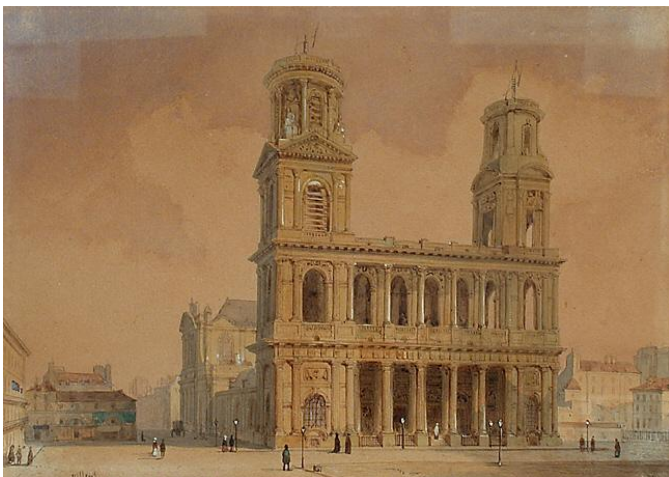


**COTES DES NEIGES 149<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY ADDRESS**  
**REV. DR. BARRY MACK**  
**MAY 25<sup>TH</sup>, 2013**

Not long after French arrived in these parts in 1642, Cotes des Neiges was established as an agricultural settlement by the Sulpician priests who were the seigneurs – the landlords - of the island of Montreal. They are the order of Catholic priests that still run the Grand Seminaire on Sherbrooke Street (here it is in the early years still surrounded by forest)

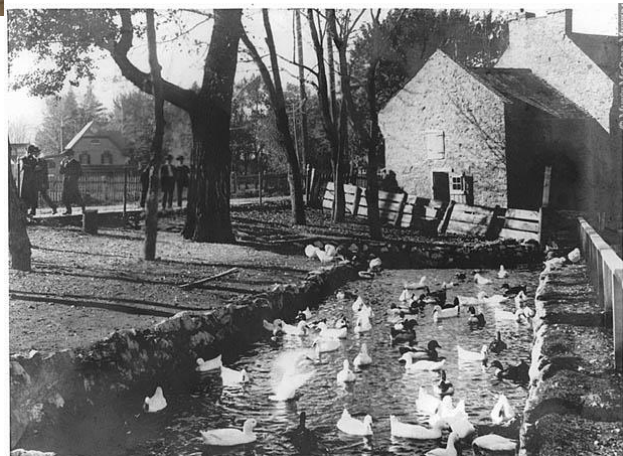


and Notre Dame basilica in the old city and the Cote des Neiges cemetery.



The land on this side of the mountain was fertile so they found tenant farmers to work it and built a flour mill to grind the wheat. Raimbault Creek - now Cote des Neiges Road - provided the necessary water power.

Fast forward a couple of centuries to the winter of 1900. There were still lots of cattle around since the abundant water supply also attracted tanneries and the leather business.



The Sulpicians built a church and a school for their farmers. Add a tavern or two and some light industry; civilization had arrived.

Who were the Sulpicians? They were an order of priests that began in the seventeenth century church of Saint Sulpice in Paris.. (If you read Dan Brown's novels the *Da Vinci Code* you'll know about the Church of Saint Sulpice.) They were part of the Catholic reaction to the Reformation; typically came from wealthy, aristocratic French families. Their mission was to improve the level of theological education among priests; to help the French Catholic church catch up to the Eglise reformée in that respect.



The families from which the Sulpicians came didn't do very well during the French Revolution. Their politics were, as a result, strongly Monarchist rather than Republican. They distrusted American democracy - in fact any kind of democracy. Whether a particular King or Queen spoke French, English, German - or none of the above - was not so important. What mattered, from their perspective, is that there was a monarch so that society didn't fall apart into anarchy and ruin, chaos and revolution. It was a point of view shared with the British military officers who ran Montreal after the Conquest.

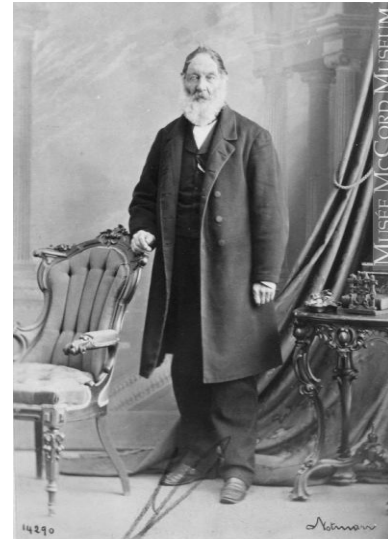
During the rebellion of 1837, the Sulpicians provided the military intelligence that the soldiers needed to contain the uprising. Their loyalty and usefulness was soon rewarded. Their legal title to the island of Montreal - left in limbo at the time of the Conquest - was confirmed by a grateful government in 1840. Soon everyone - English and French - was paying rent to the Sulpicians.





They became enormously wealthy and they were soon bankrolling projects like Saint Patrick's Cathedral for the impoverished Irish and many of the Catholic schools that were built.

One of those who purchased land in this area from the Sulpicians was a former soldier, James Snowdon, who eventually became a wealthy lawyer and would play a key role in the establishment



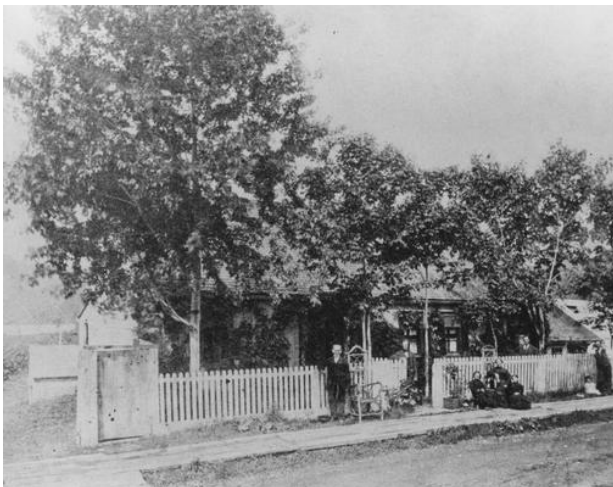
of this congregation.

Other English-speaking settlers also bought farms in the area. It was desirable land being so close to the major market just over the mountain.

Here is the John Leeming farm,

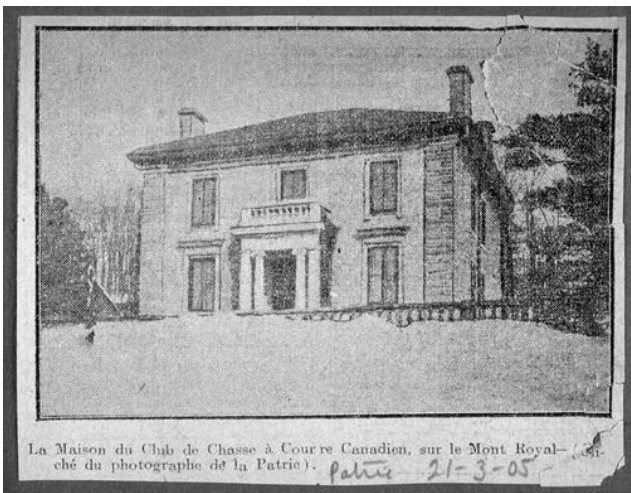
The McKenna house

John Swail's house,



Cote des Neiges also become a favourite recreation destination for Montrealers. Lumkin's hotel is where they often ended up for drinks after an invigorating day of snowshoeing in the winter or hunting in the summer.

Here is the old Hunt Club



And here's the new and improved Hunt club built in 1906. You may wonder what the French-Canadian locals thought about fox hunts, given that not many of them were members of the club. By the end of the nineteenth century, Quebec society in general and the Montreal in particular, were much divided along religious and linguistic lines.



This brings us back to Mr. James Snowdon, former soldier and now wealthy lawyer, Queen's Council and landowner. It was he who



chaired the meeting called by the trustees of the Dissident (Protestant) School on March 26, 1863. At that meeting a committee of Anglicans and Presbyterians was appointed to raise the needed funds "by public subscription" to purchase the land on which an English and Protestant school was soon built. In the conflict with French-speaking Roman Catholics, whether one was English and Anglican or Scottish and Presbyterian didn't make much difference. They had to stick together if they were to have any influence or build an educational infrastructure of their own. Differences over church government – whether by bishops or presbyteries were hardly on the same level as the doctrine of the Trinity or justification by faith. Anglican or Presbyterian, people recognized each other as fellow evangelical Protestants and were prepared to overlook differences of secondary importance in the pursuit of a shared, ecumenical mission

of educating the next generation in the faith. The school building also served on Sundays as a place of worship.

Here is a picture of Mr. Snowdon with his wife.



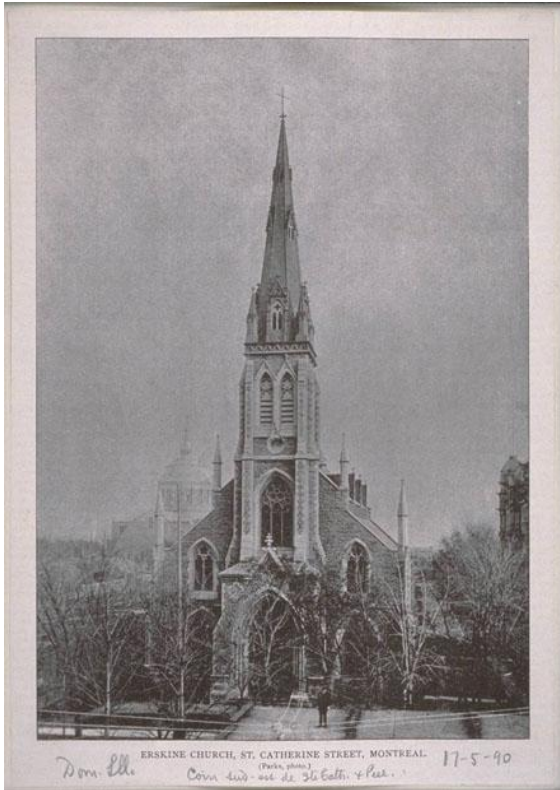
**Sunday worship services began on 22 May 1864 with a Presbyterian service at 11:00 and an Anglicans one at 4:00.**

The Rev. Dr. William Taylor preached for the Presbyterians in the early years. By the 1860's he had an assistant who could cover for him at his own church. Taylor was formidable figure who came from the landed gentry in Scotland. His father was a land owner, a squire or a laird. Although his family background was established Church of Scotland, he had been attracted by the evangelical fervour of what we call the Secessionist strand of Presbyterianism that, more typically, drew people from middle and working class backgrounds.

Taylor had a very strong personality, a man not easily contradicted – perhaps especially by those who were not, socially speaking, his equals. Back in the days when social position counted for a great deal, he retained the habits of one accustomed to rule. He had also received an excellent education, and was a fine Hebrew and Greek scholar. There is a story that perhaps captures his relationship with his Session. The elders decided that there was a subject that needed to be broached with the minister. The question was which of the mice would volunteer to bell the cat? Finally one of the elders screwed up his courage. “I will go, he said, if the rest of you will earnestly pray for me!”

Taylor was a man of strong views and commitments. He was a founder of the Evangelical Alliance and of the Montreal Ministerial Association; the secretary and third president of the French Canadian Missionary Society. His aid for escaped slaves who arrived in Montreal from the United States via the underground railway resulted in his being awarded an honorary DD in 1851 by the strongly abolitionist Franklin College in Ohio.





In 1874, he was minister of Erskine church, then located at the corner of Peel and St. Catherine. In the background of this photo you can see the tower of the Cathedral: “Marie, Reine du Monde”. His views on the Roman Catholic Church are suggested by the title of a sermon preached to the Montreal-Ottawa Presbytery in 1876: “The Pope, the Man of Sin.”

Many years before Taylor had preached a sermon against dueling which attracted considerable public attention. The pastoral issues were different in nineteenth century Montreal than they are today. Dueling was not a sin to which the tradesmen and merchants of his own congregation were prone, but it still occurred in the gentlemanly social circles in which Dr. Taylor had grown up and amongst the officers of the Montreal garrison. In the

face of a particular tragedy in which a man shot his best friend over a misunderstanding, Dr. Taylor poured scorn on the aristocratic code of gentlemanly pretension that demanded the satisfaction of blood for slights to one’s personal honour. It was not the ethic of the One who forgave his enemies even on the cross.



(The sermon is included in John Vaudry’s *We Have This Treasure: Sermons and Addresses by Presbyterian Ministers of Montreal 1820-2000.*)



Here is a picture of Mrs. Taylor - who looked pretty formidable herself.

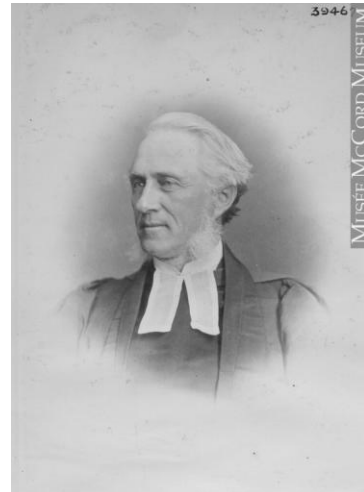
Taylor's Anglican counterpart at the beginning of the mission partnership here at Cote des Neiges was the Rev. Dr. Charles Bancroft, minister of Trinity Church at the corner of St. Denis and Viger. It was still standing there, the last time I looked, but just barely.



Bancroft born in Montreal, but had left for New York City to attend High School and University. Getting an education in Montreal in first half of the nineteenth century was a problem. It is not surprising that establishing rival school systems was a task to which both English-speaking Protestants and French speaking Catholics set themselves busily to work in the next generation. Some of you may have heard of Presbyterian ministers like D.H. McVicar, Principal of Presbyterian College and Dr. John Jenkins, minister of St. Paul's church. Both served as chairmen of the Protestant School Board. So did Bancroft. Christian education was central to the Church's mission. I think that the best way I can give you a sense of Bancroft is to let him speak for himself. Here are a few excerpts from a sermon preached on Reformation Sunday 1847. If we listen carefully, perhaps we can also hear it as a sermon preached to us 166 years later.

His text is Philippians 1: 27. "Only live your life in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that, whether I come and see you or am absent and hear about you, I will know that you are standing firm in one spirit, striving side by side with one mind for the for the faith of the gospel".

"I have no greater joy my brothers and sisters, he paraphrases Paul, than to hear of your devotion to that Gospel, your strict adherence to the truth as it is in Jesus, your holy and consistent walk; and your "love to each other and to your divine head. May your whole conversation, your whole way of life, redound to the glory of God."

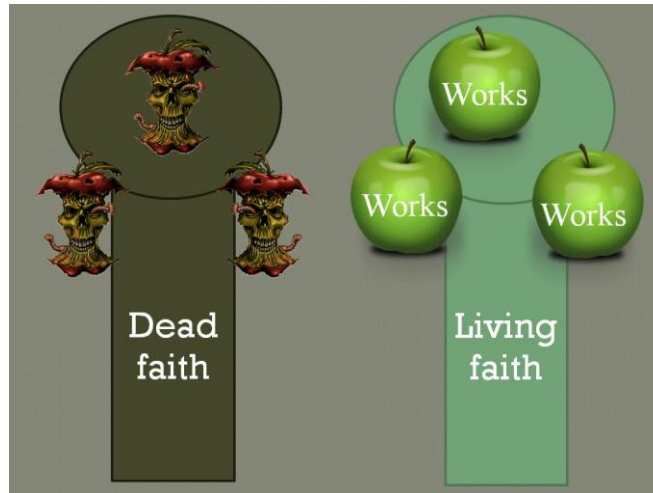


Let me entreat you to stand firm, to stand fast in doctrine. "The importance of this point will clearly appear, for unless our faith be sound, in vain shall we look for correctness in practice. Unless a man believe, his heart to be corrupt he will not seek its transformation. Unless he be sensible of his inability to turn to God, he will not seek the aid of the Holy Spirit. If he think that he can work out his own righteousness, he will not seek to be justified by the alone merits of Christ. If he call in question the proper Deity of Christ, he will not rest his hopes of salvation on a mere man or angelic being. He will not, as did St. Stephen, in the agonies of death, commit his soul into the keeping of his Redeemer. If he do not regard Holy Scripture as the inspired record of Divine truth, he will not come with child-like confidence to its hallowed page to

be taught the way of life. Hence you see the importance of keeping near to the sacred oracles, of holding fast the form of sound words, which is contained in that blessed volume. .... It is by the study of this Sacred volume only, that we can hope to become wise unto salvation. Here is rest for the weary and heavy laden, comfort for the afflicted soul. Here are inexhaustible treasures open to all who will dig for them. Here, says Bishop Jewell, is "manna given to us from Heaven, to feed us in the desert of this world". It is by the scriptures that we learn about being accounted righteous by faith, as the instrument appropriating the righteousness of the Lord Jesus; and that not a dead, but a living faith, working by love, manifesting its existence by its works, known just as the tree is, by its fruits.

This brings him to his second point namely, to see to it, that your lives be consistent with the doctrines which you hold. There are some who, with loud professions of orthodoxy, fail entirely in their practice. They give no evidence in their lives of a heartfelt appreciation of the great saving truths of the Gospel. Their faith is destitute of fruit. Where are the love, the liberality, the zeal, the active exertion, which ought to characterize the true followers of Christ? Where is that meek and forgiving spirit which shone forth so brightly in the victim on the road to Calvary, nay, even in the agonies of death? Where is that strict regard for truth and honesty in all their dealings with their fellow creatures? The Apostle James appears to have had the character of such in his mind, when he wrote, "What doth it profit though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? Can faith save him?" That is, can an inoperative dead faith prove acceptable in the sight of God? No. "For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works," as the evidence of its existence", is dead also." This is a danger against the approach of which, the Christian needs to be ever on his watch. He will be tempted to rest satisfied with the conceded orthodoxy of his views, and while he is priding himself upon it, may, as far as his life is concerned, be sinking into a soul-destroying lethargy, or breaking forth into acts of sin and folly.

Aim, my brothers and sisters, at consistency of life, as well as soundness in doctrine. Let all the world around you take knowledge of you that you "walk with Jesus." Let it appear that there is a vitality in religion, from its influence upon your own personal conduct. I have often expressed the opinion to you, that there is more injury by far done to the cause of religion by the inconsistencies of communicants of the Church, than by any or all infidel attacks whatsoever. Remember this, my beloved brethren, and " Let your conversation," in this particular, " be as it becometh the Gospel of Christ; that, whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of our affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the Gospel."



[He then goes on to speak of the diligent use of the means of grace: prayer, worship the sacraments as indispensable to your running well the race that is set before you. Above all, in the use of these means, seek to possess such an eye of faith as will discern Christ everywhere, —in the Sanctuary, in the Sacraments, in the Scriptures, - in the person of His sincere followers, the branches of the living and true vine, the Members of that one great body, the Church, of which He is the head. Do you want a Prophet to instruct you in Heavenly wisdom? Behold Christ—" the light of the world." Do you stand in need of a Priest to make an atonement for you, and to be your intercessor above? See in Christ the great High Priest of our profession, who has suffered death and passed into the Heavens. Are you in search for a king to rule over you? Behold in Christ, one whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom,' and whose sceptre is a right sceptre.

Christ as true prophet, priest and King. A good Calvinist theme from this evangelical Anglican preacher.

Bancroft's particular concern for education emerges. "To the Superintendent and Teachers of the Sunday School, I would a word in particular. "Yours is a noble work. Prosecute it vigorously in the strength of God. It is a very-trite observation, but no less true, that the young are the hope of the Church. To you along with your Pastor has been entrusted the solemn responsibility of training up these dear children in the way they should go. You have been, preparing for usefulness those who are shortly to become the fathers and mothers in Israel. Your privilege it has been to aid in ripening these precious souls for a happy immortality. May multitude rise up to call you blessed. Let our prayers mutually ascend to the Throne of Grace, that each may be strengthened and blessed. May the Lord prosper you in your interesting work."

His passion for excellence in worship and church music also comes through. "May the Lord abundantly reward the kindness of those who have so cheerfully and so acceptably conducted the praises of the great congregation by giving unto them a double portion of His Holy Spirit that they may be prepared to join the song of angels in the glorified Sanctuary above."

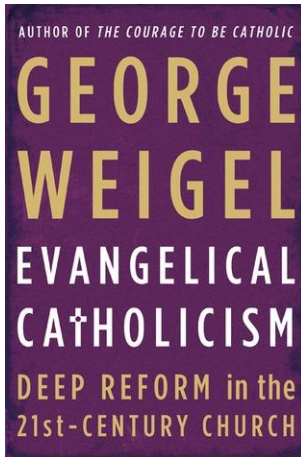


Here is Mrs. Bancroft looking very much the Victorian evangelical lady. Obviously times have changed in many respects.

The village of Cote des Neiges was annexed by Montreal in 1910 and soon became part of the big bad modern world. But our concern for raising the next generation in the faith obviously continues, and the question of the best means to do it is always with us. What partnerships, if any, do we need to forge today with those who share our vision if we are to be fruitful in our participation in God's mission to the world?



My own sense is that we have come to the end of the 500 years of European history marked by the Reformation and Counter-Reformation. And we are on the verge of something new.



George Weigel's recent book is entitled "Evangelical Catholicism". He argues that for the last 500 years that the Roman Catholic Church has been dominated by the reactive theology of the Council of Trent, and preoccupied by a focus on clergy and the institutional structure of the Church. Vatican II marked a decisive shift. The new mission is to empower lay people to re-evangelize society from the grassroots up. It sound, to me, as if our sense of mission within the Universal church - Protestant, Orthodox and Roman Catholic - may be lining up.

This congregation has a rich history and much to be proud of, as it gets ready to face the next 150 years. So how much room is there for co-operation with other Christian bodies as we engage in God's mission to the world? We face some of the same questions as those who preceded us. How central are disagreements about church government? Are they of primary importance or merely secondary matters? And how can we tap into the wisdom of our spiritual ancestors, their theological depth and their powerful ability to articulate and defend their faith in public? I throw that out as a challenge on this anniversary occasion, as we look back in gratitude and as we look forward in hope.



(Hymn: They did not build in vain. (#616 in the 1998 BofP)

1 They did not build in vain  
who founded here a church  
as witness to God's love  
amid a world of pain,  
for still, to those who wish to see,  
this place proclaims God's mystery.

2 They built upon the rock  
that is the risen Lord,  
the one foundation laid  
which stands each earthly shock;  
that, Spirit filled, we here might raise,  
as living temples, prayer and praise.

3 Those who have loved this place,  
a cloud of witnesses,  
surround and urge us on  
as we now run our race,  
and so we lay aside each sin  
in our desire to strive and win.

4 Though the horizon's bend  
conceals the way ahead,  
the footprints on the road  
show Christ waits at the end;  
in him alone our faith shall stand  
who waits for us at God's right hand.

5 In every place our world  
is storm and tempest tossed;  
the flames of fear and hate  
are evil's flags unfurled;  
yet still the Spirit's wind and fire  
pour gifts for service in this hour.

6 Here is our meeting place,  
where doubt finds grounds of faith;  
where hurt finds healing love,  
our penitence your grace;  
where bridging time to eternity  
is God the holy Trinity.