Souvenir

SPY PLAN

of The Town and Fortification of MONTREAL or VILLE MARIE in 1758

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When Montreal Was a Stone Walled Town

Montreal in 1758

A walk around the site of these former fortifications would just be long. The whole walled place—an irregular parallelogram, covered only 110 French arpents or 93 English, acres—with outside the walls a few incipient suburbs as indicated on the map of 1758. This site however is the down town, business, official, legal, administrative centre of Montreal—the "Ville-Marie" Municipal Ward of today.

With the Spy map in hand, make your pilgrimage in 1936 around outside the walled town of 1758 thus: Start from Fortification Lane at the east side of Victoria Square (1860) (formerly "Commissioners") a little above St. James Street and a little below Craig Street. Continue till you come to the middle of our Champ de Mars; below is the lower part of the original Champ de Mars, as marked enlarged about 1818, and the crack new Craig Street; on your right is the "Jesuits Gardens (and church and residence)—now the site of the Law Courts and the City Hall. Make your way by Champ de Mars Street and on to Notre Dame Street above Beaucourt Street and pass outside the site of old Citadel Hill (removed about 1818 to make Dalhousie Square) and so on to the most easterly end of the fortification wall (say roughly about Place Viger Railway tracks); then turn directly south, pass by the "Quebec Gate" facing between our Notre Dame and St. Paul Streets and continue down south to opposite our Victoria Basin, on your way passing the former "Arsenal and yard for canoes and bateaux." Now turn east along our present waterfront (known originally as "Chemin du Roi", "Water Street" and since the demolition of the walls as "Commissioners' Street"). Continuing your walk outside the walls you pass Beaucourt Chapel (the first dating from about 1657), further to the "Water Gate" which is now the foot of our Jacques Cartier Square (but formerly the private wharf of the Governor de Vaudreuil whose "Château" and gardens were above it.) Pass on west to "Market Gate" which is opposite our "Place Royale" (so named since May 6, 1892) and also, Champlain's Island (afterward called Normand) Market Island, because of its position, Oyster Island because of its shape, Island Wharf after 1837 till 1903 when after building Elevator No. 1 it disappeared from our present maps, but its ghost lurks in the basin between King Edward and Alexandra piers and is guarded on the river side by the lofty walls of Elevator No. 1.

Avoiding the temptation to continue along our Common Street, pass west by the upper side of our Place Youville and below St. François Xavier and St. Nicholas Streets above the site of old Ville Marie and of the Little River St. Pierre, turnpalled over about a century ago. Now by following the upper side, a little west of Place Youville, (so called since 1901), you will pass on your left the old Customs House of 1872 to 1917, still standing—The Colonist's Memorial (1892), the present Fire Station No. 1 (1903), formerly on the site of the Fish Market and St. Ann's Market No. 2 (1851-1900) and the auto parking space formerly the site of the first St. Ann's Market (1830-1849) of which the remodelled top portion was the seat of the Union Parliament between 1844 and 1849 when it was burned down by a foolish mob, thus losing for Montreal the prestige of still being the Parliamentary of Canada—pass on till you reach McGill Street directly opposite the Canadian National Railway offices, west of McGill Street—opposite on your left the new Customs House (1936) is facing south of Place Youville.

You are now keeping the fortification walls on your right, to continue up northward on McGill Street, (formerly St. Augustine, but so called after one of the Commissioners), pass the "Recollets Gate" at the entrance of Notre Dame Street, past St. James Street to Victoria Square and back to your starting point at Fortification Place.

The Streets of Montreal in 1758, when it was a stone walled town. Notes from Dr. W.H. Atherton's history of Montreal. This map is a copy of one published by W. Greig, of Montreal in Bosworth's "Hochelaga Depicta", 1839, when it was copied from a map published in London in 1758 by Thos. Jeffreys, geographer to H.R.H. Prince of Wales. This latter map was probably provided by an English Officer Stobo, a spy who had been in Montreal during 1756-1758, before the fall of New France, in 1760. His plan would probably have been based on that published in Paris in 1723 by Maillart Sanson, opposite the "Old Louvre". The author of this 1723 map was the King's engineer, Gedeon de Catalogne, who designed the stone walls of Montreal, after the fire of 1721, when the old wooden ones were pulled down. The stone walls began in 1722, were demolished after 1804; they enclosed a space of 930 acres. The walls were not strong enough to resist cannon, being 4 feet at base and 3 feet at top, the bastions were 18 feet high, there were 5 gates and 4 postierns, a ditch and a glacis ran around the walls. The river bed of the top is now Craig St. the walls A. B. ran roughly round an irregular parallel from West of the corner of our present Victoria Square and Fortification Lane across the lower part of what is now the present Champ de Mars, to the railway tracks at the East end of Place Viger Hotel, then turned South past the "Quebec" gate to the water front (opposite the present Victoria Basin) then West, passing the site of Beaucourt Chapel and the Market Place, leaving the Charron Frères Suburbs and then on through the present Youville Square, to the corner of our McGill St., then North past the Recollets gate, back to our present Fortification Lane. There were two main streets running the length of the town – (1) Notre Dame Street, at the Recollets gate, ran up to the parish church, past the seminary, the same as to-day, and the Parish Church (the predecessor of our Notre Dame Church, 1829) of our present Place d'Armes, and then on till Citadel Hill (taken down in 1818). (2) St. Paul Street, starting West, ran past the Market Place (our present Place Royale) and past Vaudreuil Palace (site of lower Jacques Cartier Square, to-day) and on to the "Quebec" gate. The main diagonal streets are mostly our present St. Peter, St. François-Xavier, St. Sulpice, etc. The little St. Peter River, which flowed from the West, passing through our present Youville Square, entered the Saint Lawrence opposite the Market Place at Porte à Callière (called from the name of a former Governor of Montreal and New France) is no longer there, nor is the island Normand,* formerly called Market or Oyster Island, which is now part of the Harbour Basin, opposite Elevator No 1. Of the buildings registered on this map of 1758, the seminary built 1683-1712, on Notre Dame Street and the original house of the Charron Frères (1692, afterwards Grey Nuns, 1747-1871) are still remaining. The population in 1760 was 8300. Montreal was the most commercial city of Canada and was the fur-trading centre and the starting-point of all trading expeditions. * The Island of Normand was named after Normand de Feradon, Superior of the Seminary.

Archives de la Ville de Montréal