

## MONUMENT McTAVISH

- 1854 On demande que le règlement municipal prohibant les enterrements sur le territoire urbain soit modifié de manière à ce qu'il ne s'applique pas à la voûte de famille construite en 1846 sur la propriété McTavish.
- 1878 Le mûr entourant le monument McTavish fut endommagé durant la construction du réservoir à haut niveau de l'aqueduc de Montréal. La Ville vote un crédit de \$665 pour faire effectuer les réparations voulues au mûr de ce monument.

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Historiques

*Voir aussi: 1844 - 2  
1ère série  
Conseil  
Rapp. & doss.*

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**Archives Municipales  
de Montréal**

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LA COLONNE MC TAVISH

PIED DE LA MONTAGNE, A MONTREAL

Simon Mc Tavish fut le plus entreprenant et, probablement, le plus intelligent des "bourgeois" de la fameuse Compagnie du Nord-Ouest. C'est lui qui conduisait les destinées de cette puissante association lorsque la Compagnie de la Baie d'Hudson entra en lutte avec elle.

M. L.R. Masson a raconté, dans son grand ouvrage "Les bourgeois de la Compagnie du Nord-Ouest", les préparatifs faits par M. Mc Tavish pour vaincre à tout prix l'opposition qui était faite à sa compagnie par ce qu'il appelait avec mépris The Little Company.

"M. Mc Tavish, dit M. Masson, ne devait pas voir les résultats presque surhumains qu'il avait faits pour écraser ses adversaires et étendre le contrôle de la Compagnie sur toutes les parties connues de l'Amérique anglaise. Cet homme vraiment remarquable avait amassé une fortune colossale pour l'époque. Il acheta la seigneurie de Terrebonne et se proposait de mener une vie de faste, comme seuls les Nor-Westers le savaient faire, lorsque la mort vint l'arracher, jeune encore, à ses nombreux amis et admirateurs.

"Il mourut en juillet 1804, avant d'avoir pu terminer cette princière demeure qu'il s'était fait construire au pied de la montagne, à Montréal, et dont les ruines firent, pendant un demi-siècle, l'effroi des enfants et des âmes trop crédules. Le "château hanté des Mc Tavish eut, en 1860, le sort des grandes résidences des puissants du Nord-Ouest: Burnside, Beaver Hall, etc.; il fut démoli, et sur son emplacement on éleva la superbe demeure d'un de nos compatriotes également distingué, enlevé lui aussi, beaucoup trop tôt au Canada: sir Hugh Allan. Le monument sous lequel repose le corps de M. Mc Tavish est tout ce qui reste pour rappeler le souvenir de cet énergique marchand."

La colonne Mc Tavish porte l'inscription suivante:

Sacred to the memory  
of  
Simon Mc Tavish Esquire  
Who died July 6th 1804,  
Age 54 years  
This monument is erected by  
His nephews  
William and Duncan Mc Gillivray  
To commemorate their High sense of his  
manly virtue  
and  
as a grateful tribute for his  
many acts of kindness to them.

Ce monument, le deuxième érigé à Montréal, est très peu connu de la population de la métropole. Les arbres, le réservoir municipal et une clôture en dérobent la vue aux passants.

EXTRAIT: Voir. Les monuments commémoratifs du Québec.  
année 1923, T.1., p.161.



## THE MC TAVISH OR HAUNTED HOUSE

Thirty odd years ago there stood under the brow of Mount Royal a huge mansion, weatherbeaten, unfinished, tenantless. It had been there since the memory of the oldest inhabitant, yet never had it changed its appearance, except as years went on it grew more venerable. Three generations had known it under similar conditions. Standing there, tenantless, uncompleted, a relic of the ambitions of by-gone days. Time had changed its surroundings, gathered round it a new generation of men and things, but still the old house reared by the hand of man, for the occupation of man, remained vacant, save for the cattle that took refuge in it from the scorching rays of the summer's sun, and the birds who built their nests among its beams, while, finally, after many, many years of exposure to the pelting rains of summer and the drifting snows, the hand of man again seized upon it, in the great march of improvement, and levelled it to the ground.

Although the house of Mc Tavish came down before it had ever been occupied, it did not want for occupants. Public superstition gave it a tenant, if not in the flesh in the spirit. People who passed it after dark swore afterwards that they had seen the ghost of Simon Mc Tavish wandering through it. Deserted as it was, it was easy for a weird name to attach itself to it, and so for years the Mc Tavish house was known as the "Haunted House."

Many attempts have been made to explain the origin of the ghost story. The most probable is that told to the writer's father in 1832, by a farmer named Mc Martin, who then occupied and farmed the Mc Tavish property around the deserted building, and who said that while the moon was in its particular phase it shone on an angle of the tin roof causing a bright ray of light, which the superstitious called Mc Tavish's spirit.

The Simon Mc Tavish mentioned above as the builder of the Mc Tavish house was in his day, one of the leading citizens of Montreal. He was engaged in the fur trade, then the principal business of the country. The North West Company was formed 1783 by a Benjamin and Joseph Frobisher, in which Simon Mc Tavish and several other gentlemen were partners. On retiring from the North West Company, Simon Mc Tavish married a Melle Chaboillez, a member of one of the most distinguished French families of the city and a family particularly noted for the beauty of its ladies. Melle Chaboillez was a sister of the then Curé of Longueuil, a noted scholar of those days. One of the sisters married a Mr. Samuel Sherwood, of Toronto, a barrister; and a third the late Hon. Roderic McKenzie, of Terrebonne, one of whose grand daughters was the wife of the the Hon. Roderic Masson, late Lieutenant Governor of Quebec. In 1818 through the influence of his wife's family Mr Sherwood was elected to the house of Assembly for Lower Canada, representing the then county of Effingham, at present known as Terrebonne. It is said that during the winter months, Mr. Mc Tavish city residence was Nos. 23, 25 and 27 St. Jean Baptiste Street, while during the summer months he occupied a stone cottage a few hundred yards west of his new house, this cottage was afterwards occupied by Mc Martin the farmer above mentioned. It was at this cottage he died in July 1804. At that time it was thought such a long distance between the



Mc Tavish House and the city that a lunch was laid on the tables in front of the house for those who came to attend the funeral. Mr Mc Tavish was buried in a vault situated a little to the west of "Ravenscraig". The mausoleum and shatt erected over his place of burial are atill to be seen. He left four children. His fortune at the time of his death was estimated at £126,000 sterling, an immense sum in those days. It will be of interest to note that in the year 1803 Mr. Mc Tavish bought the Seigniory of Terrebonne for the sum of £25,000 sterling, and his brother-in-law and associate, the Hon. Roderic Mc Kenzie, lived there. At the time of his death the Mc Tavish house was in course of construction. Work was at once discontinued the windows of the second and third stories bricked up, and itsstrange career began.

The Mc Tavish house was more than a pretentious dwelling for a gentleman of those days. It stood between Peel and Mc Tavish Streets the greater part of the house being the grounds of the present residence of Mr. Andrew Allan. The house with one semi-circular tower at each end had a frontage of about 126 feet. The roof of the main building was constructed on the old fashioned "high" principle, draining from the ridge-pole to all four aides. Those of the two towers were conical in shape, all being covered with tin. The main building was three stories high, the rez-de-chaussee or ground floor being some twelve feet in height, the intention being evidently to have it occupied by the kitchen, servants rooms etc., the same as we see in many of the houses built in France. The towers coming up above half-way between the second and third row of windows.

The material employed in this construction was dressed limestone. The interior of the house was never completed, only the floor beams placed in position. There are many reports concerning Mr. Mc Tavish's death, but as a matter of history, he took cold in the month of March or April while superintending the construction of his house, which turning to inflammation, brought his career to an end in July 1804. The particulars concerning the death and funeral of Mr. Mc Tavish were given to the writer, by a lady who was residing as a guest at the Mc Tavish cottage at the time of its owner's death. By his death Montreal of that day lost one of her foremost citizens. A man whose enterprise was responsible directly and indirectly for much of prosperity, and whose business integrity was known to be above reproach. His death was regretted by all who had known him in his life and who were compelled to admire his manly character. The old house is gone, but its story will live for years to come.

EX: Vol. Streets of Montreal,  
by Rev.J.D. Borthwick, 1897.,  
pp. 210 etc.

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CITY'S HANDS ARE TIED

Cannot Spend Money to Repair McTavish Monument.

Taxpayers' money cannot be spent on making much needed repairs to the Simon McTavish monument, on the slopes of Mount Royal just east of the small reservoir in the park, because the plot is the property of the estate and public money cannot be spent on private holdings.

Guillaume Saint Pierre, K.C., chief city attorney, has given this ruling to the city administration, because Ald. W.S. Weldon has repeatedly been requested by Montrealers to see that the monument was repaired with money of the current relief works programme.

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EX: "The Gazette"  
3 oct. 1936.

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E X T R A C T

from the minutes of a meeting of the Water Committee of the City of Montreal held on the 3rd of December 1878.

The Sup't reported that the contract of Messrs Plante & Dubuc for repairing the walls of the Mc Tavish monument had been completed.



E X T R A C T

from the minutes of a meeting of the City Council of Montreal held on the 14th October 1878.

REPORTS SUBMITTED

From the Finance Committee, concurring in the report of the Water Committee for an appropriation of \$665.00 to repair the wall of the Mc Tavish Monument.

TO THE CITY OF MONTREAL -

The Water Committee respectfully report:

That the wall surrounding the Mc Tavish monument and facing the Upper Level Reservoir, was damaged by the works which the Corporation had to perform in the construction of said reservoir and now requires some repairs, the cost of which, as per accompanying statement, are estimated at \$665.00.

Your Committee therefore recommend that they be authorised to have such repairs made and that an appropriation of the said sum of \$665.00 be made to them for that purpose out of the Reserve Fund.

The whole nevertheless respectfully submitted,

Committee Room  
City Hall  
Montreal 13th September 1878.

(Signed) P. Donovan  
M. Laurent  
R. Holland  
O. Robert  
Wm. Clendinning.

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The Finance Committee respectfully report:

That, as directed by the Council, they have considered the accompanying report of the Water Committee for an appropriation of \$665.00 to repair the wall surrounding the Mc Tavish monument and that they concur in the recommendation therein made, the amount to come out of the reserve Fund.

The whole nevertheless respectfully submitted.

Committee Room  
City Hall  
Montreal 10th October 1878.

(Signed) H.A. Nelson  
J. Grenier  
C. Melançon  
Wm. Clendinning.

On motion of Alderman Grenier,  
Seconded by Alderman Donovan, it was

RESOLVED: that the said reports be adopted.

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E X T R A C T

from the minutes of a meeting of the City Council of  
Montreal held on Monday the 23rd september 1878.

Submitted and read a report from the Water Committee  
for an appropriation of \$665.00 to repair a wall.

Referred to the Finance Committee.

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E X T R A C T

from the minutes of a meeting of the Water Committee of the City of Montreal held on the 13th September 1878.

The tenders received for repairing a masonry wall at the Mc Tavish Monument near the Upper Level Reservoir were opened in the following order:

No.1 - Peter Nicholson	\$1185.00
2 - Plante & Dubuc	650.00
3 - Danl. Wilson	1140.00
4 - J.B. St-Louis & Bros.	790.00

RESOLVED: That the tender of Messrs Plante & Dubuc be accepted and that the contract be awarded to them provided the City Council grants to this Committee the amount required for that purpose.

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E X T R A C T

from the minutes of a meeting of the Water Committee of the City of Montreal held on the 30th August 1878.

Read a letter from Mr Alex. Rose in reference to some work required at the Mc Tavish Vault near the high level Reservoir, also an estimate prepared by the Sup't of the probable cost of the required repairs.

Alderman Clendinneng moved that the following gentlemen be requested to send in tenders for the job viz: Messrs Plante & Dubuc, St Louis Bros., Peter Nicholson, Danl. Wilson, Bourgouin & Lamontagne & James Hall.

Alderman Robert moved in amendment that tenders be advertized for.

The votes being called on the amendment it was lost the mover only voting for it.

The main motion was carried in the affirmative, Alderman Robert dissenting.

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E X T R A I T

du procès-verbal d'une assemblée du Conseil de la Cité de Montréal, tenue le 27 avril 1854.

2.- De Madame Elizabeth Mc Gilvray, pour que le Règlement défendant les enterrements en dedans des limites de la Cité soit amendé de manière à ce que son exécution ne s'étende pas à la voute de famille construite en 1846 sur la propriété Mc Tavish.

ORDONNE: Que les dites pétitions soient renvoyées au Comité de Santé.





No.928

8th November 1853

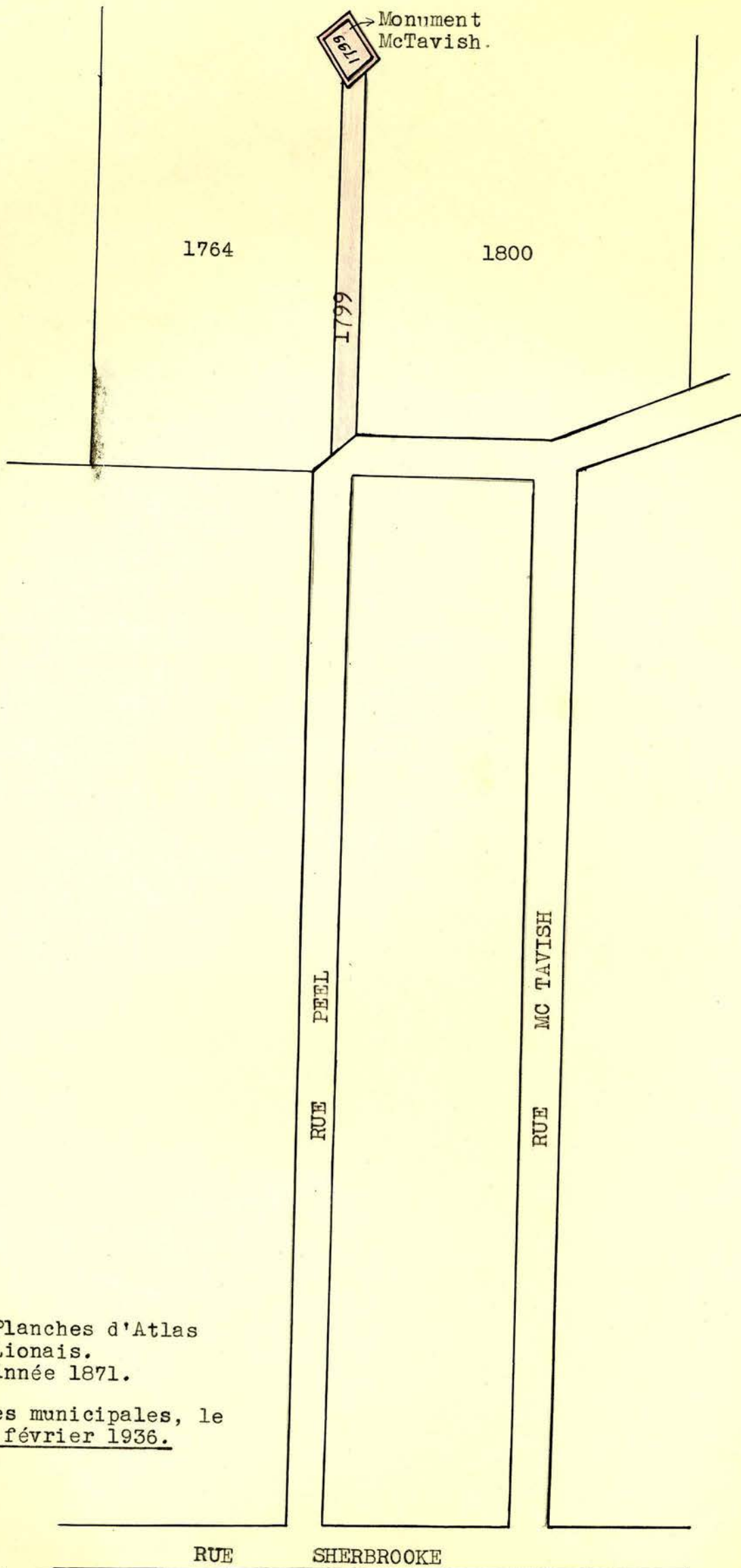
Sale & Relinquishment by Hugh Taylor, Esq.  
to the City of Montreal

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TITLES

The said two sold parcels of land originally formed part of the property known as the Mc Tavish property which was sold by John Mc Tavish Esquire, of the City of Baltimore in the State of Maryland, Nephew of Simon Mc Tavish, Esquire, of Montreal, deceased, and the eldest and only surviving son of his late brother Alexander McTavish acting through his agent the said Hugh Taylor, Esquire, to James Smith, Esquire and Duncan Fisher Esquire, Advocates of Montreal.....  
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EX: Vol. no. 3, Actes & Contrats,  
page 177, en possession du  
Service des Finances.



EX: Planches d'Atlas  
Lionais.  
Année 1871.

Archives municipales, le  
2 février 1936.