

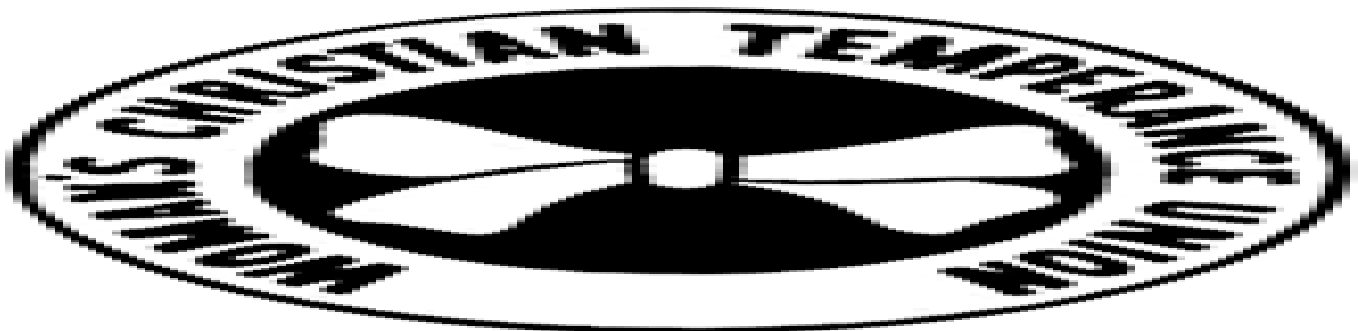


Westmount places:
The mystery of the missing fountain

Description

What happened to the magnificent victorian drinking fountain in Westmount Park?

By Michael Walsh



January 11, 2022

While browsing digital archive images of Westmount, I keep coming across this picture of a **beautiful old fountain** next to the park's current wading pond in the early 1900s.

Council proceedings confirm that it is a drinking fountain donated to the City of Westmount by the **National Women's Christian Temperance Union** to celebrate **Queen Victoria's jubilee** in 1898.

At the 1874 organizing convention of the National Woman's Christian Temperance Union, the members were urged to erect drinking fountains in their towns so that men could get a drink of water without entering saloons and staying for stronger drinks. The drinking fountains that were erected often offered a place for horses to drink, another for dogs, and of course, a place for humans to drink.

– The Vagabond – History of the drinking water fountain on First & Broad streets in Gadsden



Sailing pond at Melville and Sherbrooke with drinking fountain on the right – Image: Souvenir postcard – The Valentines' and Sons Publishing Company Limited

Thinking this would be a wonderful historic addition to the park if restored to its former glory, I contacted City Hall and enquired about its whereabouts. The City of Westmount Archives and Records Management office kindly did the research and provided a fascinating insight into this matter.

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Part from disassembled missing fountain – Image:
City of Westmount Archives

Apparently, in the 1960s, a major redevelopment occurred in the park. During that period, the fountain was, for unknown reasons, removed. Interestingly, the City's Archives has a document with photographs dated 1987 that shows the fountain disassembled, 100 kilometres north of Montreal in Saint-Gabriel-de-Brandon. How the fountain ended up there is the question – one can speculate that it was given to a City employee who moved it to a country property.

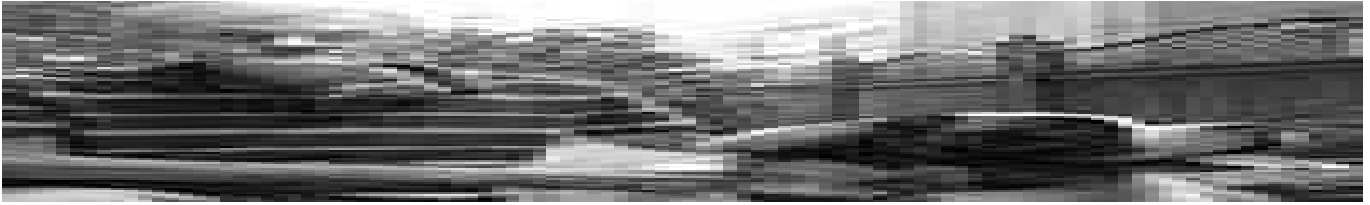
Its removal and disposal remain a mystery. In fact, several cities have maintained these fountains over the past century, and they are still used to this day. It is a pity this city did not have the foresight to retain a historical artifact that could have been proudly displayed as a beacon to their past.

Images: Souvenir postcard – The Valentines' and Sons Publishing Company Limited

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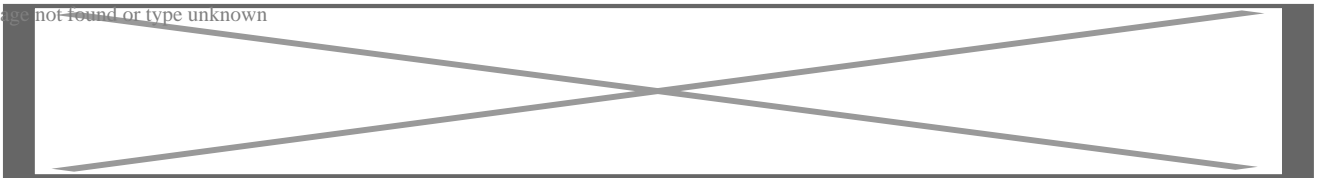
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Michael Walsh is a long-time Westmount resident. He is happily retired from nearly four decades in the field of higher education technology. A “professional student” by nature, his academic training, and publishing, include statistical methodology, mycology and animal psychology. During this period, he was also an officer in the Canadian Armed Forces. Prior to moving to Montreal, he was contracted by the Ontario Ministry of Education evaluating bilingual primary and secondary school programs. Today, he enjoys spending time with his (huge) Saint Bernard while discovering the city’s past and sharing stories of the majestic trees that grace the parks and streets. He can be contacted at michaeld2003@hotmail.com or through his blog [Westmount Overlooked](#)

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