comité du Conseil municipal, Ville de Montréal, By-Law 2875, 13 September 1965, AVM, Dossiers du Comité et du Conseil, 1961-1973: Série VM-1 : Fonds, Conseil municipal et Comité Exécutif, 4^e Série, File 1801, Reel 366. Italics mine.

¹³⁰ As quoted in Harold Poitras, "Facelift instead of bulldozer sparks Griffintown renewal: Tenement buildings renovated," *Montreal Star*, 3 June 1967.

Bonaventure Station on Peel Street, kitty-corner to the Dow Brewery; and the old Grand Trunk yards in the Pointe. Montréal was central to North American transportation and shipping routes, given the presence of the largest inland sea port in North America, as well as being home to two of the largest intercontinental railway systems, the CNR and CPR.¹³¹ As such, the railways that criss-crossed the *sud-ouest* were central to not just the CNR and Montréal's economy, but the Canadian economy as well. This, of course, was reflected in the large industrial basis of Griffintown and other communities along the Lachine Canal prior to the construction of the St. Lawrence Seaway.

Thus, it should come as no surprise that the Griffintown landscape was first decimated by the various expansions of the CNR's track in the neighbourhood, in particular, the construction of the viaduct that presently leads into Gare Central. Plans to construct an elevated viaduct over Griffintown were floated as early as 1913. In March of that year, Chas. F. Skelton, who owned a building on the northwest corner of Duke and William streets, wrote the Railway Commissioners in Ottawa,¹³² with concern. Skelton reported that he had been informed of the Canadian Northern Railway's (CNoR)¹³³ plan for an elevated viaduct and had watched "buildings being removed between Nazareth and Dalhousie streets"; he assumed that this is where the viaduct would be located. He demanded compensation from the CNoR, arguing that he would lose income from his building with a railway viaduct nearby. The Commission, however,

¹³¹ Canadian Pacific relocated its head offices from Montréal to Calgary in 1996, reflecting its shift in priorities regarding its rail lines from the continent to the western portion of it. Canadian National, however, maintains its head office in Montréal still, in a tower adjacent to Station Central and the Queen Elizabeth Hotel.

¹³² The Board of Railway Commissioners, a federal body, had jurisdiction over the operation of railways in Canada prior to the 1919 formation of the CNR as a Crown corporation.

¹³³ The Canadian Northern Railway was a predecessor company to the Canadian National Railway.

was not all that sympathetic, as it failed to see how proximity to a railway could hurt a building's value, and that "[t]his whole district is given up to industrial pursuits and slums and we cant [sic] do it any harm from any point of view while from that of the cold storage man, the warehouse, the small manufacturer, and even the saloon keeper, we do it a lot of good."¹³⁴

While nothing came of these plans in the 1910s, a decade later, as the volume of traffic on the level railways of the Griff increased, new problems emerged. Quite simply, there was too much traffic on the tracks and streets of Griffintown. The tracks were used for both passenger and freight purposes, and cars of all kinds were shuttled back and forth between the various yards and the three CNR passenger stations downtown.¹³⁵ A 1927 internal CNR report speaks to this problem:

Between Bonaventure, St. Henri,¹³⁶ and Turcot where the major portion of the passenger business of the Railway is handled there are a large number of grade crossings at which vehicular and pedestrian traffic is frequently delayed owing to the numerous passenger trains and movement of locomotives and empty coaches to and from the Coach yard and engine facilities at Turcot...It is essential that the grade crossing situation be improved and the disadvantages of present passenger and freight conditions be eliminated.¹³⁷

Thus, the CNR sought to construct a viaduct out of the Tunnel Station,¹³⁸ south from rue Saint-Antoine to Wellington Street through Griffintown, and then across the Lachine

¹³⁴ F. Chas. Skelton to Chairman, Railway Commissioners, 5 March 1913, LAC, RG 30, Vol. 9235, File 1045-58-181; Wickstead to Temple, 9 July 1913, LAC, RG 30, Vol. 9235, File 1046-58-181.

¹³⁵ The three were: Bonaventure Station on Peel Street; the Tunnel Station, located roughly where the Gare Central is located today; McGill Street Station, located on McGill Street near Victoria Square. The CNR also operated the Moreau Street Station in the east end.

¹³⁶ This refers to Station Saint-Henri, which was located on rue de la Station, just off rue Notre-Dame, and a block east of Place Saint-Henri. The CLSC de Saint-Henri is now located on this site.

¹³⁷ CNR, "Canadian National Railways – Proposed Terminal and Grade Separation Development, Montreal, Que., November 17th, 1927," LAC, RG 30, Vol. 10139, File 7440-5.

¹³⁸ The Tunnel Station stood at the southern end of the CNR's tunnel through Mont-Royal to the Ville de Mont-Royal. The present-day Gare Central stands roughly on the site of the old Tunnel Station.

Canal into Pointe-Saint-Charles.¹³⁹ Construction began in 1928 and was completed in the early 1930s, just after the onset of the Depression.¹⁴⁰

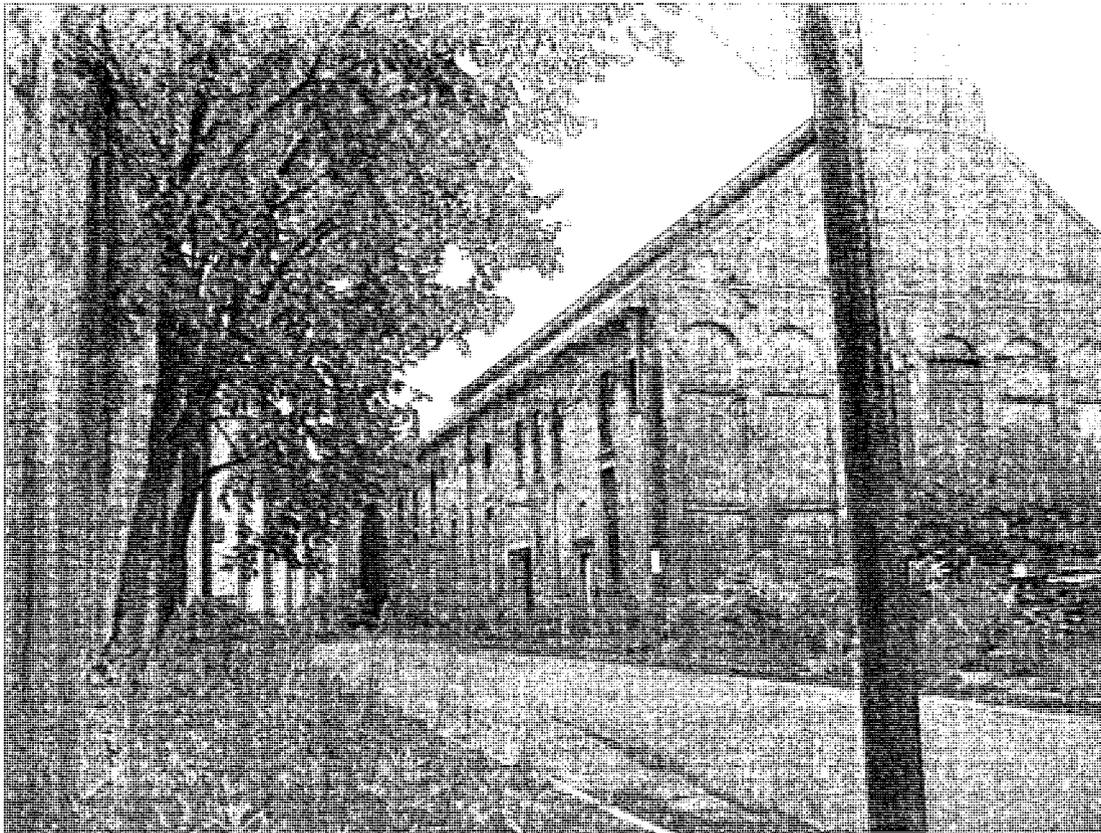


Figure 4.1: CNR Viaduct (on left) and Dalhousie Street, with New City Gas Works building, summer 2006. Credit: Author

This viaduct splits the Griffintown landscape in two, as it travels south between Dalhousie and Nazareth streets towards Wellington and then over the canal. Moreover, the viaduct is an imposing, and ugly, structure, engulfing the landscape around it, creating dank and ill-lit bridges over rue Saint-Antoine and William and Ottawa streets as it heads south. It was not, of course, designed for aesthetic purposes (despite the fact that the CNR's head offices were temporarily located there until the completion of the Gare

¹³⁹ CNR, "Proposed Terminal."

¹⁴⁰ The viaduct came to be part of the Gare Central complex, which was designed to replace the three downtown Montréal stations, as well as Station Saint-Henri and the Moreau Street Station. While construction on the Gare Central was commenced in 1928, it was not completed until 1943, owing to the pressures of the Depression and World War II. See, Assistant to the President to Sen. Vincent Dupuis, 13 December 1961, LAC, RG 30, Vol. 13210, File 9660-10.

Central and the CNR Tower attached thereto);¹⁴¹ it is a looming, concrete, industrial structure that alienates its surroundings.

UISM historian, and former Griffintowner, Don Pidgeon argues that the viaduct separated the neighbourhood in two.¹⁴² This may well be, given the imposing nature of the structure. However, if the neighbourhood was not physically separated in two prior to the construction of the viaduct, the residential patterns of the Griff were already split to some degree. The dividing line was Peel Street, which is a full three blocks west of the viaduct. More importantly, much of what lay between Colborne and Dalhousie streets, with the exception of the area around Shannon and Ottawa streets, was mixed-use industrial.¹⁴³ This area served as a buffer zone of sorts between the Irish-Catholic district to the west, around St. Ann's, and the more heterogeneous district to the east, where the Anglican St. Edmund's and French-Canadian Catholic Sainte-Hélène's churches could be found on Chaboillez Square, reflecting the residential patterns of their flocks. Thus, Griffintown was already divided along a different axis than that which was imposed by the CNR viaduct.¹⁴⁴ Nonetheless, the viaduct is an assaulting structure on the landscape of Griffintown and this certainly did something to the geography of the neighbourhood on the part of its residents, irrespective of what stood between Colborne and Dalhousie streets prior to its construction.

If the Griff was beginning to feel the effects of shifting industrial patterns and the physical destruction of the neighbourhood by the 1950s, the 1960s was the decade which saw its ultimate death. This was a period of urban renewal and reform in Montréal as

¹⁴¹ Assistant to President to Sen. Dupuis, 13 December 1961.

¹⁴² Don Pidgeon, in, *The Ghosts of Griffintown*

¹⁴³ Charles Blickstead, in, Burns, *The Shamrock & The Shield*, pp. 54, 60-1; Thomas Seivewright, in, *The Ghosts of Griffintown*.

¹⁴⁴ See, Ames, *The City Below the Hill*, pp. 87-100.

Drapeau's administration sought to leave its mark on the city. In Griffintown, this meant further devastation with the construction of the Autoroute Bonaventure, itself part of the larger construction of a new highway infrastructure to serve Montréal in the 1960s, designed to connect the city with its surroundings for Expo '67.¹⁴⁵

The construction of the Autoroute Bonaventure, which connects the Pont Champlain with downtown Montréal, led to the destruction of a wide swath of buildings parallel to the CNR viaduct, both commercial and residential, along University Street, where the Bonaventure begins, as well as along Duke and Nazareth streets, on either side of the elevated expressway. Buildings were torn down all the way from rue Saint-Antoine at the foot of downtown to Brennan Street, rue de la Commune, and the Lachine Canal at the south end of Griffintown. Initially, the areas underneath the elevated expressway were to be used for parking spaces for commuters and visitors to Expo '67, some 200 spaces between William and Wellington streets, plus another 100 between Wellington and the canal. As the *Montreal Star* reported in February 1964, when plans for the Autoroute Bonaventure were announced,

Realization of the multi-million dollar scheme will necessitate the disappearance of 55 dwellings, in addition to warehouses, foundries, restaurants, wood yards, repair shops, according to the plan... With mensuration plans¹⁴⁶ scheduled for completion by the end of this month,

¹⁴⁵ "Comité sur les routes d'accès: Procès-verbal de la 5ème réunion régulière," 15 December 1964, LAC, RG 71, Vol. 340, File 2000-11-2-2; "Comité sur les routes d'accès: Procès-verbal de la 6ième réunion régulière," 19 January 1965, LAC, RG 71, Vol. 340, File 2000-11-2.1, pt. 1; Gerard Dery, "New Elevated Road Planned for Bridge," *Montreal Star*, 6 February 1965; "Voie d'accès au pont Champlain: des crédits de plus de \$6.5 millions pour les expropriations," *La Presse*, 3 April 1965; "Expo Approach Road Contract Bid Opened," *Montreal Star*, 17 December 1965; Arthur Branchaud, to E. Churchill, 17 February 1966, LAC, RG 71, File 341, File 2000-11-2-1, pt. 4; S.M. Staples to Director of Installations, 25 January 1967, LAC, RG 71, File 341, File 2000-11-2-1, pt. 4; Charles Lazarus, "New Expressway Gives Elbow Room to Traffic," *Montreal Star*, 15 April 1967. See, also, Linteau, *Histoire de Montréal*, pp. 438-40.

¹⁴⁶ Mensuration plans are plans that reflect the measurements and surveying of the land under redevelopment.

eviction notices will be mailed out from April 1-30 and demolition will start on May 1 with a 60-day deadline to raze all existing buildings.¹⁴⁷

This means that the residents of those 55 “dwellings” that would be made to disappear would have no more than one month’s official notice of their evictions, and no more than three months in total from the announcement of the plans to the demolition of the buildings to move out of their homes and find new accommodations. In addition to the wide swath of destruction in Griffintown, construction of the Autoroute Bonaventure also led to the complete and total destruction of Goose Village on the south side of the Lachine Canal. Don Pidgeon sums up this physical destruction of Griffintown, both the expressway and railway viaduct, quite well, “The CNR, when they built Central Station, of course, went right through Griffintown, built up the railtrack which separated Griffintown right in two. When it came to the Expo 67, they built the autoroute, no care, right through.”¹⁴⁸

That there was no real care shown to Griffintown should not be all that surprising, given that it was an urban industrial working-class slum. The discourse of the urban reformers since the late nineteenth century had been clear: slums were areas to be diagnosed and cured of their ills (as a means of curing the ills of society as a whole). As the battle between the publican Charles “Joe Beef” McKiernan and the moral reformers of the late nineteenth century showed, care for the lives and culture of the working classes was not at the top of the list of the reformers’ priorities; they sought to alter, if not eradicate, working-class culture, to replace it with a more genteel one.¹⁴⁹ Not much had changed by the middle of the twentieth century, though the reformers had learned the

¹⁴⁷ Gerard Dery, “New Elevated Bridge,” *Montreal Star*, 6 February 1965.

¹⁴⁸ Don Pidgeon, in, *The Ghosts of Griffintown*.

¹⁴⁹ See, Delottinville, “Joe Beef of Montreal.”

new language of the professionalised state bureaucracy and technocracy, which appeared to, but did not really, show care for those affected by these *rénovations urbaines*.

The idea that Griffintown was a slum was not a new one, of course. Throughout the nineteenth century, Griffintown was oftentimes dismissed as a slum in newspaper reports. Nor was it a stretch to so-call Griffintown, given issues like over-crowding, population density, to say nothing of very high mortality rates, and the various attendant public health issues that predominated in the area. In 1942, Stephen Leacock termed Griffintown “a wretched area, whose tumbled, shabby houses mock at the wealth of Montreal.”¹⁵⁰ He went on to term Griffintown “the first of our industrial ‘slums’.”¹⁵¹

The slum discourse was very much present in official and media discussions concerning Griffintown. For example, in a 1967 editorial, *The Gazette* patted on the back the various levels of government responsible for the “spectacular” and “extraordinary” new expressways around the city:

The Bonaventure expressway, for example, sweeps around the shore of the river and into the centre of the city, some of it going through land which was undeveloped and unkempt¹⁵² and other parts of it through former slum areas.¹⁵³

¹⁵⁰ If this really were the case, then a lot more than just Griffintown mocked Montréal’s wealth in 1942. Since the dawn of the industrial age in the 1840s in Montréal, the city was very much one that was geographically divided along class, as well as ethnic, linguistic, and religious ones. See, Robert Lewis, *Manufacturing Montreal: The Making of an Industrial Landscape* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000); Sherry Olson, “Research Note: Ethnic partition of the work force in 1840s Montreal,” *Labour/Le Travail*, 53 (2004): 159-202.

¹⁵¹ In this he was correct, Griffintown was the first industrial working-class slum in Montréal, if not Canada. Leacock, *Montreal*, p. 187.

¹⁵² This refers to the section of the Bonaventure that follows the north bank of the St. Lawrence River from the Pont Champlain to Victoria Bridge. Ironically, whilst *The Gazette* called this “undeveloped and unkempt” land in 1967, by the turn of the millennium, there were different ideas for this land, to get rid of the Bonaventure. In 2005, the Société du Havre, headed by former Québec premier Lucien Bouchard and former Trudeau-era federal cabinet minister, Francis Fox, proposed a radical redevelopment of the Bonaventure from the Pont Champlain into the downtown core, including burying it along the waterfront to allow for the construction of housing and other amenities, including a park, on that land, as well as the shrinking of the autoroute to an urban boulevard, at ground level, through Griffintown in order to construct condominiums on either side of it along Duke and Nazareth streets, amongst other things. This plan, however, appears fated to come to naught, especially with the proposed redevelopment of the core area of

All of this neglects the fact that these were not just slum tenements, they were homes. Indeed, former resident Thomas Seivewright confirms this when he recalls the home he grew up in: “I used to live right there on the corner across from that new building,¹⁵⁴ on this side, at 110 Duke Street. It was upstairs and we have five rooms and that. It was nice. It was clean. We kept it clean. Painted it every year.”¹⁵⁵ Seivewright’s building at 110 Duke Street, as well as Charlie Blickstead’s at 95 Duke, were two of those 55 destroyed for the construction of the Bonaventure. Today where Seivewright’s home stood, at the corner of Duke and Wellington streets, all one can hear is the sound of traffic on the expressway above. As the remembrances of Blickstead and Seivewright suggest, their childhood family homes were not just slums to be made to disappear. They were firmly located in the culture and community of the neighbourhood; they were homes.

Whilst the newspapers may not have been willing to recognise the human costs of progress, a more ambivalent stance was struck by the Ville de Montréal’s “experts”. Indeed, the entire movement of slum clearances in Montréal in the 1960s and 70s was predicated on this ambivalence. In November 1962, the Service d’urbanisme de la Ville de Montréal prepared an in-depth report concerning Goose Village, or Victoriatown, as it was more properly called. This report is a rather interesting study in the mindset of the

Irish-Catholic Griffintown by the private developer Devimco. Henri Aubin, “Waterfront pipe dream is deeply flawed,” *The Gazette*, 8 October 2005; Linda Gyulai, “Expressway may stay put,” *The Gazette*, 23 October 2005; Ann Carroll, “Harbourfront shifts to Plan B,” *The Gazette*, 26 April 2006; Peter Hadekel, “Ambitious redevelopment dream for the waterfront worth pursuing,” *The Gazette*, 26 April 2006; Andy Riga, “Griffintown Reborn? \$1.3 billion Blueprint: Proposed project would preserve face of district, developer says,” *The Gazette*, 23 November 2007.

¹⁵³ These “former slum areas” are Goose Village and Griffintown. “Roads with a View,” *The Gazette*, 14 June 1967.

¹⁵⁴ On the corner of Ottawa and Duke streets, a new office building was constructed around the year 2000 as part of the Cité du Multimédia project. See Chapter 5.

¹⁵⁵ Thomas Seivewright, in *The Ghosts of Griffintown*.

rénovationistes in Montréal in the 1960s. On the one hand, the authors of the report remarked that

on ne retrouve pas dans ce secteur les indices de délinquance, de maladies, ou d'autres problèmes généralement associés par l'opinion publique aux zones délabrées. De plus, plusieurs des résidents sont des nouveaux Canadiens qui ont travaillé avec ardeur pour améliorer leurs logements. Il y a une proportion remarquable de propriétaires pour un territoire où les revenus sont plutôt bas.

Yet, on the other hand, the authors conclude that

[I]es conditions actuelles de vie et l'environnement rendent évident que « Victoriatown » est un site absolument impropre pour l'habitation, que toute la population devra être déplacée, que le déblaiement complet de la zone s'impose et que les terrains déblayés ne pourront pas être réutilisés à des fins résidentielles. « Victoriatown » est un territoire dont l'état et l'environnement nécessitant sans équivoque un réaménagement.¹⁵⁶

This report shows what can be seen as either ambivalence, or worse, arrogance, on the part of the *rénovationistes* at *hôtel de ville*.

The discourse surrounding the term “slum” construes it as a problem, something that needs to be solved. *Les rénovations urbaines* were sought as a means to solve the problems of the slum. This mindset, when it drives public policy, is almost always deleterious for the inhabitants.¹⁵⁷

These *rénovations urbaines* were very much tied up with modernity, as the technocrats attempted to do away with substandard, in many cases, Victorian, housing in the inner-city of Montréal. The goal was to replace these old houses with modern, equipped housing, or else to renovate the older buildings. Indeed, this was the case with a stand of row houses on rue de la Montagne in Griffintown which was renovated in 1967

¹⁵⁶ Service d'urbanisme de la Ville de Montréal, “Réaménagement urbain: “Victoriatown,” November 1962, AVM, Dossiers du comité du Conseil, 1961 à 1973, Série VM-1: Fonds Conseil municipal & Comité exécutif, 4e série, File 8081.1-1, Reel 158.

¹⁵⁷ Alan Mayne, *The Imagined Slum: Newspaper representations in three cities, 1870-1914* (New York: Leicester University Press, 1993), pp. 1-4.

to provide the flats with such amenities as indoor toilets, hot water, central heating, and fully-equipped bathrooms and kitchens.¹⁵⁸ The discourse of modernity was central to Montréal's mid-twentieth century development, and can be seen as emanating from everything from these *rénovations urbaines* to the construction of these new expressways. Jean Décarie, a retired Montréal city planner, argues that the construction of the elevated expressways, to say nothing of the interchanges that dominate the Montréal landscape, were "emblematic. They needed something to mark social progress owing to the automobile." He goes on to state that the automobile in the postwar era was the ultimate symbol of progress and, thus, by extension, modernity.¹⁵⁹ Goose Village, indeed, was torn down for the construction of a symbol of progress and modernity, the Autoroute Bonaventure. Similarly, the destruction of Victorian slums and their replacement with modern, low-cost housing can be seen in the same light.

Thus, slum clearances came to Montréal in the 1960s and 70s,¹⁶⁰ as the city made way for Expo 67, in the case of Goose Village, or sought to knock down and destroy ageing slum tenements and replace them with modern-style, low cost housing, in neighbourhoods such as Saint-Henri, Little Burgundy, and Pointe-Saint-Charles. A walk today through any of these neighbourhoods will show the effects of these *rénovations urbaines* in the 1960s and 70s, in the form of housing projects littered throughout.¹⁶¹ These clearances were part of a concerted effort at *rénovations urbaines*. Even Goose

¹⁵⁸ Poitras, "Facelift Instead of Bulldozer."

¹⁵⁹ As quoted in, Linda Gyulai, "Road design moving from elevation," *The Gazette*, 4 August 2007.

¹⁶⁰ See, Linteau, *Histoire de Montréal*, pp. 515-18.

¹⁶¹ I lived in both Saint-Henri and Pointe-Saint-Charles whilst writing this dissertation, where housing projects dot the landscape. Indeed, I can see a housing project out the front window of my flat in the Pointe.

Village would have been torn down irrespective of whether there was a need to in order to construct the Autoroute Bonaventure and the Autostade¹⁶² for Expo 67.

Whether or not these *rénovations urbaines* have been successful is difficult to gauge, given the on-going problems with unemployment and crime in the *arrondissement sud-ouest*. Indeed, in much of the Pointe, Saint-Henri, and Little Burgundy, a more modern slum discourse has emerged, that centred on the “housing project,” and the attendant social problems. In the case of the projects in these neighbourhoods, while they remain owned and operated by the Ville de Montréal, they have fallen into neglect and disrepair. At any rate, the neighbourhoods of the *arrondissement sud-ouest* were targeted as part of an official, and carefully thought out, plan of renewal. Yet, somehow Griffintown appears to have escaped official notice until it was too late. There were no plans to rebuild and renovate Griffintown, as there was for Saint-Henri, Little Burgundy, and the Pointe. Griffintown was left to die, forgotten for some reason by the administrators, *rénovationistes*, and technocrats at the municipal, provincial, and national levels.

IV. The end of the Griff, 1970-75

And thus, Griffintown meekly disappeared from the urban landscape of Montréal. The neighbourhood was disintegrating through the combined forces of voluntary depopulation, re-zoning, changing industrial patterns, and infrastructural construction.

¹⁶² The Autostade was constructed over that part of Goose Village that was not used for the Autoroute Bonaventure. After a protracted negotiation with the Montréal Alouettes Football Club, which was seeking a new stadium, the Autostade was constructed without the football club’s help, on the site of Goose Village. After Expo 67, the stadium was turned over the Alouettes, who played there until moving to Stade Olympique in 1976. D.L. Workman, to R.S. Shaw, 29 November 1963, LAC, RG 71, Vol. 343, File 2000-502, pt. 1; D.L. Workman to Col. E. Churchill, 30 January 1964, LAC, RG 71, Vol. 343, File 2000-502, pt. 1; “Press Release,” 7 April 1964, LAC, RG 71, File 343, File 2000-502, pt. 2.

While the *rénovations urbaines* were underway in adjoining neighbourhoods like Little Burgundy, Pointe-Saint-Charles, and Saint-Henri, and Goose Village was being wiped off the map with the imprimatur of *hôtel de ville*, Griffintown was again virtually ignored, with the exception of the lonely voice of Frank Hanley, City Councillor and MNA for St. Ann's.

In 1961, Hanley noted to the *Montreal Star* that the only solution for Griffintown was low-rent housing,

The square formed by Mountain, Windsor,¹⁶³ McGill, and the waterfront should be taken over for a low rental housing project.¹⁶⁴ I have brought this situation to the attention of the authorities, including those in Ottawa, and all that is needed is the green light – and that can't come too soon.¹⁶⁵

The following year, Hanley convened a meeting between various interested stakeholders, including the municipal and federal governments, and residents of his ward, including Griffintown. Here, he noted that there had been a 40 per cent drop in the population in the previous quarter century, owing to the deterioration of the housing stock. He called upon the city to honour a commitment it had made to the people of the

¹⁶³ Windsor Street disappeared during the construction of the Autoroute Ville-Marie and the Peel Street exit therefrom.

¹⁶⁴ Note, here, that Hanley is calling for almost the entirety of Griffintown to be razed and replaced with low-cost housing. This would have been a very ambitious project, rivalling only the Dozois Plan in terms of a *rénovation urbaine*. In 1954, Paul Dozois, a member of Montréal's Executive Committee, announced his plan for the redevelopment of a sector of the downtown of Montréal along blvd. de Maisonneuve between rue Saint-Denis and blvd. Saint-Laurent, taking advantage of the federal *National Housing Act*, which provided funds for the "elimination" of slum areas and the construction of low-cost housing in their stead. The Dozois Plan called for this area of downtown to be razed for low-cost housing. Mayor Drapeau was steadfast against the plan, arguing that the downtown core of the city was not the proper location for low-cost housing, especially given the average size of a French Canadian family at the time. He had other plans for the area, as well, including the construction of Place-des-Arts and a new Maison Radio-Canada, envisioning a *Cité des Ondes*. However, Drapeau's surprise loss to Sarto Fournier in the 1957 mayoral election, allowed for the Dozois Plan to go ahead, and Les Habitations Jeanne-Mance were constructed between rue Saint-Dominique in the west, rue Sanguinet in the east (Saint-Dominique is a block east of blvd. Saint-Laurent, rue Sanguinet a block west of rue Saint-Denis) along boulevard de Maisonneuve. Les Habitations Jeanne-Mance were the one and only housing project built in the downtown core of Montréal, something Drapeau's return to the mayoralty in 1960 guaranteed. See, Linteau, *Histoire de Montréal*, pp. 515-17; Germain and Rose, *Montréal*, pp. 82-3.

¹⁶⁵ Palmer, "Two Old Parishes."

district in 1948 that if “they would co-operate in reducing juvenile delinquency they would be given better recreational facilities and housing.” Hanley noted that juvenile delinquency had fallen 95 per cent in the previous decade. A glimmer of hope was presented at this meeting in that Councillor Gerry Snyder, vice-president of the Executive Committee, stated that he hoped the city and the federal government could come to an agreement which would see the city pay 25 per cent and Ottawa 75 per cent of the costs, “Mr. Snyder reported that city authorities were prepared to go ahead with the project as soon as negotiations had been completed with Ottawa.”¹⁶⁶ But, nothing came of this, and Hanley was left to continue the fight all but alone through the rest of the 1960s, until his retirement from politics in 1970, by which time the Griff was all but dead.

The 1960s were the end for Griffintown. There was no green light forthcoming from the federal government or the city to save it. As Kay Peachey, the former Griffintown resident notes, “Griffintown became so industrialized after the war that people more or less had to move out.”¹⁶⁷ By this point, the neighbourhood was no longer even remotely Irish in character; by 1971, only one in fourteen residents of Griffintown was Irish.¹⁶⁸ The population of the neighbourhood as a whole had taken a drastic dive; according to the 1971 census, only 840 souls remained in the Griff.¹⁶⁹

St. Ann’s and the French-Canadian Sainte-Hélène’s had been faced with extinction for some time by the late 1960s. Indeed, the Capucin Order was sent into Sainte-Hélène’s in 1956 by Cardinal Paul-Émile Léger in a vain attempt to save the

¹⁶⁶ Harold Poitras, “Slum Clearance Project Urged for District No. 2: Hanley goes to bat,” *Montreal Star*, 23 January 1962; “Deux paroisses de Montréal sont menacées de disparition,” *La Presse*, 23 January 1962.

¹⁶⁷ Kay Peachey, in, Burns, *The Shamrock & The Shield*, p. 149.

¹⁶⁸ Canada, Statistics Canada, *1971 Census of Canada*.

¹⁶⁹ Canada, Statistics Canada, *1971 Census of Canada*, figures 1 and 2.

parish.¹⁷⁰ While Denis Delaney claims that “[t]he Catholic Church decided to get rid of either St. Ann’s in Griffintown or St. Patrick’s Basilica, and even though St. Patrick’s is impressive, it wasn’t an obvious choice because St. Ann’s was well attended,”¹⁷¹ the reality was far from that. Attendance at St. Ann’s was in a freefall, and it was only kept alive by former Griffintowners returning for weddings and other sacraments.¹⁷² In short, St. Ann’s was always going to be the church to be closed.

In September 1969, the axe fell on St. Ann’s. The Archdiocese of Montréal announced it would be closed and the church razed. *The Gazette* commented in an editorial: “The reason is starkly simple: the parish has almost disappeared. Where once the handsome greystone edifice served 1,200 families, it now serves barely 90, and of these only about half are English-speaking.”¹⁷³ St. Ann’s was hardly the only church to be razed during this period; indeed, an article in the *Montreal Star* about the death of St. Ann’s also lists a series of other Anglo Catholic parishes that had gone by the wayside. French Catholic churches also saw their end during this period, such as the massive Saint-Henri on rue Saint-Jacques at Place Saint-Henri. The Irish-Catholic church in Saint-Henri, St. Thomas Aquinas, on the rue du Couvent, behind the Saint-Henri Church, was also facing an uncertain future in 1969.¹⁷⁴ It has since been closed and is now an auction house, though the parish itself moved to a smaller church on the rue Saint-Antoine in Little Burgundy. Saint-Hélène’s was also torn down at this time. Indeed, the

¹⁷⁰ Al Palmer, “Two Old Parishes.”

¹⁷¹ As quoted in Kristian Gravenor, “Last Irishman Standing: How bureaucracy levelled the once shamrockieriffic Griffintown,” *Montreal Mirror*, 11-17 March 2004.

¹⁷² Al Palmer, “Two Old Parishes.”

¹⁷³ “Old St. Ann’s,” *The Gazette*, 25 September 1969.

¹⁷⁴ Harold Poitras, “Goodbye to St. Ann’s!” *Montreal Star*, 23 September 1969.

late 1960s saw the decline of Catholicism across Québec as a whole as a result of the Quiet Revolution.¹⁷⁵

In July 1970, St. Ann's was demolished. The interior had been stripped in advance of the wrecking ball coming in. The organ went to Our Lady of Mont Carmel Church in Saint-Léonard, an Italian parish in the north end. Some of the ancient stained glass windows went to St. Aldan's Anglican Church in Ville Émard, and the confessional boxes found their way across the canal to St. Gabriel's in Pointe-Saint-Charles. Many of the pews were sold to the Anglican archdiocese in Montréal; some ended up as souvenirs with parishioners. And the collection of Holy Relics was sent to Windsor, Ontario, to the Holy Redeemer Seminary there. Amelia Murphy, who lived across the street in one of those renovated flats on rue de la Montagne, watched the work. Recalling it thirty-three years later to journalist Sharon Doyle Driedger, Murphy said, "They broke three cables before they got the steeple down. It was heartbreaking." Journalist Harold Poitras summed it up simply, "With the elimination of St. Ann's Church on old Gallery Square, the old Griffintown area will never be the same without the old landmark."¹⁷⁶

Yet, the destruction of St. Ann's Church seems to have spurred those who remained in Griffintown into action. In June 1970, a citizens' committee was formed, called the Griffintown Progress Association (GPA), with the purpose of finding a suitable location for a community centre in the neighbourhood, especially given the lack of park space. This, at least, was a constant of the Griffintown experience across the neighbourhood's history. In late June, the *Montreal Star* published an article on the

¹⁷⁵ Paul-André Linteau, René Durocher, Jean-Claude Robert, and François Ricard, *Histoire du Québec contemporain, tome II: Le Québec depuis 1930* (Montréal: Boréal, 1989), pp. 652-54.

¹⁷⁶ Poitras, "Goodbye"; Doyle Driedger, "The Pluck of the Irish," p. 38.

attempts of the GPA under the telling headline, on the front page: “Indignant Griffintown makes a stand.” Initially, the GPA had sought to convert the St. Ann’s Boys’ School into a community centre, but the Commission des écoles catholiques de Montréal refused to turn the building over. Thus, the GPA turned its sights on the presbytery of St. Ann’s. Léon Brault, a barber and the head of the association, managed to convince the Archdiocese of Montréal to halt work on the destruction of the building. Eventually he, along with Joe Baker, Professor of Architecture at McGill University, convinced the Archdiocese to turn the building over on the condition that the GPA find \$60,000 to pay for the installation of heating and plumbing fixtures, the originals having been torn out in 1969. The Archdiocese proceeded with tearing down the church, but operated on the understanding that if the GPA found the funds, it would halt the razing of the presbytery. But, the GPA did not find the funds, and the presbytery was torn down later in 1970.

The GPA had the support of the Benedict Labré House, a lay Catholic community organisation with a mandate to feed and clothe the poor of Griffintown and the surrounding areas. Bob O’Callaghan, who ran the Labré House then, said that Griffintown could and should be a thriving community, “But to develop community services here, we’d need co-operation from the city, from social agencies, and from private individuals.” Indeed, half of the 400 families in Griffintown in 1970 were on welfare.¹⁷⁷

In August 1970, 130 Griffintown residents made a trek to the Laurentians in order to gather to “feel like a community,” in Brault’s words. He went on:

¹⁷⁷ Hervé Duff, “Les gens de Griffintown veulent conserver le presbytère Ste-Anne,” *La Presse*, 9 June 1970; Rose-Anne Giroux, “Le presbytère de l’ancienne paroisse Sainte-Anne: la démolition est retardée,” *La Presse*, 11 June 1970; Sheila Arnopolous, “Indignant Griffintown makes a stand: Cry for community centre,” *Montreal Star*, 26 June 1970; Susan Pomerantz, “Griffintown romps again,” *Montreal Star*, 3 July 1971. Quotes taken from Arnopolous, “Indignant Griffintown.”

We wanted to discuss with the people about renovating the district and bringing it back to life. A lot of people have moved out of Griffintown because there are no schools, no churches, and no recreation places for children. Maybe these people might come back if Griffintown were renovated.

The familiar slum trope returned in an article in *The Star* concerning this gathering, however. The trip was paid for by a grant from the Secretary of State's office "for the purpose of promoting bilingualism and biculturalism in Griffintown." After reporting on that, *The Star* turns to the refusal of the remaining residents of Griffintown to move out, "despite the fact that most of the houses have been torn down leaving large gaping holes in the blocks of houses and easy prey to the dumping of garbage."¹⁷⁸

Tony Gray, a social worker for the Secretary of State's office who would go on to become Director of the Benedict Labré House in the late 1990s,¹⁷⁹ was present at this meeting at Camp Oohlawhan. He considered it a success, stating that the residents of Griffintown "have never really considered themselves a community. This is the first time they have done anything as a community and it seems to be a real success."¹⁸⁰ This is a rather startling comment, as it belies the picture of Irish-Catholic Griffintown that arises from the remembrances of former Irish-Catholic Griffintowners. It is clear that the massive depopulation of Griffintown over the 1950s and 60s left those who remained in the neighbourhood feeling beleaguered. In this sense, it is perhaps not so surprising that a sense of community was missing in Griffintown in the early 1970s, after decades of infrastructural assault, destruction, and depopulation.

¹⁷⁸ Angela Ferrante, "'Griff' isn't dead yet – residents," *Montreal Star*, 3 August 1970.

¹⁷⁹ Following Tony Gray's death in the early 2000s, his daughter, Kat, took over as director of the Benedict Labré House.

¹⁸⁰ As quoted, in, Ferrante, "'Griff' isn't dead yet."

In 1971, Baker and three of his students created a model of what Griffintown could be, based on a plan devised by the students,¹⁸¹ that led the Ville de Montréal's housing department to propose undertaking a survey of Griffintown, where "1,000 residents liv[e] in dilapidated dwellings between the now obsolete Lachine canal and the CN railway tracks." Baker was adamant that the city do something, arguing that people should not and could not be expected to live in such decrepit conditions as Griffintown presented, arguing that the city either had to provide new housing or relocate the residents, "because most of the residents here can't afford to move on their own even if they wanted to." The ultimate solution, according to the architecture students, lay in low-cost subsidised housing, new community services, and the rehabilitation of the old housing.¹⁸² In other words, they proposed a *rénovation urbaine* somewhat different from that which had been tried in Little Burgundy, Pointe-Saint-Charles, and Saint-Henri, as they sought to both provide new subsidised housing, combined with the renovation of what already existed in the neighbourhood.

In 1972, the Griffintown Progress Association won a \$20,000 grant from the federal Department of National Health and Welfare with a view towards involving the residents in community planning projects. This grant developed out of the work of Baker and his students the previous summer, despite the failure of negotiations with the Ville de Montréal concerning reform in Griffintown. This new grant came on the heels of two other grants from the federal government, one to provide activities for the youth of the

¹⁸¹ This was repeated, in a sense, by Pierre Gauthier, of Concordia University's Department of Planning, Geography, and the Environment, in 2004. A group of Gauthier's students investigated Griffintown and came up with various options and plans for urban redevelopment there. Christopher DeWolf, "Griffintown will rise again: A university project has come up with bold ideas for the area," *The Gazette*, 18 July 2004.

¹⁸² Huguette Laprise, "Tollé à Griffintown: 'Réparez nos taudis!'" *La Presse*, 25 March 1971; Susan Pomerantz, "Griffintown refuses to die."

neighbourhood in the summer, the other concerning food distribution in the Griff. Yet, despite the assistance of Griffintown's elected representatives at the federal, provincial, and municipal levels (recall that Hanley had retired in 1970),¹⁸³ nothing came of it all, and Griffintown was left to die.

V. Conclusion

The work of the GPA was too little too late. Griffintown died. As for the Irish-Catholics, they were long gone by the time St. Ann's was torn down in the summer of 1970. They had left both because they could. They could afford to escape the slum, and because they had to, given the infrastructural onslaught the neighbourhood faced in the period between the 1930s and 1950s.

There was no longer a need to protect Irish-Catholic identity, in both the Griff and Montréal as a whole. Constitutional, linguistic, and economic pressures combined in the middle of the twentieth century to make the English-speaking population of the city defensive, especially in the face of the rising *québécois* nationalist and separatist movements. And as the English-speaking community of Montréal came together to forge this new socio-cultural group, Anglo Montréal, the ethnic and linguistic divisions, to say nothing of class cleavages, that had existed between the descendants of the British Isles in Montréal became of little importance next to the fact that, quite simply, they spoke English.

¹⁸³ Janet MacKenzie, "Griffintown are fighting back with aid of three federal grants," *The Gazette*, 28 June 1972; Ken Whittingham, "Residents unite to save Griffintown: \$20,000 grant is just a start," *Montreal Star*, 13 July 1972

And with that, Griffintown passed into the realm of the ghosts, more or less forgotten by Montrealers. A tour through the neighbourhood in the 1970s or 80s would have found an area decimated by a combination of demographic, economic, and structural changes. In the old Irish centre of Griffintown, west of the CNR's viaduct, about all that remained was the Benedict Labré House on Young Street, Leo Leonard's Horse Palace on Ottawa Street, and the remnants of the old kindergarten on Young Street, now the head office of King Transport, a moving company. Basin St. Park fell into disrepair, as did Gallery Square. As for the site of the old church, it remained an empty and barren lot until 2001, when Parc St. Ann's/Griffintown was established by the Ville de Montréal.¹⁸⁴ Finally, in 1990, the city removed the last traces of the Irish from the landscape of Griffintown, renaming it the *Faubourg des Récollets*, to commemorate the Récollet gate to the old walled city of Montréal, which had been where the intersection of rue Notre-Dame and McGill Street is today, at the northeastern corner of Griffintown. Don Pidgeon fumes that this is "saying the Irish never existed."¹⁸⁵

What remained of Griffintown was its reputation, and a poor one at that. What Stephen Leacock had once called "a wretched area,"¹⁸⁶ in its death, maintained its reputation as a tough part of town. In an article related to the sad sack Montréal Concorde¹⁸⁷ of the Canadian Football League in the mid-1980s, *Toronto Star* sports

¹⁸⁴ Charlie Fidelman, "Griffintowners soak up nostalgia: Former Irish neighbourhood memorialized in park," *The Gazette*, 27 July 2002.

¹⁸⁵ As quoted in Doyle Driedger, "The Pluck of the Irish," p. 38.

¹⁸⁶ Leacock, *Montreal*, p. 187.

¹⁸⁷ The Concorde had replaced the Montréal Alouettes, who had folded in 1981. The Concorde, faced with poor attendance, reclaimed the Alouettes name in 1986, seeking to capitalise on that franchise's long and successful history. This was to no avail, and the Alouettes folded for a second time in 1987, on the day before the start of the season. Montréal was without a CFL team until 1995, when the Baltimore Stallions were forced out of that city by the move of the Cleveland Browns to Baltimore. The Stallions relocated to Montréal, taking the Alouettes' name.

columnist Rex McLeod, a former Montrealer, suggested an easier and safer career path for beleaguered quarterback Turner Gill: “operating an all-night convenience store in Griffintown.”¹⁸⁸

Ultimately, in many ways, Pidgeon is correct in his assessment: the Ville de Montréal did indeed remove the Irish from the landscape from Griffintown, though largely inadvertently, through what was a policy of neglect on the part of city bureaucrats and elected officials, with the exception of Hanley. Griffintown, despite being surrounded by neighbourhoods affected, for both good and ill, by *les rénovations urbaines* in the mid-twentieth century, was ignored. Why the Griff was ignored is harder to determine; it simply did not figure into discussions concerning redevelopment, it did not attract the attention of the *rénovationistes*. That being said, however, Griffintown died only after the Irish had themselves abandoned the neighbourhood a generation earlier.

¹⁸⁸ Rex McLeod, “Barnes starts for ‘Cords in semi-final against Riders,” *Toronto Star*, 8 November 1985.

**Chapter 5:
Public and Private Griffintowns:
The Griffintown Commemorative Project, c. 1991-2008**

I. Introduction

Griffintown has remained a faded, decrepit, and largely abandoned neighbourhood since its destruction in the middle third of the twentieth century. Depopulated and desolate, the Griff disappeared from the physical landscape of Montréal. Abandoned, it also faded from the memories of Montrealers, including former Griffintowners. The city's populace was more concerned in the late twentieth century with the linguistic and constitutional strife that dominated life there. And thus, the Griff became a forgotten and neglected corner of the city, a ghost town.¹

In the early 1990s, though, the Irish-Catholics of Montréal began to return to Griffintown, if only symbolically. In 1991, Fr. Tom McEntee, then *curé* of St. Edmund of Canterbury parish in suburban Beaconsfield, and who was born and raised in the Griff,² instituted what has become a gathering of former Griffintowners and the curious at the corner of William and Murray streets every seven years on the night of 26 June.³ The occasion is the alleged septennial haunting by Mary Gallagher, the prostitute who was beheaded by her best friend and rival, Susan Kennedy, at 242 William Street on 26 June 1879.⁴ Gallagher's ghost apparently returns to the site of her demise every seven years looking for her head, though no one can claim to have seen her ghost on the night

¹ See, for example, "Little is left of some old canal-side communities, *The Gazette*, 1 November 1986; Lewis Harris, "Rundown district needs help, city told," *The Gazette*, 21 November 1989.

² Fr. Tom McEntee died on 29 May 2008, at the age of 84. See his obituary at: <http://www.legacy.com/CAN-MONTREAL/Obituaries.asp?Page=Notice&PersonID=110702445> (accessed 25 June 2008).

³ Melana Zyla, "A Ghostly Night: Parish awaits return of headless Mary Gallagher," *The Gazette*, 27 June 1991; Alan Hustak, *The Ghost of Griffintown: The True Story of the Murder of Mary Gallagher* (Montréal: Redlader Publishing, 2005), pp. 12-13, 99.

⁴ See Chapter 1 for the story of the murder of Mary Gallagher.

in question since 1928. Nevertheless, as former Griffintowner Denis Delaney notes, even the threat of the headless prostitute was enough to scare the children straight when he was growing up: “children used to take her candy [on Hallowe’en] and then we’d run away so she wouldn’t harm us.”⁵

Thus, every seven years since 1991 former Griffintowners have gathered, telling each other ghost- and other stories from Griffintown’s past. Richard Burman, the director of a 2003 documentary about Griffintown, uses the 1998 gathering, and the ghost motif in general, to great effect in his film. And while Fr. McEntee never expected the guest of honour to show up at these gatherings, that was not the point. “Since Griffintown by this time had been decimated by one thing or another, I thought it was an opportunity to call the troops back and socialize.”⁶ Indeed, these septennial gatherings have been central in the task of coalescing the memories of Griffintown for use in what I term the “Griffintown Commemorative Project.”

This Project emerges out of a series of cultural productions centred on Griffintown in the late 1990s and early twenty-first century.⁷ Aiming to commemorate, memorialise, and eulogise Irish-Catholic Griffintown, the project has seen an almost

⁵ Hustak, *The Ghost of Griffintown*, p. 10. See, also, Sharon Doyle Driedger, “The Pluck of the Irish,” *MacLean’s*, 17 March 2003, p. 40. Delaney, “who admits he has a vivid imagination,” claims to have seen Gallagher’s ghost three times in his life, the most recent being in 1998. Whilst walking past the corner of William and Murray streets, he says he looked up and saw a building appear on the vacant lot, “and in the yellow light through the upstairs window, like a lamp...I saw a figure standing there, and it asked me, ‘Will you help me look for my head?’ I said, ‘Yes,’ and then she asked me to close my eyes, and I could feel something, like a rising around me, and when I opened my eyes, the house had vanished and she was gone.” As quoted in Hustak, *The Ghost of Griffintown*, p. 10.

⁶ Alan Hustak, “Gruesome celebration: But will Griffintown block party’s headless ghost show up?” *The Gazette*, 23 June 1998; Kazi Stastna, “Prostitute slain in 1879 said to return every seven years,” *The Gazette*, 27 June 2005.

⁷ The main core of productions that I rely upon in making this argument are: Patricia Burns, *The Shamrock & The Shield: An Oral History of the Irish in Montreal* (Montréal: Véhicule Pres, 1998); *A Griffintown Evening*, VHS, Richard Burman, dir., Burman Productions, 2003; *Ghosts of Griffintown*, DVD; Doyle Driedger, “The Pluck of the Irish.”

uniform version of Griffintown emerge. Most of these cultural producers have informed each other's work and assisted each other; more importantly, they have, for the most part, relied upon the same body of former residents of Griffintown, or informants, for their memories. Out of this emerges an imagined Griffintown, one that has been carefully manufactured to reflect the interests of the stakeholders.

It is in this chapter that we witness the intersection of history and memory vis-à-vis Irish-Catholic Griffintown. Here, I examine the process which has led to this re-creation and re-casting of Griffintown as an Irish-Catholic neighbourhood in Montréal. This has happened within the larger “re-Irishification” of Montréal, a process I situate within the cultural and economic revival of Montréal following the second referendum on Québec sovereignty in 1995, as well as the re-emergence of the Republic of Ireland economically, which has led to a tourist culture there that has commodified and marketed Irish culture and history for the benefit of the diasporic Irish. Then I turn to examine this process “on the ground,” so to speak, and trace how the Irish of Montréal have recast the Griff as this Irish place on the urban landscape, how they have manufactured this new form of Irishness in Montréal, and how the boundaries of this specific identity in Montréal are reinforced and policed by those involved in the Griffintown Commemorative Project. What we see is that this process is controlled not by the cultural producers, but by their informants. Centred on a small group, they have taken the lead in re-creating Griffintown, in effect using the vehicles provided by the producers to re-cast Griffintown according to their collective memory.

In the formation of this collective memory vis-à-vis Griffintown, we see how these informants make use of the opportunities afforded them to put forth a homogenous

version of Griffintown. The informants at the centre of this process are members of either the Ancient Order of Hibernians (AOH) or the United Irish Societies of Montreal (UISM), or both. In particular, those at the core of this re-Irishification of Griffintown are Don Pidgeon, who is the historian of the UISM and a past president of the organisation, the late Fr. Tom McEntee, who was a member of both organisations, and Denis Delaney, who is a member of the AOH. It is the remembrances of these three men, especially Pidgeon and Delaney, that form the core of the stories collected by Patricia Burns, in her oral history of Irish Montréal, and Burman, in his documentary film.

That being said, there are important differences to be noted between the works of Burman, Burns, and Sharon Doyle Driedger, in her 2003 article in *MacLean's* magazine. Burman and Doyle Driedger are both more interested in reconstructing the Griff as an Irish neighbourhood. Indeed, this can be seen in the titles of their works: Burman's documentary is entitled *The Ghosts of Griffintown: Stories of an Irish Neighbourhood*, whilst Doyle Driedger's article is entitled, "The Pluck of the Irish." Burman and Doyle Driedger, and their informants, are interested in telling us the story of Griffintown as an Irish and Catholic neighbourhood. To that end, all of the stories they collect and tell are centred on that basic fact. Voices of dissent do not exist in these two works. Burns, for her part, is less interested in telling the story of Irish-Catholic Griffintown as she is in telling stories from Irish Montréal. Thus, there is more room for dissent and contradictory versions of the Griffintown story in her *The Shamrock & The Shield: An Oral History of the Irish in Montreal*. Nevertheless, even in Burns' book, a mainstream, relatively uniform version of Griffintown and life there emerges. Dissenting views are marginalised in that they are not reinforced by remembrances from others who have

similar views. And, in the end, Burns' work is part of the Griffintown Commemorative Project. Indeed, Burns conducted interviews for Burman in the production of his film. Thus, we get the production of a uniform, homogenous Griffintown, one that was Irish, Catholic, and working-class. This vision of Griffintown grows out of the symbiotic relationship between the informants and cultural producers.⁸

II. The Reinvention of Griffintown

Griffintown was never home to even the majority of the Irish population of the city, and by the late nineteenth century it was not even the primary home of the Irish in Montréal. As the twentieth century progressed, the Irish population of the Griff continued to decline, as other groups became more predominant there. Yet, in this reinvention of the Griff, it has emerged as the primary Irish neighbourhood in the city. In this reconstructed, essentialised Griffintown, other Irish-Catholic groups in the city, most notably the middle classes, the so-called "lace curtain Irish,"⁹ are purged from the community's collective memory. So dominant is the memory of Griffintown that recollections of the middle-class experience of Irish Montréal have been sidetracked and/or ignored, both within the community and by historians.¹⁰ A similar fate has

⁸ To this end, whilst I may be seen as being complicit in the Griffintown memorial growth industry, I am less interested in recreating an historical Griffintown that is uniformly Irish and Catholic in nature, than I am simply interested in Irish-Catholic Griffintown's history. Nor do I have an interest in the re-construction of Griffintown in this manner.

⁹ The use of this term connotes a derogatory meaning, and reflects the suspicions of the working class Irish-Catholics of the city towards the middle- and élite- classes. This is especially the case in the Griffintown Commemorative Project. "Lace curtain Irish" is usually meant in a sneering manner, and reflects the on-going class tensions within Montréal's Irish-Catholic community.

¹⁰ Whilst the historical geographers Sherry Olson and Patricia Thornton do give some attention to the Irish-Catholic middle classes in the nineteenth century, there is only one article published on the Irish-Catholic middle class experience in Montréal in the nineteenth century as of January 2009, with an article on this experience at the turn of the twentieth century set for publication in September 2009. See, Kevin James, "Dynamics of Ethnic Associational Culture in a Nineteenth-Century City: Saint Patrick's Society of

befallen those Irish-Catholics of working-class neighbourhoods other than Griffintown. Moreover, those Irish who were not Catholic are also removed from the historical memory, as Griffintown has been recast as the *Irish*, not Irish-Catholic, neighbourhood, and the synonymy between Irish and Catholic in this memory is absolute. Finally, in recreating Griffintown as an Irish-Catholic neighbourhood, those other ethnic groups which lived there (French Canadians, Scots-Protestants, Anglo-Protestants, Italians, Jews, Ukrainians, and so on) are effectively removed from the landscape, or else moved to the background.

What we are left with, then, is a newly-imagined Griffintown, one based on the needs of the stakeholders in the Griffintown Commemorative Project. These contemporaneous needs are related to re-claiming what the Irish of the city regard as their rightful place on the multi-ethnic and multicultural landscape of Montréal. Indeed, other ethno-religious groups can lay claim to various parts of the city. For example, the Plateau and the St. Laurent Main are synonymous with the Jewish experience in Montréal, Westmount with the Anglo-Protestant, Chinatown with the Chinese. What the Irish are claiming through Griffintown is their own space on the landscape of the city.

This reinvention of Griffintown is based upon the memories of former residents of the neighbourhood. There is a very obvious nostalgia on display in these remembrances,

Montreal, 1834-56," *Canadian Journal of Irish Studies/Revue canadienne d'études irlandaises*, 26/1 (2000): 47-67; Sherry Olson and Patricia Thornton, "The Challenge of the Irish-Catholic Community of Montreal," *Histoire Social/Social History*, 35/70 (2003): 333-62; John Matthew Barlow, "'Scientific Aggression': Irishness, Manliness, Class, and Commercialisation in the Shamrock Hockey Club of Montréal, 1894-1901," *Coast to Coast: Hockey in Canada Before the Second World War*, ed. John Chi-Kit Wong (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009, forthcoming). Insofar as the Irish community in Montréal goes, the one exception to this Griff-centrism is Patricia Burns' *The Shamrock & The Shield*, as some of her oral histories venture out of the confines of Griffintown, but even there, the middle-class remembrances tend to be from Irish-Protestants. The back cover of the book flouts its connection to Griffintown, informing potential readers that Burns has, "since 1991, been recording the memories of Irish men and women from all walks of life, many of whom grew up in the working class community of Griffintown." Burns, *The Shamrock & The Shield*, back cover.

and it is perhaps not surprising that this process occurred thirty years after the final destruction of the Griff. Much of the Griffintown Commemorative Project is led and carried out by this last generation of Griffintowners. They were born, for the most part, in the 1930s and 40s and are now, in the first decade of the twenty-first century, reaching into their 60s and 70s. Thus, there is a certain nostalgia for their childhood and for a neighbourhood that once was. As Tom Rowe, a former Griffintowner puts it, “Forgive my nostalgia, but in looking back, I can only say that my memories of Griffintown are essentially happy ones,” despite growing up poor during the Depression, raised by a single mother following his father’s death, and being forced to drop out of school to enter the work force at the age of sixteen.¹¹

This nostalgia tinges many of the recollections collected by Burman, Doyle Driedger, as well as Burns. Take, for example, Annie Wilson and Dennis Daugherty. Daugherty is very clear as to how he felt when he moved out of Griffintown as a child: “The worst day of my life was when I moved out of Griffintown, I was very, very sad. We had no choice, the whole block from Notre Dame to William Street was being torn down. So we had no choice [but] to move.” Wilson, when asked, “How did you feel when the neighbourhood broke up?” responds, “Oh, terrible. But if I had a chance to go back, I would love to go back. Because I thought there was no place like it. I really loved it.”¹² Thelma Pidgeon, for her part, says that the destruction of Griffintown “was a shame, really, [seeing] a place like that go, because we had it all. But we’re fortunate, we can always say that we did have it all.”¹³

¹¹ Tom Rowe, in Burns, *The Shamrock & The Shield*, pp. 156-7.

¹² Dennis Daugherty and Annie Wilson, in *The Ghosts of Griffintown*.

¹³ Thelma Pidgeon, in *The Ghosts of Griffintown*.

Svetlana Boym argues that nostalgia is not something to be either overlooked or patronised by historians. In studying nostalgia for Communist rule in the former Eastern bloc, Boym has discovered that nostalgia is neither facile nor kitschy. Rather, it is “a sentiment of loss and displacement, but it is also a romance of one’s own fantasy.”¹⁴ As such, and as part of the memory of Griffintown constructed and manufactured by these cultural producers and their informants, it should not be surprising to find nostalgia located in the memories of Griffintown. In essence, then, the Griff becomes a romanticised location, despite the hard times there, as evidenced in Thelma Pidgeon’s remembrances quoted above.

Doyle Driedger, a former Griffintowner, notes rightly, that “[w]e all have our own private Griffintowns.” And while this is the case, those involved in the Griffintown Commemorative Project have created a shared, public Griffintown that is remarkably uniform and orthodox in nature. Doyle Driedger herself engages in this romanticisation of Griffintown throughout her article, working to remove all dissent and all memory of hard times, unemployment, alcoholism and, especially, violence, from the landscape of Griffintown:

Griffintown had the atmosphere of an old black-and-white movie. Think *The Bells of St. Mary’s*, with nuns and priests and Irish brogues and choirs singing Latin hymns. Then throw in the Bowery Boys, the soft-hearted tough guys wisecracking on the corner.¹⁵

There is some irony that Doyle Driedger would cite the Bowery Boys as a peaceful, comforting image in an Irish neighbourhood. The Bowery B’hoys, as they were more properly called, were a legendary street gang in the Lower East Side of Manhattan in the

¹⁴ Svetlana Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia* (New York: Basic Books, 2001), p. xiii.

¹⁵ Doyle Driedger, “The Pluck of the Irish,” p. 39.

nineteenth century. They were a nativist anti-Irish gang and were the primary belligerents of the 1857 Bowery B'hoys Riot, which saw the B'hoys attack a gang of Irish-Catholics from the notorious Lower East Side slum, the Five Points.¹⁶

Meanwhile, by the time Doyle Driedger was growing up in Griffintown in the 1950s, Irish brogues were rare, as Irish emigration to Canada had slowed to a trickle a century earlier, though there was, in the mid-twentieth century, an increase in the emigration of young Irishwomen who became nurses in Canada. These women, however, did not settle in Griffintown.

Doyle Driedger goes on, arguing that,

[y]ou could easily get the impression that Griffintown is the setting for Canada's own *Angela's Ashes* – a downtrodden spot where transplanted Irishmen suffered unremitting misery. You could – but you'd be wrong. Because despite the hardships, Griffintowners felt rich in a way no outsider could understand.¹⁷

Thus, there is an invocation of insider/outsider status in the Griffintown Commemorative Project. It is this tension between the former Griffintowners and “outsiders” that also helps serve the memorialisation and eulogisation of Griffintown. Indeed, Richard Burman, an outsider himself, ironically calls them “wannabes” on his website.¹⁸ But more than this, the invocation of this insider/outsider status arises from the fact that Griffintown was a real community. Thus, when Doyle Driedger and others invoke this

¹⁶ J.T. Headley, *The Great Riots of New York, 1712 to 1873: Including a Full and Complete Account of the Four Days' Draft Riot of 1863* (New York: EB Treat, 1873), pp. 129-35; Herbert Ashbury, *The Gangs of New York: An Informal History of the Underworld* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1928), pp. 102-06; Tyler Anbinder, *Five Points: The 19th-Century New York City Neighborhood that Invented Tap Dance, Stole Elections, and Became the World's Most Notorious Slum* (New York: Plume, 2002), pp. 269-70, 281-93.

¹⁷ Doyle Driedger, “The Pluck of the Irish,” p. 37.

¹⁸ While Burman does this tongue-in-cheek, it remains that he himself is an outsider claiming, and perhaps being granted, insider status, due to his work in documenting not just the history of Griffintown, but the version of history that emerges from the memories of the former residents. See his website, http://ourworld.es.com/ht_a_/Griffintowndoc/index.htm (accessed 14 June 2003).

sense of wealth on the part of the poor working-class Irish-Catholics of Griffintown, they are invoking that community feeling. Moreover, creating this dichotomy is also a defence mechanism, as it allows the former Griffintowners to feel pride and nostalgia for their childhood neighbourhood. Similarly, it challenges the slum discourse that has surrounded Griffintown throughout its history. By dismissing those who would question their attachment to the Griff, an inner-city slum, they can simply invoke a sense of community and, as Doyle Driedger does, state that outsiders just cannot understand what it was like to live there.

Maurice Halbwachs provides some insight into this process when he notes that the recollections of individuals work in concert in group situations.¹⁹ Many of the recollections offered up in the Griffintown Commemorative Project arise out of such collaborative moments. This process is obvious at events such as the Mary Gallagher ghost watch, or as captured by Burman on film at *A Griffintown Evening*, a gathering of former Griffintowners hosted by the Centre for Canadian Irish Studies at Concordia University in 2002. During that event, the former Griffintowners shared a stage with each other and stood at a podium as they told their stories. In *The Ghosts of Griffintown*, informants are oftentimes interviewed in group settings, or in conjunction with their friends and former neighbours, by Patricia Burns. Burman chose Burns to conduct his interviews for the film due to her familiarity with the Griffintown community. Aside from producing an oral history of the Irish in Montréal, Burns can claim something akin to insider status with the former Griffintowners; though she grew up in Notre-Dame-de-Grâce, her father, Jimmy, was a local legend in the Griff. Her claim to Griffintowner

¹⁹ Maurice Halbwachs, *La mémoire collective* (Paris: Les Presses Universitaires de France, 1930), pp. 30-1.

status, combined with the manner in which Burns asks her questions, serves to form an almost conspiratorial atmosphere between her and her informants on-screen. The memories thus collected work in harmony with each other, and the commonalities of these individual memories work to construct a common foundation between the various remembrances of the former Griffintowners. For the most part, these are memories and stories designed to create a rather glorified image of the history of Griffintown. Stories that recall the hard times and/or misery do not, for the most part, get repeated and amplified, with the exception of a small collection of stories. But even these stories are carefully placed against stories that use humour to disarm them.

The Griffintown Commemorative Project is one that is unique for two major reasons. First, it has been carried out almost entirely without the involvement of the state. This is somewhat unusual for Canada, a country which has several branches and departments of the federal government charged with such commemorative projects, promoting the nation's (largely invented)²⁰ multicultural history. Similarly, the Gouvernement du Québec also possesses several branches and departments centred around the commemoration of Québec's past. It is also not enough to dismiss Québec's lack of involvement in the Griffintown Commemorative Project as a question of language; the provincial government has oftentimes been involved in the celebration of the histories of not just the Anglophone population, but Allophones as well, especially in the case of the *metropole québécois*, Montréal. Nevertheless, the only real involvement

²⁰ See, Daniel Francis, *National Dreams: Myth, Memory, and Canadian History* (Vancouver: Arsenal Pulp Press, 1997); J.L. Granatstein, *Who Killed Canadian History?* (Toronto: Harper Perennial, 1998).

of the state at any level has been in the creation of Parc St. Ann's/Griffintown on the former site of the church by the Ville de Montréal.



Figure 5.1: Parc St. Ann/Griffintown, 2006. Credit: Author

It is also not so much the case that the state has not wanted to be involved, but more that the community has been jealous in its protection of its heritage. A case in point is the attempt on the part of Parks Canada to involve the Irish community of the city in the process of creating a National Historic Site commemorating the Irish past in the city and Canada as a whole. This was part of a larger initiative on the part of Parks Canada to increase the number of National Historic Sites in Québec through the celebration and commemoration of the experiences of various ethno-cultural groups and minorities around the province. Parks Canada historians Yvan Desloges and Roch Samson thus convened a committee with representatives from the Irish community, as well as

academia,²¹ to explore the issue and to come up with suggestions for sites to be commemorated. The committee, however, was essentially a non-starter. The community was not willing to cede control of its history to the state, unless the state was to follow its wishes.²²

Second, this is a process that is not led by the *élite* of Montréal, let alone the *élite* of the Irish community. The members of the Irish community who have been the most vocal and enthusiastic of this commemorative project all grew up poor and working class in Griffintown. Today, whilst they have by and large escaped this poverty, they are hardly an *élite*. Certainly, some, such as Fr. Tom McEntee and Don Pidgeon, historian of the UISM, have made use of their positions of authority within the community to further the project. But it remains that this group, centred around the UISM and AOH, maintains its working class roots, with their offices and bases in Verdun and Pointe-Saint-Charles, clearly distinct from the St. Patrick's Society of Montreal, which has historically been closely aligned with St. Patrick's Basilica.

Nonetheless, whilst the UISM and AOH have control of the Griffintown Commemorative Project, the Irish-Catholic community of Montréal, in its institutional

²¹ I was a member of this committee, along with Ronald Rudin of the Department of History, Concordia University, and Michael Kenneally, Chair of the Centre for Canadian Irish Studies at Concordia University. The Irish community was represented by Don Pidgeon, historian of the UISM, Patrick O'Hara, historian of the St. Patrick's Society, and Margaret Healy of the UISM.

²² In particular, the Irish community wanted the Black Rock to be made into a National Historic site. The Black Rock, located on the approach to the Victoria Bridge connecting Montréal to the South Shore, was placed there in 1859 by Irish Catholic navvies constructing the bridge. In excavations, they had come across a mass grave of Irish Famine victims from 1847. During the Famine, when many of the refugees arrived laden with disease attendant to famine and starvation, fever sheds were constructed on Windmill Point of Pointe-Saint-Charles, near where the Victoria Bridge was constructed, away from both the city and the port. Pidgeon argued that the rock is the "phoenix of the Irish" of Montréal, and ultimately Canada, as within a generation, he argued, the Irish had "arrived" in the city and nation. A previous attempt to create the Black Rock as a National Historic site in the 1990s had ended in failure when Parks Canada decided that the site lacked truly national historic implications, the major criteria for a National Historic site. In 2002, Desloges and Samson remained unreceptive to the suggestion of the Black Rock, and dialogue broke down when they suggested that alternative sites be explored.

entirety, has united behind this project, and it is one that is largely self-funded and self-propagated. This is reflected in, for example, the sponsors of Burman's film. Aside from the local CTV affiliate, CFCF 12, funding for the project came from businesses within the Irish community of Montréal, such as McKibbin's Irish Pub, and Thomas O'Connell, Inc., a local electrical and mechanical engineering firm, which was located in Griffintown for most of the past century, amongst others. Interestingly, given the participation of the UISM and AOH in the project, it was the St. Patrick's Society of Montreal which contributed financially to Burman's film. Despite this corporate involvement, Burman predominately self-financed the documentary, and much of his fundraising came from within the community and through the sale of two books of photographs from Griffintown, the photographs themselves largely donated by members of the community.²³ Indeed, it is likely that because the protectors of the Griff and its memory are not a cultural élite that they are so careful, guarded, and jealous in their safe-guarding and policing of the community and its memory. This is reflected in Doyle Driedger's suggestion that "outsiders" would be unable to understand the connection former Griffintowners feel for the neighbourhood and its physical landscape.

It is through the Griffintown Commemorative Project, that the neighbourhood emerges as a *lieu de mémoire*; it becomes the site of the symbolic memory of the Irish-Catholic community of Montréal. Pierre Nora argues that *lieux de mémoire* emerge out of the realisation that there is no such thing as spontaneous memory in an industrial, or post-industrial, culture. Thus, we are left to create artificial sites, locations, and places to commemorate and eulogise the past. These loci of memory, moreover, are carefully

²³ See Burman's website, in particular his sponsors page, <http://ourworld.es.com/hta/Griffintowndoc/id24.htm> (accessed 22 June 2004).

guarded by their caretakers, because “without commemorative vigilance, history would soon sweep them away.”²⁴

Thus we have Griffintown, a community that without this commemorative vigilance *was* swept away, both physically and symbolically, in the 1950s and 60s. Since the early 1990s, the neighbourhood has been resurrected as a *lieu de mémoire* by the Irish-Catholic double minority, in terms of religion (as a minority in the Catholic Church) and language (as part of the Anglo minority of Montréal), to say nothing of class, as a protected enclave, designed to serve the community’s collective memory. Dissenting views, which are oftentimes more critically reflective of Griffintown, are marginalised, either ignored or patronised through the use of humour, as if to disarm them. At the same time, we see the built (or in the case of the Griff, the destroyed) landscape of the neighbourhood become the repository of memory and the memories of the former Griffintowners. Griffintown, as a *lieu de mémoire*, comes to represent and articulate the memories of the community. More than this, however, Griffintown has emerged as the universalised, and essentialised, representation of the historic experience of the Irish-Catholic, if not Irish, experience in Montréal.

III. The Re-Irishification of Montréal

The re-birth of Griffintown as a *lieu de mémoire* has taken place within the larger context of the re-Irishification of Montréal, which itself has taken place as the Irish-Catholic community has sought to reclaim its place within the history of the city, as well

²⁴ Pierre Nora, “General Introduction: Between History and Memory,” *Realms of Memory: Rethinking the French Past, Vol. 1: Conflict and Drama*, ed. Pierre Nora, trans. Arthur Goldhammer (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), pp. 6-7.

as upon the contemporary cultural fabric. By the 1950s and 60s, Irish-Catholic identity in Montréal had been subsumed into the Anglo Montréal entity, girded for the linguistic, cultural, and constitutional battles brought on by the rise of a new brand of *québécois* nationalism in the post-World War II era. Concomitant with this was the decline of an Irish-Catholic working class, as the former residents of Griffintown moved on, either by choice or force. This rather sudden resurgence of Irish identity in Montréal in the 1990s and beyond can be situated within three sometimes competing, at other times complementary, impetuses of both a global and local nature.

First, the global phenomena. The re-Irishification of Montréal can be seen in the light of the Irish diaspora and the developments within, as well as contemporary politics in Ireland itself. The 1990s saw a cultural and economic renaissance in the Republic of Ireland (something that has been longer, and slower, coming in Northern Ireland).²⁵ At the same time, that decade saw major commemorative anniversaries marking two of the more traumatic episodes in Irish history: the Famine and the United Irishmen Rising of 1798. With the Republic awash with prosperity and a rapidly growing economy, for the first time in its memory, there was a re-appraisal of Irish history and the promotion of Irish culture. And this cultural revival was exploited to draw the diasporic Irish closer to the “homeland,” even if, as in the case of the Montréal Irish (or Canada as a whole, for that matter), the overwhelming majority of these diasporic Irish ancestors fled this

²⁵ Whilst the Republic of Ireland was awash in the Celtic Tiger economy of the 1990s and early 2000s, Northern Ireland lagged behind. After the Good Friday Accords of 1998, and the end of the Troubles, Northern Ireland began to recover, both economically and culturally, from a thirty year long civil war. It is only in the past four or five years, however, that the North’s economy has really grown. More recently, since the collapse of the Celtic Tiger economy in the Republic, the North’s has continued to grow and it is now a destination for cross-border consumers, as the euro has risen against the British pound, still the currency of Northern Ireland. See, Eamon Quinn, “A Northern Ireland Town is a Shopper’s Paradise,” *New York Times*, 18 December 2008.

“homeland” at least a century-and-a-half ago. This Irish revival, nonetheless, became a prevailing force for both the Irish and the diaspora, in both academic and lay circles.²⁶

Tourism has been central to this re-Irishification of the worldwide diaspora. As John Pollard has noted, the Irish tourism industry, with the support of the Irish government, “has seized upon the importance of the diaspora in marketing Ireland as nostalgia and a link to one’s cultural heritage [and] the diaspora...[has] accounted [for] a strong factor in the dramatic increase in tourist numbers over the past few decades.”²⁷ Indeed, the Irish Tourist Board sought to “emphasise a fixed number of ‘storylines’ in Irish history, linked to tourist sites and presentations: easily tapped into, easily understood.”²⁸ These storylines have been tied to the most common tropes of Irish history, most of which surround victimhood and victimology,²⁹ by focusing on traumatic events, most notably the Famine. This means that the diasporic Irish tourist is supposed to be imbued with a sense of loss, however defined, when tracing the steps of her ancestors on Irish soil. We see something akin to this process at work with the emergence of Griffintown as a *lieu de mémoire*: the twin tropes of loss and nostalgia have pervaded memories of the neighbourhood.

This tourist version of the “Irish story” is one that is created with a presentist bias, designed for modern-day consumption. However, whereas Roy Foster decries this

²⁶ Indeed, Irish historian Roy Foster points out, in a rather sour tone, that there was a good deal of involvement in the commemorative events surrounding the Famine and 1798 amongst academic historians in Ireland. R.F. Foster, *The Irish Story: Telling Tales and Making It Up in Ireland* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), esp. ch. 12.

²⁷ John Pollard, “Patterns in Irish Tourism,” *Ireland: Contemporary Perspectives on a Land and its People*, ed. R.W.G. Carter and A.J. Parker (London: Routledge, 1990), p. 316.

²⁸ Foster, *The Irish Story*, p. 24.

²⁹ With the exception, of course, of 1798, which tends to be celebrated as a lost opportunity for ecumenical, non-sectarian, Irish history, carefully separating the Catholic Defenders and Protestant Orange Order from the record.

presentism,³⁰ we must keep in mind that this Irish historical past (as opposed to history) and the commodification of culture is a process that has been undertaken with a clear eye on the economic prize and is one that is carried out as a means of forging a new imagined community of Ireland with its sizeable diaspora. And whilst Foster complains of the over-simplification of history that is part and parcel of this process, Ian McBride, another Irish historian, rightly notes that

[t]he potency of...collective memories does not derive from their accuracy or comprehensiveness but, on the contrary, from their ability to reduce complex historical processes to basic images and narrative types that answer specific ideological needs.³¹

In other words, this simplification is very much a part of this forging of a public history and memory, and concomitant with that, the creation and enforcement of a version of Ireland and its diaspora which has been, for these purposes, re-imagined as part of the Irish nation itself.

This is not to suggest that this public history and memory of Ireland, Irish history, and Irish culture is some grossly over-simplified construction, as Foster suggests.³² Rather, it is forging a usable past, albeit with stock options; one that can be used to commodify and market Irish history and culture,³³ or what the Irish Tourist Board has termed “the brand image of Ireland.”³⁴ All of this has led to the reinvigoration of the

³⁰ Foster, *The Irish Story*, esp. chs. 1, 2, and 12.

³¹ Ian McBride, “Introduction: Memory and National Identity in Modern Ireland,” *History and Memory in Modern Ireland*, ed. Ian McBride (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2001), pp. 36-7.

³² Foster, *The Irish Story*, pp. 23-6, 211-32.

³³ Which is not to suggest that there are no inherent problems in either the commodification of culture or the process of this usable past. In North America, these two forces have led to a fetishised version of Irish history and culture that centres around “Plastic Paddy” stereotypes involving the drink and violence, especially as it relates to St. Patrick’s Day in cities like Boston, Chicago, New York, and Montréal.

³⁴ Irish Tourist Board, “Heritage, Attractions, and Development: A Strategy to Interpret Ireland’s History and Culture for Tourism,” as quoted in Foster, *The Irish Story*, p. 24.

diasporic Irish, who are now encouraged to think of Ireland as “home”, and this serves to create a tangible link between these diasporic Irish and the Irish “homeland.”³⁵ Mary Robinson, who was President of the Irish Republic from 1990-7, is generally regarded as having been key to the linkage between Ireland and its diaspora worldwide. In a speech to the Houses of the *Oireachtas* (the Irish Parliament and Senate) in 1995, Robinson reached out to the diaspora, arguing that the diversity of the diaspora was instructive for a rapidly-changing Ireland during the Celtic Tiger economy, and attempting to include it within the imagined Irish nation.³⁶

Next is the link between Ireland and its diaspora. The former Griffintowners have created a link between the neighbourhood and Ireland as Griffintown becomes a sort of Little Ireland for the community in Montréal. This has led to an essentialisation of Ireland and Irish culture on the part of the former Griffintowners, an Ireland that is consistent with North American representations of it. Denis Delaney recalls his childhood in Griffintown: “Women were a lot more subdued in those days although they really ran the show. I think it was like that in Ireland and Griffintown was a microcosm of Ireland.”³⁷ Don Pidgeon, in various public comments about Griffintown and the Irish in Montréal, continually references Ireland and Irish culture. For example, in commenting upon the lack of statuary honouring the Irish in Montréal, Pidgeon told a

³⁵ The thoughts of the Irish themselves as to this commodification of their culture and their history, and the attendant extension of “Irish” status to the diaspora, is somewhat more problematic and complicated. See, Pollard, “Patterns in Irish Tourism”; Brad Kent, “McDrama: The Sentimental in Martin McDonagh’s *The Beauty Queen of Lenane* and Conor McPherson’s *The Weir*,” *Canadian Journal of Irish Studies/Revue canadienne d’études irlandaises*, 28-29/2-1 (2003): 30-45; Foster, *The Irish Story*, pp. 1-36, 164-86, 211-32.

³⁶ Breda Gray, *Women and the Irish Diaspora* (London: Routledge, 2004), pp. 33-5.

³⁷ Denis Delaney, in Burns, *The Shamrock & The Shield*, p. 191.

Gazette reporter in 2001 that this was not all that surprising, given that the “Irish don’t celebrate their dead with statues, they celebrate life.”³⁸

A certain degree of staginess seeps into these commemorative events in Ireland and the diaspora, as well as the commodification of Irish culture and history insofar as tourism and the marketing of Irish culture is concerned. The trope of the stage Irish is a common rhetorical tool used by the Irish, both in Ireland and the diaspora, as a means of story-telling. Most commonly, it is the sentimental or black humour that the Irish engage in in telling tales. We can see the stage Irish, in both its sentimental and humourous forms, at work in the remembrances of former Griffintown residents in the commemorative project. For example, Patricia Burns asks Dennis Daugherty how he felt when “the neighbourhood broke up.” This makes it sound as though Griffintown just disintegrated in a way that made the Irish there passive victims of forces beyond their control, allowing for the sentimental response. Indeed, in many remembrances of the destruction of Griffintown in the mid-twentieth century, what is often left out is human agency. Charlie Blickstead is about the only former Griffintowner who explains why and how people would want to move out of the neighbourhood in the aftermath of World War II. Otherwise, the Irish-Catholics of Griffintown are presented as the victims of forces beyond their control in the destruction of the neighbourhood.³⁹

³⁸ Alan Hustak, “Irish past barely present: People from Ireland have a long history in Montreal, but these days, the traces are vanishing,” *The Gazette*, 17 March 2001.

³⁹ In contrast to the destruction of Griffintown and the cult of victimhood that emerged therefrom, the example of Chinatown in Vancouver is instructive. Vancouver’s Chinatown was threatened with many of the same external forces as Griffintown. More than that, as Kay Anderson argues, racism was at play in Vancouver with respect to its Chinatown. The City of Vancouver wanted to build a freeway through Chinatown in the 1960s, which would have destroyed the neighbourhood, around the same time that the Autoroute Bonaventure was constructed through Griffintown and Goose Village. The residents of Chinatown in Vancouver, however, fought against this enforced destruction of their neighbourhood, with the result that the freeway was re-routed east of Chinatown, which has since emerged as a major tourist

The humorous side of the stage Irish trope is most clearly seen in the Griffintown memories when it comes to the less-than-savoury aspects of life there. In particular, humour is used to disarm the narratives of poverty, violence, and alcoholism. For example, “Banjo” Frank Hanley and Denis Delaney both recall how some in Griffintown obtained coal to heat their homes in winter in the 1930s and 40s. Hanley recounts this from his perspective as a delivery man for Tougas & Tougas, the local coal merchants, in the Depression. Laughing, he tells how the 100-pound bags destined for the homes of the wealthy in Westmount somehow lost 20 pounds on the way out of Griffintown, as he and his co-workers tossed coal into the streets for the poor Griff residents.⁴⁰

Delaney, meanwhile, remembers how he and his friends used to steal coal from the yard of Tougas & Tougas:

We’d go into the Tougas coal yard on Murray Street at night. We’d go over the fence with rotten meat that we’d find behind Pesner’s [the local grocery store on rue Notre-Dame]. We’d throw this rotten meat at the vicious German Shepherd dogs they had. They’d eat you up, those buggers. We’d throw the meat far out and they’d go over and gobble it up. We’d take a coal scuttle, shove it into the pile and pass it up and away we’d go with the coal. But it wasn’t for gain. We would bring it home and then we would have to make up a tall story for Mom or she’d bring us back to Tougas the next day.⁴¹

Delaney tells this story in both Burns’ *The Shamrock & The Shield* and on film in *The Ghosts of Griffintown*. In the latter, he is laughing and is clearly exaggerating at least parts of the story for effect. But he is also serious, noting that the coal was necessary to

destination. See, Kay J. Anderson, *Vancouver’s Chinatown: Racial Discourse in Canada, 1875-1980* (Montréal: McGill-Queens University Press, 1991).

⁴⁰ “Banjo” Frank Hanley, in *The Ghosts of Griffintown*.

⁴¹ Denis Delaney, in Burns, *The Shamrock & The Shield*, p. 192.

heat the house in the frigid Montréal winters, because his father was “an alcoholic, [who] never brought home any money.”⁴²

Hanley and Delaney both engage with their recollections and stories through the use of humour. The heart-breaking is rendered humourous; the fact that Griffintowners were freezing in the cold Montréal winter becomes the backdrop for comedy. Of course, in the face of such conditions, black humour is oftentimes a means of coping. Either way, we get a sense of survival by one’s wits that was necessary to live in Griffintown, as well as the pitting of the (Irish) underdog against the force of power, in this case the rich Anglo-Protestants of Westmount.

The local context for the re-emergence of Griffintown as a *lieu de mémoire*, in Montréal, in the late 1990s and early twenty-first century was a re-orienting of the city’s cultural landscape. One of the results of this has been the re-Irishification of Montréal, which has taken place at the confluence of these local and global conditions. This re-Irishification runs the gamut from a plethora of Irish-themed and/or –owned pubs around the city (four within waking distance of Concordia’s downtown campus), to say nothing of the massive popularity of the annual St. Patrick’s Day parade. Beyond this, there is a popularity, at Concordia, of courses on Irish, history, dance, language,⁴³ and music.⁴⁴ In the midst of all of this, the Centre for Canadian Irish Studies was founded at Concordia, with a mandate to both liaise with the local Irish community and to deliver an academic

⁴² Denis Delaney, in *The Ghosts of Griffintown*.

⁴³ The Irish government has endowed the Centre for Canadian Irish Studies at Concordia with funding to create courses on the Irish language, as of the 2006-07 academic year. See the *News@Concordia* website, <http://news.concordia.ca/faculties/006629.shtml> (accessed 12 July 2006).

⁴⁴ The course offerings for the Certificate in Irish Studies have grown exponentially in recent years. In the 2008-09 academic year, no less than 15 courses in disciplines such as History, Theology, Geography, Political Science, and Literature, are being offered, taught by a variety of Concordia University faculty, specialists in various aspects of Irish Studies, as well as a distinguished visiting scholar.

basis to Irish Studies at Concordia. The popularity of Irish Studies in Montréal and at Concordia was made clear in the summer of 2004, when the Centre hosted a summer-long symposium entitled, “Ireland on the Saint Lawrence,” which saw a series of courses on Irish culture and history, both in Ireland and the diaspora, taught by various specialists. The popularity of all things Irish has also extended across ethno-linguistic and cultural lines in Montréal. It is not surprising to see a multicultural audience taking in the city’s Irish film programme, *Cine-Gael*, or to see francophones populating classes on Irish step-dancing.⁴⁵

While there has been a general re-birth of Irish culture throughout the diaspora in the past two decades, there are particularities to what has occurred in Montréal that are unique to that city and are connected to language and identity. The Irish-Catholics of Montréal threw their lot in with the Anglo-Protestants in the twentieth century, forming the cultural-linguistic entity of Anglo Montréal, in large part as a means of defence against a resurgent *québécois* nationalism and separatism in the second half of the twentieth century. In the wake of the second referendum on Québec sovereignty in 1995, there has been an attempt to re-think and re-define the boundaries of the imagined Québec nation. This has seen thinkers as diverse in political outlook as Gérard Bouchard, Jocelyn Létourneau, Jocelyn Maclure, Yvan Lamonde, and Allan Greer, attempt to recast the Québec nation as a multicultural one.⁴⁶ In this schema, the Québec nation

⁴⁵ I taught a course entitled “The Irish Experience in Montréal,” during the summer session at Concordia in the summers of 2004 and 2006. In both cases, whilst students of Irish descent were the majority of the student body, there was also a large minority of students from other ethno-linguistic groups in Montréal.

⁴⁶ Despite the diversity in this list of scholars, what is even more interesting is noting whose works have been translated into English. Not counting Greer, who writes in English, it is the federalists Létourneau and Maclure who have found publication in translation in English, whilst the writings of the nationalists, Bouchard and Lamonde, have yet to be translated.

encompasses not just the French-speaking majority *québécois*, but also those members of other cultural communities who have historically been more than slightly reluctant to include themselves in this imagined community of Québec, if they were ever even invited to do so, including Anglo Montréal.⁴⁷ And while recent years have seen a backlash, an attempt to reclaim a sense of “*nous*” on the part of a certain cadre of *québécois* nationalists, led in large part by politicians such as Mario Dumont of the Action Démocratique du Québec (and more recently by Pauline Marois, the leader of the Parti québécois), this remains more of a backlash of a disgruntled minority of French-speakers than a sea change.⁴⁸

Meanwhile, Anglo Montréal has itself fractured since 1995, as its constituent elements have attempted to reclaim their ethnic identities, now that the battles over sovereignty and the boundaries of the Quebec nation had lost their punch. That being said, the so-called Allophone communities all managed to more or less retain their ethnic identities within this larger Anglo Montréal conglomeration over the course of the last third of the twentieth century. This came about either through these groups' own refusal to surrender their ethnic identity, or due to an unwillingness to allow full membership to

⁴⁷ See, for example, Allan Greer, *The People of New France* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997); Michel Venne, ed., *Penser la nation québécoise* (Montréal: Les Éditions Québec Amérique, 2000); Yvan Lamonde, *Allégiances et dépendances: L'histoire d'une ambivalence identitaire* (Montréal: Les Éditions Nota Bene, 2001); Jocelyn Maclure, *Quebec Identity: The Challenge of Pluralism*, trans. Peter Feldstein (Montréal: McGill-Queens University Press, 2003); Jocelyn Létourneau, *Le Québec, les Québécois: Un parcours historique* (Montréal: Fides, 2004).

⁴⁸ The publication of Mathieu Bock-Côté's *La Dénationalisation tranquille: Mémoire, identité et multiculturalisme dans le Québec postréférendaire* (Montréal: Boréal, 2007) in the autumn of 2007 initially set off a flurry of discussion within nationalist circles, especially in the newspaper *Le Devoir*. The discussion, however, faded from view in the wake of the Bouchard-Taylor Commission's report in the spring of 2008. While there are certainly those who are in agreement with Dumont, Marois, and Bock-Côté, they have, by and large, been unable to make headway into the larger body politic of Québec. See the website of the Commission de consultation sur les pratiques d'accommodement reliées aux différences culturelles (aka: The Bouchard-Taylor Commission), <http://www.accommodements.qc.ca/> (accessed 31 May 2008), for the commission's report.

these groups on the part of the “old-stock” Anglo-Irish union. But what is more important here *is* this old-stock Anglo-Irish grouping, which has, since 1995, fractured. This split has come across class lines, as evidenced, first, by the memorialisation of the working-class neighbourhood of Griffintown and, second, by the arguments of the City of Westmount’s lawyers against the merger of all of the municipalities on the Île-de-Montréal in 2001. In essence, Westmount argued that to force its merger with the predominately francophone Ville de Montréal would be to wipe out two hundred years of an Anglophone presence in the metropolitan area, as Westmount was the rightful repository and caretaker of this history and the collective memory of Anglo Montréal.⁴⁹

This split of the old stock of Anglo Montréal has also come in more obvious places, such as along ethnic lines. It has not only been the Irish who have rediscovered their ethnicity in Montréal, but so too have the Scots. In 2005, the McCord Museum held an exhibition entitled “The Scots: Dyed-in-the-Wool Montrealers,” celebrating the long Scots presence in the city.⁵⁰ At the same time, Robbie Burns Day celebrations have expanded. The fracturing of Anglo Montréal has also been helped by the increased bilingualism of Anglo Montrealers, especially the children of Bill 101.⁵¹ Indeed, in post-referendum Montréal, as the city’s economy has recovered and identities are being re-thought and re-negotiated, it has become somewhat retrograde to identify oneself as an

⁴⁹ Darren Becker, “Merger Battle in Court: Bill 170 would reduce Anglos’ rights, lawyers say,” *The Gazette*, 23 May 2001; Elizabeth Thompson, “Anglo Rights in Peril: Towns” *The Gazette*, 4 December 2001.

⁵⁰ The Irish will get similar treatment in 2009 at the McCord.

⁵¹ Bilingualism amongst Anglophones in Montréal has increased from 24 to 66.1 per cent between 1960 and 2001. Levine, *La reconquête de Montréal*, p. 373; James Ferrabee, “Language is not a hot topic in Montreal’s coffeehouses these days, even if Premier Landry thinks it should be,” January 2003, Institute for Research on Public Policy, accessed on the IRPP’s website, <http://www.irpp.org/ferrabee/archive/0103.htm> (accessed 4 March 2005).

Anglo Montrealer. Rather, one is more likely to identify according to one's ethnic background, though this is also complicated by generational and urban/suburban lines.

Thus, increasingly, identity in Montréal is less concerned with the question of language, especially within the Anglophone and Allophone communities, as the issue becomes less central to life in the city. At the same time, there has been an increased awareness of the various ethno-cultural communities that comprise the city's population. The various ethnic groups, including the francophone *québécois* majority, have made an attempt to forge their own space on the city's cultural and physical landscape, whilst also trying to forge links across ethno-linguistic lines as a means of community building. In other words, Montréal, which has long been a multi-ethnic city, has become a multicultural one. The attempt of the Irish to re-claim Griffintown as an *Irish* location on the city's physical landscape is not all that surprising, given the presence of other ethnic neighbourhoods across Montréal. And the fact that the Irish have been successful in doing so despite the historical presence of other ethno-religious groups in the neighbourhood speaks to this process, as well as to the fact that these other ethno-religious groups already have their own neighbourhoods with which their own histories are entwined.

In terms of local conditions, the re-discovery and veneration of Griffintown must also be viewed within the context of gentrification. The long-abandoned neighbourhood had, by the late 1990s, become the site of speculation and planning for its revitalisation. The eastern part of the Griff, between the Autoroute Bonaventure and Vieux-Montréal, was reinvented as a high-tech centre, known as the Cité du Multimédia. The Ville de Montréal and the Gouvernement du Québec made use of incentives like tax credits and

infrastructural reform and renovation to lure high-tech companies to the neighbourhood. Today, the Cité du Multimédia is home to companies both small in nature, as well as large conglomerates, like Bell Globemedia and Québecor. For the most part, the nearly two-centuries old warehouses that predominate the landscape of the eastern half of Griffintown have been converted for these firms' purposes, though some have built new structures that conform to the scale of the built environment of the narrow streets of the Cité du Multimédia. This reinvention of the eastern half of Griffintown has been successful, as the neighbourhood has been reinvigorated and today, it is a bustling locale, full of high tech industry offices and, increasingly, condos, both in converted buildings and new constructions. The service industry has also arrived, to accommodate both the workers and the residents of the Cité du Multimédia.⁵²

But if the Cité du Multimédia represents a successful redevelopment and reinvention of the eastern half of Griffintown, the area's history remains in full view of the city's residents. In 1999, then-Montréal Mayor Pierre Bourque publicly wondered whether the streets of the Cité du Multimédia should to be renamed to reflect the new uses of the neighbourhood. To this end, Bourque proposed street names such as rue Pixel and rue Marshall McLuhan.⁵³ The mayor was met with outrage by the citizens of Montréal of all stripes, but especially the Anglophones, and Bourque was forced to beat a

⁵² Kelly Tynan, "Tax credits lure for plan to create multimedia complex," *The Gazette*, 16 June 1998; Jan Ravensbergen, "837 new multimedia jobs: \$15,000 annual subsidy for each new post will be recouped, says Landry," *The Gazette*, 27 April 1999; "Tax breaks attract 30 new firms," *The Gazette*, 25 November 1999; Alison MacGregor, "Bell, Québecor join multimedia program credits," *The Gazette*, 26 November 1999; Mary Lamey, "Developers cry foul: Subsidies for e-commerce tower seen as damaging rental market," *The Gazette*, 11 May 2000; J.D. Gravenor, "Tech City Pioneers: The streets are dusty and sometimes deserted on this frontier, but there's a leading-edge excitement afoot in the Cite Multimedia," *The Gazette*, 27 March 2001; David Theodore, "Design reflects high-tech tenants," *The Gazette*, 4 January 2003; Catherine Solyom, "Enter the Yuppies," *The Gazette*, 11 February 2003.

⁵³ Rue Marshall McLuhan was meant to honour McLuhan, who coined the phrase, "the medium is the message." Bill Browenstein, "Calling Planet Bourque: It's time to beam in on real problems," *The Gazette*, 25 July 1999.

hasty retreat. Opponents argued that while to change the names of the streets might indeed reflect the present-day usage of the buildings in the Cité du Multimédia, it did not mean that this would reflect the usage of the area in the future. Moreover, to rename the streets would be to remove the history of Griffintown from the physical landscape of Montréal,⁵⁴ a process which Don Pidgeon argues began in 1990, with the official renaming of Griffintown as the *Faubourg des Récollets*.⁵⁵

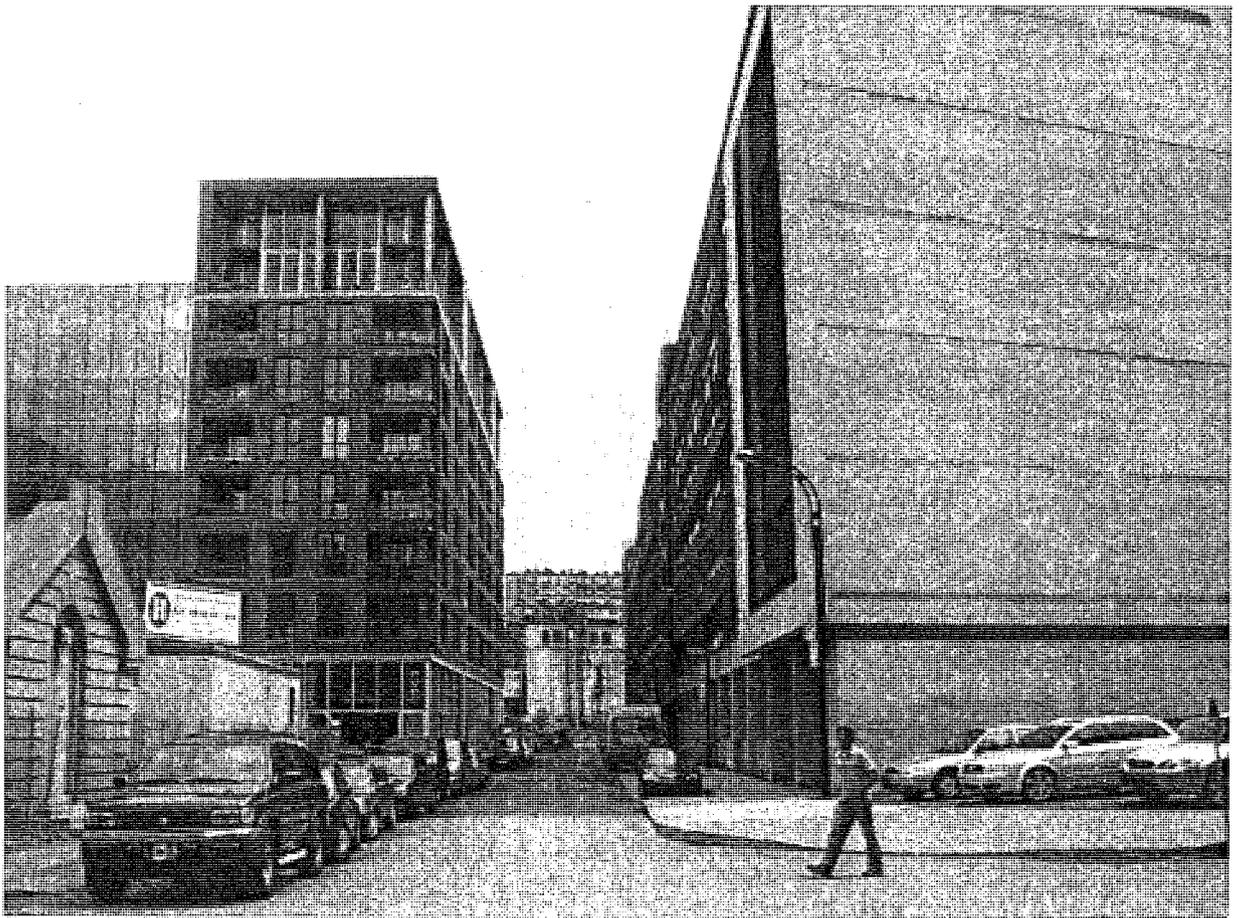


Figure 5.2: Streetscape, La Cité du Multimédia, summer 2006. Credit: Author

⁵⁴ Browenstein, “Calling Planet Bourque”; “Pull the plug on Pixel,” *The Gazette*, 28 July 1999; “Name changes would dishonour the past,” *The Gazette*, 29 July 1999; Linda Gyulai, “Bourque backs off; ‘Pixel St.’ might be used for alley or park instead,” *The Gazette*, 30 July 1999; Peggy Curran, “Tripping over names,” *The Gazette*, 25 August 1999.

⁵⁵ Doyle Driedger, “The Pluck of the Irish,” p. 38.

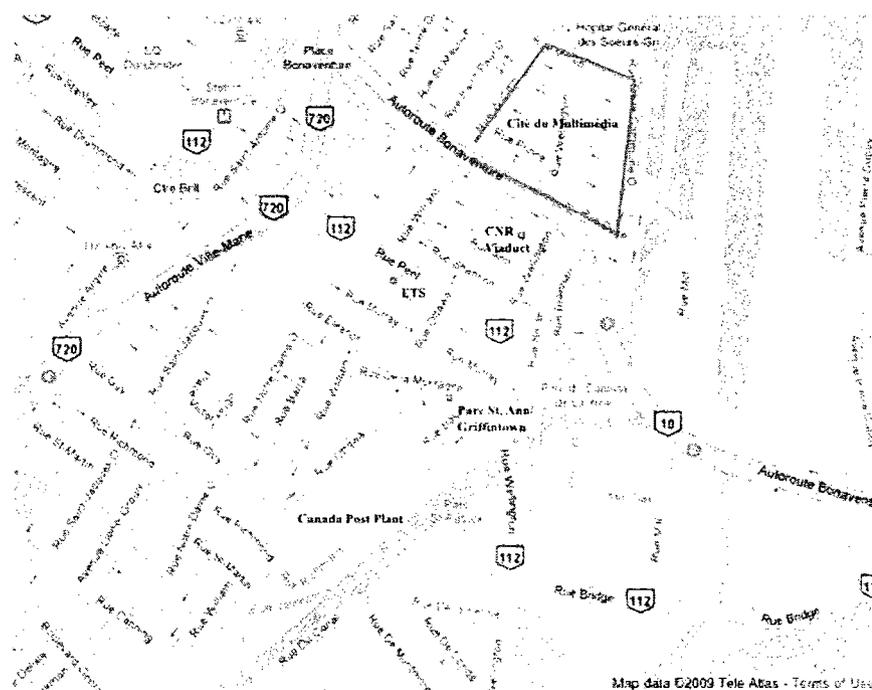
Meanwhile, right through the middle of Griffintown, along Peel Street between the Peel Basin of the Lachine Canal and rue Notre-Dame, the École de Technologie Supérieure (ÉTS), perhaps capitalising on its proximity to the Cité du Multimédia, has moved in. The ÉTS has converted old, abandoned industrial structures, as well as built new buildings, for student residences up and down Peel. It has taken over the old O’Keefe Brewery on the south-western corner of Peel and Notre-Dame, converting it into use as its main building. The ÉTS has also constructed a secondary building across rue Notre-Dame on the site of the old Bonaventure Station, and has taken possession of the old warehouse building on the southeast corner of William and Peel streets. Meanwhile, across Peel from the old O’Keefe Brewery is the massive, and still disused, Dow Brewery. However, behind the Dow on William Street, the old Lowney chocolate factory has been converted into condominiums⁵⁶ in the midst of a larger condo development around the old chocolate factory, across the street from the police station at the corner of William and Inspector.

Meanwhile, in the old Irish core, the “soul of Griffintown,”⁵⁷ in the west end of the neighbourhood centred around Parc St. Ann/Griffintown, several massive redevelopment plans have been tabled in recent years. The old Canada Post plant, which was built over the Des Seigneurs basin of the Lachine Canal on Ottawa Street at the foot of rue Guy, has seen several plans for development come and go. In the summer of 2005, a plan to construct a hotel, condos, and a cultural centre for Montréal’s Czech community fell through. The following summer, another plan emerged to redevelop the site with

⁵⁶ Mary Lamey, “Griffintown, reborn: Development sparked, Old factory buildings being converted into condos,” *The Gazette*, 18 February 2004.

⁵⁷ Isabelle Paré, “L’âme du Griffintown,” *Le Devoir*, 8 July 2008.

public housing, condos, and shops. That project fell into limbo due to squabbling between Canada Post and Canada Lands, the federal government agency charged with the site's redevelopment, over the price of the land before falling apart.⁵⁸ In the autumn of 2008, however, Canada Lands finally announced that it will spearhead a redevelopment of the site, leading to the construction of some 2,000 housing units, including subsidised housing, as well as shops and offices. The old basins of the canal will also be excavated.⁵⁹



Map 5.1: Griffintown showing redevelopment sites. Source: TeleAtlas/Google Earth © 2009.

⁵⁸ Ann Carroll, "Parks Canada backpedalling on cultural centre by canal," *The Gazette*, 5 July 2005; Ann Carroll, "Czech project on canal sabotaged," *The Gazette*, 14 July 2005; Ann Carroll, "Canada Post land for sale: Property runs along Lachine Canal," *The Gazette*, 19 April 2006; Ann Carroll, "Griffintown sorting station might get reprieve," *The Gazette*, 27 October 2006.

⁵⁹ Éric Clément, "Un projet de 2000 logements dans le sud-ouest," *La Presse*, 13 November 2008; Jeanne Corriveau, "Bassin du Nouveau-Havre: Un projet de 750 millions le long du canal Lachine," *Le Devoir*, 13 November 2008.



Figure 5.3: Lowney Condos under construction, summer 2006. Credit: Author.

While the Canada Lands plan has been received with open arms in Griffintown and the surrounding areas, the same could not be said of a massive plan for the redevelopment of Griffintown put forth by Devimco, a private development company, in November 2007. With this project, Devimco proposed to radically renovate, tear down, and rebuild a huge core of Griffintown to the east of the Canada Post plant. Devimco's proposed site was bounded on the west by rue du Séminaire, on the east by the CNR viaduct, and on the north and south by Ottawa Street and the canal. Devimco immediately came under fire from heritage preservationists, as well as a large group of

individuals concerned with the future of Griffintown almost immediately. Devimco's plan, however, is strongly supported by Montréal Mayor Gérald Tremblay and *hôtel de ville*. Nonetheless, in November 2008, one day before Canada Lands announced its plan for the Canada Post plant, Devimco announced that it had been forced to delay the start of construction for a year, until 2010, due to the global credit crisis. Devimco was having problems raising the \$400 million necessary for the first stage of the \$1.3 billion development.⁶⁰

Nonetheless, the old Irish core of Griffintown is in a sad state of disrepair as things stand at the end of 2008. Nature has reclaimed many of the abandoned lots and the sidewalks are crumbling. The only exceptions to this lie in the renovation of a couple of buildings near the corner of Ottawa and Murray streets around Leo Leonard's Horse Palace at the corner of Ottawa and rue de la Montagne. This leads to what is missing from the discussion of plans for the redevelopment of Griffintown: that of the old Irish community there. For the most part, the Irish community has been excluded from the discussion, though the UISM has met with Devimco to put forth a plan for the commemoration of the community in a re-designed Parc St. Ann/Griffintown.⁶¹

All of this pre-Devimco activity in Griffintown, and the changing nature of the neighbourhood's landscape, doubtlessly factored into the re-birth of Griffintown as a site of remembrance for the Irish community of the city. The various plans for redevelopment that have emerged for the old Irish core of Griffintown, combined with various other issues, not the least of which is the age of the last generation of

⁶⁰ Éric Clément, "La construction de Griffintown repoussée à 2010," *La Presse*, 11 November 2008.

⁶¹ "Griffintown project is developed through consultation: The City of Montreal given the green light to develop a *programme particulier d'urbanisme* (PPU)," *The Gazette*, 22 November 2007; Don Pidgeon, historian, UISM, email to author, 13 August 2008.

Griffintowners, have created a situation where it is increasingly imperative to record and commemorate the history of the neighbourhood before time and history have completely swept away both the neighbourhood and its former residents.

IV. The re-Irishification of Griffintown

About halfway through Burman's *Ghosts of Griffintown*, there is a rather telling moment in the midst of an otherwise innocuous, and seemingly out of place, interview with two former residents of Griffintown, Charlie Blickstead and Bill Greenberg. When asked by Burns what it was like to grow up Jewish in the midst of all the Irish Catholics in Griffintown, Greenberg answers immediately: "Very difficult. Not easy. We basically had to defend for ourselves to live down there." Blickstead, an Irish Catholic, immediately objects: "I never heard of the Jews being molested." Greenberg immediately back-pedals, "We weren't molested." Blickstead then laughingly recalls, "Not like the French!" Greenberg lightens up some at this memory, "No, that's right, the French really got beat up."⁶²

This interview with Blickstead and Greenberg gives us a glimpse into the process by which Griffintown has been re-cast as an Irish neighbourhood in the Griffintown Commemorative Project. As we have seen, by the turn of the twentieth century, the Irish population had declined precipitously, both in real numbers and proportionally. By World War II, the Irish were no longer the dominant ethnic group in Griffintown. This means that throughout the childhood of most of the informants in the Griffintown Commemorative Project, the Irish were a minority. And yet, in this symbolic

⁶² Interview with Charles Blickstead and Bill Greenberg, *Ghosts of Griffintown*.

reconstruction of Griffintown as a *lieu de mémoire*, other ethno-religious/linguistic groups are either removed from the landscape, or else they are reduced to a tokenistic, background presence. They are all used to enrich the Irish experience, usually through comedy, especially in the case of the French Canadians. Indeed, of all those who offer their remembrances in the various cultural productions that comprise the Griffintown Commemorative Project, all but four are Irish-Catholic. Moreover, any suggestion of conflict with other ethno-religious/linguistic groups is downplayed, again with humour, as in the case of the exchange between Blickstead and Greenberg.

This exchange between Blickstead and Greenberg is significant for a number of reasons. First, Greenberg is the only voice of dissent insofar as ethnic relations in Griffintown are concerned in this symbolic reconstruction of Griffintown. He is the only one to suggest that to grow up as the Other in the Irish-Catholic dominated section of Griffintown could be difficult. In fact, he is the only one who is even asked what it was like to grow up as the Other at all. As one of these four non-Irish-Catholic voices in the Griffintown Commemorative Project, Greenberg is the exception; the others are more interested in recalling how they fit in, and ran with, an Irish-Catholic crowd. And even if Greenberg is quickly challenged by Blickstead, and even if he subsequently backs down, Greenberg's alternative view is significant; as his is the only voice of dissent in this reconstruction of Griffintown and its equation with Irishness. Also, the manner in which Greenberg's dissent is dealt with by Blickstead is telling, and is symptomatic of how any sort of dissent, or even the threat thereof, is dealt with in the Griffintown Commemorative Project: through humour.

To be fair, Burman, in narrating his documentary, does note the presence of the Anglo-Protestant population (nearly one-third of the population in the early twentieth century) and the French Canadians, but he quickly dismisses them, suggesting that they lived in a different world: “There was a strong French population with its own church and school. And St. Edward’s [sic]⁶³ Anglican Church and William Lunn School were the place to go for people like Thomas Seivewright, a Scottish Protestant.”⁶⁴ While the French Canadians and Anglo-Protestants at least get noticed for their presence in Griffintown, even if they are immediately marginalised, other, smaller groups do not even get this courtesy. In his narration, Burman notes that other groups, such as Jews and Italians, also had a presence in the Griff, due to its convenient location vis-à-vis the port, where immigrants landed, but he also adds quickly that they “eventually settled in other neighbourhoods.”⁶⁵ But this was not entirely the case, at least insofar as the Italians are concerned. By the death of Griffintown in the 1960s, Italians, together with Ukrainians, were the dominant groups in the Griff.⁶⁶

This passing recognition of other groups in Griffintown, as well as the snippet with Greenberg, which runs for not quite thirty seconds in a 63-minute documentary, represent the only attempts to discuss the presence of these other groups in all of these

⁶³ The Anglican Church in Griffintown was St. Edmund’s.

⁶⁴ Burman, narration of, *The Ghosts of Griffintown*. It is unlikely that Seivewright, a Scots Presbyterian, would have been worshipping at an Anglican Church.

⁶⁵ Burman, narration of, *The Ghosts of Griffintown*.

⁶⁶ Canada, Dominion Bureau of Statistics, Ninth Census of Canada, 1951: Population and Housing Characteristics by Census Tracts: Montréal (Ottawa: The Queen’s Printer, 1953), p. 4; Canada, Dominion Bureau of Statistics, Census of Canada, 1961: Population and Housing Characteristics by Census Tracts: Montréal (Ottawa: The Queen’s Printer, 1963), p. 8. See, also, Patricia Nolan, “Benedict Labre House, 1952-66: The History of an Unofficial Lay Apostolate,” (MA thesis, Concordia University, 2000), pp. 61-3. Italians had also replaced the Irish as the primary residents of Goose Village in the post-World War II era. The list of expropriations prepared by the Ville de Montréal prior to the destruction of Goose Village, the majority of the names are Italian. See, Service d’urbanisme de la Ville de Montréal, “Réaménagement urbain: “Victoriatown,” November 1962, AVM, Dossiers du comité du Conseil, 1961 à 1973, Série VM-1: Fonds Conseil municipal & Comité exécutif, 4e série, File 8081.1-1, Reel 158.

cultural productions commemorating Griffintown. All of Doyle Driedger's informants are Irish-Catholic. In Burns' case, at least insofar as Griffintown is concerned,⁶⁷ all but two of her informants, Tom Rowe and Cliff Sowery, are Irish-Catholic. Seivewright and Greenberg are the only non-Irish-Catholic voices in *The Ghosts of Griffintown*. And even at that, Rowe, Sowery, and Seivewright are present less for what they can tell us about the Anglo-Protestant communities in the Griff than for what they can contribute to our understanding of Griffintown as an Irish-Catholic neighbourhood. Rowe and Seivewright are both careful to point out that they ran with an Irish-Catholic crowd growing up. Seivewright was called "the dirty Scot. But I took that as a joke, you know."⁶⁸ As for Rowe, he converted to Catholicism as a teenager.⁶⁹ Greenberg offers a more ambivalent stance, as he is the only non-Irish-Catholic who is asked what it was like to be the Other in Griffintown. Sowery's ethno-religious identity is not made an issue of in his recollections, given that he was an adult during this period, a co-director of the Griffintown Boys' and Girls' Club. His recollections are also designed to contribute to our understanding of the Irish-Catholic culture of the Griff. All of this is part of an attempt to paper over ethno-religious differences in Griffintown, at least to a degree. Seivewright notes that a "lot of Griffintowners were French Canadian but they grew up Irish. And they married Irish girls. Religion had no part of it, we never fought Catholics against Protestants, we were all Griffintowners and that was it."⁷⁰

There are two things of note in Seivewright's commentary here. First, French Canadians were granted a form of honorary Irishness in order to fit in, at least when they

⁶⁷ Burns' *The Shamrock & The Shield* is an oral history of the entire Irish community of Montréal, though the bulk of it is focussed on Griffintown.

⁶⁸ Thomas Seivewright, in *The Ghosts of Griffintown*.

⁶⁹ Tom Rowe, in Burns, *The Shamrock & The Shield*, p. 152.

⁷⁰ Thomas Seivewright, in *The Ghosts of Griffintown*.

were not being beaten upon. This appears to have indeed been the case with the boxer Marcel “Rocky” Brisebois, a French Canadian from Griffintown, who had a successful career as a professional boxer in the 1950s, winning the Canadian welterweight championship, as well as being a prize fighter in the United States. After his career, Brisebois and his wife, Raymonde, returned to the Griff. After Rocky’s death in 2004, Raymonde Brisebois recalled:

His father was French Canadian, his mother was of German descent, but he was brought up Irish. This was his life, his Irish side. Before every fight, he’d go to St. Ann’s church to make a novena. On St. Patrick’s Day, he’d sing all those songs, wear shamrocks, and everything – When Irish Eyes Are Smiling and Danny Boy. He could speak English with an Irish brogue.⁷¹

Second is when Seivewright says that religion played no part in the Griff. He makes this comment in discussing relations between the French-Canadians and Irish-Catholics; these groups had no reason to fight over religion, they shared one. As for Seivewright, he did not attend school with either the French Canadians or Irish-Catholics, being a Protestant. Even if Seivewright had no problem with his Irish-Catholic neighbours due to religion, Greenberg is adamant that this was not the case when he and his sister were growing up. In explaining his difficulties in growing up Jewish in Griffintown, following his exchange with Blickstead, Greenberg goes on: “[t]he problem was that on the way to school, my younger sister and I would manage to get to school, but then at recess time, there was no protection. So then you had to join either the English side or the French side.”⁷² Rita Savoie, née Earle (she married one of those French-Canadian boys who married an Irish girl), recalls her childhood with glee: “We

⁷¹ Alan Hustak, “Welterweight was Griffintown’s Rocky,” *The Gazette*, 25 April 2004.

⁷² Bill Greenberg, in *The Ghosts of Griffintown*.

beat up the French! We beat up the boys!”⁷³ Thus, at least in the schoolyards for this last generation of children to grow up in Griffintown, it does seem that the French-Canadians took more than their fair share of lumps from the Irish-Catholics. And even if they did not fight Catholic versus Protestant, they did fight French versus English.

But this reduction of French-Canadians to punching bags in the memories of Griffintown also essentialises their presence and experiences in the neighbourhood. Despite being roughly equivalent in size to the Irish-Catholics over the first half of the twentieth century, and even the majority for a small period of time around World War II, the French-Canadians are left to become either the comic relief for the Irish, or else they are removed from the landscape. We see this removal in the commentary of the informants. For example, Seivewright notes that the French-Canadian lads grew up Irish and married Irish girls and Raymonde Brisebois’ comments about her late husband growing up Irish and being dedicated to his “Irish side.” Thus, when they are not being beaten upon, the French-Canadians are left to become Irish in this reconstruction of Griffintown.

As for the Anglo-Protestants, their physical presence in Griffintown was nearly as large as that of the French-Canadians, at least in the early twentieth century.⁷⁴ Yet their presence is just as, if not more so, marginalised from the cultural and physical landscape of the neighbourhood. As noted, both Rowe and Seivewright appear not for what they can tell us of their own communities, and their experiences in the Griff, but for what they can tell us about the Irishness of the neighbourhood. The fact that they both ran with an

⁷³ Rita Savoie, in *A Griffintown Evening*.

⁷⁴ Canada, Department of the Interior, *Census of Canada, 1901-1911*; Rosalyn Trigger, “God’s Mobile Mansions: Protestant Church Relocation and Extension in Montreal, 1850-1914” (PhD dissertation, McGill University, 2004).

Irish-Catholic crowd growing up, when combined with Rowe's teenaged conversion to Catholicism, effectively removes their status as Anglo-Protestants; like Brisebois, they are given a form of honorary Irishness for the purpose of the symbolic reconstruction of Griffintown. The rest of the Anglo-Protestant community, however, is removed from the landscape.⁷⁵

More to the point, aside from the presence of Seivewright and Rowe, there is no actual mention of the Anglo-Protestant population in any meaningful manner in the Griffintown Commemorative Project. There are no laughing stories told of the Irish-Catholics beating up on the hapless Anglo-Protestants. There are no stories of Anglo-Protestant version of "Rocky" Brisebois. All we are left with is Blickstead noting the location of Protestant houses of worship on the east side of Griffintown.⁷⁶

Seivewright, though, begins to offer an explanation of the removal of the Anglo-Protestants from the Griffintown Commemorative Project when he notes that his house stood at 110 Duke Street, where an on-ramp to the Autoroute Bonaventure stands today. Duke Street is on the eastern side of Griffintown, on the opposite side of Peel Street from St. Ann's Church. Across the street from where Seivewright grew up now is a new office building, part of the Cité du Multimédia project. And while Don Pidgeon argues that the

⁷⁵ This is something that has been furthered by historians and historical geographers looking at Griffintown. Only Rosalyn Trigger, in her doctoral dissertation and one published article, has given any sustained attention to the Anglo-Protestant community of the Griff. In her case, she explores the role of the various Anglo-Protestant churches in Griffintown, most of which moved out of the neighbourhood and up the hill downtown and to Westmount as their parishioners made a similar move out of Griffintown and the "city below the hill." However, she also finds that most of them established missionary outposts in Griffintown to tend to the Anglo-Protestant flocks there. See Rosalyn Trigger, "Protestant Restructuring in the Canadian City: Church and Mission in the Industrial Working-Class District of Griffintown," *Urban History Review/Revue d'histoire urbaine*, 31/2 (2002): 5-18; Trigger, "God's Mobile Mansions."

⁷⁶ Charles Blickstead, in, Burns, *The Shamrock & The Shield*, p. 54.

construction of the CNR viaduct in the 1920s “separated Griffintown right in two,”⁷⁷

Blickstead offers another explanation:

My own view is that there was an invisible line of demarcation which divided Griffintown. West of Colborne [now Peel] Street, the Irish-Catholics were pretty much the main body of the population. If you went east of Colborne (now I repeat again, this was an imaginary line) we became more cosmopolitan in the sense that, while there were many Irish-Catholics all the way down, there was a mix of Jewish families and French families, a few Italian families, and numerous Protestants there also.⁷⁸

Seivewright (and Blickstead, who grew up at 95 Duke Street), then, lived in that part of Griffintown where much of the Protestant community lived. It was here that the remaining Protestant churches and missions still stood on Nazareth Street following the gentrification of most of the Protestant congregations of the Griff.⁷⁹ In other words, there was a spatial separation between the Irish-Catholic and Anglo-Protestant communities, at least to some degree, in Griffintown, especially as both underwent demographic decline in the middle of the twentieth century. This meant that contact was limited in many ways between the two groups. And while the men may have worked together and drank in the same taverns, as Seivewright suggests,⁸⁰ their wives and children would not have had such opportunities for cosmopolitanism. The children went to different schools and they worshipped at different churches.

As for the other ethno-religious groups in the Griff, ones with a much smaller presence than the Anglo-Protestants and French-Canadians, they tend to be reduced to the tokenistic, if they are even mentioned at all. We have already seen how Burman, in his narration of *The Ghosts of Griffintown*, quickly dismisses Jews and Italians. Don

⁷⁷ Don Pidgeon, in *Ghosts of Griffintown*.

⁷⁸ Charles Blickstead, in Burns, *The Shamrock & The Shield*, p. 54.

⁷⁹ See, Trigger, “God’s Mobile Mansions.”

⁸⁰ Thomas Seivewright, in *The Ghosts of Griffintown*.

Pidgeon, who as historian of the UISM, has quite an investment in this reconstruction of Griffintown as a *lieu de mémoire*, also aids in this tokenisation of other ethnic groups in Griffintown. In his remembrances for Burns in her *The Shamrock & The Shield*, Pidgeon recalls “Frank,” owner and proprietor of Frank’s Grocery Store on Ottawa Street. Frank, Pidgeon recalls, was “the first man from Lebanon that I ever met in my life.” It is also significant, of course, that Frank’s last name has been lost to history, he is merely “Frank.” Pidgeon also recalls the typical and stereotyped Chinese presence in the neighbourhood, a launderer. Consistent with the creation of the Other, this man also remains nameless, even though Pidgeon says that he learned some “Chinese” from him.⁸¹

At any rate, Pidgeon recalls these two men, Frank the Lebanese grocer and the nameless Chinese launderer, almost in passing in his recollections of growing up Irish-Catholic in the Griff. And while Pidgeon is blessed with a story teller’s ability, one is left with the impression that the inclusion of these characters is more an aside. The Chinese launderer comes up in connection with one of Pidgeon’s childhood homes, which was upstairs from the laundry, and while this building was owned by a Jewish man, “the Irish still owned quite a few of the houses at that time.”⁸² Frank comes up in conversation about an immense, alcoholic Irishwoman (to mention a stereotype: this is Paddy’s alcoholic, brutish wife Bridie personified), who bought her beer at Frank’s, and a larger funny tale about her accent:

I remember being in the store one day when she walked in and banged this case of empties on the counter. The thunder of it shook everything in the place and we were all scared. In her Irish brogue she yelled out to Frank:

⁸¹ Don Pidgeon, in Burns, *The Shamrock & The Shield* pp. 197-201.

⁸² Don Pidgeon, in Burns, *The Shamrock & The Shield*, p. 199.

“Frank, would ye be givin’ me twelve Black Arse beer?!” For the longest period of time, I thought it was Black Arse beer, not Black Horse beer.⁸³

Thus, even these Jewish landlords, Lebanese grocers, and Chinese launderers are only part of the background of Irish-Catholic Griffintown. More to the point, these three characters represent ethnic groups which were not a threat to the re-Irishification of the neighbourhood, as the French-Canadians and Anglo-Protestants were. The result of this essentialisation, othering, and outright removal of such ethno-religious/linguistic groups from the Griffintown landscape is obvious: Griffintown becomes an Irish-Catholic neighbourhood.

Clearly, then, this picture of ethnic relations that arises from the Griffintown Commemorative Project, even if it is achieved through the marginalisation of Other groups, does not tell the entire story and covers up more than it reveals. Yet, it is also understandable. In order to claim Griffintown, Montréal’s Irish-Catholics needed first to establish the neighbourhood as Irish-Catholic. That these various other groups who were in the Griff also have their own spaces on the Montréal urban landscape aids in this process, as they are likely to neither lay claim to the Griff, nor to question the stories told by the Irish in laying claim to the neighbourhood. This clearance of the Griffintown landscape for the neighbourhood’s re-Irishification is an excellent example of how the historical past is carefully controlled and massaged in order to invent this usable past for Griffintown and, ultimately, for the stakeholders in the Griffintown Commemorative Project.

⁸³ Don Pidgeon, in Burns, *The Shamrock & The Shield*, p. 201.

V. Irish identity in the re-imagined Griffintown

Humour, specifically black humour, is used to great effect by the former Griffintowners in dealing with the less-than-savoury aspects of life in the Griff. Black humour is an effective means of removing the edge of unwelcome, or painful, memories. This is especially the case when it comes to violence and the drink in Griffintown, two stereotypical tropes in the Irish experience, both in Ireland and the diaspora, both in reality and in the minds of commentators.

The exchange between Greenberg and Blickstead also shows us how the subject of violence is dealt with in the Griffintown Commemorative Project: through humour, mixed with nostalgia, and then the sidelining of the issue, usually with a few laughs. Hanley, before he became a delivery man for Tougas & Tougas, was, in the 1920s, a champion boxer from Griffintown. Hanley learned to box on the rough streets of Griffintown, as well as from the Christian Brothers at the St. Ann's School for Boys. Boxing and fighting skills are badges of honour for many of the male informants of the Griffintown Commemorative Project. In another part of *The Ghosts of Griffintown*, the conversation with Greenberg continues, without Blickstead:

Greenberg: I don't intimidate easily, I never back off. You learn that, that's what you learned down there.

Burns: Griffintown didn't produce any wimps, no wimps in Griffintown.

Greenberg: That's right.⁸⁴

Greenberg's (and Hanley's) attitude towards violence and toughness and, ultimately, masculinity, is a trope repeated time and again throughout the various cultural productions of the Griffintown Commemorative Project. The boys and men of the Griff were tough; they had to be in order to survive on the streets of the neighbourhood. They

⁸⁴ Bill Greenberg and Patricia Burns, in *The Ghosts of Griffintown*.

learned to fight on the streets, the taverns, the schoolyards, Cliff Sowery's Boxing Club, and even at school. It is thus not surprising that Sowery's Boxing Club in the St. Ann's Boys' and Girls' Club was popular amongst the lads of Griffintown. Sowery's skills as a boxing coach border on the legendary. He is a member of the Canadian Boxing Hall of Fame, and he produced a number of Olympic and prize-fighting champions, including "Rocky" Brisebois, Armand Savoie, Johnny Greco, and Gus "Pell" Mell.⁸⁵ He recalled the toughness of the lads in his boxing classes at the Boys' and Girls' Club:

They didn't know anything about boxing, but they had all the courage in the world, and they loved to fight. They fought their heart out, they'd get a big slap on the nose, their eyes would be full of tears, no idea of quitting. They'd come back like little tigers, they'd fight like the blazes.⁸⁶

In his recollections of learning to fight in Sowery's classes, Seivewright, who has thick hands and a jaw that has clearly been broken at least once, speaks of "the code":

You don't learn how to fight to go out and beat up some kid that's twenty pounds lighter than you and six inches shorter than you. It's an art of self defence, and while a lot of them didn't turn into professional fighters, they knew how to defend themselves. If you go into a strange bar as they got older, or into the Navy or the Army, and somebody picked on you because they were a little bigger, all you'd have to do is clip him with a left hook because word went around, don't pick a fight with that guy, he has a wicked left. I think it was good training.⁸⁷

This code of masculinity in the Griff meant that there was an honourable manner of conducting one's business as a man in the rough streets of the neighbourhood. And that these streets were rough and tough is clear. Not only did the boys and men of the Griff bank on their reputation as tough guys, they wore this as a badge of honour, in their bravado, as we saw with Greenberg. Indeed, the entire neighbourhood is cast in this

⁸⁵ Cliff Sowery, in Burns, *The Shamrock & The Shield*, pp. 40-1. Also note that of the major boxers to come out of Sowery's club, none were Irish-Catholic.

⁸⁶ Cliff Sowery, in *The Ghosts of Griffintown*.

⁸⁷ Thomas Seivewright, in *The Ghosts of Griffintown*.

light. Don Pidgeon draws upon this in talking about the 1918 St. Patrick's Day parade, which was cancelled due to wartime conscription, though the official reason for the cancellation was the death of John Redmond. Many men were afraid that if they openly marched on St. Patrick's Day that they would be plucked out of the parade by the recruiting men of the Canadian Expeditionary Force, as a conscription bill had just been passed. The AOH and the St. Ann's Young Men's Society, both of which had been opposed to cancelling the parade, insisted on marching on their own in Griffintown. Pidgeon reasons that this was the logical thing to do, as no one would dare come into the Griff to cause trouble.⁸⁸ Sowery recalls that in entering Griffintown, "you had to be careful."⁸⁹

The reason for outsiders' recalcitrance in coming into the Griff seem pretty clear; aside from the fact that every single boy and man of the neighbourhood, at least in the symbolic reconstruction of the Griff, could fight, there were also street gangs throughout the neighbourhood. Young men with nothing better to do gathered on the street corners to hang out. Yet, despite the gangs on the corner, and the obvious toughness and intimidation factors that came with them, and the fact that the informants in the Griffintown Commemorative Project are proud of the toughness of their neighbourhood, there is also a concerted effort to de-fang these gangs. Doyle Driedger suggests that these young men were just wise-cracking tough boys. She does her best to play down the more sinister aspect of the gangs, rendering them declawed and as a source of entertainment. She juxtaposes the gangs' presence with humourous, and cute, stories of Griffintown. For example,

⁸⁸ James Mennie, "Being Irish: It's all in the lobes," *The Gazette*, 10 March 2004.

⁸⁹ Cliff Sowery, in Burns, *The Shamrock & The Shield*, p. 44.

The Griffintown gangs, a fixture on almost every corner, could intimidate strangers. But they gave us a sense of security⁹⁰ -- and entertainment. At one point, there was a police station on Young Street, but it was closed after a year or so because there was so little crime. There were pranks, however.

She then proceeds to relate the story of Leonard Normoyle, who one day gave his mother the fright of her life by appearing to step out of a second floor window. His fall, however, was cushioned by a passing wagon full of oats.⁹¹ By juxtaposing the threat of violence and crime with the funny story about Normoyle, Doyle Driedger is effectively removing the memory of crime and violence from Griffintown, to say nothing of why the street gangs existed in the first place, something Blickstead hints at: unemployment and poverty.

The de-clawing of the street gangs continues in the recollections of Annie Wilson, who also recalls the sense of security the gangs gave the women of the neighbourhood:

I remember Miss McCunn, she was a director of the Griffintown Boys' and Girls' Club. She said to me, "You know, Annie, I don't care what time I came out at night, I was always protected with the boys standing at the corner. I had no fear of coming out." And they did, they always looked after the girls.⁹²

It is interesting that whilst Doyle Driedger, McCunn, and Wilson all had fond recollections of the gangs, they are all women. Indeed, a major aspect of the gangs and gang culture was to "protect" the young women of the neighbourhood, and their honour. This was part of the territorial aspect of the gangs, who organised to protect and defend their territory against the encroachment of other, rival, gangs. In this sense, then, the

⁹⁰ Again, an invocation of insider/outsider status.

⁹¹ Doyle Driedger, "The Pluck of the Irish," p. 40.

⁹² Annie Wilson, in, *The Ghosts of Griffintown*.

women whose honour they protected were seen as “belonging” to them and their territory.⁹³

Other than Charlie Blickstead, who was amongst the gangs, Dennis Daugherty is the only man to recall them. Not surprisingly, Daugherty, in contrast to the women, does not have such fond recollections of them. He reports a particular nasty gang, whose territory was the corner of Peel and Ottawa Street. This gang was fierce, intimidating passers-by, including Griffintowners, to the point that the police were afraid of that corner.⁹⁴ Daugherty’s recollections suggest a darker side to the gangs in Griffintown. Indeed, their very presence and their acts of intimidation against “strangers” shows this.

Andrew Davis argues that young men growing up in a working-class neighbourhood “witness countless demonstrations of male violence. Frequently there were victims of such violence themselves... Thus boys learned by example that violence was both a necessary and legitimate means of self-assertion.”⁹⁵ Robert Roberts, in his *The Classic Slum*, also makes note of the role of violence in the life of working class boys.⁹⁶ In both instances, it is violence within the home and corporal punishment that interests the authors. Nevertheless, the boys of Griffintown grew up witnessing, and being victim to, violence. There is also the fact that violence is the last resort of the dispossessed. The working classes *had* no other tools available in many instances, or felt

⁹³ Andrew Davis, “Youth Gangs, Masculinity, and Violence in Late Victorian Manchester and Salford,” *Journal of Social History*, 32/2 (1998), p. 350. More sinister was the likelihood that a young woman in Manchester or Salford who had spurned the attentions of a young gangmember would be made to pay for her haughtiness through an assault, whether physical, sexual, or both. I have not found any evidence for this in Griffintown, which is not to say that it absolutely did not happen. Davis, “Youth Gangs,” p. 356.

⁹⁴ Dennis Daugherty, in *The Ghosts of Griffintown*.

⁹⁵ Davis, “Youth Gangs,” pp. 354-5.

⁹⁶ Robert Roberts, *The Classic Slum: Salford Life in the First Quarter Century* (Manchester: University of Manchester Press, 1971), pp. 28-9.

as if they did not, and thus violence becomes a forceful, and useful, language to use. Violence, then, becomes a typical expression of masculine culture in a working-class neighbourhood.

Just as the reasons for the gangs on the corner are downplayed in the Griffintown Commemorative Project, so, too, is the presence of the police and the existence of crime. We have seen how Doyle Driedger claims that the police station on Young Street was closed down “after a year or so due to a lack of crime.” Police Station No. 7 opened on Young Street at Christmas 1847, due to the increase of crime in Griffintown with the influx of Famine refugees from Ireland, and remained a fixture in Griffintown for over a century until the dismantling of the neighbourhood in the 1960s. Moreover, a second police station stood on Haymarket Square in the northeastern corner of Griffintown. Indeed, the Service de Police de la Ville de Montréal’s *Poste du quartier 20* stands at the corner of William and Inspector streets today, across from the Lowney condo developments.

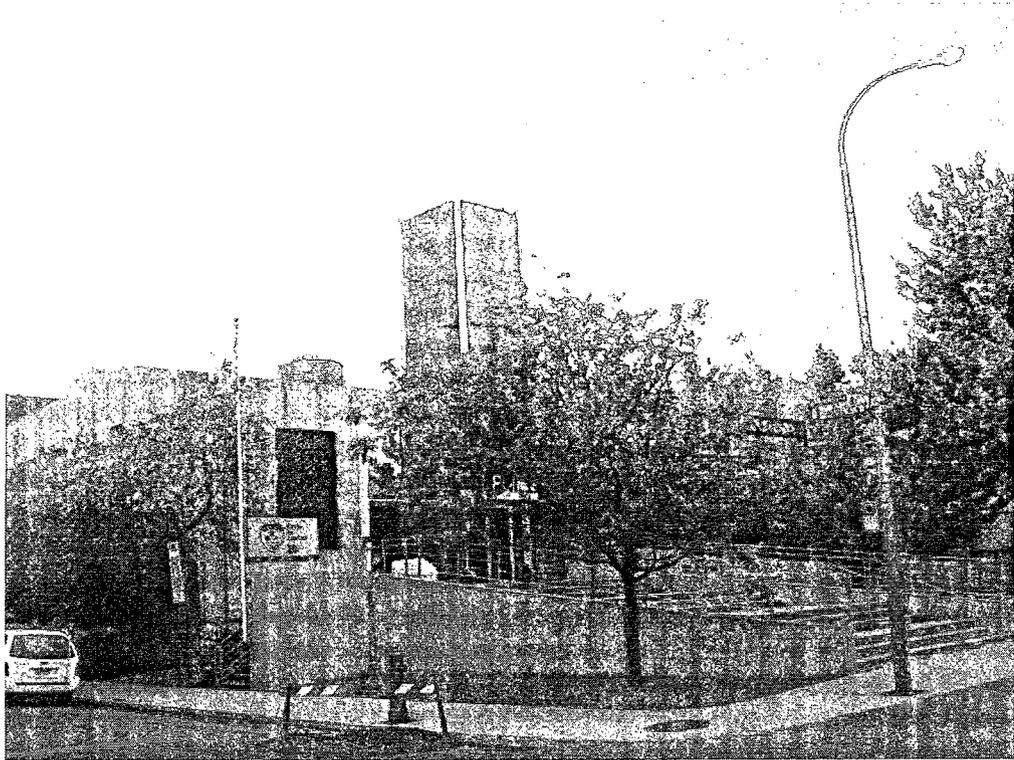


Figure 5.4: La service de Police de la Ville de Montréal’s poste du quartier 20, corner of William & Inspector streets, Griffintown. Credit: Author.

The manner in which Doyle Driedger removes the police from the landscape of Griffintown with a throw-away sentence before going on to tell the Normoyle story is in perfect keeping with her method of de-clawing the street gangs. She skilfully papers over the unsavouriness, or even the threat thereof, in Griffintown. Instead, she feeds the common stereotype that the poor are a happy-go-lucky people, unburdened with the responsibilities and stresses that come with money and affluence. This sentiment is echoed throughout the Griffintown remembrances, no doubt since the ex-residents of the neighbourhood have long ago moved out of the poverty of the Griff, becoming, in Doyle Driedger’s words, “survivors.”⁹⁷

⁹⁷ Doyle Driedger, “The Pluck of the Irish,” p. 41.

In line with Doyle Driedger's fictive statement about Police Station No. 7, most of the informants who discuss the police presence in Griffintown do their best to minimise the suggestion of any activities that might require policing. Jimmy Burns recalls that the police patrolled "all the time," and notes the large territory that they had to cover on foot, but suggests that the police were concerned with property crime against the "stores and factories," reporting that the police beat was a lonely one. Thus, they oftentimes ended up spending their evenings with his father at his place of employment as a night watchman, before returning to the station on Young Street.⁹⁸ Of course, the fact that the police were constantly patrolling might also suggest that there was more than just the shops and factories of Griffintown to worry about for them.

Hanley also recalls the police station on Young Street: "[m]y grandfather was the stable man for Jimmy Feron's, the undertaker,⁹⁹ and the police captain and some of his men would come to the stable for card games and a drink while I took care of the police station next door. I was five." When he was older, Hanley recalls that he would go out with Jimmy Williams, who was in charge of the Black Maria,¹⁰⁰ pulled by two horses, and round up the drunks who were having a hard time finding their way home: "we would take them in to be sobered up and send them home."¹⁰¹ Hanley's recollections of rounding up the drunks in Griffintown are seconded by Sowery, who recalls an Irish cop

⁹⁸ Jimmy Burns, in Burns, *The Shamrock & The Shield*, p. 33.

⁹⁹ Feron is still in business as an undertaker and funeral home in Montréal, and it is perhaps fitting that upon his death in January 2006, at the age of 96, the arrangements for Frank Hanley's funeral were undertaken by Feron. Alan Hustak, "Bells toll for Hanley; end of an era," *The Gazette*, 28 January 2006.

¹⁰⁰ "Black Maria" is another term for "Paddywagon," which is a vehicle used by the police to transport prisoners. "Paddywagon" is American in origin, and its meaning is obvious: it was the Irish who were being arrested. "Black Maria," pronounced "Mariah," is a term more common in the United Kingdom and Ireland.

¹⁰¹ "Banjo" Frank Hanley, in Burns, *The Shamrock & The Shield*, p. 85.

named Hogan, “[h]e was respected by the people. If, say, the husband got drunk, he’d escort him home, take him in and say, ‘Missus, look after him.’”¹⁰²

That the police were really not all that necessary in Griffintown is a theme that recurs throughout the remembrances of former residents in the Griffintown Commemorative Project, despite the poverty, unemployment, the gangs on the corner, and the Griff’s reputation. It seems that the most the police had to worry about was getting drunks home at night. Blickstead even goes so far as to say,

I don’t think the police were necessary in Griffintown, to tell you the truth, although there were some Irishmen and people of other nationalities[,] too, who were rambunctious at times, but it was largely a peace-loving family area. Sometimes the odd guy would kick over the traces and maybe have too much to drink. By and large there was no robbery.¹⁰³

Of course, if there was no real need for the police in Griffintown, it is highly unlikely that there would have been two police stations in the neighbourhood, within six blocks of each other.

Another common theme in the recollections of the police presence in Griffintown is that the policemen themselves fit into the neighbourhood. We have already seen how both Frank Hanley’s grandfather and Jimmy Burns’ father would have a few drinks and play cards with the police whilst they were ostensibly out on the beat. Officer Hogan happily escorted the drunks home to their wives, according to Sowery. Only Don Pidgeon hints at what might be the obvious for a poor, working class district: that the police were far from popular. He points out that “it was difficult being a policeman in Griffintown because many people had a distaste for them.” But Pidgeon is also equally

¹⁰² Cliff Sowery, in Burns, *The Shamrock & The Shield*, p. 45.

¹⁰³ Charles Blickstead, in Burns, *The Shamrock & The Shield*, p. 61.

careful to fall in step with Sowery, Burns, Blickstead, and Hanley, in noting that crime was never a problem.¹⁰⁴

The drink is an equally problematic subject in the Griffintown Commemorative Project, its presence in the memories of the former Griffintowners is ambivalent at best. Drinking was not an uncommon activity in the Griff, especially given the plethora of taverns and masculinised drinking spaces in the neighbourhood. It is with the drink that we perhaps see the trope of the stage Irish at work best, especially insofar as the problems that could arise from alcohol. Most particularly, the informants in the Griffintown Commemorative Project tend to invoke the sentimental and maudlin images of the role of the drink in the community, or they engage in humour and subvert gender roles and norms. Perhaps this is not all that surprising, given the Irish stereotypes about the drink.

Many of the informants are quick to point out that whilst their fathers did enjoy a drink or two at the local tavern, they were not alcoholics.¹⁰⁵ Indeed, a condemnation of alcoholism is pretty constant in the recollections.¹⁰⁶ This quick defensive reaction to the suggestion of alcohol in the neighbourhood is interesting and perhaps speaks for itself. Only three informants in the entire Griffintown Commemorative Project recall their fathers' alcoholism: Denis Delaney, Sybil Brown Morse, and Ruth Davie. Delaney tells the tale of his father's drinking and the impoverishment of his family as a child. Yet Delaney is a story-teller, so he is able to spin the potential devastation of his father's drinking problem into comedy, for example, the story about pinching coal from the yard

¹⁰⁴ Don Pidgeon, in Burns, *The Shamrock & The Shield*, p. 201.

¹⁰⁵ Charles Blickstead, in Burns, *The Shamrock & The Shield*, p. 61; Doyle Driedger, "The Pluck of the Irish," p. 40.

¹⁰⁶ See, for example, Charles Blickstead, in Burns, *The Shamrock & The Shield*, p. 61; Patricia McDonnell McLeod, in Burns, *The Shamrock & The Shield*, p. 183.

of Tougas & Tougas.¹⁰⁷ For her part, Brown Morse is bitter about her father's drinking, which led to her being put in an orphanage at a young age following her mother's death.¹⁰⁸

Davie, on the other hand, relates her past in a more sentimental and maudlin manner; yet, she is also authentic in telling her tale in a heavy, soft voice, the look in her eyes both intense and distant, something reflected in her choice of words in relating the story of her father's drinking:

My dad was a good dad, he was a good worker, he always worked. He'd always come into the house and give my mother a kiss on the cheek, he used to call her Butchy, that was her nickname. But you know, he used to go to the bar a lot. He wasn't a violent man when he drank, it's just that he wasn't a responsible man. But when my mother went to the hospital [and died], that's when I had to fend for everybody. And then he was, since my mother wasn't holding the reins, he was going out more often....I stayed home, I left school to take care of [her younger brothers]. I was 13. I didn't want to see my brothers going into a foster home, and I didn't want them to be there. I wanted them to be with me. But I knew once they went there they'd never come back out. My mother used to ask me to take care of your brothers.

And yet, she is also very protective of her father and his memory, very careful to point out that he was still a good man and a good father.¹⁰⁹

But Delaney, Brown Morse, and Davie are the exceptions in the general discourse on the drink in Griffintown. Generally, it is dismissed with humour. Violence arising from the drink is dealt with similarly. For Rita Pidgeon, the drinking was part of the entertainment in growing up in the Griff: "Every Friday night, we'd wait for the people up the road, there were always friends and neighbours, then they'd get to drinking, and of

¹⁰⁷ Denis Delaney, in Burns, *The Shamrock & The Shield*, p. 192; Denis Delaney, in *The Ghosts of Griffintown*.

¹⁰⁸ Sybil Brown Morse, in Burns, *The Shamrock & The Shield*, pp. 63-5.

¹⁰⁹ Ruth Davie, in *The Ghosts of Griffintown*.

course that was a big *spectacle* for us. We'd sit on the doorstep on a Friday night and wait for the fight. That was our entertainment."¹¹⁰

Rita's brother, Don Pidgeon, also discusses violence and the drink in Griffintown, in the form of domestic violence. But he is more interested in dismissing the suggestion that domestic violence was a problem in the Griff. In so doing, he subverts gender norms and the dynamics of domestic violence, once again calling upon the stereotype of Bridie, the immense, drunken, violent stereotypical Irishwoman. Clearly, in invoking Bridie, a stereotype invented by the British and further developed by nativists in the United States in the mid-nineteenth century,¹¹¹ Pidgeon is also invoking the stage Irish, inverting and subverting anti-Irish stereotypes for his own purposes, and injecting some humour into the process.

There were some people in Griffintown who had a different lifestyle, of course. On Friday night, some of them would get drunk and roll home. Certain women could beat the hell out of these men. I remember one woman, who went down to beat her drunken husband with a baseball bat and when her brother jumped into to try to stop her, she would beat him too.¹¹²

First, Pidgeon attempts to downplay tavern culture in Griffintown, suggesting that it was only "some people" who engaged in "a different lifestyle," and that they only engaged in these activities on a Friday night (something seconded by Rita Pidgeon), as if to suggest that this was far from normal. This belies the tavern culture of the neighbourhood and the geography of alcohol in Griffintown. At any rate, Don Pidgeon's invocation of Bridie and the subversion of gender norms is also in keeping with a trope of Irish culture: the

¹¹⁰ Rita Pidgeon, in *The Ghosts of Griffintown*.

¹¹¹ See, Dale T. Knobel, *Paddy and the Republic: Ethnicity and Nationality in Antebellum America* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1986).

¹¹² Don Pidgeon, in *The Shamrock & The Shield*, p. 200.

domineering woman. Delaney also plays on this in suggesting that whilst women were subdued in those days, it was they who ran the show in Griffintown, a microcosm of Irish society.¹¹³ Delaney also invokes “the fury,” a caricaturised image of the (petite) Irish woman as drunk and violent, that grew out of the banshee tradition in Irish culture. The fury, of course, was the exact physical opposite of Bridie, who was immense.¹¹⁴

Pidgeon continues with the theme of domestic violence in his remembrances, raising the more traditional type of male on female domestic violence just long enough to dismiss it, to suggest that it did not happen in the Griff. Indeed, in subverting the gendered norms of domestic violence, the idea is to erase the subject from the Griffintown landscape as much as possible. Right after telling the tale of the woman with the baseball bat, and immediately before that of the immense drunken Irishwoman at Frank’s Grocery, Pidgeon discusses domestic violence:

Did men beat their wives in Griffintown? I would presume that it went on as it does in all societies, but it was a different way of living then. The families all lived in the community and I think a lot of the men would hold back on their wives because her brothers could come over and beat him too. So I think that puts a certain restraint on things. Remember, too, the strength of the priests who used to walk around the community. I remember Father Kearney (who was the heart and soul of Griffintown) walking around with his cane. They went into homes and had tea with many families. Their involvement with the lives of the people probably stopped a lot of aggressive behaviour.¹¹⁵

Here, Pidgeon draws upon nostalgia, a common theme throughout the Griffintown Commemorative Project, recalling a golden age when domestic violence did not happen, as if it is only a problem of today’s corrupted, post-modern society. He also seeks to

¹¹³ Denis Delaney, in Burns, *The Shamrock & The Shield*, p. 191.

¹¹⁴ See, Louise Ryan, “‘Furies’ and ‘Die-hards’: Women and Irish Republicanism in the Early Twentieth Century,” *Gender & History*, 11/2 (1999): 256-75.

¹¹⁵ Don Pidgeon, in Burns, *The Shamrock & The Shield*, p. 200.

downplay the issue within the Griffintown community, suggesting that if domestic violence did indeed occur there, it was no different than anywhere else, while at the same time claiming that he has no knowledge of it having occurred in Griffintown. Pidgeon also invokes the name of community to emphasise his point that domestic violence was not common in Griffintown, if it ever happened at all (other than the woman with the baseball bat beating her husband and brother). The presence of the wives' brothers would be a deterrent for a man about to beat his wife (or his kids).

It is a truism of domestic violence that family and neighbours are not likely to get involved, no matter how close-knit or disparate a family or a community is, as people assume that what goes on in the household is a private, domestic matter. Domestic violence, then, invokes the old dichotomy between the public and the private, and the assumption that what goes on in the privacy of the family home is sacrosanct and out of the public eye. Domestic violence only becomes an issue when it is practised in public, or when that public/private dichotomy is broken down, if even then.¹¹⁶

Pidgeon invokes the Catholic Church in order to justify his assertion that domestic violence was not prevalent in Griffintown. The priests of St. Ann's Parish were involved in the daily lives of their parishioners, which doubtlessly did a world of good for the Irish-Catholics of Griffintown. However, the Church's record on domestic violence and divorce does not exactly inspire confidence. The Church does not condone divorce or the breaking up of the family home for any cause. Indeed, Church policy throughout the twentieth century was to counsel the couple to work out their problems, which, in many

¹¹⁶ See, Nancy Janoviček, "Finding a Place: The Politics of Feminist Organizing Against Spousal Assault in Ottawa and Lanark County, 1979-1982," (MA thesis, Carleton University, 1997), pp. 1-26; Nancy Janoviček, "No Place to Go: Women's Activism, Family Violence, and the Mixed Social Economy of Northwestern Ontario and the Kootenays, BC, 1965-1989," (PhD dissertation, Simon Fraser University, 2002), esp. ch. 1.

cases, is not possible when domestic violence is the issue causing them.¹¹⁷ A woman leaving her husband and divorcing him, in addition to encountering increased economic and social instability, would also lose the right to receive the sacraments of the Catholic Church. In other words, whilst the individual priests may indeed have made a difference and may have been able to provide aid and comfort to their parishioners, the Catholic Church was not all that useful for a woman feeling the brunt of her husband's anger after a bender.

That being said, the Catholic Church is a strong presence in the remembrances of Griffintown. Almost to a person, the recollections of the informants in the Griffintown Commemorative Project recall the strong presence of the Catholic Church in their lives, and its role in the neighbourhood. The Catholic Church and the priests of St. Ann's Parish, to say nothing of the Christian Brothers and the *Congrégation de Notre-Dame* nuns who educated the children of Griffintown, played a prominent role, acting as a sort of social service agency in the era before the growth of the welfare state in Canada. Also, in this era of the confessional-based education system in Québec, the church was responsible for education. In other words, the Catholic Church was omnipresent. And it was welcome, at least according to the recollections of those involved in the Griffintown Commemorative Project. The Irish-Catholics, especially, look back on the church with fondness.¹¹⁸ The only exception to this view of the Church comes from Cliff Sowery, who was neither Irish nor Catholic. Sowery had issues with the Christian Brothers at the St. Ann's School for Boys, though he does contradict himself:

¹¹⁷ See, Janoviček, "No Place to Go," esp. ch. 1.

¹¹⁸ See, for example, Charles Blickstead, Don Pidgeon, Tom Rowe, Rev. Fr. Tom McEntee, in Burns, *The Shamrock & The Shield*; Charles Blickstead, Don Pidgeon, Ruth Davie, Betty Bryant, Sr. Emily Monaghan, Dennis Daugherty, in *The Ghosts of Griffintown*.

The priests at St. Ann's were friendly enough but the Brothers were the hard ones. They'd ask the kids, "Who was at the Griffintown Club last night?" And if a kid put up his hand he was sent home and he had to come back with his parents. The Brothers didn't want the kids to go to the club. I don't know what they thought would happen. When the Sodality¹¹⁹ was having a reunion they borrowed all the cups and saucers and cutlery from the club[,] and the chairs too. But other times, they didn't want anything to do with us. But when they needed anything – even when St. Ann's wanted to play basketball, they used to borrow our basketball to play. We tried to co-operate with them. We'd run field days and everything else down there. There was no antagonism at all.¹²⁰

This apparent conflict with the Christian Brothers is interesting, in that Sowery is the only one to really mention conflict with the Church, other than Fr. Tom McEntee, who notes that his sister, a kindergarten teacher, had a bit of a conflict with Fr. O'Hara of St. Ann's Church when she sent her students to the Boys' and Girls' Club, which had initially been a Protestant club, based in the Nazareth Street Mission.¹²¹ It is not surprising that only Sowery and Fr. McEntee would relate stories of conflict with the Church in Griffintown. The majority of the informants in the Griffintown Commemorative Project, with the exception of Blickstead, were children during the period recalled. Sowery was the Director of the Boys' and Girls' Club, and Fr. McEntee was, obviously, a priest, whose sister was a teacher.

It is perhaps a continued Catholicism in the Griffintown diaspora surveyed in the commemorative project, combined with the active participation of the AOH, an ultra-Catholic organisation, that accounts for these fond recollections of the Catholic Church in the neighbourhood. Indeed, many of the old-timers from Griffintown can be found at St. Gabriel's Church in Pointe-Saint-Charles for Sunday morning mass today. Nostalgia and

¹¹⁹ The Sodality was a parochial organisation, it was not affiliated with the Christian Brothers, who operated the school only. The Redemptorists were the order in charge of St. Ann's Parish.

¹²⁰ Cliff Sowery, in Burns, *The Shamrock & The Shield*, p. 44.

¹²¹ Fr. Tom McEntee, in Burns, *The Shamrock & The Shield*, p. 170.

a yearning for the way that things were also play a part. This can be seen in Don Pidgeon's declaration that there was "a different way of living back then."¹²² Frank Hanley also recalls the Catholic Church in Griffintown with fondness in discussing his time at the St. Ann's School for Boys, despite being "invited" to leave school at a young age by the Brothers: "You'd better be in church for communion every Sunday too. I think that's what's missing in the school programme today. I think we would have a better society if we were living as we lived then."¹²³

Clearly, then, this nostalgia for the way things were vis-à-vis the Catholic Church can be seen in conjunction with the general nostalgia that pervades in the Griffintown Commemorative Project. But this Catholic identity that emerges out of the Griffintown Commemorative Project is also tied up with notions of Irishness, and is used by the Irish of Montréal to set themselves apart from the larger old-stock Anglo-Protestant community. But more importantly, the identification of Griffintown with the Catholic Church underlines the essential Irishness of the neighbourhood. For better or worse, Irishness has been equated with Catholicism both in Ireland, at least historically, and the diaspora; Irish-Protestants have been effectively removed from the equation outside of Northern Ireland.

VI. Conclusion

In this chapter, we have seen the intersection between history and memory vis-à-vis Irish-Catholic Griffintown in the early twenty-first century. The former residents of the neighbourhood, the last generation to grow up there, have turned Griffintown into a

¹²² Don Pidgeon, in Burns, *The Shamrock & The Shield*, p. 200.

¹²³ "Banjo" Francis Haney, in Burns, *The Shamrock & The Shield*, p. 86.

lieu de mémoire through the Griffintown Commemorative Project. This was part of the wider re-Irishification of Montréal that occurred over the course of the late 1990s and the first decade of the twenty-first century as a result of issues within the Irish diaspora combined with the emergence of Montréal from a long, tense period with the threat of separatism and constitutional unrest hanging over the city. With the passing of at least some of this threat, Montréal's Irish-Catholic population essentially rediscovered its ethnic identity. It had been assimilated into the larger Anglo-Montréal socio-political grouping over the course of the second half of the twentieth century in the face of that resurgent *québécois* nationalism and separatist movement that, according to the historian Marc Levine, allowed a re-conquest of Montréal, making French the *lingua franca* in the metropole.

Meanwhile, the Irish-Catholics of Montréal tapped into the Celtic Tiger economy of the Republic of Ireland, at least insofar as links between the Republic and its diaspora are concerned. This saw a reinvigoration of the Irish of the city, as they were once again encouraged to think of themselves as Irish, to tie their history to that of their ancestral nation. This reinvigoration of the Irish diaspora, combined with the local contingencies of Montréal, allowed the Irish-Catholics there to re-assert their identity within the city.

Within this context, the Griffintown diaspora was able to reinvigorate itself, beginning with Fr. McEntee's ghost watches, and to lay claim to the neighbourhood as their own. Their subsequent re-creation of Griffintown as a *lieu-de-mémoire* allowed the neighbourhood to be re-cast as *the* Irish neighbourhood of historical memory in Montréal. All other ethno-religious groups in the Griff were removed from, or moved to the

background, of the neighbourhood's landscape in the stories told about Griffintown. And other Irish-Catholic neighbourhoods in Montréal were effectively forgotten.

The re-casting of Griffintown as an Irish-Catholic neighbourhood, despite the historical presence of other groups in the neighbourhood, has allowed the Irish-Catholics of Montréal, and not just former Griffintowners, to lay claim to a segment of the city's cultural landscape. In short, Griffintown has emerged as an ethnic neighbourhood, serving as a physical home for the memories and cultural identity of the Irish in a way not unlike how Little Italy works for Italians or the Mile End and Parc Extension for Greeks in the city.

Postscript

Ultimately, the Griffintown Commemorative Project was successful in re-creating Griffintown as an Irish neighbourhood on the Montréal landscape. As a *lieu de mémoire*, Griffintown has emerged as *the* site of Irish immigration into Montréal and, indeed, as the first working-class neighbourhood in Canada, if not the Americas.¹ A singular historical narrative of the Griff's past has emerged out of the Griffintown Commemorative Project, as can be seen in two widely disparate events held in the summer of 2008.

In August, Devimco, the private company proposing to redevelop the old Irish core of Griffintown,² held an “envisioning session” in Vieux-Montréal, a few blocks east of the Griff. Participants included various stakeholders in the hotel, restaurant, entertainment, housing, and retail industries, as well as a branding expert from California, and myself, an historian. The session was put together at the behest of Eric Kuhne, principal partner of Civic Arts, a London, UK-based firm of planners and architects.³ Whilst Kuhne got his start developing shopping malls in the United Kingdom in the 1980s, his more recent projects are centred around waterfront developments in major cities, including Sydney, Auckland, Belfast, London, and Dubai. These waterfront developments, however, still focus on the retail experience of visitors.⁴ Kuhne was hired

¹ Isabelle Paré, “L’âme du Griffintown,” *Le Devoir*, 8 July 2008.

² For details of the announcement of Devimco’s plans in November 2007, see: “Griffintown project is developed through consultation: The City of Montreal given the green light to develop a *programme particulier d’urbanisme* (PPU),” *The Gazette*, 22 November 2007; Andy Riga, “Griffintown Reborn? \$1.3 billion blueprint; proposed project would preserve face of district, developer says,” *The Gazette*, 23 November 2007.

³ Kuhne himself, however, is American. Civic Arts’ website can be found at: <http://www.civicsarts.com> (accessed 10 January 2009).

⁴ Kuhne specialises in making retail developments more “user-friendly,” and has been quite successful in his previous projects in creating “destination retail experiences.” More recently, Kuhne has undergone a “green shift” and has developed an interest in creating “LEED”-certified projects. “LEED” is an acronym for “Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design,” and is a third-party administered

by Devimco earlier in 2008 to help it deal with the massive backlash against its proposed Griffintown project and to make it more palatable to Montrealers.⁵ This backlash was led by the Comité pour le sain redéveloppement du Griffintown, a group of Griffintown residents whose homes were threatened by the company's plans.⁶ The opposition, however, has been widespread and sustained by Montrealers as a whole, sceptical as they are of proposed redevelopments undertaken with a modicum of public consultation,⁷ as has been the case in Griffintown.⁸

One of the major goals of the envisioning session, entitled "Griffintown Retooled," was to come up with a story for Griffintown, a marketable narrative for a re-

programme that encourages sustainable building developments. Initially developed in the United States in 1998, the programme has since expanded to over 30 countries, including the United Kingdom and Canada. Kuhne's influence on Devimco in this respect is obvious: the Griffintown redevelopment is now proposed to be LEED-certified. For details on the Canadian LEED programme, see the Canada Green Building Council's website at: <http://www.cagbc.org> (accessed 10 January 2009).

⁵ Éric Clément, "Griffintown: Nouveau partenaires et un architecte de renom," *La Presse*, 29 August 2008.

⁶ The Comité pour le sain redéveloppement du Griffintown's website can be found at: <http://csrgriffintown.wordpress.com> (accessed 10 January 2009).

⁷ In the 1960s, Montrealers in the Milton-Parc neighbourhood straddling the McGill Ghetto and the Plateau Mont-Royal successfully fought off most of a proposed redevelopment of that neighbourhood which would have seen its total devastation for the construction of Cité Concordia, a series of concrete apartment towers. In the end, a wide swath of Victorian homes around the corner of Milton and av. du Parc were demolished and a smaller version of the Cité Concordia, known as La Cité, was constructed. Ironically, the drama surrounding Milton-Parc emerged around the same time as Griffintown was being wiped off the map of Montréal in the late 1960s/early 1970s. More recently, the residents of Pointe-Saint-Charles successfully fought off an attempt by the Casino de Montréal and Cirque du Soleil to construct a massive new casino at the Peel Basin of the Lachine Canal in the Pointe. Indeed, mindful of the Casino's failure in the Pointe, Montréal Mayor Gérald Tremblay called on Montrealers to be open-minded when Devimco announced its plans for Griffintown, arguing that the city needed such redevelopments. For details on the Milton-Parc developments, see, Jean-Claude Marsan, *Montreal in Evolution* (Montréal: McGill-Queens University Press, 1990 (1974)), pp. 386-7. For the Casino de Montréal project, see, amongst others, Debbie Parkes, "Casino non grata in Point, groups say," *The Gazette*, 28 October 2005; William Marsden, "Casino opposition grows," *The Gazette*, 5 December 2005; Riga, "Griffintown reborn?"

⁸ James Mennie, "Thumbs-down on Griffintown plan; Heritage council says no. City, not developer should set guidelines for revitalizing district, advisers say," *The Gazette*, 10 January 2008; Jason Magder, "Griffintown consultations open to everyone, borough promises; Residents still wary about planning process," *The Gazette*, 6 February 2008; Max Harrold, "Griffintown plan gets the once-over; At public hearing, developer provides few answers about \$1.3B mixed residential-commercial development," *The Gazette*, 22 February 2008; Henri Aubin, "Tremblay administration is doing an end run on Griffintown; Instead of in-depth hearings, the city is letting the borough conduct them," *The Gazette*, 22 March 2008; Alan Hustak, "Phyllis Lambert makes last-minute plea to stop Griffintown project," *The Gazette*, 16 April 2008.

born and re-tooled Griff. Kuhne's central marketing technique hinges on the use of storytelling to create a compelling sense of place. Participants were thus asked to consider stories of and from Griffintown, past and present (indeed, this is why an historian was necessary). Participants were then asked how the Devimco project would "stay in touch with [Griffintown's] roots? [How will it p]reserve connections to the past and retain a cultural identity for the citizens of tomorrow?"⁹ Thus, the briefing notes for the session were full of vignettes of the history of Griffintown, of the city of Montréal as a whole, as well as suggestions for brainstorming sessions devoted to creating a narrative for the redevelopment. This narrative would then be used to both market the project to Montrealers, the intended audience and consumer group, to overcome the backlash and, ultimately, to sell retailers and consumers on the new shopping malls and condominiums in Griffintown.

Central to Kuhne's message here was an attempt to forge a new community in the Griff:

Griffintown represents the next generation in Montreal's long history of bold waterfront stewardship. What makes it unique is that it restores the public's access to the waterfront, *making it home for a real community, instead of simply an industrial workforce.*¹⁰

Kuhne's comments are made all the more interesting in light of seemingly contradictory ones he makes in the briefing notes about the old Irish-Catholic community of the neighbourhood. There he cites and praises the solidarity of this community.¹¹

⁹ *Griffintown Retooled: Envisioning Session Brief* (Montréal: Agence Bleu Blanc Rouge, 2008), p. 15.

¹⁰ *Griffintown Retooled*, p. 7, italics mine.

¹¹ "Griffintown Retooled," p. 15.

There are two competing impulses at work here. On the one hand, Kuhne's commentary calls on the slum discourse that we have seen attached to Griffintown throughout its history. Despite a feeling of community solidarity within the Griff on the part of the Irish-Catholics there, it was not a "real community"; the working classes dwelling in the slums are incapable of experiencing community, hence his patronising comments about "simply an industrial workforce." Yet, more importantly, on the other hand, Griffintown is acknowledged as having been Irish. Throughout the entire two days of the session, whenever Griffintown's history came up, which was frequently given that Kuhne was attempting to market this history, the Irish connection was made. Indeed, one of the suggestions for preserving Parc St. Ann/Griffintown involved relocating the Black Stone near Victoria Bridge to the park to juxtapose it with the ruins of St. Ann's Church there. And the session's participants, all but two of whom were Montrealers, readily acknowledged Griffintown's Irishness.

Kuhne's retooled Griffintown was to be marketed as having once been an Irish working class neighbourhood. He reported having spent a good deal of time in the lead up to the session collecting stories about Irish-Catholic Griffintown, especially the more sordid ones, such as that of Mary Gallagher. These stories were then to be used for marketing purposes, calling on the colourful history of the neighbourhood, especially when it comes to selling consumers on the proposed entertainment district of the neighbourhood.

One month after the "Griffintown Retooled" session, a very different sort of event took place. A group of communications students from Concordia University, in conjunction with Concordia University Television, hosted a weekend-long festival

celebrating Griffintown's history and future on the site of the New City Gas Works building on Ottawa Street, entitled "Remember Griffintown." The New City Gas Works building, it should be noted, marks the extreme northeast of the proposed Devimco redevelopment of Griffintown.

Paul Aflalo, one of the events co-ordinators, has had an interest in Griffintown for his entire life, but what spurred him into action was the proposed Devimco development.¹² And while Liz Bono, the other co-ordinator of the event, made pains to point out that "Remember Griffintown" was to be non-political,¹³ this was impossible. This entire event was political; indeed, it could be no other way. Several of the people who helped Aflalo and Bono organise the event are deeply involved in the protests against Devimco, including Judith Bauer, one of the organisers of the Comité pour le sain redéveloppement du Griffintown, and urban planner Steven Peck. Indeed, much of the interest in "Remember Griffintown" on the part of the public, and Aflalo estimates that upwards of 600 people attended over the course of the weekend,¹⁴ was centred around Devimco's plans and the opposition thereto.

"Remember Griffintown" turned out to be a weekend-long celebration of the Griff's past, present, and future. It featured talks, presentations, and displays by artists, historians, and planners familiar with the neighbourhood, as well as live music by a coterie of Irish and independent musicians from around Montréal. And while there was

¹² "Concordia Students Remember Griffintown," Student Life Section, Concordia University website, <http://www.concordia.ca/about/whoweare/tellingourstories/studentlife/griffintown.php> (accessed 10 January 2009).

¹³ Peggy Curran, "Let the nostalgia begin...; Griffintown's \$1.3-billion redevelopment plan was set last spring amid bitter dispute. Now, two film students too young to remember the neighbourhood in its glory years aim to celebrate the crumbling pieces of Montreal history," *The Gazette*, 24 August 2008.

¹⁴ Karen Herland, "Communicating Griffintown's history with stage, screen, and sound," *Concordia Journal*, 25 September 2008.

much debate about the present and future of Griffintown, this was not the case with the past.

At “Remember Griffintown,” participants and attendees were only interested in one version of the neighbourhood’s history: its Irish one. Denis Delaney, a former Griffintowner and a central player in the Griffintown Commemorative Project, gave tours of the neighbourhood, as did I. Delaney’s tours attracted large crowds in the neighbourhood of 40-50 people for each of the two times he went out from the Gas Works building. For my part, I gave five tours of Griffintown over the course of the weekend, to over 175 people. Delaney gave tours of his Griffintown, where he grew up and all the places where the stories he tells took place. He told his crowds about Mary Gallagher and her ghost, the crashing of the Royal Air Force Liberator bomber in 1944, stealing coal from Tougas & Tougas, and he talked about life in St. Ann’s Parish. His tours were meant to be about Irish-Catholic Griffintown.

On the other hand, I had planned to give two versions of the Griffintown tour, designed to complement Delaney’s. The first was to be a tour of the Devimco site and of the Cité du Multimédia, offering an example of a successful redevelopment of an abandoned waterfront district. The other tour was meant to be a cultural history of Griffintown, including the non-Irish-Catholic communities. I gave the audiences on my tours the option of which tour they would like to take; only once, the first tour, did they opt for the Cité du Multimédia. The other four times, it also became immediately clear that the participants were not interested in the non-Irish-Catholic history of Griffintown. Thus, the tours became exclusively focussed on Irish-Catholic Griffintown. This was all the more surprising to me as the audiences were remarkably multicultural and multi-

lingual. Yet, they were not interested in the French Canadian, Anglo-Protestant, Jewish, Italian, South Asian, or Ukrainian communities which called the Griff home, other than in passing. Rather, the audiences wanted to know about Irish-Catholic Griffintown, St. Ann's Parish, the multitude of drinking establishments, and what life was like in the Griff. Some audience members compared these stories to their own experiences growing up in working-class quarters in the north and east ends of Montréal, finding remarkable similarities.

In short, it became clear throughout both events, "Griffintown Retooled" and "Remember Griffintown," that the Griffintown Commemorative Project had been successful, to a point. Griffintown has been recast on the cultural landscape of Montréal as Irish and Catholic.¹⁵ Nevertheless, the one voice missing from the public discussion around the now-postponed¹⁶ redevelopment of Griffintown is that of the Irish.

Early on in the process, Devimco did seek out the input of the Irish-Catholic community of Montréal, to be sure. In early 2008, representatives of the Irish-Catholic community met with Devimco and proposed that Parc St. Ann/Griffintown be preserved as a memorial to the defunct Irish-Catholic community of the neighbourhood.¹⁷ What exactly has become of this is unclear. At the envisioning session, the value of the park, and the ruins of St. Ann's Church in particular, as a site of commemoration of the old Irish community were clearly recognised by Kuhne. And yet, on the other hand, he spoke

¹⁵ See, for example, Frédérique Doyon, "Le patrimoine sauvé de Griffintown," *Le Devoir*, 23 January 2008; Gordon Sawyer, "Patrick Roy, héritier du longue tradition," *Le Devoir*, 29 March 2008; Paré, "L'âme du Griffintown."

¹⁶ Éric Clément, "La construction de Griffintown repoussée à 2010," *La Presse*, 11 November 2008.

¹⁷ "Griffintown project is developed through consultation"; Riga, "Griffintown reborn?"; Don Pidgeon, historian, UISM, email to author, 13 August 2008.

of building the sales office for the condominiums to be constructed around the park on this site.

The old Irish-Catholic community of Griffintown, or at least members of it, were successful throughout the 1990s and early twenty-first century in recreating Griffintown as a *lieu de mémoire*, creating it as a virtual memorial to a defunct community. It was a virtual memorial because the physical built landscape of the Griff has been destroyed. Griffintown no longer resembles either the neighbourhood these people grew up in, or the neighbourhood their ancestors toiled away in. Indeed, this is what fuelled the Irish community's attempt to have Devimco memorialise their old community in a refurbished Parc St. Ann/Griffintown at the centre of the proposed redevelopment.

Yet, despite the lack of a physical marker of the old Irish community of Griffintown anywhere in the neighbourhood, on a more ephemeral level, it perhaps does not matter, as Griffintown is regarded as *the* Irish neighbourhood of Montréal. The imagined Griffintown of early twenty-first century Montréal is one that was not just Irish, but full of soul: spunky, and irrepressible, despite the misery of life there. Griffintown has even been recast as the “Ground Zero” of Montréal in an article in *Le Devoir*. Bernard Vallée, of the Collectif d'animation urbaine l'autre Montréal, argues that “À ceux qui n'y voient qu'un gros furoncle urbain, le «Grif» cache des merveilles, affirme ce passionné. Derrière ses allures de malade en phase terminale, les ruelles oubliées de Griffintown recèlent encore des trésors et des histoires inouïes.” And yet, *Le Devoir* is also clear that the Griff was Irish, the soul of the neighbourhood found in the Irish quarter near where the church once stood.¹⁸

¹⁸ Paré, “L'âme du Griffintown.”

And with that, Irish identity in the Griff has come full circle over the past century-and-a-half. In 1914, the organisers of the St. Patrick's Day parade called Griffintown "The House of the Irish."¹⁹ Griffintown was the recognised centre from which all things Irish in Montréal sprang. The organisers of the 1914 parade also noted that old Griffintown was dying, as the neighbourhood was undergoing depopulation and an increased commercialisation and industrialisation. Indeed, they pointed to what this dissertation has traced, the arc of Irishness in Montréal, as seen through the lens of Griffintown since the mid-nineteenth century, following the massive influx of Famine refugees in the 1840s.

Over the course of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, we have seen how this Irishness in Griffintown became diasporic in nature, as it was tied to a localised, Montréal-based identity as the immigrant generation died off. In the case of the Shamrock L.C., the working-class Irish-Catholics of Griffintown created and defended an Irishness, tied as it was to a postcolonial sport such as lacrosse. Moreover, the players and fans of the Shamrock L.C. were contributing to a new sense of Canadianess on the playing field and in the stands, given the connection between lacrosse and the new-born Canadian nation in the 1860s, 70s, and 80s.

The ambivalence caused by these identities as diasporic Irish and Canadians came to the fore in the World War I era. The Irish-Catholics of Griffintown, and Montréal as a whole, were in danger of being caught between Ireland and Canada. That they were not speaks to both their skilful manoeuvring of their identities, combined with the politics of John Redmond and the Home Rulers in Ireland. However, unlike the brand of Irishness

¹⁹ Irish-Catholic Committee, Annual Meeting Minutes, 12 February 1914, SPBMA, Irish-Catholic Committee Meeting Minutes Book.

tied to the Shamrocks, in the World War I era, Griffintown Irishness was also in step with political currents in Ireland and throughout the diaspora in relation to Home Rule and a form of independence for Ireland. Griffintown's Irish-Catholics were, by the First World War, fully diasporic in nature, connected to an Ireland that was largely an imagined one; Canada was their home.

And at the same time, Griffintown was dying. The Irish-Catholics who remained in the Griff remained proudly Irish-Canadian, but their numbers were dwindling, for a variety of reasons. As the twentieth century progressed, these reasons included the upward mobility of the Irish-Catholic population of the neighbourhood, the infrastructural onslaught, as well as the pressing linguistic and constitutional tensions in Montréal. As Griffintown disappeared from the Montréal landscape in the late twentieth century, so, too, did Irish identity in the city. It is fitting, then, that the Irish revival in Montréal in the 1990s and early 2000s was predicated on a symbolic revival of Griffintown. The Griff had been the first of Montréal's Irish neighbourhoods and today, even if only symbolically, it remains the last.

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