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Beaver Hall

Once An Exclusive Club — Now It's For Cars

By JOE EMERY

Another bit of older Montreal passed into oblivion with the recent demolition of a tired-looking building on Beaver Hall Hill.

When the work of the bulldozers and hammer wielders was finished, all that was left of what had been an exclusive men's club before the turn of the century was a patch of level ground.

Soon even the earth was paved over and cars now park where the Metropolitan Club once stood.

At one time a place of retreat for Montreal's leading men in business and the professions and "gentlemen of leisure", the stone structure had become inconspicuous to passersby.

Many years ago the ground

floor was converted into small shops and the rest of the building housed a cafeteria and offices.

According to scanty records available, the Metropolitan Club had a brief but brilliant life before it came to a sad end at a sheriff's sale in 1896.

It was bought at that time by Edward Rawlings, president of the Guarantee Company of North America, for \$46,531. The price included a lot of land immediately to the north on which the 10-storey Guarantee building now stands.

H. M. Rawlings, grandson of the purchaser and present president of the company, admits this was a bargain — although his grandfather had been warn-

ed of the dangers of moving the business so far away from the St. James St. district.

The old club quarters served as head office for the company until the new building was completed in 1913.

Original deed of the building shows it was owned by Tancrede de Bouthillier, presumably as a private residence, and sold in 1872 to Hon. Joseph A. Berthelot.

First mention of the Metropolitan Club comes six years later as purchaser from Mr. Berthelot.

So began what a story in The Gazette of some 35 years ago calls "one of the most important institutions in the city

— ranking among the leading organizations of its kind."

At least one royal visitor was entertained at the Metropolitan. The Duke of York, later to become King George V, dined there when he visited Montreal as a Royal Naval officer aboard HMS Thrush.

By the mid-90s the club's financial situation appeared to get a bit rocky and, in documents in the vaults of the Guarantee Company, mention is made of healthy mortgages and suits for back taxes.

The end came with the sheriff's sale.

Mr. Rawlings says ultimate use of the land has not yet been decided.

But, in the meantime, it remains a resting place for automobiles.

Cote Beaver Hall

THE RECORD

• BEAVER HALL HILL BUILDING PROJECTS: Plans are expected to be unveiled shortly for construction of a major new building on Beaver Hall Hill, just above Belmont street. Tenants of buildings on the west side of the street, who have been on a month-to-month basis, have been notified they must vacate. The old buildings, with a frontage of 180 feet on Beaver Hall Hill and 105 on Belmont street, will go into wreckers' hand shortly; and when they are razed the new owners will take over. Almost directly across the street, land and buildings immediately south of the Dupont Building, at the Dorchester intersection, are reported to have changed hands recently, with a building development planned on that site for the early future.

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Metropolitan Club

Beaver Hall Hill remained a street of houses and churches until the close of the 19th Century. The surveyor's plans of 1881 show very few buildings, not houses or churches, except the Metropolitan Club. The club was on the east side of Beaver Hall Hill, about midway between Belmont and Dorchester just above the lane that leads to the west side of St. Patrick's Church.

Even the Metropolitan Club had begun as a house. Tancrede de Bouthiller had owned it, then Joseph A. Berthelot, who sold it as a clubhouse in 1878. An extension was built, known as "the Wheel House." Its chief feature was a large bay window. From that window the members had a full view of what was happening on Beaver Hall Hill.

Many doctors were members of the Metropolitan Club. So many of them had their offices on Beaver Hall Hill that it had come to be known as "the Harley Street of Canada." One of the club's medical members (who had his office a few doors away) was young William Osler. It was the first club he ever joined.



Sometimes he arranged to dine with a group of medical friends. But when he came in alone he might have dinner with someone else who might happen to be dining alone also.

From time to time he dined in this way with a young Englishman who was in Montreal on business, and had been put up at the club. One day, while at dinner, Dr. Osler observed his young friend's appearance with uneasiness. The Englishman was evidently ill. Osler asked him how he felt. The symptoms observed and learned made a tentative diagnosis possible. It might be a case of malignant smallpox. In those years Montreal was seldom free of smallpox. Osler himself had it twice.

Dr. Osler helped the young man out of the club and to his rooms. When it became clearly a case of smallpox, he took him to the smallpox ward at the Montreal General Hospital. There he attended him, both as physician and friend, until the young man died.

The Metropolitan Club on Beaver Hall Hill lasted about 20 years. It was wound up in 1896, when the building was auctioned at sheriff's sale.

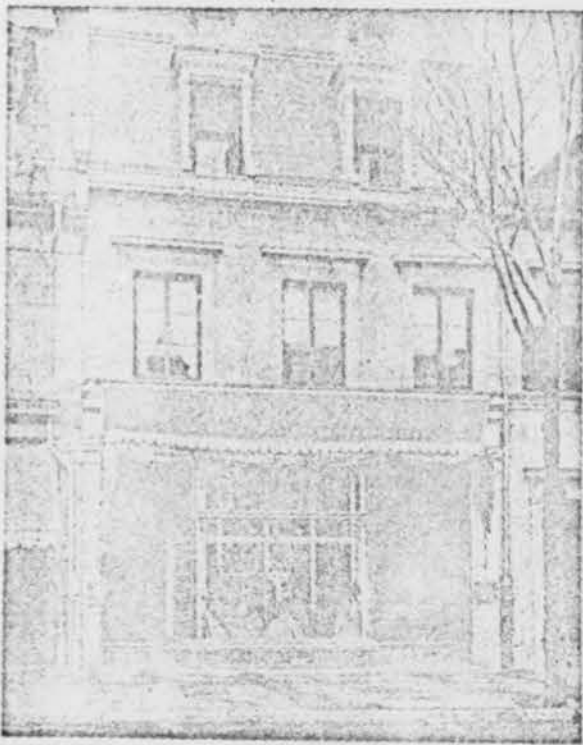


After the turn of the century changes came rapidly to Beaver Hall Hill. Shops and offices were intruding. As the district ceased to be residential, the churches were left with dwindling congregations. One by one they were closed and demolished. The last of the spires on Church Corner, where Beaver Hall Hill and Lagache-fiere crossed, was that of St. Andrew's, which some Montrealers liked to think was as beautiful as Salisbury Cathedral's. The congregation of St. Andrew's merged with the congregation of St. Paul's, to form the new Church of St. Andrew and St. Paul, soon to move to Sherbrooke Street.

1-8-1970

W. ST. PIERRE.

FOR the highest class of fashionable tailoring for ladies and gentlemen in the city of Montreal, Mr. W. St. Pierre, whose store is located at 63 Beaver Hall Hill, has achieved an excellent reputation. This is unquestionably headquarters in the city for first class tailoring.



where garments to measure embody every feature of grace and elegance, where cutting is done on correct principles and where the stock of imported woolsens, suitings, etc., covers all the latest shades, patterns and textures. The store is 125 x 30 feet in size, elegantly equipped and fitted up with all modern conveniences, handsome mirrors, ladies' and gentlemen's dressing rooms, electric lights, etc., the work rooms being in the rear.

From 30 to 45 first-class tailors are employed, and a specialty is made of ladies' and gents' suits, coats, mantles, riding habits, etc. Mr. St. Pierre devotes his entire attention to his business, and the garments made by him are recognized by a critical public as perfect in style, fit and artistic workmanship, while his prices in all cases are extremely just and moderate. His trade is rapidly increasing, and he numbers among his permanent customers many of Montreal's best dressed citizens, who find in Mr. St. Pierre's establishment not only the best goods in the country, but a place where the style and trimming of a garment is a matter of careful study. Orders are promptly executed, and complete satisfaction is guaranteed the most exacting patrons. Mr. St. Pierre is a native of Three Rivers, Quebec, and is widely known for his skill, ability and just methods. To seek his services once is to be his patron always, and we select Mr. St. Pierre to represent the fashionable tailors' industry in the commercial review of the city.

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V-3005.2-24

William St. Pierre. Canadians bear a universal reputation for being well dressed men and women, and Montreal the character of setting the fashion in cut, style and finish for the tailoring industry of the Dominion. William St. Pierre is one of the most fashionable and artistic ladies' and gentlemen's tailors in the Canadian



metropolis, his business now extending over every part of the country. He transacts an extensive trade with the United States, and his fame as one of the finest ladies' tailors, is abundantly enjoying a greater variety of garments of every kind are in great demand. William St. Pierre has a specialty of the manufacture of sports of every description, his make of hunting suits, golfing suits, fishing suits being famous throughout the continent. In order to secure the highest class of skilled cutters and workmen, he brings them from the most fashionable houses, and has about 75 expert hands on constant employment. These hands of work is undoubtedly the highest paid in Canada, the needlemen and head of the firm receiving salaries varying from \$1,000 to \$2,000 per annum. With regard to material, it can be said that only the very finest cloth are made up by Mr. St. Pierre. All the advantages combined, it is not surprising that during the past twelve years William St. Pierre has placed himself among the leaders in Montreal.

His list of patrons include the most and wealthy people in Canada and especially those who are fastidious about the fashion of their attire. Mr. St. Pierre always have in stock the latest patterns and materials, but the most up-to-date English and American fashions are shown and explained. Every week a new and stylish novelty is introduced, either imported or of his own invention. He is famous for his useful suggestive powers, many of which have only fashionable, but in general well known in England and America, as well as in Montreal. His commodious and well-appointed room, warehouse and extensive premises are situated at 63 Beaver Hall Hill, Montreal.

Henry Hammond. The Henry Hammond is now located at 100 St. James Street. Mr. Hammond is the best beater and upholsterer in the city and has the best trade in that line. He has a thorough and practical knowledge of carpet making, cutting, refitting and laying, and is also fitted, beaten and relaid by hand in the most careful and thorough manner. His system of beating carpets and rugs with improved machinery, and purifying the same with compressed air without the slightest injury to the fabric, is one much appreciated by the public. Mr. Hammond also does the fitting and mattress making in all its branches. He also supplies carpet rollers, stair pads, studs, etc.

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