



Westmount places
Lewis Avenue

Description

The history behind the familiar: Lewis Avenue, another Westmount beautiful cul-de-sacs bordered with elegant Victorian homes

By Michael Walsh

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Houses are like people – some you like and some you don't like – and once in a while there is one you love.

Emily Climbs (1925), Lucy Maude Montgomery

Lewis Avenue – another one of Westmount's beautiful cul-de-sacs bordered with elegant Victorian homes that terminate at CPR's historical ballast covered tracks originally constructed by the British-owned Grand Trunk Railway in the 1800s that originally connected Montreal with Toronto.



106 Lewis

Have you ever wondered where the name “Lewis” originated? Answering this question is not a simple explanation. It’s amazing that there are still things in the world today that neither Google nor Siri can explain!

Fortunately, the preservation and professional care of the City of Westmount’s historical documents, images and artifacts falls within the mandate of the City’s Archives Unit. As a resident, you can submit these types of questions and receive advice from primary and secondary sources in their collection. In addition, the [Westmount Historical Society](#) provides an additional level of primary research to assist in this regard.

According to the City of Westmount archives, the street first appeared on their valuation rolls from 1887-1889. The street, however, was unnamed during that period. The street appears with the name “St. Louis” on the 1890-1891 valuation roll. Two years later, on the 1893-1894 valuation roll, the street appears as “Lewis”.



109 Lewis

In terms of the name's origin, the publication [*Westmount: A Heritage to Preserve*](#) provides the following clue: "There are three clusters of heritage buildings... the first near the old station from Blenheim Place to Abbott Avenue south of St. Catherine Street, consisting of row cottages built by developers Blenheim, Lewis and Irving around 1895..." (p. 42)

Other contenders include: W. F. Lewis (a City councillor from 1877-1879 & 1881) and Isaac Lewis, a local developer that resided on the street during that same period.

In addition, one of Andy Dodge's consistently well researched articles describes the relationship between the Canadian Investment Agency Company, owned by Hugh Allen and his brother working as developers in the area, "(they)...snapped up the land from various bankruptcies... and sold it in portions to home owners and builders" (Westmount Independent, March 18, 2014). Interestingly, Hugh Allen, was also the owner of the Montreal Ocean Steamship Company sailing to Liverpool, twice a month, at cost of 18 guineas per passenger.

In total, this would seem to suggest that "Lewis" was one of several developers responsible for the beautiful Victorian homes that still, to this day, grace Lewis Avenue.



111 Lewis

With another one Westmount's "mini-mysteries" behind us – let's take an early March walk along Lewis Avenue and discover some of the stories waiting to be told.

104 Lewis (former Civic number)

Jas. Knowles, painter – 1894

William MacKenzie, fireman – 1899

106 Lewis

William S. Boyd, customs officer – 1894

Thomas Johnston, clerk – 1896

James R. Greig, manager, Greig Manufacturing Company – 1899

"Licorice... We manufacture everything in the Licorice line carried by the Grocery, Drug and Confectionery trades. We might mention – Y & S Stick Licorice, all sizes; Acme Licorice Pellets; Y & S Licorice Lozenges, in cans or glass jars; A B C Blocks; Purity & Dulce Brand one cent sticks; Bundled Licorice Root, etc. In Pliable Licorice, Triple Tunnel Tubes, Mint Puff-Straps and Navy Plugs. Write for illustrated catalogue. Young & Sylle Established 1845. Brooklyn, N.Y. Unequalled For Purity And Strength. Greigs Crown Extracts – The Greig Manufacturing Company Montreal." *Canadian Grocer July-December 1898*



115 Lewis

108 Lewis

G. P. England, McGoun & England Law firm located at 181 St. James Street – 1894

Mrs. A. Matthews, wid. John Helliwell – 1896

Norman William Jordan, dispatcher Grand Trunk Railway – 1899

109 Lewis Avenue

H. C. Andrews, agent – 1896

Alfred A. Andrews, bookkeeper, Midland Revenue – 1896

P. S. Andrews, clerk – 1896

G. S. Andrews, clerk – 1896

110 Lewis



117 Lewis

Edward Riel, builder – 1894

In partnership with Charles Smith, he built many of the solid detached and semi-detached homes during the turn of the century.

John Wilkins, agent – 1896

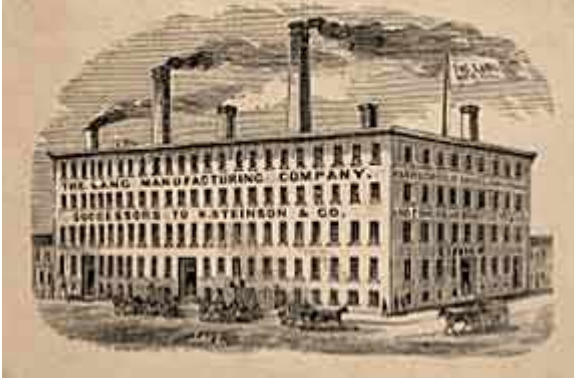
Mrs. G. C. Tweed, wid. Charles H. – 1899

111 Lewis

Henry Lookhart – 1905

“Henry Roland Lookhart, of Westmount, Canada. Trolley-base. Specification of Letters Patent. Patented Nov. 28, 1905. Application filed July 23, 1904. Serial No. 217,816. To all whom it may concern: Be it known that I, Henry Roland Lookhart, a citizen of the United States, residing at 111 Lewis avenue, in the town of Westmount, in the Province of Quebec, Dominion of Canada, have invented a certain new and useful Improvement in Trolley Bases, of which the following is a specification.

My invention relates to electric railways operated through a trolley; and it has for its object to provide a base supporting the trolley pole adapted to permit movement in every direction and more particularly to permit the trolley-pole to swing on a bearing parallel to the roof of the car lengthwise, thereby providing a mechanism which holds the trolley-wheel securely to the trolley-wire in all positions of the car and which prevents wear and tear on both trolley-wheel and trolley-wire, due to pressures on curves in the railway-line.”



The Lang Manufacturing Company
McCord Museum M930.50.5.579

112 Lewis

Miss Lang – 1894

James Lang, Lang Manufacturing Co. – 1896

The Lang Manufacturing Company produced biscuit and confectionary products. They were the largest manufacturer of biscuits in Eastern Canada.

“...undoubtedly the largest trade in plain and fancy biscuits in Eastern Canada. They are also manufacturers of every description of confectionary and do an immense business in this line as well. Some idea of the magnitude of the amount of goods manufactured and disposed of by this house can be obtained from the fact that over one hundred hands are kept constantly employed.” *Industries of Canada: City of Montreal: Historical and Descriptive Review, 1886*



James Lang – McCord Museum I-31470.1

Hugh McCallum – 1899
Frank McCallum, bookkeeper – 1899

113 Lewis

George Hill, electrician – 1896
Thomas Sills – 1913

“Patented Sept. 16, 1913. Thomas Sills of Westmount, Quebec, Canada. To all whom it may concern: Be it known that I, Thomas Sills, a resident of 113 Lewis avenue, in the city of Westmount, in the Province of Quebec, in the Dominion of Canada, a subject of the King of Great Britain, have invented certain new and useful Improvements in Grain-Car Doors; and I do hereby declare that the following is a full, clear, and exact description of the same. The invention relates to improvements in a grain car door, as described in the present specification and illustrated in the accompanying drawings that form part of the same.

The invention consists essentially in the novel arrangement and construction of parts, whereby a readily operated locking mechanism is employed for securely holding the door in its closed position, and other means for storage within the car when out of commission. The objects of permanent attachment to the car and cannot readily be removed without the opening of the door for discharging purposes, and generally in any desirable form of grain car door.”



Harry H. Thomas, agent – 1899

115 Lewis (former Civic number)

Gus. Dunn, commercial traveller – 1896
H. W. Aird, treasurer, Canada Paint Company – 1899

“Dry colours and coach painting materials of every description are manufactured in Montreal by this company. The waters of the Lachine Canal are harnessed to powerful turbines; steam and electricity also being employed. The most extensive oxide and graphite mines for the production of paints in the Dominion of Canada are owned

by the Canada Paint Company. One branch of the company is entirely devoted to grinding and maturing White lead, and amongst their brands may be mentioned the "Painters' Perfect" white lead, which is beautifully soft and fine in the grain. It mixes well with linseed oil, forming a creamy, smooth paint of great covering power and undoubted durability."

The Monetary Times, April 24, 1903

116 Lewis

Joseph Carsen, agent Aetna Life Insurance – 1899



119 Lewis

117 Lewis

E. Romeril, commercial traveller – 1899

118 Lewis

T. W. Costen, bookkeeper – 1896

J. H. McComb, Lockerby & McComb, Manufacturers of building paper – 1899

119 Lewis

A. M. Rogers, commercial traveller – 1896

H. Rogers, clerk – 1896

120 Lewis

Gordon C. Fletcher, clerk – 1896

Alex Campbell, clerk – 1896

Gordon Fletche, ticket agent, Grand Trunk Railway – 1899

121 Lewis

W. P. Ransom, grocer – 1896



122 Lewis



131 Lewis

Thomas Henry, agent – 1896
H. J. Silver, principal, Dufferin School – 1899

126 Lewis

Walter Binmore – 1899

127 Lewis

Mrs Annie Stone, wid. Albert – 1896

130 Lewis

W. J. Lapham, carpenter/contractor – 1894

131 Lewis

Henry W. Brown, chief clerk, St. Lawrence Hall – 1896



St. Lawrence Hall
McCord Museum VIEW-1876

“This first-class hotel (the largest in Montreal) is situated in St. James Street, in the immediate vicinity of the French Cathedral, or Church “Ville Marie”, Notre Dame Street, the Post Office, Place d’Armes and Banks. The St. Lawrence Hall has long been regarded as the most popular and fashionable hotel in Montreal, and is patronized by the Government on all public occasions, including that of the visit of His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales and suite, and that of His Excellency the Governor General and his suite... All rooms lighted by gas. The consulate office of the United States is in the hotel, as well as Telegraph Office to all parts.”
Chisholm’s all round route and panoramic guide of the St. Lawrence, 1871

Harry Allan, traveller – 1899

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Images: Michael Walsh – Feature image: Andrew Burlone

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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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