

Traveling Through Time

A historic exploration of Old Montréal

An invitation from



Hello!

May I present myself, Jacques of Noyon, a traveler from my state, right out of the 18th century! While earlier I traversed the forests and rivers, now I travel through time! Care to join me?

I've dropped into Montréal for just a few errands. Won't you tag along? You'll discover the city from my era, what we still occasionally call Ville-Marie, but you probably know it as "Old Montreal". I'll show you the buildings frequented by my generation, and share a bit about what they're used for. As it is, if you'd accidentally stumbled on one of these historic sites of New France, you'll learn what it was there for!

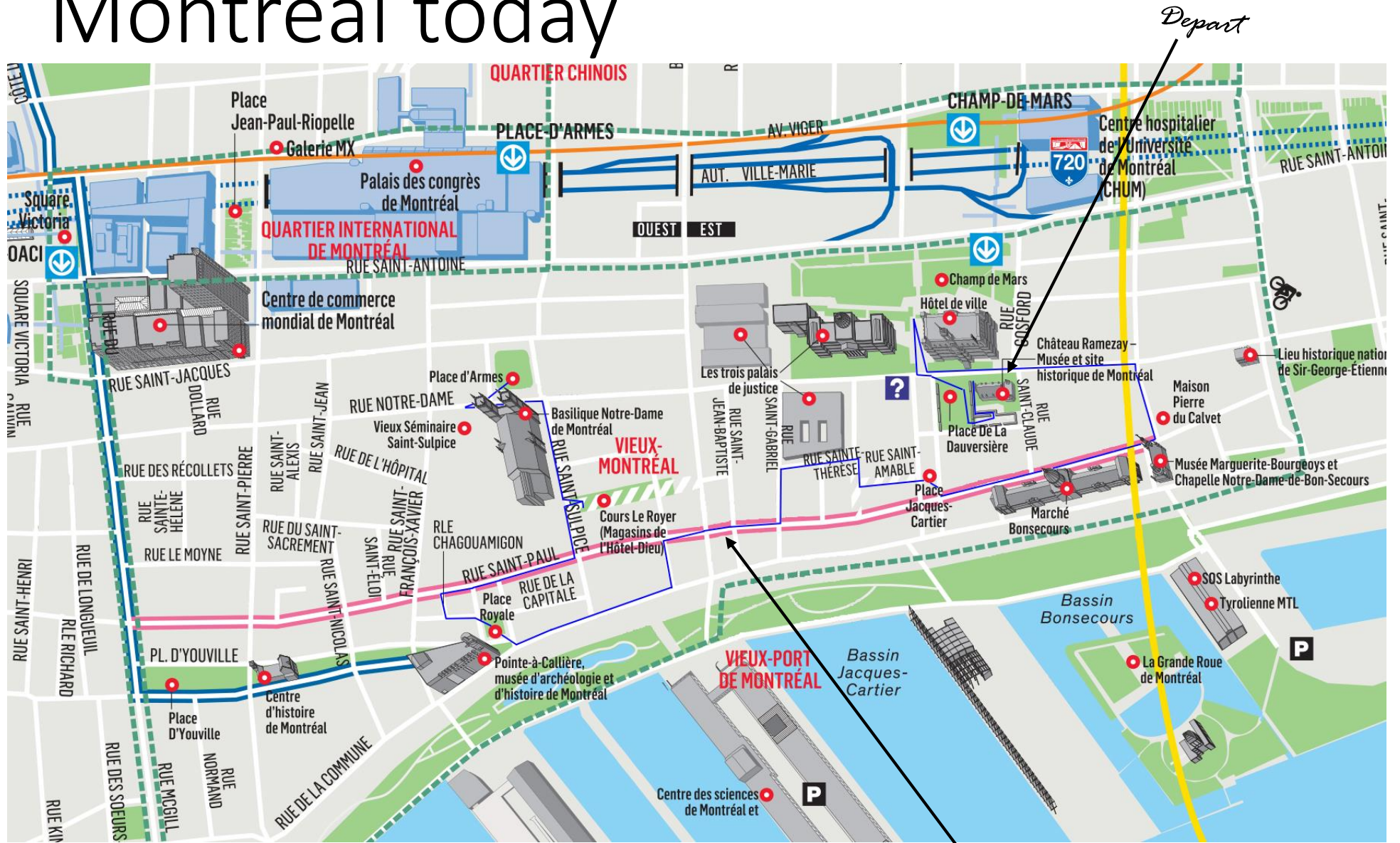
I suggest we start at the Château of Governor Claude de Ramezay. It's easy enough to find, high up on Notre Dame Street, number 280, facing the historic City Hall. Then we can wind down Saint-Paul Street just to the port and market, then hike back up by the Notre-Dame cathedral.

Me, I know this city like the back of my hand (no matter the year, I might add!). But you might be more at ease with a map, I imagine?

Well, I'll present you with two! One of the Montréal you see today, and one as it existed in my era, so you truly understand what I'm talking about. Each one has markings on the places where we will stop.



Montréal today



Detail of map *Montréal - Bonjour 2017*, Montréal à la carte ©2017, City of Montréal
Modified by Château Ramezay – Montréal Museum and historic site

Follow the blue line

1

Château Ramezay

280, Notre-Dame Street East

What a beautiful home! And it's not just me who thinks so: the governor himself had planned to build the most beautiful building in all of Canada!

Here we find ourselves at the heart of Montréal's history as well as that of New France. It's a first-rate spot to begin our voyage! These stones bore witness to many an event that shaped our history. The plaque to the left of the door should convince you: numerous dignitaries and institutions have resided within these four walls.

We qualify this as a Château simply because it housed a representative of the King. The building itself has certainly changed, you must know. When it was built it had one more storey, plaster cladding, a four-slope roof, and no tower (that last one was a 20th century addition).

The governor and his wife weren't nobodies, of course. Members of the elite milieu, this group often came from noble origins, and occupied important positions. One look and you could distinguish them from the common city-dwellers! Their habits followed the French fashion, while they also had at their service employees and slaves, not to mention imposing homes! Well, that explains this grandiose stone house sitting atop the waterfront, with a view of the whole city and the river. It goes without saying that many would spend more than their entire salary to keep up with what was in fashion!

The Ramezays' pursuit of luxury pushed them so far as to create gardens mirroring those found in Versailles! *Gardens à la française*.

I see that nowadays they've put in a pathway along the side of the Château to take us there. In my days, this was more of a farmyard, but let's make the most of this new addition and take a look!



Château Ramezay in 1705, just after its construction. Looking at the Château of today, try to spot the differences!

© Château Ramezay – Montréal Museum and historic site.

Illustration: Francois Ville-Marie

The farmyard: Walk down through here to reach the garden..

2

Governor's Garden

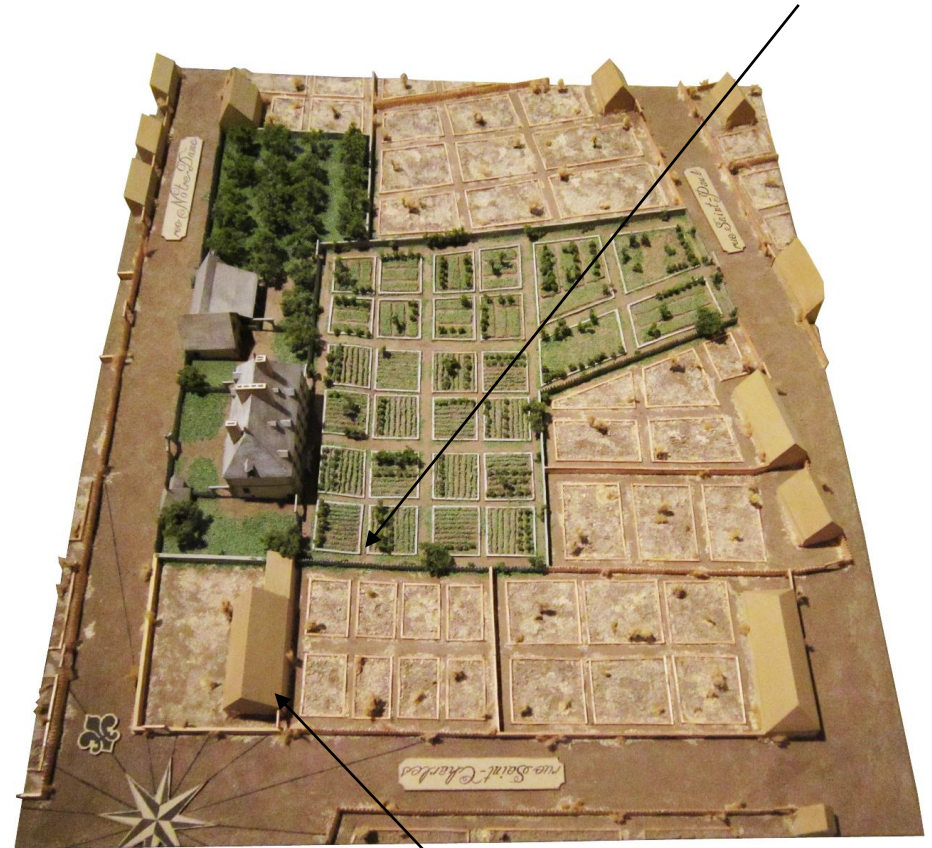
Behind the Château Ramezay

Imagine a garden three times the size of that which sits in front of you.

The ornamental and vegetable gardens once stretched to where those red brick buildings line, all the way down to Saint-Paul Street. The orchard ran further along Notre-Dame Street to the East.

You can see the full extent of this in this image and on my map... and note the pervasive presence of gardens all across the city! In the 18th century we found ourselves with more green spaces than houses with fortifications. But over the course of history, apartments and other buildings have replaced our gardens and orchards.

The most fortunate afford the luxury of having an “ornamental” garden, as we say. In New France, on the contrary, most gardens served to feed the city’s inhabitants. With the nobility, we find the same principles of symmetry in vegetable gardens as we would in ornamental ones, showing the victory of the mind, order, and reason over nature. Trust me, these rows of vegetables are well disciplined! Across the city’s gardens, we will always find numerous species imported from France. Everyone would have cabbage, onions, lettuces, and roots. The culture of aromatic plants, like chives, found here in abundance, and medicinal plants, allowed the locals to spice up their meals and treat common ailments. Stews, ragout, soups, salads, and fruits from the orchard: we eat well and widely in New France.



Exit via the garden door that stands here..

Model depicting the Château and its garden. Notre-Dame Street East is on the left and Saint-Paul Street is on the right. At the bottom, we find Saint-Charles Street which would become Place Jacques Cartier, and in between the Château’s property and rue Saint-Charles stands what is today called Place De La Dauversière.

© Château Ramezay – Montréal Museum and historic site.

We're going to drop in on the neighbour!

3

House of Nicolas Daneau-de-Muy

Today: Place de la Dauversière

In your time, the Château Ramezay looks a bit isolated. But at other times, it was surrounded by other properties that joined in imitating the style of French nobility.

Lost with the turning of time, they have reappeared amid more recent urban developments. The traces of my era are hidden, but they reveal themselves to those who pay attention. In any case, I'm here to give you a hand!

In the place of the grassy square of Place de la Dauversière, there once stood another building of prestige, that of the Marines officer Nicolas Daneau de Muy. The trees further down are exactly where his garden once lay.

It's said that a certain James McGill, the same McGill who founded the university under his name, had also lived on this land. Sadly lost to time, the building was demolished to grow the public market along Place Jacques Cartier!

Let me take you to another important neighbour, a beacon of 18th century Montréal that has already disappeared.

Go ahead and cross Notre-Dame street, towards City Hall, as we're moving towards what today is known as Place Vauquelin.

*The Château Ramezay
is back here.*



No image could be found of the House of Daneau de Muy, but instead you can see here what the home looked like when McGill lived there. It now sits at the corner, so had certainly expanded from the time of du Muy. Compare this photo to the model on the previous page.

Château de Bécancour, Matthews, around 1850.

© Château Ramezay – Montréal Museum and historic site, 1998.3837

*Here is where Place
Jacques Cartier sits
today.*

4

Jesuits Convent

Today: Place Vauquelin, City Hall, and the Lucien Saulnier building (old courthouse)

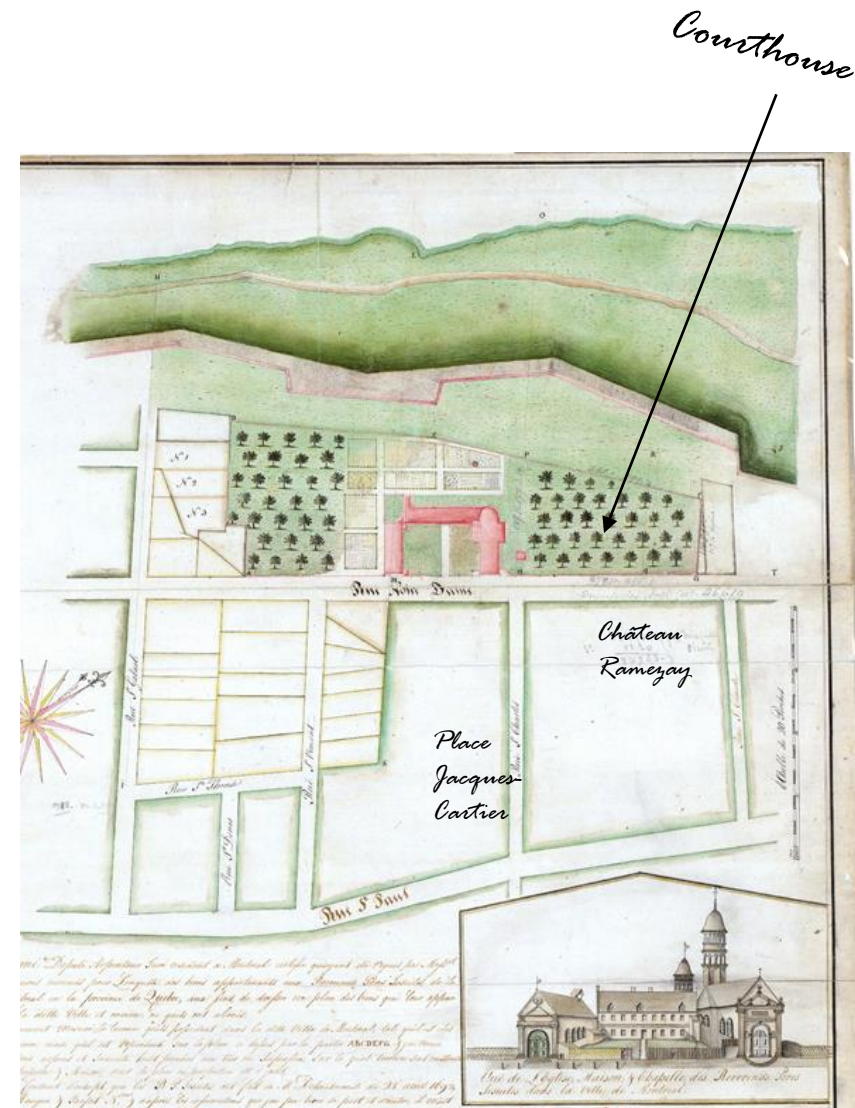
Here, facing the Château and the current Place Jacques Cartier, was once home to the College of Jesuits, a complex of buildings that housed the Society of Jesus.

This Catholic order was very powerful in Europe. The Jesuits advised royalty, practiced in reputable colleges, and sent missions across the world. In 1625 they set out for New France, setting up first in Québec City, then in Montréal.

In 1754, a fire that ravaged the neighbourhood also reached this residence. A few years later, the English who came to take Montréal banned them from recruiting new members. Eventually they abandoned their building, which became a prison, an Anglican church, and also a fire station before it was transformed to become the courthouse, which you now call the Lucien Saulnier building. Aside from the Jesuits, other religious congregations aided the community's functioning through education and care for the poor and sick. Ahh the life of the parish... these congregations presided over more than a quarter of the land within the city's walls at the end of the 17th century. In sum: they were everywhere!

It should be said that at the centre of the city's history we find a missionary project: that of the *Society of Ladies and Gentlemen of Notre-Dame of Montréal for the conversion of the Savages of New France*. This group was determined to build a fortified city for French settlers and convert the native population to Christianity. And who is found at the origin of this society: a Frenchman named Jérôme Le Royer de la Dauversière, who never once stepped foot in Canada!

Walk towards the north of the square. Here you can see the mountain, and also the remains of a landmark building from my era.



Place Vauquelin is exactly where the cross-shaped chapel is on this plan. And today's City Hall occupies the space of the orchard on the right.

Details of the [Plan of Jesuit Properties in the City of Montreal], by Louis Guy, Centre d'archives de Québec, E21,S555,SS2,P70 BANQ, 0003814155.

5

Fortifications

Today: Champs de Mars

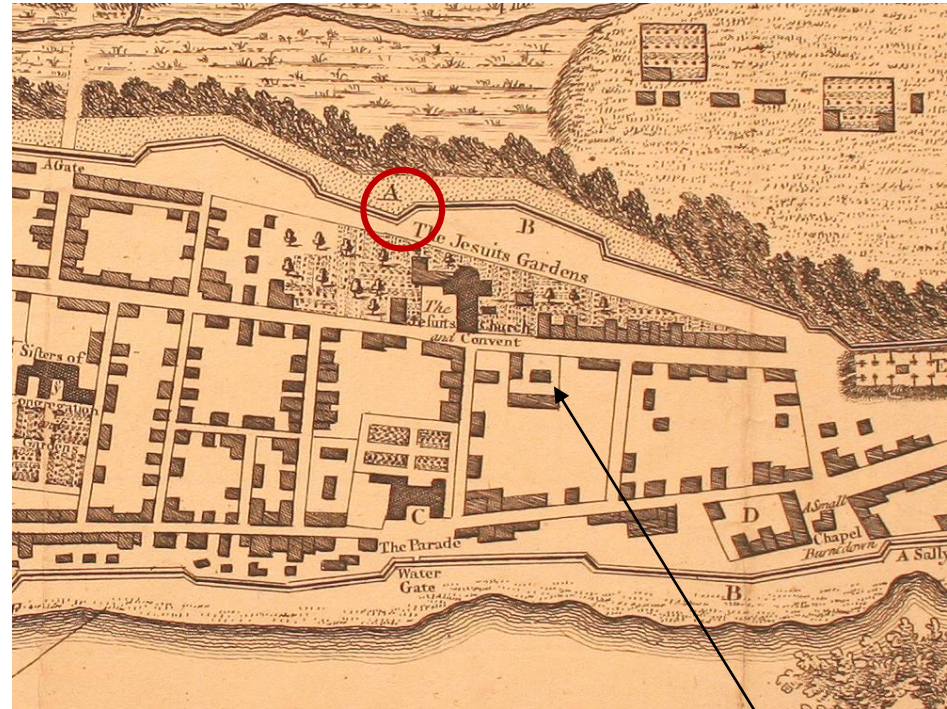
Move a little further down and you'll see a vast expanse of grassy field. We call this Champs de Mars: it's an area intended for military manoeuvres, built in the Jesuit bastion in the 1740s. Can you see the remains of the fortifications down in the ditch? I'm sure you'll struggle to imagine this, but you must believe me: this is where the city's walls once stood tall.

After Montréal was founded, the protection of the city quickly proved indispensable. Since the arrival of the first colonisers, the Iroquois, allies of our English enemies, made life very hard for those living in the city. At first, we were content with a wooden palisade. But eventually, this was replaced by a stone enclosure. From 1714 to 1744 a long construction period brought craftsman, tradesman, and laborers together, stimulating the economy and bringing prosperity to many locals.

The walls separated the town from both the river and the surrounding countryside, with access only through gates. Why, you might ask? During this period, Montréal was a strategic location for the conquest of Canada's interior. It became a garrison town where hundreds of soldiers gathered. We saw a lot of them, and for good reason: they would bunk with residents!

The soldiers, like the stone walls, couldn't stop Montréal from falling first at the hands of the English, then the Americans. In both cases, in 1760 as in 1775, the surrender was swift, without a battle. As you can imagine, the enemies and the artillery changed dramatically in 40 years. The fortifications were obsolete, and could not protect the population against an attack with state-of-the-art artillery! In any case, we wouldn't stay demolished for long. As early as 1801 work began again and the city emerged from its straightjacket of stone.

But for the moment, let's hop back on our route down Notre-Dame street, going east alongside City Hall, just until Bonsecours street.



Looking to the Champs de Mars, locate the Jesuit's bastion, circled in red on this map. It's clearly marked on the ground.

Detail of *Plan of the Town & Fortifications of Montreal, or Ville Marie in Canada*

1760

© Château Ramezay – Montréal Museum and historic site, 1996.3674.

The Château Ramezay is here!

7

Notre-Dame-de-Bon-Secours Chapel

400, Saint-Paul Street East

We are now at the foot of one of the oldest sanctuaries in Old-Montréal. Alongside the Notre Dame church, these are the primary places of worship in my day. And they even complement each other: while one was essentially a pilgrimage site, the other was more of the parishioners' church. But the bell towers... there were certainly others, you must know. If you were rich enough, you could have a place of worship all to yourself!

The origins of this chapel, that we've named Notre-Dame-de-Bon-Secours, go back to the 17th century. The pioneer Marguerite Bourgeoys erected a wood chapel here as a pilgrimage site. At the time, this building was beyond the city's palisade. With construction starting in the 1650s and ending in the 1670s, the small chapel would be destroyed by a fire a century later, in 1754. Oh yes, the same fire that set ablaze the Jesuits' complex! On this note, I have a little anecdote. In 1672 Mademoiselle Bourgeoys returned from a trip to France, bringing in her luggage a small wooden effigy of Notre-Dame-de-Bon-Secours. And you know what? The statue and its shrine survived the fire unscathed! You can still see the statuette in the left-hand side altar of the chapel. After the fire, we of course reconstructed the chapel from 1771-1773, and then redesigned it a century later! And that is the chapel you're looking at today.

Following the port's expansion in the 19th century, the chapel became a popular prayer site for seamen. Miniature ships hang from the chapel's vault, reminding us of our faith in Notre-Dame-de-Bon-Secours.



Notre-Dame-de-Bon-Secours chapel and its immediate surroundings, around 1710.

Jean-Marie Gaillot

Collection of Marguerite Bourgeoys Historical Site

Photo: Bernard Dubois.

8

Pierre-du-Calvet House

401, Saint-Paul Street East

Ah, look behind you at that house resting on the North-East corner. It's the home of the merchant Pierre du Calvet.

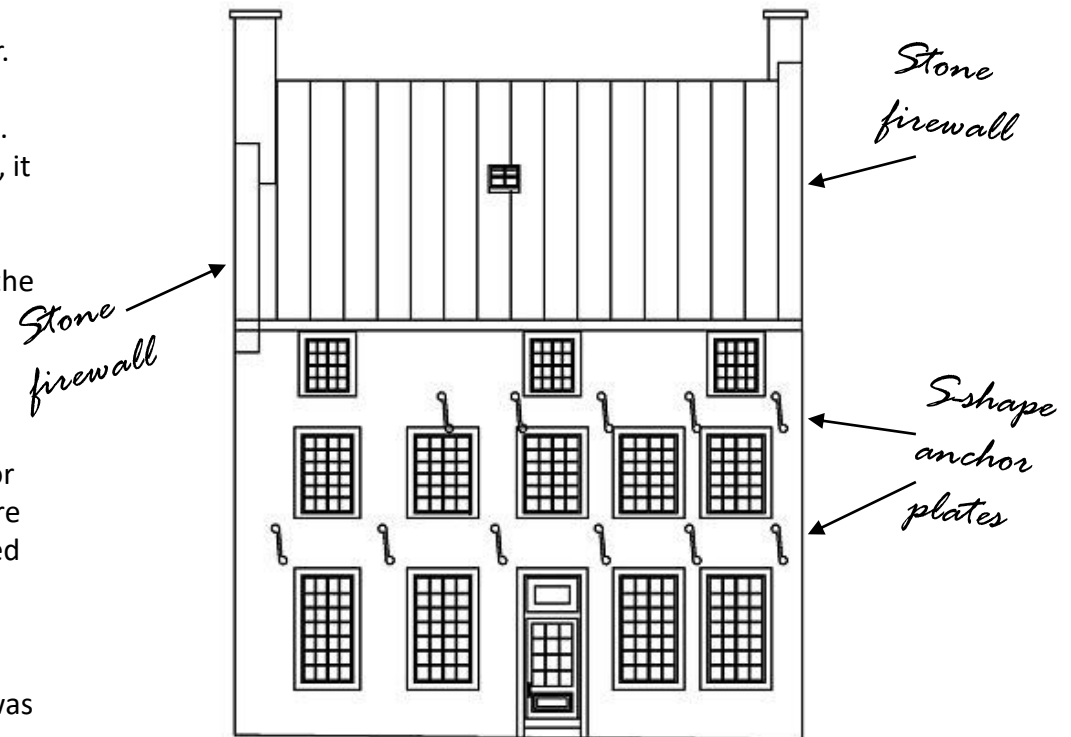
In my time, this style of house was the most pervasive in Montréal. The stone firewalls, which go higher than the roof, were obligatory, it must be said. There were so many horrific fires in the 18th century that the cityscape shifted from one where wood prevailed to one replete with stone structures. Even while it was constructed after the British conquest, this residence remains a perfect example of the common urban home in New France. You'll see it has Montréal Greystone walls, a gable roof, tall chimneys, and no overhanging features. Every level of this house has a predetermined use.

The basement, almost always vaulted, served as a storage space for various merchandises and materials. The street-level housed a store or workshop. The family lived one floor up. The attic was often used as a granary (grain storeroom). In the court behind one found the latrines, a well, a firewood shed, vegetable gardens, and a chicken coop.

At the homes of merchants or privileged military officers, wealth was also put on display across a home's exterior. Some popular

decorations included corner ties, S-shaped anchor plates, as well as large—and numerous—windows.

Drivers of the economy, wealthy merchants became a part of the urban elite, though their values differed from those of the aristocracy: namely, they shunned idleness, enemy of profit. Speaking of merchants, lets look over at this large building, the Bonsecours market!



Elevation Plan of Pierre-du-Calvet house
© City of Montréal, around 1995

9

Intendant Palace

Today: Bonsecours Market

A market here? Well why not, in any case, it's certainly changed from my time! There wasn't a trace of a market here before the 19th century...

Under the French reign, as well as after the British conquest, this site where the market now stands was home to the centre of elite society and culture. Numerous celebrated personalities resided here, starting with Charles Lemoyne of Longueuil, one of the first military chiefs of the city. Madame Bégon ran a salon here, receiving all sorts of nobility. Her particular inn became known as the Intendant Palace. Francois Begot, the last Intendant of New France lived here from 1749 until his return to France in 1760. It's impossible to forget the excitement brimming within these walls on the evenings of parties and galas. High society sure knows how to entertain! And there was always lively exchange at the salons: cultivated minds discussing the most sophisticated ideas circulating in France, be it within the arts, sciences, or literature! But of course, there were also balls and feasts where we sang and danced minuets or the *contradance*, just like at Versailles. It's said that the Intendant Begot is particularly excited when it comes to balls and grand meals. His balls sometimes go until the early morning, allowing revelers to forget the toughness of winter and enjoy themselves. But these evenings were also strategic: they helped the most skillful performers launch their careers! In the end... those events didn't concern me too much, as I wasn't one to pass by. Us travelers, we have our own entertainment, you see? That happened closer to the market square. In any case, lets continue down along Saint-Paul street.



Elevation Plan of the home of Madame Bégon
Detail of *Plan de la ville de Montréal en Canada*, 12 avril 1749,
Michel de Couagne
Archives nationales d'outre-mer (ANOM, France), FR CAOM 3DFC488A
Source gallica.bnf.fr / Bibliothèque nationale de France (National Library of France)

10

Saint-Paul Street

The street, a place where all kinds of people bump into one another: rich and poor, young and old, men and women. We live, laugh, share news, greet our neighbours as well as peasants. It's customary to tip your hat each time you see someone, otherwise who knows what unpleasantries you may provoke. And sure, there are arguments. And of course we like to mock one another a bit too! You never really know what to expect walking the streets, especially on Saint-Paul.

It's said that this street will become the first major one in the city. It's no doubt then why it meanders contrary to the other streets planned by Dollier-de-Casson. It links the Ville-Marie Fort to City Hall and the Notre-Dame-de-Bon-Secours Chapel, along the north side of the commune where the cattle would graze.

I see that it's still quite commercial, which is not surprising at all: being close to the port, it's ideal for transferring merchandise. In my era, it started as the street of wealthy bourgeois Montréal fur traders. The elite have settled in here also. Even the governor of New France lives here! Let me show you his home.

It's just a little further down, by Place Jacques Cartier.



Villemarie dans l'isle de Montréal, 13 novembre 1685, Jean Dehayes, Archives nationales d'outre-mer (ANOM, France), FR ANOM 03DFC466C

Hôtel-Dieu

Chapel

Around here on Saint-Paul street there are lots of houses.

1 1

Château de Vaudreuil

Today: Place Jacques-Cartier

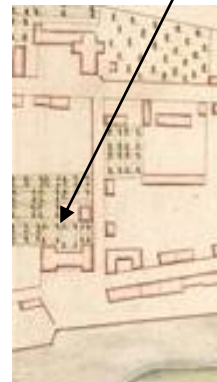
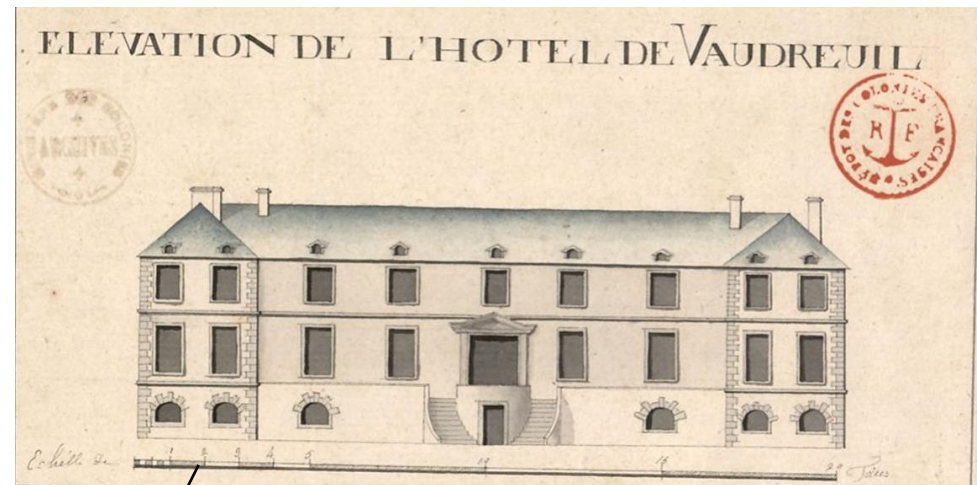
Oh voilà, the Château de Vaudreuil... if you look closely! See down on the ground, those black tiles... they're here to remind us that Old Montréal is home to more hidden traces of the past than we might think.

It's here, along Saint-Paul street, that the Governor Philippe de Rigaud de Vaudreuil once resided. At the time, his residence was lauded as one of the most beautiful buildings around, built in the classic French style. Given that the governor's office was in his home, following the practices of the times, it was only fitting that the edifice replicate the stature of his high authority.

Imagine before you a two-storey winged marvel of a structure, with semi-circular staircases granting access to an elevated patio and entrance, with large gardens in the back.

Vaudreuil and his family lived here for hardly two years: the marquis died in 1725. Up until the end of the French regime Vaudreuil's descendants rented out the building to those in the higher echelons of Montréal society, including the colonial governor of Montréal. During their visits to Montréal, dignitaries would find a triumphant entrance from the Saint-Lawrence, approaching the door to government that this residence embodied.

Follow me now, I must greet the merchant Clément Sabrevois de Bleury. Across from the Château de Vaudreuil we'll go down this little alley, Saint-Amable Street. We'd call it a "ruelle". Then take a right on Saint-Vincent, and a left on Saint-Thérèse. It's just around the bend...



Elevation Plan of Château de Vaudreuil and location on the map.

Detail of *Plan de la ville de Montréal en Canada*,
12 avril 1749, Michel de Couagne

Archives nationales d'outre-mer (ANOM, France), FR
CAOM 3DFC488A

Source gallica.bnf.fr / Bibliothèque nationale de France
(National Library of France)

*Today it feels a bit small in its place,
with all the surrounding buildings gone
up to four storeys.*

1 2

Clément-Sabrevois-de-Bleury House

428-430, Saint-Gabriel Street

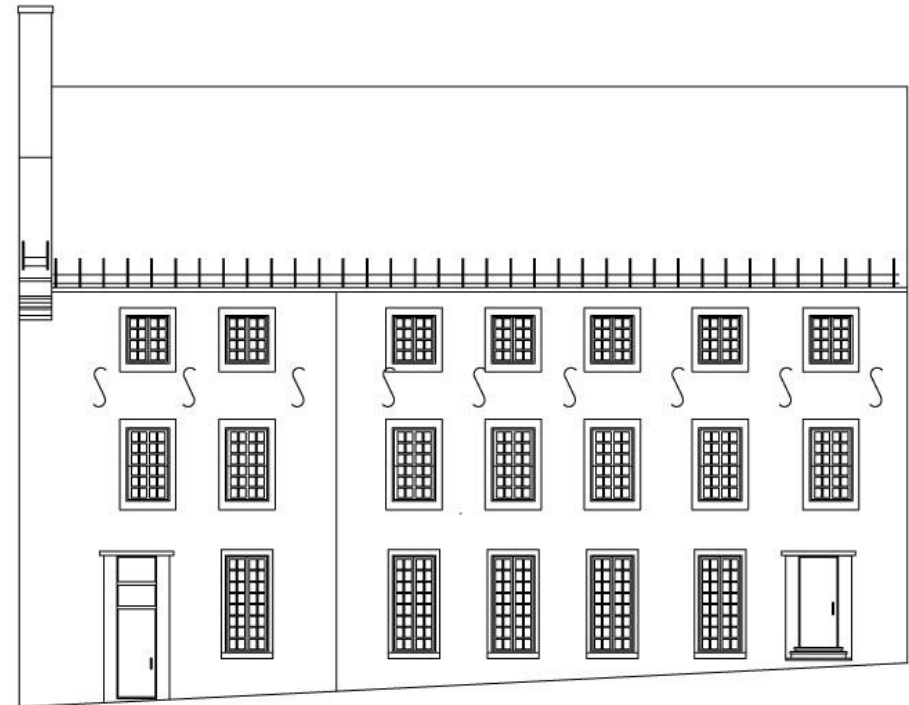
Do you see this house of stone? It belonged to Clément Sabrevois de Bleury, a merchant of wood and other goods.

Merchants formed a very important social group during my time: they brought European goods to the colony to keep the lucrative fur trade flowing. In fact, it was a merchant who hired me to go searching for furs in the high-country trading posts, beyond the rapids.

Believe me, merchants had things pretty good! They usually were housed in large buildings that served as both a residence and a warehouse: you know, just like the home of Pierre du Calvet, that we just walked by? And can you recognize the characteristics? The gable roof and firestone walls that extend above the roof, as well as the S-shaped anchor plates high up the façade.

After the 1760 conquest, the direct links between fur traders and Canadian merchants were severed, and in came the British. So now all we have to drink is tea, instead of coffee and chocolate! With this new elite, the buildings are changing too: they're now a bit taller, with a wider surface area. They've abandoned the stone firewalls and started to build larger warehouses next to the houses.

Go down Saint-Gabriel just a bit to Saint-Paul, where we'll continue three blocks west just up to the little *ruelle* Saint-Dizier.



Elevation plan of the Clément-Sabrevois-de-Bleury House
© City of Montréal, around 1995

Attention: Saint-Dizier is so small that it doesn't have a street-sign. It's across from Marie-Morin street.

1 3

First School and Convent of the Notre-Dame Congregation

On Saint-Paul Street, between Saint-Jean-Baptiste and Saint-Dizier

It may not look like it, but this spot here is central to the history of Montréal. It's where the city's first school was founded! In 1657, Marguerite Boureoyoys, founder of the Notre-Dame-de-Bon-Secours Chapel, opened a school here in a vacated barn. She was quickly joined by the sisters of the Congregation of Notre-Dame.

Oh, I remember it well. All the believers lived there, in a building made of stone, constructed in 1669, that was expanded a number of times... to the point of becoming its own village within a village! Just look at the map from my era. The whole complex was destroyed at the beginning of the 20th century. In any case, they played an important role in the city, in terms of social support and teaching. And by the way, they still exist today!

For the missionaries, the men and women who founded Montréal, it was essential to form good parishioners, pious and hard-working! The teachings, based on the catechism, aimed to instill moral Christian principles in the youth. One also learned to read, write, and count. For the girls, I can't hide the fact that they sought to create good housekeepers.

We started school around age 11, and our education would take anywhere from several months to several years. The majority of people were unable to read or write. In my era, only half of Montréal's residents could sign their own name.

We'll now go down the narrow, cobbled Saint-Dizier alley. It was used to get from the hospital to the river.



First school established in Montréal by Marguerite Bourgeoys in 1658
Charles Vinh
Collection of Marguerite Bourgeoys Historical Site
Photo : Normand Rajotte

*Did you see the plaque at the entrance
to Saint-Dizieruelle?*

1 4

The Saint-Lawrence River and the Harbour Gate

Now: De la Commune Street between Saint-Dizier and Place Royal

At the foot of Saint-Dizier, turn right and walk along the fortifications, and in no time you'll arrive at the harbour gate, which today sits across from Place Royal. And there flows the mighty Saint-Lawrence!

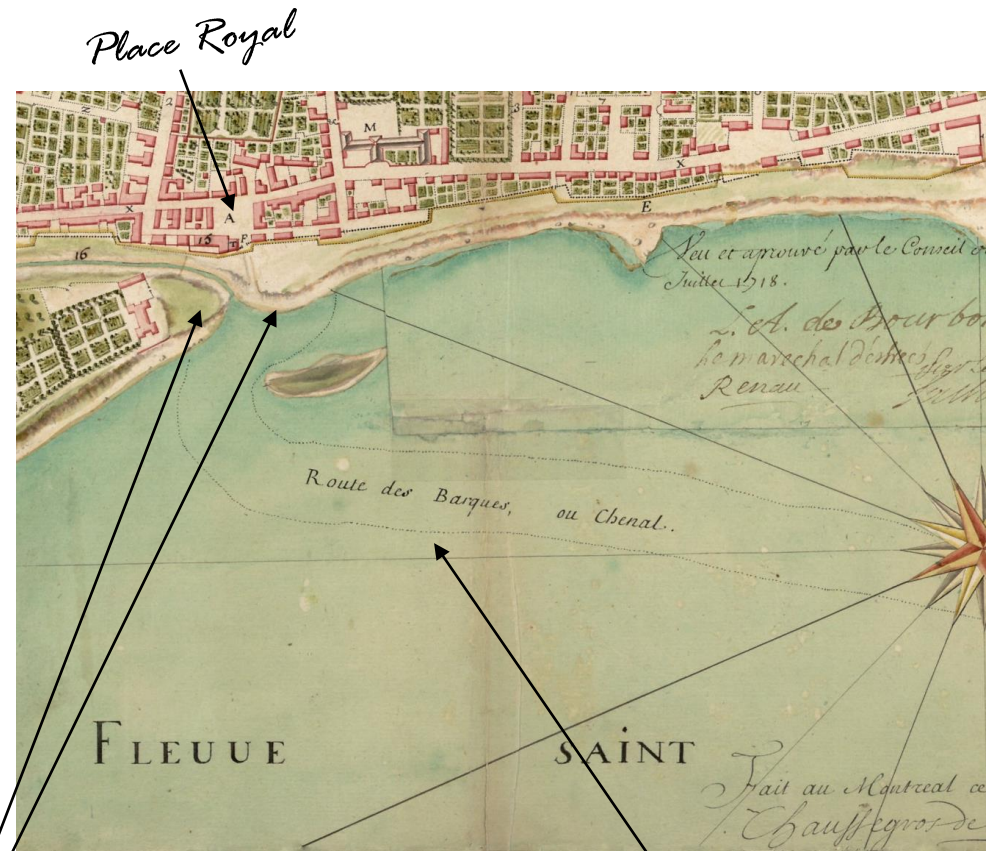
Well, you can't really see it from here these days. In my days, there weren't all these harbour facilities of the modern era. The river bank was here, more-or-less opposite the pavement you're walking on. Imagine, we've dropped anchor further down and approached the shore in our rowboat to disembark on the muddy bank in front of the city walls.

Then you had to pass through one of the five gates situated by the port. It goes without saying, things are on the whole better equipped today.

Access to the Saint-Lawrence was pretty much essential: it was from there that everything came and went! New France is more or less structured around that. If Montréal is built around here, it's because it wasn't possible to go any higher up river: the Lachine rapids would require a portage.

We say that the indigenous people were often stopped at this point, even before the French built their Fort "Ville-Marie".

Let's continue to that point up ahead, Point-à-Callière. It's the liveliest place in town!



Details of *Plan de la ville de Montréal en Canada, 10 août 1717*
Joseph-Gaspard Chaussegros de Léry
Archives nationales d'outre-mer (ANOM, France),
FR ANOM 03DFC47C473B

Perfect places to disembark

Note the "Route for rowboats"

1 5

Market Square

Today : Place Royale

Oh yes. Here, in the 17th and 18th centuries, this was the market square. On Tuesdays and Thursdays there were butchers and vendors selling all sorts of provisions. The market opened at dawn and ended by 11 a.m., marked by the ringing of church bells.

Above the market there was a wide public place where all the population could congregate during major events. Public announcements were proclaimed. Justice was carried out with the sound of drums and the executioner was brought out two or three times a year, attracting as many people as possible to terrorize the population. Justice was exemplary! The military also trained here until 1721.

Oh, and then once a year, for more than thirty years, the fur fair was held here. You probably already know this, but Montreal was the centre of the fur trade in my day!

That's why the location of Montréal was strategic. At the confluence of various rivers, the island had already been for a long time a point of exchange for the Indigenous peoples. It was a natural place to hold this kind of event. A place to do business, as well as an opportunistic spot to conduct diplomatic talks and celebrations.

What a commotion it was at the market, but also in the little streets nearby! Businesses, inns, and cabarets offered a variety of pleasures to travelers like me. I must admit that I spent quite a bit of time there, including in the alleyway Chagouamigon. Yes, named after a trading post! Like the Michilimakinac and Outaouaises lanes, which have disappeared... it must be said that all this activity sometimes got out of hand, and to mitigate public disturbances, the authorities ended up redeveloping the whole area.

Today, the atmosphere has changed, but you can still take a stroll down memory lane and relive the good times. Take rue de la Capitale, opposite the square, then turn right - the Chagouamigon is still there.



This print is a little late. It's 1829, at the "New Market" where one finds most of the merchants. The "New Market" was situated where Place Jacques Cartier stands today.

Lower Market, Montréal in 1829

James Patisson Cockburn (1779-1847), published in 1918

© Château Ramezay – Montréal Museum and historic site, 1998.945.7

1 6

Hôtel-Dieu Hospital

Today: Cours Le Royer

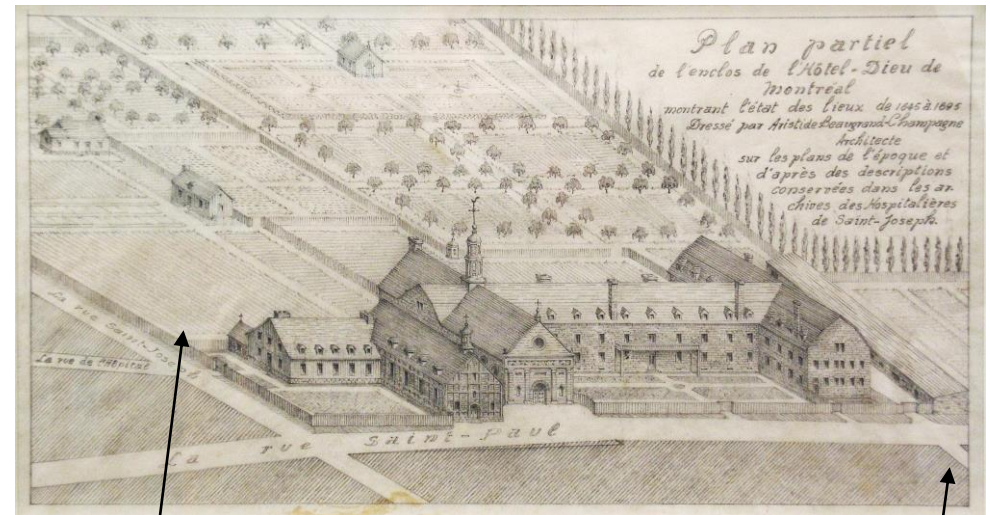
Yes, yes, you can pass through the black gates of the Cours Le Royer. Look to your right. Here we're close to a plaque commemorating Jeanne Mance. Maybe you've heard talk of her? She was a lay nurse, very pious, who came to help found Montreal with the Society of Notre-Dame for the conversion of Savages. Her plan was to create a hospital. Three years after her arrival, Hôtel-Dieu was built right here. At the time, it was one of the most important buildings in the city. It was enlarged and rebuilt after several fires, before being demolished and replaced by warehouses in the 19th century.

Jeanne Mance was the director, assisted by the hospital-worker Sisters of Saint Joseph, a congregation of around forty women dedicated to caring for the sick. There were also lay doctors and surgeons.

The patients were mainly slaves, servants, smugglers, soldiers, and sailors. They treated the common people, in fact, since the rich were cared for at home. The care provided at the hospital was free.

Patients often came in with infectious diseases such as smallpox or cholera, or with injuries that required surgery or even amputation. At the time, bloodletting, enemas, and purges were used. Herbal teas, potions and ointments were also in practice. Generally speaking, they treated more than they cured.

In any case, without the Sisters of Saint-Joseph, the colony would probably not have survived. Religious congregations played a very important role in all areas. By the way, we haven't even mentioned the practice of faith yet! Let's take a look at the parish church. At least, what's left of it. We'll go up Saint-Sulpice to Notre-Dame Street.



Partial plan of the Hôtel-Dieu hospital of Montréal showing the premises from 1645-1695, Aristide Beaugrand-Champagne 1942

© Archives des Religieuses Hospitalières de Saint-Joseph de Montréal

The plaque for Jeanne Mance is here.

Saint-Dizier Street

17

Notre-Dame Church

Today: Forecourt of the Notre-Dame Basilica

In my time, that grand Basilica you see in front of you did not yet exist. We had the Notre-Dame church, which would have also been found right here. Look down at the ground, and you'll notice some black stones: the original outlines of this ancient church, which sat right in the middle of Notre-Dame street.

It was constructed in 1672, in a baroque style according to the plans of Dollier de Casson. You remember, the same Sulpician priest who designed the first street plans of Montréal. We can see it on the original street plans. It was enlarged in 1706, and a façade was added later on in the 18th century.

Despite this growth, by the 19th century it proved too small to welcome all: there were only 3,000 seats for 15,000 parishioners! Even while Sunday mass was obligatory and (almost) nobody deviated from the norm. And so, in 1830 they built a new, larger church, right beside the old one. It was demolished shortly thereafter.

The catholic religion was ubiquitous in everyday life. From birth to death, everything was controlled by the church: education, holidays, as well as fasting and what clothes were worn. It was an austere and demanding religion, and not always respected to the letter, as you could imagine!

In Montréal, all this religious life was controlled by the priests of Saint-Sulpice, the local lords, whose residences were close by. Why don't we go see them? It's right around here, just in front of where the Church of Notre-Dame stood. Behind the gate, you'll recognize it from the bell tower and clock.



View of Place d'Armes

John Nixon

1804

© Château Ramezay – Montréal Museum and historic site, 1998.963

*Compare this image with
the one on page 23!*

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Old Saint-Sulpice Seminary

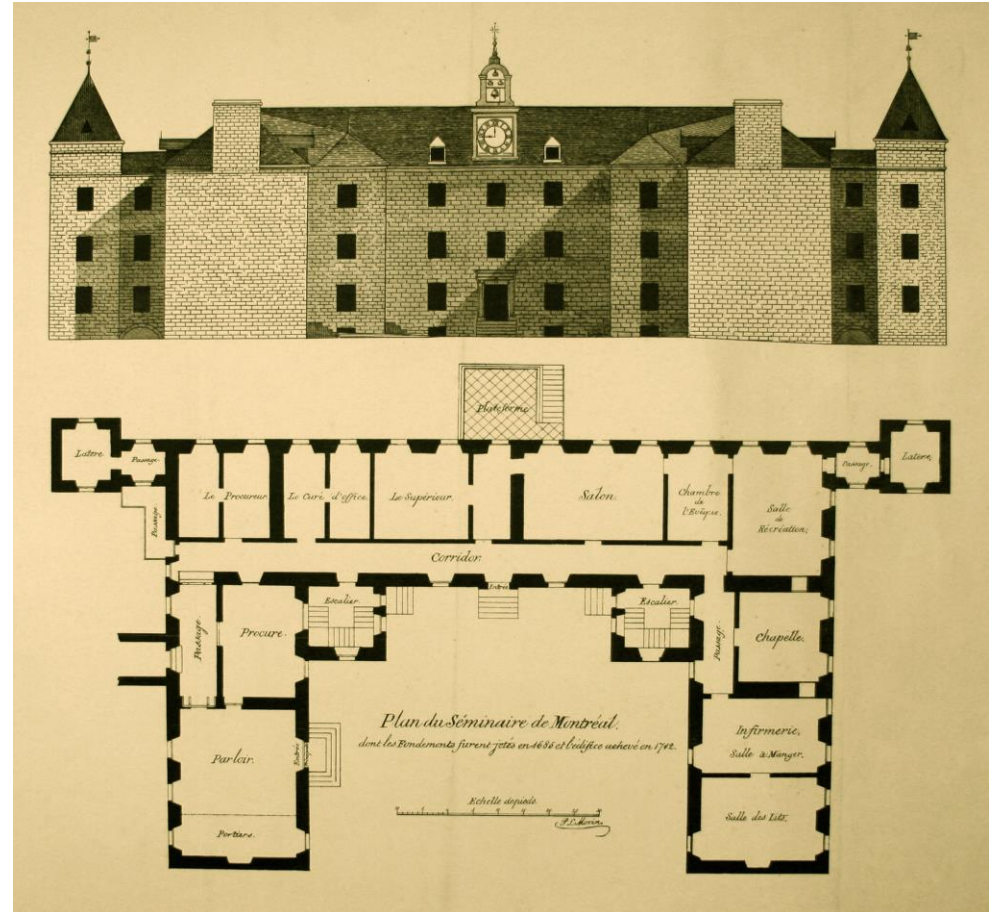
Wow, you've really kept that bell tower and clock in good shape! For a long time, this was the only public clock across the city.

And here we are: you can see the site that housed the Company of Priests of Saint-Sulpice since 1684. It's the oldest preserved building in Old Montréal. And it has always belonged to the Sulpicians, don't forget! Their coat of arms can be seen on the front piece with the monogram AM for *Auspice Maria*: under the auspices of Mary. It was at the same time a rectory, a lordly manor, and a seminary that welcomed dozens of aspiring priests. The Sulpicians held lordship over the island of Montréal, managing the Notre-Dame parish while educating priests and evangelizing the Indigenous population. Their role in the city was immense! And they've certainly left their mark, including this building as well as the street-plan for Old Montréal.

Their garden, situated in the back, has also survived the passage of time, from what they tell me. This garden was so big, you could certainly see it from the sky. Ah, if I were a bird!... But, come to think of it, you only have to look at the map from my time. It's made up of 9 large green squares.

Like the residences of Ramezay and Vaudreuil, the Old Seminary, with its ceremonial courtyard at the front, resembles a 17th-century French mansion. The Sulpicians were keen to build their residence and church at a strategic location. In fact, they bought the land just to the north of it, known as *Place de la Fabrique*. It's right opposite, let's go!

It's this large square with a fountain in the centre.



The building has changed a lot since this plan, but we can still recognize its central form with the clock and bell tower.

Plan of the Montréal Seminary P. L. Morin, 1884

© Château Ramezay – Montréal Museum and historical site, 1996.1597

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Place de la Fabrique

Today: Place d'Armes

After mass, the announcements were read here. It quickly became an important public square, especially when the military manoeuvres were moved here after the fire in the Market square in 1721.

There was also a well here, which provided the faithful with water on their way to church. Just one more reason to come and pray! You may have seen it on the ground just in front of the entrance to the Saint-Sulpice residence courtyard.

This square is also a historic site, as the French regiments laid down their arms against the English here in 1760. For fifteen years, Montreal was British, before being occupied by the Americans for a few months.

That was the end of New France, and it's also where our journey through the Montréal of yesteryear ends.

I hope that you'll keep a few of the traces in your memory, as I have, and that from now on you'll take note of the glimpses of another era that these buildings, streets, and archaeological sites give us.

In fact, what better place to end our journey into the past than at the foot of the statue of one of the city's founders, Paul Chomedey de Maisonneuve, in a square where so many different types of architecture stand side by side? What a wonderful metaphor for a city where so many eras and cultures come together!

Goodbye, and we look forward to seeing you again sometime!

The seminary is here.



Note — the bell towers on the basilica aren't finished yet!

Place d'Armes Montréal

Robert Auchmuty Sproule (1799-1845)

1830

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Traveling Through Time:

A historic exploration of Old Montréal

An invitation from



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Would you like to learn more about Montréal's architectural heritage?

Consult the online resource

“Heritage Inventories of Old Montréal”

https://www.vieux.montreal.qc.ca/inventaire/hall_eng.htm