Exhibition – Documentary by the Centre d’histoire de Montréal in collaboration with Archives de la Ville de Montréal

LOST NEIGHBOURHOODS
EXTENDED UNTIL SEPTEMBER 1, 2013
« Ce que j'ai trouvé le plus difficile c'est quand on a vu la démolition se faire. [...] Y'a pu de traces de ton enfance. On peut pu dire "Moi, j'suis née là", "Moi, j'ai grandi là". Ben non, c't'un stationnement, pis une tour. [...] Ça fait une lourdeur en'dans. Ça, ça a été d'une grande tristesse quand on a vu toute se défaire un après l'autre. Ça a été terrible.»

Jeanelle Bouffard, former resident of Faubourg à m'lasse

« J'habite une ville! Depuis belle enfance, j'habite une ville secrète, cachée, enfouie sous les décombres du silence obstiné. »

Pierre Perrault, J'habite une ville, Montréal, Hexagone, p.29.

* All photographs herein are part of the Archives de Montréal collection unless otherwise specified. These images are avaible on demand via André Gauveau, 514 872-9385.
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« L’ère des grands projets a eu des bons côtés parce que ça a mobilisé et ça a soulevé autre chose. [...] Il y a eu des interventions de modernisation qui ont eu des effets néfastes, mais pas juste ça. Y’a eu autre chose aussi. Et je pense que c’est la dynamique entre les deux qui donne un peu le milieu dans lequel on se trouve aujourd’hui. »

Claire Poitras, Director of the Institut national de la recherche scientifique, Urbanization, culture and society
**LOST NEIGHBOURHOODS**

Exhibition – Documentary by the Centre d’histoire de Montréal  
June 15, 2011 – September 1, 2013

A city is not a fixed object. It is a body in perpetual movement and perpetual change. This unassailable logic applied in the disappearance of entire neighbourhoods in Montreal between 1950 and 1975, a period of urban modernization in much of the world. The official reasons for demolition were the unhealthy conditions prevailing in the existing dwellings and the needs created by major projects such as the 1967 World’s Fair and the 1976 Summer Olympic Games. Montreal was at a turning point in its history!

The City undertook the daunting task of creating an inventory of the dwellings slated for destruction, leaving a photographic archive of life in that era to posterity. Wishing to bring these lost neighbourhoods back to life, the Centre d’histoire de Montréal team carried out the task of collecting memories from the former inhabitants of the **Red Light district**, the **Faubourg à m’lasse**, and **Goose Village**, as well as those of experts working for the City and actors in the demolition process.

As soon as they enter the exhibit, visitors come up against the unpleasant evidence that entire neighbourhoods were bulldozed. When it happened, living communities turned into no-man’s-lands.

Continuing through the exhibit, visitors discover that the reason for this mayhem was the determination to solve urban problems by clearing slums and modernizing Montreal to take on the challenges of the post-war 20th century. Urban planners, architects, and engineers active either in a bygone era or today explain the perceived need for urban megaprojects which offered a promise of renewal and the hope of a “Radiant City” whose inhabitants could lead better lives.

In the next section, visitors can peruse the inventory taken by City of Montreal employees: the thousands of residences condemned for demolition that were systematically numbered and photographed. Montrealers of today, witnesses of those times, reveal what their former neighbourhoods were like. The Red Light district, the Faubourg à m’lasse, and Goose Village are recreated in a space that plunges visitors into life milieus that have been lost forever.

The exhibit ends in a space where visitors are questioned on their roles as citizens: their ability to mobilize, to reflect, and to visualize the city of the future.

Media tours, interviews with the exhibition’s conceptors, and visual and audio-visual material are available on demand.

« Ma récompense, c’est d’avoir largement contribué à transformer la ville que déjà nous aimions en ville que nous aimons encore plus. »
Jean Drapeau’s resignation speech, in Benoît Gignac, Le Moine qui rêvait sa ville, Montréal, Éditions La Presse, p.246.

“[...] un centre-ville hérisse d’immeubles de rapport et d’hôtels, ces derniers si neufs d’aspect qu’on les eût cru sortis de leurs caisses la nuit précédente. La Place Ville-Marie. Le métro. L’île Notre-Dame. Habitat [67]. La Place des Arts. Cette corne d’abondance ne pouvait être la ville où j’avais grandi et que j’avais désertée.”
« Ce qu’on appelle le progrès peut nous aveugler beaucoup. À l’époque, on pouvait imaginer que le fait de raser le quartier pour construire de nouveaux logements, des tours que c’était un énorme progrès. Et on pouvait se le souhaiter pour ce motif-là, sans se poser de questions. »

Robert Petrelli, former resident of the Red Light district
«Il y avait pas ce regard moralisateur à l’égard de la pauvreté ou à l’égard de la prostitution. C’était normal. C’était la vie qu’on connaissait.» - Claude Brochu, resident of the Red Light district

«Si les projets qu’on élaborait aujourd’hui étaient aussi ambitieux que ceux qui ont été fait dans les années 1950 et 1960, aussi au fait des défis que nous pose le présent […] On peut faire de Montréal une ville intéressante.» - France Vanlaethem, Professor, Université du Québec à Montréal

"It's just like a death. Part of you, part of your history died that day when they choose to put Expo 67. So you go to that process of grieving the same way as you would go to do a death. because that's something that's loss. The memories are still there […] but the place is not there, people are gone." - Frances Ortuso, former resident of Goose Village

«On jouait beaucoup dans la rue. La rue était extrêmement animée. Y’avait les enfants et y’avait aussi des prostituées. […] Y’avait un dialogue entre les gens qui se promenaient dans la rue et les gens qui étaient accoudés aux fenêtres.» - Robert Petrelli, former resident of the Red Light district

«L'urbanisme ça vous concerne, ça vous regarde et vous devriez vous y intéresser davantage. […] Qu’est-ce qui se passe en matière d’urbanisme, ça concerne tout le monde. Ça a des impacts sur tout le monde. Être citoyen devrait vouloir dire être interpellé par les questions d’urbanisme, les questions d’architecture, les questions de paysages.» - Gérard Beaudet, Professor of Urban Planning, Université de Montréal

"Everybody was a first time immigrant, basically from the other side and they had to keep together, they had to stay together. You know, most of them didn’t even know how to read and write, so they needed each other. […] So, they used to help each other. I think that's what kept everybody together.” - Sigismondo Gagliardi, former resident of Goose Village

«Quand on parle de notre enfance, de ce quartier là, on a des bons souvenirs. La façon de vivre c’tait plus semblable […] à un milieu d’la campagne en ville […]. C’tait pas anonyme. Tu vivais pas là pour t’isoler. […] Y’avait beaucoup de liens, d’interactions. C’tait pas riche, mais c’était des gens généreux.» - Jeannelle Bouffard, former resident of the Faubourg à m’lasse

«Je trouve ça vraiment essentiel de ne pas se faire marcher dessus. […] On a pas forcément tous les mêmes moyens de comprendre les choses, mais c’est pas pour autant qu’il faut se laisser passer sur le dos, que ce soit par une autoroute ou du monde qui vient démolir ta maison. C’est quand même un droit fondamental.» - Sophie Thiébaut, Mobilisation Turcot

"What is a city? A city is not just skyscrapers and emptiness at five o’clock in the afternoon. A city is a vibrant living thing and it shouldn’t just be a parking area or a work area. It should be a living area." - Brian Merret, Photographer who collaborated with the Westmount Action Committee against the Ville-Marie Expressway
« Lorsque le grand train, The Montrealer, entra en gare Windsor en 1965, mon esprit, naturellement, agita tous mes souvenirs du Montréal d’autrefois. Quel choc j’égrouvai quand je découvris que ce Montréal n’existait plus ! Beaucoup des endroits que j’avais aimés le plus étaient tombés sous le pic des démolisseurs et avaient été remplacés par des édifices modernes. Le Samovar avait disparu, un lot vacant le remplaçait. Comme Montréal se préparait pour l’Exposition universelle, elle devenait très consciente de son image. Plusieurs des choses que j’avais aimées le plus ne cadraient plus dans la nouvelle conception que la ville se donnait d’elle-même. »

Le Centre d’histoire de Montréal

The Centre d’histoire de Montréal, created in 1983, is a city museum located in a former fire station, a unique heritage site.

On the museum's ground floor, the permanent exhibition, Montreal Five Times, offers a historical survey of the city from 1535 until today. The open-ended nature of the exhibition invites visitors to walk through the city itself to rediscover traces of history in it.

Above all, the museum focuses on Montrealers' everyday activities and their life stories. The Centre d’histoire’s temporary exhibitions showcase the city, its inhabitants, and their experiences. We have been encouraged by the success of two recent exhibitions, The Adventures of the Unpredictable Dr Bethune, and Modern Montreal.

The Centre d’histoire is also a centre of animation for the city, which is why it initiates activities throughout the city's territory. Although its tours are appropriate for both children and adults, the emphasis is on primary-school children and high-school students new to Quebec in French-language welcome classes.

What distinguishes the Centre d’histoire is a community and social orientation which centres on the memories of Montrealers. The institution wishes to be a base for the gathering of the first-hand accounts offered by citizens. The museum's intangible heritage orientation can be seen in both its memory clinics and in the "You’re part of history!" integration program for high schools.

The museum offers its expertise to cultural communities, companies, boroughs, and neighbourhoods in their memory-gathering initiatives and commemoration events. Its mission is to bring the public to discover and appreciate the valuable memories rooted in the territory, heritage, and history of Montreal. The Lost Neighbourhoods exhibition illustrates the value given by the Centre d’histoire to intangible heritage and its option for a museological approach in which citizens are active participants.

By relying on the gathering and curating of intangible heritage, the Centre d’histoire de Montréal has become a front-line actor in the presentation of the city's history, especially its recent past, and is well positioned to accompany its present and future transformations.
A word from the director

"You’re part of history!" is the Centre d’histoire’s message to all Montrealers – whatever their interests, occupations or origins – through its exhibitions, educational activities, and projects in the boroughs.

Their everyday experience of the city and its neighbourhoods – of its places and events – adds a human dimension to the knowledge found in the written and visual archives. It also reveals the hidden history of buildings and streets, the places that constitute our common heritage, rendering it more accessible and evocative for the majority of citizens.

For individual memories to enrich our collective memory, we must know how to present them advantageously, but also how to dig into them, even challenge them, to get the best from them.

Montreal’s cultural diversity is often highlighted as a distinguishing feature of Quebec’s metropolis. To fully reveal this diversity, the Centre d’histoire has directed its attention to the city’s inhabitants, training its cameras on them and holding out its microphones to them. Gradually, by means of several projects, not only a diversity of origins, languages, and traditions has been revealed, but also the diversity of opinions, human experiences, and ways of life that makes the urban scene so fascinating and enriching.

Starting ten years ago, the Centre d’histoire de Montréal has patiently carried out the task of listening to Montrealers and showcasing their memories at the museum and in city boroughs. The CHM is interested in both the tangible and intangible heritage of the city and of its citizens, who hold the keys to important aspects of Montreal’s history. The Lost Neighbourhoods exhibition is an opportunity for the institution to publicly reaffirm this ever-growing commitment.

Jean-François Leclerc
Catherine Charlebois  
Project director, oral history and memory

Autumn, 2009: the massive project of the Lost Neighbourhoods exhibition was launched. Over 6000 photographs of the Archives of the City of Montreal documenting the former neighbourhoods were our inspiration. Our objective was to bring three working-class neighbourhoods, the Red Light district, the Fauboug à m’lasse and Goose Village, back to life. Between the 1950s and 1970s, major urban renewal projects – the construction of Les Habitations Jeanne-Mance, the Radio-Canada tower, the infrastructures for Expo 67, and the Ville-Marie expressway – resulted in the expropriation, eviction, and displacement of more than 20,000 people from older inner-city neighbourhoods.

The collection of information took place in two stages. Documentary research brought data, statistics, maps, plans, and written, photographic, and audio-visual records of these neighbourhoods and of the movement to modernize the city. Parallel to the documentary research, for nine months, the field team carried out 43 filmed interviews involving 55 participants, a total of over 100 hours of shooting. Thirty-nine former residents, 7 planners active during the crucial period, and 9 present-day experts give their views on past and present transformations of the city.

The interviews carried out have given us a story which is at the same time knowledgeable and detailed, individual and collective, human and emotional – the story of the great urban upheaval that metamorphosed Montreal in the second half of the 20th century. The interviews have given a voice to the citizens who were uprooted, to professionals who explain the issues of the period, and to today’s observers who evaluate its legacy. Taken as a whole, this testimony has forged a discourse that allows us to reflect on the past and to dream of the Montreal of the future.

Stéphanie Lacroix  
Researcher-interviewer

Lost Neighbourhoods is the 50 people who were willing to talk to me, as well as all Montrealers, for their memories, opinions, and expertise. The process began by an intensive search for potential participants: former residents, period experts and contemporary observers. Ingenuity and patience were needed to locate these guardians of memory, as it wasn’t easy to track them down decades after the events. Public announcements, newspaper advertisements, telephone calls, word of mouth, and social networking: all these strategies were used!

From Bolton to Saint-Sauveur and from LaSalle to Pointe-aux-Trembles, accompanied by Marc or Antonio with their cameras and occasionally by Bernard for the sound equipment, I was able to gather hundreds, even thousands of memories. Over a cup of coffee and tasty homemade cake, the Landrys, Petrellis, Brochus, Gagliettas, Pauzés and others showed me their photo albums and told me stories of their lives in neighbourhoods that have been forgotten by the majority of Montrealers today. It was with laughter in their voices, tears in their eyes and feelings of poignant nostalgia that they so generously shared their treasure chests of memories and anecdotes, like precious little gifts. Needless to say, listening to them stirred a whole range of emotions in me. In a way, no more no less, they were entrusting me with THEIR parcel of history, THEIR life moments, THEIR Montreal.
Ms Helen Fotopulos
Member of the Executive Committee of the City of Montreal, responsible for culture, heritage, design, and women’s issues

In November 18, 1983, the Centre d’histoire de Montréal came into being thanks to the collaboration between the Quebec government and the City of Montreal. The signing of the first Agreement between the Ministère des Affaires Culturelles du Québec and the City in 1979 made it possible to open an institution, which since then, has revealed the history and heritage of Montrealers and their city. Here, visitors can get a real feeling of the city of yesterday and today. They discover the inhabitants' ways of life, their culture, their past and their present, and understand a little better how Montreal's identity was forged.

The City is proud of what the Centre d'histoire has become: its contribution to the personality of our metropolis is unique. For more than thirty years now, with competence and talent, it has fulfilled its educational mission and its role of cultural disseminator in a manner that is welcoming, accessible, collaborative, and innovative.

In 2009, we decided it was high time for a makeover of the former fire station that houses the Centre d’histoire. Built at the beginning of the last century, its architectural features make it a stand-out in Old Montreal.

The City has invested over three million dollars for the building's protection. In addition, the Ministère de la Culture, des Communications et de la Condition féminine du Québec contributed $161,400. for the updating of the Centre d'histoire's permanent exhibition, a project which is now underway, with our collaboration. A development plan recently submitted upon a recommendation by the City's Executive Committee confirms the CHM’s role of urban animator, particularly in the highlighting of the value of the memories of Montrealers and the city's cultural diversity.

With the aim of placing its expertise at the service of citizens, over the years, the CHM has developed a variety of collection and presentation tools that can be put to use in the boroughs and with various associated partners, on the occasion of an anniversary or other historical interpretation activities. We are happy to be able to offer Montrealers unique opportunities to get to know their city better, to appropriate their history and to understand its development, both at the museum and in their neighbourhoods. In this way, the museum’s actions foster feelings of pride and belonging among us. Through this institution, the City is saying to all its citizens, to quote the Centre d’histoire's slogan: “You’re part of history!”

Together with our public partners, we hope that in the coming years, even more Montrealers and visitors from all around the world will be able to take full advantage of what the Centre d'histoire de Montréal has to offer.
Our exhibition partner: the Section des archives de la Direction du greffe de la Ville de Montréal

The mission of the Section des archives de la Direction du greffe de la Ville de Montréal is to acquire the institutional and private documents that constitute the archival heritage of the municipality, ensuring their treatment, preservation and dissemination to researchers and the general public. The Archives' intention is to make Montreal's history accessible to all by means of every possible channel: on its Internet site and through the social media, in the consultation room at City Hall, and in collaborative projects such as *Lost Neighbourhoods*.

The Archives de Montréal and the Centre d'histoire de Montréal have collaborated for ten years, creating exhibitions like *Johnny... and the parks. Montréal's parks in photographs 1953-1963* and *Wired: City Life and Montréal's Commission des services électriques, 1914 to 1933.*

[ville.montreal.qc.ca/archives](http://ville.montreal.qc.ca/archives)

The National Film Board of Canada CinéRobothèque

To accompany the *Lost Neighbourhoods* exhibition on display at the Centre d'histoire de Montréal, the CineRobotheque, the National Film Board of Canada’s downtown showcase on Saint-Denis Street, invites visitors to enjoy a selection of films at its 21 personal viewing stations. Admission is free. This is a unique opportunity to find out more about lost neighbourhoods and discover Montreal in a novel way by exploring the NFB’s abundant collection of films that celebrate the city’s architecture, cultural mosaic and counterculture. For groups, the CineRobotheque also offers *Postcards from Montreal*, a chance to tour the city, past and present, via a selection of clips from NFB films commented on by a group leader.

**On-site viewing of NFB films**

Admission: Free  
Hours: Tuesday to Sunday from noon to 9 P.M.

**Postcards from Montreal (group activity – reservation required)**

Admission: $7 per person  
When: Monday to Sunday between 9 a.m. and 9 p.m. (length: 2 hours)

**NFB CineRobotheque**

1564 Saint-Denis Street, Montreal  
514 496-6887  
www.nfb.ca/cinerobotheque
The Accès culture network’s program in boroughs all over Montreal

accesculture.com

The following exhibitions and activities are only offered in french.

Exhibitions

**Borough of St. Laurent**

**Découvrir le passé au présent : au cœur du Vieux-Saint-Laurent**

November 19, 2011 to January 23, 2012

Centre des loisirs de Saint-Laurent
1375, rue Grenet
514 855-6110

This exhibition presents unique places that influenced the course of the history of St. Laurent. Some 30 photographs bring back the years between 1950 and 1980, taking us through the landscape of St. Laurent during this crucial period, showing us how the borough's territory developed and what these lost neighbourhoods have become today.

In collaboration with the Musée des maîtres et artisans du Québec and the support of Yves Ouellette, who directed the project.

**Borough of Rivière-des-Prairies—Pointe-aux-Trembles**

**Le pont-tunnel Louis-Hippolyte-La Fontaine : une œuvre moderne sur les traces du passé**

May 28 to September 4, 2011

Maison Beaudry
14 678, rue Notre-Dame Est
514 872-2240

Presented by the Atelier d’histoire de la Longue-Pointe.

During the 1960s, the construction of Lafontaine Tunnel caused the disappearance of part of Longue Pointe, a community whose origins date from the French regime. Learn more about the history of the village, its industrial development and communication routes as well as the impacts of the tunnel’s construction, a true engineering feat.
Borough of Rivière-des-Prairies—Pointe-aux-Trembles

Pointe-aux-Trembles, d’hier à aujourd’hui : un patrimoine à préserver

Permanent exhibition
Centre communautaire Roussin
12 125, rue Notre-Dame Est
514 645-4519

Presented by the Atelier d’histoire de la Pointe-aux-Trembles.

The destruction by fire of 60 homes in the village of Pointe-aux-Trembles in 1912, the Convent of the Nuns of the Congregation of Notre-Dame in 1922, and Montreal’s oldest church in 1937, along with the effects of the two World Wars and the Great Depression, all contributed to the impoverishment of the community of Pointe-aux-Trembles, and diminished the quality and quantity of its housing. A comparison between about 60 archival photographs of heritage buildings and recent photographs of these same places will show visitors whether the buildings have disappeared, been made over, or been preserved.

Borough of Verdun

Au bord de l’eau, au fil du temps

July 4 – September 30, 2011
Borough City Hall
4555, rue de Verdun

October 3 – December 2, 2011
Centre culturel de Verdun
5955, rue Bannantyne
514 765-7170

December 5, 2011 – March 2, 2012
Centre communautaire Elgar
260, rue Elgar
514 765-7270

The waterfront, that fascinating window on the river, has always been a defining part of Verdun—a pole of attraction, an unforgettable scene, and an undeniable asset. In a conversation, anyone who knows Verdun will mention the presence of the St. Lawrence, the park along the shore, and the opportunity for strolling that it offers. The waterfront has never failed to make a strong impression. Presented by the Borough of Verdun, the exhibition *Flow of water, flow of time* tells a story, takes us on a voyage, and pays tribute to this legendary stretch of shoreline. It was here that the famous Maison Nivard-de-Saint-Dizier, one of the oldest houses on the Island, was built in 1710. The site has yielded evidence that previously, it had been occupied by First Nations peoples. At the beginning of the 20th century, wharfs and pavilions appeared along the shore, and a ferry boat even made the crossing between Verdun and Laprairie. Then, in the 1930s, when Verdun was in the midst of a period of rapid growth,
the Auditorium and the Natatorium, two structures whose reputation needs no further comment, were built. In the 1960s and 70s, major landfill projects reconfigured the waterfront. From 1985 until today, tree-planting, landscaping, and accessibility have continued to make the waterfront an irresistible magnet.

Activities

Borough of Saint-Laurent

• Visite commentée du territoire de Saint-Laurent
  
  Sunday, October 2, 2011, at 2 P.M.
  Departure from the Centre des loisirs de Saint-Laurent.
  
  Presented by l’Autre Montréal.
  In the framework of Les Journées de la culture, the Borough of St. Laurent invites the community to take a bus tour to discover aspects of the political, religious, social, economic, and institutional history of Old St. Laurent. This guided tour presents the evolution of the occupation and planning of the community as well as the figures who stand out in its history.

• Les Compagnons de Saint-Laurent : une belle page d’histoire théâtrale
  
  Monday, January 23, 2012, at 7:30 P.M.
  This presentation of an important chapter in the history of Quebec theatre is a survey of the 15 years of activity of theatre company Les Compagnons de Saint-Laurent. From 1937 to 1952, under the direction of Father Émile Legault, this group attracted many of Quebec’s best-known artists, including Georges Groulx, Jean Coutu, Jean-Louis Roux, Félix Leclerc, Jean Duceppe, Thérèse Cadorette, Lionel Villeneuve, Jacques Létourneau, Bertrand Gagnon, Gabriel Gascon, Charlotte Boisjoly, Hélène Loiselle, Jean Gascon, Guy Provost, and Jean-Pierre Masson.

Borough of Verdun

Visites guidées de L’Autre Montréal, collectif d’animation urbaine

  Saturdays: August 27, September 10, and September 24, 2011.
  From 10 A.M. to 12:30 P.M.
  Information : 514 765-7170

Media contact for the Accès culture network

Karine Cousineau
514 382-4844
karinecousineau@bellnet.ca
The Centre d’histoire de Montréal

Practical information

The mission of the Centre d’histoire de Montréal, the city’s own history museum, is to transmit a better understanding of the city, its cultural diversity and both its tangible and intangible heritage. Through public engagement, the museum offers its expertise to citizens and seeks to integrate their stories and mementos into upcoming exhibits and activities. It reveals how Montrealers have forged the urban environment and defined the metropolis’ identity.

335, place D’Youville
Old Montreal (Québec)
Place d’Armes or Square Victoria Metro stations

Opening hours
Tuesday to Sunday
10 A.M. – 5 P.M.

Admission fee
Adults $6
Students $4
Seniors $5

Special rates for groups and holders of an Accès Montréal or Montreal Museums pass.

Information
514 872-3207
ville.montreal.qc.ca/chm

Media contact
André Gauvreau
andregauvreau@ville.montreal.qc.ca
514 872 9385

Guided tours organized by the Centre d’histoire de Montréal

Guided walking tours are offered by the Centre d’histoire de Montréal in autumn 2011 and spring 2012 in three of Montreal’s lost neighbourhoods: the Red Light district, Faubourg à m’l’as and Goose Village.

Watch for them on our Internet site and Facebook page.