

PLACE ROYALE

Downtown Moves Uptown

A Place Names Expedition

Montréal 





The territory of Montréal was first systematically organized by the Society of Saint-Sulpice. As the island's feudal landlords, they granted land to settlers within a system of parallel lots along the shore of the St. Lawrence River called *côtes*.

In July 1672, François Dollier de Casson, father superior the Sulpicians, redrew the city's road network. His goal was to facilitate access to the new Notre-Dame Church that was to be built in the heart of this new network and organize the city's development around a grid system. Accompanied by the surveyor and court clerk Bénigne Basset, Dollier de Casson laid out new streets, named them, and put up boundary markers. At this time, the city had ten streets, the main artery being Rue Notre-Dame.

Since the city was initially encircled by a wooden palisade, and later by stone fortifications completed in the 1730s, urban expansion was limited. Nevertheless, narrow roads began to form among the existing grid, and *faubourgs*, or small suburbs, sprang up outside the city gates. After demolition of the fortifications was approved in 1801, the subsequent opening up of the city led to changes in both the road network and its toponymy, since streets in the *faubourgs* often met up with old streets named by Dollier de Casson.

Montréal's significant growth in the early 20th century led to the creation of a large number of new toponyms. This period was marked especially by a refinement of the place-naming process.

Today, Montréal's city council is the decision-making body in matters of toponymy. However, before being adopted by city council, each planned designation is first studied by the *Comité de toponymie*

de la Ville de Montréal, the city's toponymy committee, whose members are selected on the basis of their training, their experience, or their knowledge of Montréal's history, geography, culture, development, or a related field. The decisions are then submitted to the provincial body, the *Commission de toponymie du Québec*, to have their status officialized.

THE NAMING OF A CITY

Montréal's body of place names, which today includes some 5,993 toponyms, reflects the values of Montréal society at different times in its history, and especially to the ideologies of the city's founders. The co-existence of toponyms with different linguistic origins reflects the city's French character, but also its English side and, more recently, its increasingly multi-ethnic nature.

Because Montréal's city council was made up primarily of English-speakers for nearly a century, official documents during this period were written in English, and English generic terms were naturally employed. These were later transferred directly into French because of their written similarity. This is why Montréal has boulevards, avenues and squares whose physical appearance and urban reality differ somewhat from the definitions set out by the *Commission de toponymie du Québec*. Some generic terms that are today understood by their French meanings were in fact named using the English term.

A great many of Montréal's street names honor local, political or religious figures, writers, union activists, and artists. Many toponyms recognize former landowners or citizen who were especially active in their community. Still others commemorate foreign figures who played significant roles locally or internationally.



A BRIEF HISTORY OF MONTRÉAL'S STREET SIGNS

The first division of Montréal into separate municipal districts also served as an ideal occasion to improve its toponomic signage. This story begins on April 4, 1818, when planks of wood displaying street names were placed at intersections and in public squares. Later, at a city council session on July 26, 1833, Mayor Jacques Viger tabled the proposal of a Montréal painter named David Laurent to prepare and install wooden street signs painted different colours to identify the new municipal districts. Indeed, a Rue David-Laurent, named in 1978, commemorates this period in the history of Montréal's toponymy. On August 27, 1851, Charles Wilson (1808–1877), Montréal's first mayor elected by the public, renewed the mandate of the city's road committee to identify parks and streets with wooden signs and give all houses a visible number. At the time, street names were identified in both English and French.

Around 1960, the city's street signs had a very peculiar characteristic: on one side the street name was in French, and on the other it was in English. Later, the city administration decided to place French street signs in French areas of the city and English signs in English areas. This practice was eventually discontinued; modern street signs bear the city's logo and respect the language of origin of the specific toponym but employ the French generic term, as in *chemin Queen-Mary*.

In 1905, “east” and “west” streets were officially created, with building numbers increasing outward from Boulevard Saint-Laurent. However, numbering was revised on several occasions, especially when roads were extended or merged together, and was finally standardized in the 1930s.



Rue du Port

July 13, 1816



This street originally bore the name Dumont, in reference to Eustache Lambert Dumont, who opened it in 1739. Rue Dumont accessed a subdivision on the western portion of the former lands of Louis-Hector de Callière, the title to which Dumont had inherited through his wife.

The 1790s saw an increase in port activities in this section of Old Montréal. Fur traders had been storing birch-bark canoes in a large shed here for many years, and the Blondeau and Berthelet piers were just upstream and downstream respectively from the end of the street. The constantly increasing port traffic led to a number of other facilities being built in this area long before Montréal was formally designated as a port in 1830. The street name commemorates a time when the shoreline along Pointe à Callière was the site of the Montréal's port.



Place D'Youville

December 16, 1901



Place D'Youville extends from Place Royale to Rue McGill. Its elongated configuration stems from its origins as a space kept in reserve between the city fortifications and the walled-in estate of the Hôpital général of the Grey Nuns. In the two decades following the dismantling of the fortifications between 1804 and 1810, very little was done with this land aside from the opening of Rue des Enfants-Trouvés and the construction of several bridges across the Petite rivière Saint-Pierre, which emptied into the St. Lawrence at Pointe à Callière. The city magistrates had a livestock market built on the eastern portion of the land.

After a request from the magistrates in 1827, the legislative assembly established a marketplace on the western portion of the land and conferred its management upon a council of trustees, who launched a large-scale project to build a huge two-story neoclassical stone building. In addition to housing the market, the building would be used for various public



functions. Construction began in 1832 based on plans by John Wells and John Thompson, and the building was inaugurated in the spring of 1834. An integral part of the project was the canalization of the Petite rivière Saint-Pierre, which allowed refuse to be eliminated underground and kept the cellars cool.

In 1842, the city expropriated the market and took it over in an attempt to put an end to conflicts involving market regulations. But a year later, Montréal was named the capital of the Province of Canada, and in 1844 the Parliament was located in the Marché Sainte-Anne. The building was renovated with offices at street level and assembly rooms on the upper floor, and a wooden market hall was built to the north-east. But in 1849, after an act was passed to provide compensation for losses stemming from the rebellions, angry Tories set fire to the parliament building, and the parliamentary seat was moved out of Montréal.

In 1851, a new market designed by architect George Brown was built on the site of the burned down parliament building. The neighboring wooden market was demolished in 1860, and in 1871, the city built a fish market there (the current site of the Centre d'histoire de Montréal). During the second half of the 19th century, import-export warehouse stores began to set up shop around the market and this created tensions, with major merchants complaining about the traffic this created in the surrounding streets. In 1899, the market commission ceded to their demands and recommended that the Marché Sainte-Anne be demolished, which took place in 1901. On December 16 of that year, the new square created by the demolition was named in honor of Marguerite d'Youville, nee Dufrost de Lajemmerais, founder of the Grey Nuns, who ran the neighbouring Hôpital général. The western portion of Place D'Youville, opposite the new Grand Trunk Railway headquarters on Rue McGill, was then turned into a park, but by the 1920s it had become a parking lot. The city fire department's main fire station was built on the square in 1903 along Rue Saint-Pierre. Since 1983, the building has been home to the Centre d'histoire de Montréal. The area behind the fire station was also used as a parking lot until the end of the 20th century.

Since 1996, this new public square has had a central sidewalk, evoking the canalized Petite rivière Saint-Pierre, and a latticework of walkways of different materials recalls the many historical pathways that once connected the buildings around the square with the rest of the city, the suburbs and the St. Lawrence. The new arrangement was completed in 1999 in the easternmost portion of the square. In 2001, Montréal formalized the use of the upper case for French articles at the beginning of personal names used in toponyms, so the square is now called *place D'Youville*.



Place de la Grande-Paix-de-Montréal

April 17, 2001



The treaty of the Great Peace of Montréal, signed between France and 39 North American First Nations, was the fruit of many years of negotiations, and its signing marked the end of nearly a century of conflict among these different nations. To illustrate the scale of the event, 1,300 Native Americans came to Montréal in August 1701 to sign the treaty, while Montréal's population at the time was a mere 1,200. These events took place on the site of Pointe à Callière, where the Pointe-à-Callière museum stands today.



Rue De Callière

August 29, 1899



Rue De Callière is a small street parallel to Rue Saint-Pierre. It bears the name of Louis-Hector de Callière (1640–1703), governor of Montréal from 1684 to 1699 and governor general of New France starting in 1699. Callière built his residence on the site of the fort constructed by Paul de Chomedey de Maisonneuve when Ville-Marie was founded. Vacant since the fort's demolition, the land was granted to him by the Sulpicians in 1688. The new owner had a right of way on the small spit of land that had not been granted, but it is not known if a road was built at this time to take advantage of the right of way. When they granted the rest of the point (current site of the main building of Pointe-à-Callière, Montréal Museum of Archaeology and History) in 1793, the Sulpicians expressly left a passageway nearly four metres wide. In 2001, Montréal formalized the use of the upper case for French articles at the beginning of personal names used in toponyms, so it is now called *rue De Callière*.



Place Royale

April 22, 1892



Nestled among Rue Saint-François-Xavier, Rue Saint-Paul, Rue Saint-Sulpice and Rue de la Commune, the Place Royale of today should not be confused with the point of land that Champlain named *place Royale* in 1611. Champlain's *place Royale* was, in reality, Pointe à Callière, where Maisonneuve built his fort 30 years later. Today's Place Royale was initially part of the commons, a strip of land granted to the *habitants* to as pasturelands for their livestock. As the city grew and the land gained value, the Sulpicians took it back to parcel it out into smaller lots, and a new commons was established south-west of the city. In 1676, the Sulpicians granted the *habitants* a piece of land in the heart of the old commons, on the site of the fur fair, to be used as a public square. This grant was confirmed by judge Ailleboust des Musseaux, and the square was used as a marketplace twice a week, on



Tuesdays and Fridays from sunrise to 11 a.m. The square was also used for military drills and took on the name of Place d'Armes. The square's status as a market was formalized in 1706 by the intendant Raudot.

The name Place d'Armes was used until a fire in 1721 caused military drills to be moved to a site near Notre-Dame Church that would later be enlarged and become the new Place d'Armes. The square in the lower town, which had become the economic heart of the city, then began to be called Place du Marché. In 1786, the justices of the peace decreed that the market be arranged in a double row of 38 stalls in a "U" shape. That same year, a fund-raising campaign among the city's inhabitants allowed Place du Marché to become the city's first paved road. In 1808, with the opening of a new market (in what is today's Place Jacques-Cartier), the old market site was reorganized and reduced to a single row of 14 stalls. After the sale of the *maison de pesée* (or weigh house) and the market hall in 1836, the old market ceased to exist. In 1838, the square was spruced up with trees, wrought-iron fences and a fountain, and was renamed Square de la Douane after the customs house that occupied the middle of the square. The name Place Royale was conferred in 1892, on the occasion of the 250th anniversary of the founding of Montréal.

In 1940, the monument to Montréal's founders was moved from Place D'Youville to Place Royale, before being returned to its original location in 1982 when a major archeological dig took place at Place Royale. This square was the centre of life in Montréal for a very long time. It was where royal orders and decrees were publicly read and the arrival point for *charivaris* - noisy mock celebrations which sometimes followed marriages that broke certain social norms. It was where criminals were tortured and executed and the site of more than one duel, the most famous of which pitted governor François-Marie Perrot against Jacques Le Moyne de Sainte-Hélène in 1684.



Rue de la Commune ouest

June 22, 1970



The origin of the name of Rue de la Commune goes back almost to the founding of Montréal. In 1651, Paul de Chomedey de Maisonneuve, governor of Montréal, granted a commons consisting of a strip of land along the river that was one “arpent” wide (58.4 metres) by 40 arpents long (2.3 km) to Jean de Saint-Père (1618–1657) on behalf of the population of Ville-Marie. As the city grew, however, the commons soon lost its usefulness as pastureland.

In 1806–1807, as the fortifications were being demolished, the commissioners in charge of development had piers built between Place Royale and Place Jacques-Cartier. They opened up a new street called Rue des Commissaires. Farther west, the section of the street along the banks of Pointe à Callière, which had existed since at least 1792, was called Chemin des Quais. On June 22, 1970, the street was renamed Rue de la Commune in reference to the colony’s beginnings.



Rue de la Capitale

17th century



Rue de la Capitale is made up of two stretches on either side of Place Royale. Based on archived plans and documents, it is believed that the street name is associated with the layout of the fortifications, the *capitale* referring to the line dividing a bastion into two equal parts. On Catalogne's plan of 1713, the eastern part of Rue de la Capitale corresponds to the *capitale* of a bastion of the wooden palisade encircling the city at the time.

Because of its proximity to the market, this was a very busy street in the 18th century. It was home to the bakery, the king's storehouse, and a number of cabarets and inns. Guards who kept the peace on market days were housed in a guardhouse located at the intersection of the street and the square. It was also on this street that Fleury Mesplet began printing *La Gazette du commerce et littéraire* in 1778, which would later become the English-language daily *The Gazette*.



Ruelle Chagouamigon

Before 1683



The name of this lane appears in a 1683 description of a land grant to Martin Massé. Located near the Montréal fur market, it was at the time bordered by small lots occupied by shops and cabarets. The name *Chagouamigon* recalls a trading post that the famous *coureurs des bois* Pierre-Esprit Radisson and Médard Chouart des Groseillers set up on the shores of Lake Superior around 1660. There were two other small lanes nearby around this time called Michilimakinac and Outaouaise, names that were also associated with the fur trade.

After 1710, municipal, military and feudal authorities were looking to put an end to the significant disarray in this area and better protect this part of the city. Some streets were removed altogether (including a street nicknamed “rue d’enfer” or street of hell), while others were moved or extended. Ruelle Chagouamigon took on its current alignment during this restructuring of the lot plan, and today this tiny dark lane takes us back to a time of narrow shop-lined alleys that came alive during the fur trading fairs of the 17th century.



Rue Saint-Paul ouest

1673



Shortly after the foundation of Ville-Marie, the colonists used a road alongside the commons that was granted to the *habitants* in 1651. The Sulpicians eventually reclaimed the commons land, and in 1673 they officially created Rue Saint-Paul, based on a general plan drawn up in 1672, on the existing road along the northern border of the commons. Though named Rue Saint-Paul, the name also evokes the memory of Paul de Chomedey de Maisonneuve, Montréal's first governor.

Centred on Place Royale, the marketplace until 1803, Rue Saint-Paul was the city's most important commercial artery for many years. It was also home to prestigious buildings such as the Indendant's residence (1698) and the Château de Vaudreuil (1724). In the 19th century, Old Montreal became the hub of Montréal's newspaper sector, with some dozen-odd French and English political and literary newspapers setting up shop on Rue Saint-Paul. At the time, the street bustled with life day and night; lined with shops, it was the only thoroughfare in the city to have oil streetlights.





Rue Saint-Sulpice

Rue Saint-Sulpice

September 14, 1863



Originally known as Rue Saint-Joseph (the street ran along the land of the Hôtel-Dieu hospital operated by the Hospitalers of Saint Joseph), it was given the name Rue Saint-Sulpice on September 14, 1863, in honor of the religious order founded by Jean-Jacques Olier and of the role of the Sulpicians as feudal landlords of the island of Montréal and as parish priests.



ESTATE OF THE HOSPITALERS OF SAINT JOSEPH

In the mid-19th century, Montréal underwent an economic boom that heightened the downtown core's commercial role and led to the reallocation of some buildings and lands. Among the institutions most sensitive to these changes were religious communities located in the old town since the 17th century. At this time, the Hospitalers of Saint Joseph decided to move their Hôtel-Dieu hospital outside of the downtown area in favor of a healthier and less noisy location. Starting in 1861, they built a series of warehouses on the site of their former hospital, which they leased to various companies. Within this complex, the Hospitalers laid out three streets: Rue De Brésolles, Rue Le Royer and Rue Saint-Dizier, which they ceded to the city in 1871.



Rue Le Royer



Rue

Le Royer ouest

September 13, 1871

This street name commemorates the role of Jérôme Le Royer de la Dauversière, founder of the Société de Notre-Dame, which was itself responsible for the founding of Montreal. The portion of the street west of Rue Saint-Laurent was closed to traffic in 1982 during an upgrade and renovation project of the old Hôtel-Dieu stores. It has since borne the name “Cours Le Royer.”

Rue

Saint-Dizier

Before 1801

Rue Saint-Dizier is an extension of Ruelle Saint-Dizier, which is located south of Rue Saint-Paul. The name pays tribute to Étienne Nivard de Saint-Dizier, a trader and landowner along this street.

Rue

De Brésoles

September 13, 1871

Rue De Brésoles, which links Rue Saint-Dizier to Rue Saint-Sulpice, recognizes Judith Moreau de Brésoles, a sister of the Religious Hospitalers of Saint Joseph. She came from France in 1659 to run the Hôtel-Dieu de Montréal, founded by Jeanne Mance, and was its first mother superior.

In 2001, Montréal formalized the use of the upper case for articles at the beginning of personal names used in toponyms, so the street is now called “Rue De Brésoles.”



Boulevard Saint-Laurent

1720



North of Rue Saint-Antoine, Boulevard Saint-Laurent was originally the road leading to Saint-Laurent parish on the northern end of the island of Montréal. The road ran between the estate of Lambert Closse (1618–1662), one of Ville-Marie’s original colonists, and the former lands of Jacques Archambault. Inside the city, François Dollier de Casson had laid out a short street called Rue Saint-Lambert in 1672 (believed to be named after the owner of an adjacent lot), which linked Rue Notre-Dame with Rue Saint-Jacques. When the stone fortifications were built during the 1720s and 30s, Saint-Laurent gate, the main gate leading to the countryside north of the city, connected Rue Saint-Lambert to the old Saint-Laurent parish road.

Montréal’s city council only gave the name of Boulevard Saint-Laurent to the entire artery in 1905. The boulevard’s designation as the dividing line between the eastern and western ends of the city was also formalized at this time, a decision that gave birth to the current civic address system. Finally, in 1914, the Congrégation de Notre-Dame ceded a portion of its lands to the city, and the buildings were demolished to extend Boulevard Saint-Laurent down to the river, thereby facilitating access between the port and neighborhoods to the north and the countryside.





Aldred Building
Rue Notre-Dame Ouest

Rue Notre-Dame ouest

1672



In the early 1670s, the Sulpicians – spiritual leaders of Ville-Marie since 1657 and feudal landlords of the island since 1663 – wished to build a parish church. Up to that point, the city’s population had used Hôtel-Dieu chapel for their religious services. The Sulpicians decided to build the new church on the hill. At the same time, they redrew the city’s road network to facilitate access to the new church that was to be built at its heart and organize the city’s development around a grid system.



In July 1672, François Dollier de Casson, father superior of the Sulpicians, accompanied by the surveyor and court clerk Bénigne Basset, laid out new streets, named them, and put up boundary markers. Rue Notre-Dame was the first street laid out by Dollier de Casson. It followed the old road on the coteau Saint-Louis to the eastern part of the city and became one of the three main arteries that crossed the city from east to west. As the main thoroughfare of Ville-Marie, Rue Notre-Dame was named in honor of the Blessed Virgin, the parish's patron saint.

After the Conquest, the civic administration established a significant presence on this street, over the years building prisons, courthouses and the city hall. Because of its width and the fact that it led to the parish church, Rue Notre-Dame became the natural focal point for religious processions, protests and parades of all kinds. Notable among these were the funeral processions of Thomas D'Arcy McGee in 1868 and Sir George-Étienne Cartier in 1873.

Owing to annexations, Rue Notre-Dame came to cross nearly the entire island, from Pointe aux Trembles, where it took the path of the second *chemin du Roi*, opened in 1841, all the way west to the borough of Lachine. But the exceptional concentration of historical buildings between place d'Armes and Rue Berri makes this section of the street a special place in our history.



Place d'Armes

Circa 1729



In 1693, the Sulpicians, feudal landlords of the island of Montréal, acquired a piece of land to the north of Notre-Dame Church for the purpose of creating a public square called *place de la Fabrique*. This was Montréal's second public square, the first being the current Place Royale, which had been used as the city's marketplace and for military drills since 1676. The new square, in a prime location in the upper town, quickly became a place to meet and socialize and where decrees and orders were read after church services. Following the rebuilding necessitated by the devastating fire of 1721 around Place Royale, military drills were moved to *place de la Fabrique*, which was enlarged by the occupation of lots on the northern half of the current square. This is the period when the square took its current name of Place d'Armes. It was here that the French regiments laid down their arms in the presence of the English high command in September 1760.



In 1770, a water cistern and a fire pump were built in the middle of the square. Three years later, city residents erected Montréal's first monument, a bust of King George III of England. In 1775, before the American occupation, persons unknown splashed black paint on the statue, hung a rosary of potatoes around its neck, with a cross bearing the inscription "*Voilà le pape du Canada et le sot anglais*" (the Pope of Canada and the English fool). The statue later disappeared and was only found decades later in the old well. Today it is conserved at the McCord Museum. From 1781 to 1813, Place d'Armes was also used as a hay and wood market. During the War of 1812, commercial activities were moved to the new hay market (Square Victoria) and Place d'Armes returned to its military vocation. In the 19th century, several violent events took place in the square. In 1832, during by-elections in the west end, three French-Canadians were killed by the British army during a confrontation between supporters of opposing candidates. The army had to intervene again in 1837 when the Fils de la Liberté and members of the Doric Club came to blows.

In 1836, the city purchased Place d'Armes, which had to that point been owned by the Sulpicians. The city paved the surrounding streets and between 1848 and 1850, transformed it into a public garden, in the style of a Victorian-era square, with stone gates and wrought-iron fences and a tall fountain in the centre. In 1895, the fountain was replaced by a monument honoring Paul Chomedey de Maisonneuve. Sculpted by Louis-Philippe Hébert, it featured Maisonneuve surrounded by Jeanne Mance, Charles Lemoyne, Lambert Closse, and an Iroquois. In the early 20th century, the fences were taken out, and in 1914 the garden was removed completely and replaced with stone and concrete. In the 1920s, Place d'Armes became the hub of the city's tramway network between the eastern and western parts of the city.

Place d'Armes has been an important gathering place for many years, one that was closely associated with the neighboring Notre-Dame Church. The 1884 church fair, the winter carnivals of 1885 and 1887, the papal visit of Jean-Paul II in 1984, the marriage of Céline Dion, and the funeral of Maurice "Rocket" Richard in 2000 all took place there. It is also the site of the annual commemoration of the city's founding.



Rue Saint-François-Xavier

1672



Rue Saint-François-Xavier was one of the streets laid out by Dollier de Casson who named this street in honor of his patron saint, St. Francis. Mgr. de Laval, Bishop of Québec, later requested that the street be renamed in honor of St. Francis Xavier (1506-1552), the Jesuit missionary who died in China. When the city's fortifications were demolished at the beginning of the 19th century, the street was extended north to Rue Saint-Antoine.



Rue de l' Hôpital

Before 1672



Before 1672, Montréal grew along the shores of the St. Lawrence River by way of grants of land that were defined according to paths or topographical points of reference. Several hundred *habitants* used paths that connected the city's main features: the fort on Pointe à Callière, the Hôtel-Dieu hospital and chapel (located near today's Rue Saint-Sulpice and Rue Saint-Paul) and the redoubts (houses used as defensive support positions) located to the east, west and north of the city. Rue de l'Hôpital is a relic of these paths, which preceded the grid structure created by François Dollier de Casson in 1672. It was a path that peasants living in the west end of the town used to get to the hospital and chapel founded by Jeanne Mance. The chapel was used as the parish church before the construction of Notre-Dame Church.

As Montréal expanded, these diagonal paths were eliminated in 1672 in favor of straight streets that gave the city a more regular appearance. A section of Rue de l'Hôpital located between Rue Saint-François-Xavier and Rue Saint-Sulpice was closed to make space for the garden of the Séminaire de Saint-Sulpice. To the west of Rue Saint-Pierre, the landowners took back the land of this old path, since people now used Rue Notre-Dame to get to the new church built on the hill. However, several landowners kept lots and houses on Rue de l'Hôpital, including the surgeon Jean Martinet de Fontblanche. The street was officially reestablished in 1702 at the request of governor Louis-Hector de Callière "for the decoration and public convenience of this city."



Rue du Saint-Sacrement

1692



Rue du Saint-Sacrement was created in 1692 at the request of governor Frontenac “for the public convenience.” In the 17th century, there was an altar of repose near the street, used during religious processions during which the Eucharist (or Blessed Sacrament) was moved, hence the origin of the street’s name. When it was opened, however, the street could not be laid out in a straight line. In the 19th century, the street was home to businesses that supported Montréal’s role as a financial capital. In addition to being the heart of telecommunications for all of Canada, the street was also home to the offices of the influential Board of Trade.



Rue Saint-Éloi

Circa 1690



This small street was created to facilitate the subdivision of the property of Jacques Milot. The name Saint-Éloi may reflect the patron saint of goldsmiths and other metalworkers. Many smiths and armorers lived in this area.



Rue Saint-Nicolas

1736



After lots were granted on the commons, in front of the cemetery, a path sometimes called *rue du Cimetière* was used for a number of years to travel from Rue Saint-Paul to the cemetery. Located in the vicinity of the current Rue Saint-Nicolas, this path disappeared after the cemetery was moved to the north of the city in 1681 and the lot-plan was readjusted. Rue Saint-Nicolas was created when the estate of Charles de Couagne and Marie Godé was divided up in 1732. Opening the street allowed the lots between Rue Saint-Paul and Rue du Saint-Sacrement to be subdivided. It was first named in 1736. The name recalled Nicolas Godé, one of Montréal's pioneers and the grandfather of Marie Godé. After the city walls were demolished at the start of the 19th century, Rue Saint-Nicolas was extended from Rue Saint-Paul to Place D'Youville.



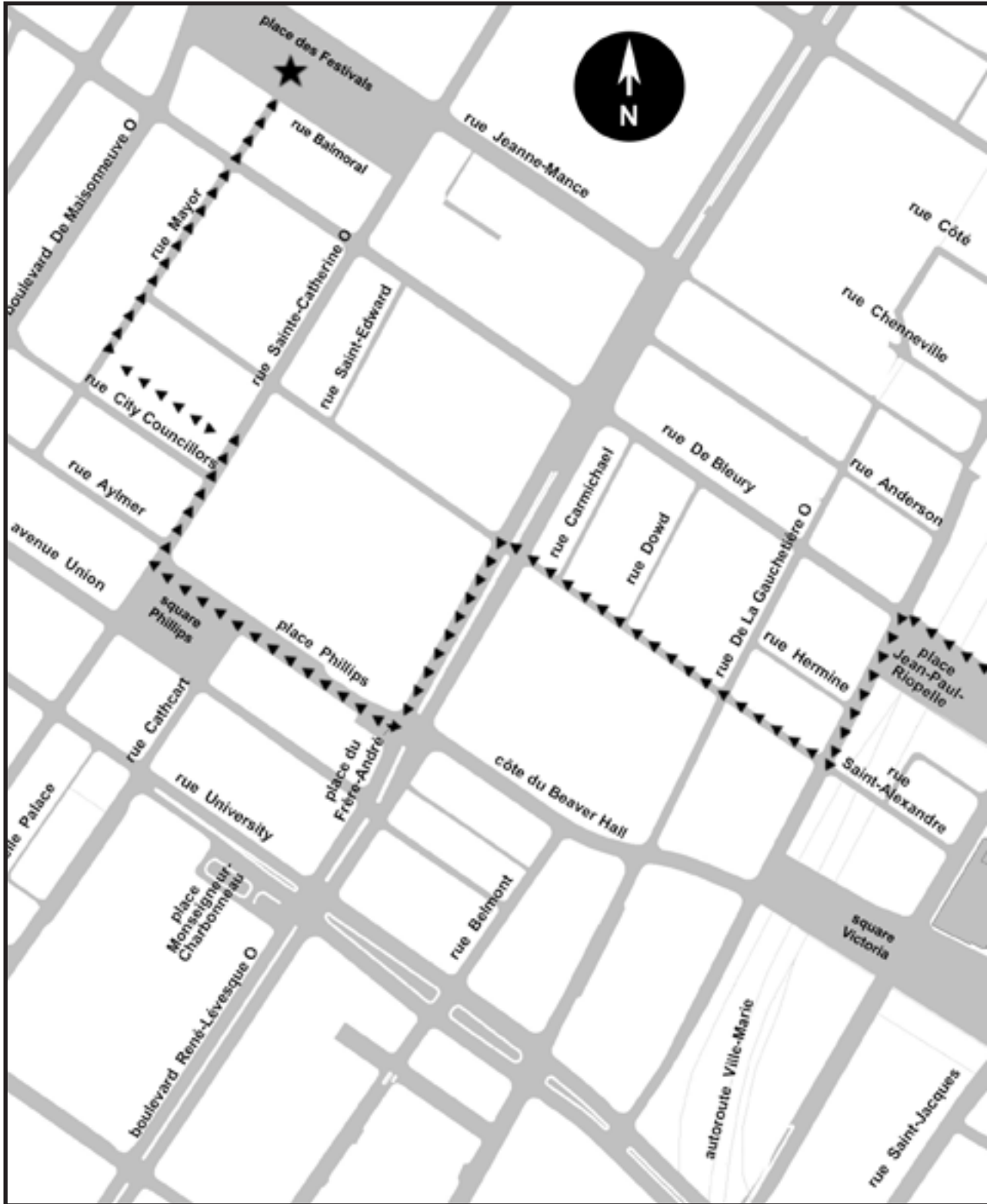
Rue Saint-Jean

Before 1692



Rue Saint-Jean was created in 1692 at the request of governor Frontenac “for the public convenience.” The exact origin of the name is unknown. Some theories associate it with Jean-Jacques Olier de Verneuil, founding member of the Société de Notre-Dame, itself responsible for the founding of Montréal, but the name could also recall Jean-Baptiste Migeon de Branssat, owner of a large garden south of Rue du Saint-Sacrement and the bailliff’s court judge of Montréal. In 1844, the inhabitants of the area filed a request that the street be extended to Rue Saint-Jacques. The city denied the request and the citizens had to wait till 1862 before the street connected to Rue Saint-Jacques.





place des Festivals



rue Balmoral

rue Jeanne-Mance

rue Côté

rue Chenneville

rue Mayor

rue Saint-Catherine O

rue Saint-Edward

rue City Councillors

rue Aymer

rue Anderson

rue De Bleury

rue Carmichael

rue Dowd

rue De La Gauchetière O

rue Hermine

place Jean-Paul-Riopelle

square Phillips

place Phillips

place du Frère-André

côte du Beaver Hall

rue Saint-Alexandre

rue Cathcart

rue University

rue Belmont

square Victoria

place Monseigneur Charbonneau

autoroute Ville-Marie

rue Saint-Jacques

Rue Saint-Alexis

Between 1711 and 1723



This street is mentioned for the first time in a concession contract by the Séminaire de Saint-Sulpice in 1711. The Sulpicians had just acquired one of the few vacant lots in the city from Jeanne Lecavelier, and the opening of Rue Saint-Alexis, between Rue Saint-Pierre and Rue Saint-Jean would facilitate its subdivision into several lots between Rue du Saint-Sacrement and Rue Notre-Dame. The origin of the name Saint-Alexis is unknown, but it could recall Alexandre Le Rageois de Bretonvilliers (1621-1676), second farther superior of the Sulpician order.



Rue Saint-Pierre

1672



Rue Saint-Pierre is one of the streets laid out by Dollier de Casson. While some feel the name pays homage to Pierre Chevrier de Fancamp, a founding member of the Société de Notre-Dame, itself responsible for the founding of Montréal, it is also possible that Dollier de Casson named the street in honor of Pierre Gadois junior, or his father, the first *habitant* to receive a land grant in Montréal, in 1648. In the era of the fortifications, Rue Saint-Pierre ran south, from the powder magazine in the north to a gate opposite the Hôpital général of the Frères Charon (later operated by the Grey Nuns). The demolition of the walls at the beginning of the 19th century allowed the street to be extended north to Rue Saint-Antoine, where it meets Rue De Bleury today. To the south, the demolition of part of the Hôpital général in the 1870 allowed the street's extension to Rue de la Commune and the port.



After gaining permission to establish themselves in Montréal to better carry out their duties as chaplains to the French army, the Recollect Fathers in 1692 combined several lots into a single enclosure, on which they built a monastery. After the Conquest, British authorities forbade them from recruiting new members, and the order eventually disappeared through attrition.

Around 1796, the British army repurposed the premises into barracks and a parade square. In 1818, the government traded the former Recollect lands for Sainte-Hélène Island, owned by Baroness Marie-Charles-Joseph Le Moyne de Longueuil, wife of Charles William Grant. Grant immediately began subdividing the land into lots, demolishing all the buildings except the Recollects' church, and opening three new streets: Le Moyne, Sainte-Hélène and des Récollets. In 1820, Grant ceded these three streets to the city, whose names he chose to commemorate various aspects of the transaction that led to their creation.



Rue Sainte-Hélène



Rue des Récollets

1818

Rue des Récollets recalls the presence of the Recollect order in this part of the city. Originally limited to the former Recollect lands, the street was only extended to Rue McGill after acquisitions made around 1820.

Rue Sainte-Hélène

1818

Rue Sainte-Hélène recalls Sainte-Hélène Island, which was named in 1611 by Samuel de Champlain to honor his wife, Hélène. Between 1858 and 1871, Rue Sainte-Hélène saw significant growth and ten-odd warehouse-stores were built on the street in a very short time. Today it remains one of Old Montréal's rare examples of architectural homogeneity.



Rue Dollard

September 14, 1863



This small street opened up opposite the Recollects' monastery around 1719. The old wooden palisade was being replaced by a stone wall around this time, and the opening of a public street facilitated the subdivision of lots between Rue Notre-Dame and the new ramparts. For many years, the street bore the name of Saint-Guillaume, a designation found in an act dating from 1728. In 1863, following a recommendation from the city's road committee, Saint-Guillaume was replaced by Dollard, in commemoration of Adam Dollard des Ormeaux (1635–1660), an adventurer who died in a battle with the Iroquois.

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Rue Saint-Jacques

1672



Rue Saint-Jacques is one of the streets laid out by Dollier de Casson. The name is often associated with Jean-Jacques Olier de Verneuil, a founding member of the Société Notre-Dame, itself responsible for the creation of Montréal. It may also be possible that Dollier de Casson was honoring the name of Jacques Archambault, one of the city's first inhabitants, whose property the street cut through.

During the second half of the 19th century, Rue Saint-Jacques lost its residential character for good and became the heart of Montréal's first business district, the veritable Wall Street of Canada. As the location of the headquarters of so many major financial institutions, it was the financial heart of the country. Over time, the city's major dailies (*The Montreal Star*, *La Presse*, *La Patrie*) also set up shop on the street. Deserted by the banking sector in the 1950s and 60s (except for the Bank of Montréal), the street has undergone newfound success in the 1970s. A small section of the street east of Boulevard Saint-Laurent was closed for the construction of the city's new courthouse, between 1965 and 1971.



Ruelle des Fortifications

Between 1804 and 1817



In 1717, under the direction of engineer Gaspard-Joseph Chaussegros de Léry, a major construction project was started to build stone fortifications to replace the wooden palisade that had encircled the city since 1685. The fortifications were completed by the end of the 1730s, but after the Conquest, the walls, which had never been designed to withstand heavy artillery, were already obsolete and falling into ruin. By 1789, Montréal's citizens were demanding that the walls be demolished so they could reclaim the portions of their land that had been expropriated to build the ramparts and also to rid the city of these barriers to communication. The government acceded to these demands, and the walls began to come down in 1804, continuing through 1810. Ruelle des Fortifications, which runs between Rue McGill and Rue Saint-Laurent along the line of the counterscarp, was opened after the demolition.

The lane was originally meant as a service road for residences and businesses along Rue Saint-Jacques and Rue Craig (Saint-Antoine). Initially, these two streets were rather residential in nature, and elegant houses sprang up along the lane, especially prior to 1850. When Rue Saint-Jacques became a centre for high finance after 1880, Ruelle des Fortifications took on the role it was initially designed for: a service road for the surrounding buildings. Between 1987 and 1991, a major project integrated several old building facades and a section of Ruelle des Fortifications into a modern complex that is today known as the World Trade Centre Montréal.



Rue Saint-Antoine ouest

1801



Since 1799, a street called Rue des Menuisiers had traced the outside border of the lands set aside for the fortifications between Rue Saint-Laurent and Rue De Bleury. The street had been opened to facilitate communication along the frontage of newly subdivided lots, whose owners at the time were primarily carpenters. After the demolition of the fortifications (1804–1810), this street was incorporated into a road that the city commissioners had created between the new Place des Commissaires (Square Victoria) and the eastern end of the Champ-de-Mars. The street originally bore the name of Craig, in honor of governor James Henry Craig. Before leaving the colony in 1811, Craig's biases had provoked very favorable reactions among the English-speaking population, and very negative ones among the French-speakers.

At the beginning of the 20th century, the old Rue Saint-Antoine (the main artery leading to the suburb of Saint-Antoine) and Rue Craig were combined under a single name. The decision was short-lived, however, and by 1906, they reverted to their original names. It was not until 1976 that the two streets were finally joined under the single name of Rue Saint-Antoine.



Place

Jean-Paul-Riopelle

September 24, 2002



Montréal native Jean-Paul Riopelle (1923–2002) was a painter and sculptor and one of Canada’s most renowned artists. His works enrich some of the world’s best art collections. Riopelle enrolled in the École du meuble de Montréal in the 1940s, where he met Paul-Émile Borduas. In 1948, he signed the *Refus global*, the declaration of a group of Québec painters called *Les Automatistes*. After World War II, he lived in France, where he frequented other artists and writers. He returned to Québec in the early 1990s. Riopelle was named a Companion of the Order of Canada in 1969 and an officer of the Ordre national du Québec in 1988.

Place Jean-Paul-Riopelle was created over the covered section of Autoroute Ville-Marie as part of the work to build the Quartier International de Montréal. Initially installed at Parc Olympique, the sculpture-fountain *La Joute*, created by Riopelle between 1969 and 1974, now decorates the square.



Rue De Bleury

Circa 1810



This extension of Rue Saint-Pierre already existed in 1801, but the city archives has it listed as de Bleury by 1810. It commemorates Marie-Rosalie de Bleury (1775–1828), daughter and heiress of Jean-Clément de Sabrevois, sieur de Bleury (1729–1784), a career military officer. Until 1802, he owned the land between Rue Craig and Rue Sherbrooke, across which this street was opened. At the beginning of the 19th century, it was nothing more than a narrow grassy path that the people called *ruelle du flirtage*, or flirting lane.

In 2001, Montréal formalized the use of the upper case for articles at the beginning of personal names used in toponyms, so it is now called Rue De Bleury. Since the creation of a square honoring the artist Jean-Paul-Riopelle, the stretch of Rue De Bleury between Rue Saint-Antoine and Avenue Viger bears the name Place Jean-Paul-Riopelle.



Avenue Viger ouest

November 6, 1905



This road is made up of two main stretches whose names go far back in the city's history. The eastern portion of the avenue, the first section to bear the name Viger, commemorates Denis-Benjamin Viger (1774-1861), son of Denis Viger (1741-1805) and Périne-Charles Cherrier. Schooled as a lawyer, the younger Viger was a politician between 1808 and 1858 at a time when Lower Canada's nationalistic ideology was taking shape. He was a very popular character in Montréal society, where he was also a major landowner. Among his relations, he could count Mgr. Jean-Jacques Lartigue (1777-1840), Louis-Joseph Papineau (1786-1871) and Jacques Viger (1787-1858), the first mayor of Montréal.

The western section of the avenue was originally named Rue de Vitré. Initially existing only along the width of the lands of Lambert Closse (1618-1662), inherited by the wife of Guillaume-Émanuelle-Théodore Denys de Vitré, the street was later extended both east and west. It was widened and integrated into Avenue Viger in the 1960s and took on the name on March 1, 1980.



Rue Hermine

1841



Hermine Lamothe (1823-1899), heiress of Joseph-Maurice Lamothe, owned the land across which this street was opened.



Rue Saint-Alexandre

Before 1800



Name of the patron saint of Paul-Alexandre d'Ailleboust de Cuisy (1696–1782), concession holder of this street. After his marriage to Thérèse Fournier du Vivier in 1727, he had five children; one of his daughters, Louise Gabrielle, went on to be mother superior of the Hôtel-Dieu sisters for 18 years.



Rue De La Gauchetière ouest

Date unknown



Daniel Migeon, sieur de La Gauchetière (1671-1746), was a military officer and owner of the lands through which this street crosses. These lands, once known as the *fief de Branssat*, were granted by Montréal's feudal landlords on December 12, 1665 to his father, Jean-Baptiste Migeon de Branssat.

In 2001, Montréal formalized the use of the upper case for articles at the beginning of personal names used in toponyms, so it is now called Rue De La Gauchetière. In 2009, as part of the celebrations of the Canadien de Montréal hockey club, Montréal city council passed a resolution to change the name of the western end of the street, where the club's arena is located, to Avenue des Canadiens-de-Montréal.



Rue Dowd

May 14, 1877



Father Patrick Dowd (1813–1891) came from Ireland in 1848 and became the second parish priest of Saint Patrick's Church, located on a neighboring street. For nearly 50 years, he worked among the Irish Catholic community and established a number of institutions such as schools, an orphanage and a home for the elderly. It is said that even the bells of the Anglican Christ Church Cathedral rang during his funeral out of respect for this man, to whom not only his own community but also the entire population of Montréal was very attached. This street was ceded to the city on May 12, 1837 by someone named Bernard Saint-Germain.



Rue Carmichael

May 29, 1911



An Anglican priest and author born in Dublin, Ireland, James Carmichael (1835–1908) arrived in Canada in 1859. After having performed his ministry in both Montréal and Ontario, he returned to Montréal as rector of Saint George's Church from 1882 to 1906, the year he became the fourth bishop of the Anglican Church in Montréal. He held the position until his death two years later. He is interred in the Mount Royal Cemetery.



Boulevard René-Lévesque ouest

November 30, 1987



Shortly after the death of René Lévesque, Montréal decided to rename Boulevard Dorchester in his honor. The decision to change the name took effect on December 1, 1988. At the same time, Square Dominion also changed its name to Square Dorchester.



The entire career of René Lévesque (1922–1987), a native of New-Carlisle, was spent on the public stage. As a radio personality, war correspondent, and host of the TV show *Point de mire*, he took part in the political awakening of the Québec public at the dawn of the Quiet Revolution. As a minister in Jean Lesage's *Équipe du tonnerre*, or Dream Team, he nationalized the provinces electrical utility. As an independent member of parliament he later founded and led the Parti québécois and became Québec premier in 1976. Under his leadership, a number of socially progressive laws were passed, including bills dealing with political party funding, dental care for children (1977), auto insurance (1978), agricultural zoning (1979), and the French language charter and bill 101 (1977). In a 1980 referendum, the public voted down his proposal to negotiate a new agreement between Québec and Canada.

Boulevard René-Lévesque is one of the city's main arteries, and its widening in the 1940s and 50s required the demolition of many villas. Those that remain, such as Shaugnessy House (now the Canadian Centre for Architecture), Thomas Judah House (1980 Boulevard René-Lévesque Ouest) and Masson House (2080 Boulevard René-Lévesque Ouest), bear witness to a bygone era when this was a prestigious residential street.



Côte du Beaver Hall

December 11, 1884



This name commemorates the presence in this location at the top of the hill of a house called Beaver Hall, built around 1792 by Joseph Frobisher (1740–1810). Despite all the later changes, this area of the city still retains an aura of the personal prestige of the house's owner and of the fur trade in which he worked, initially with his brother and later with Simon McTavish of the Northwest Company. After the house was destroyed by fire in 1848, the estate was acquired by Thomas Phillips and subdivided for him by the architect William Footner.



Place du Frère-André

September 21, 1982



Originally from Saint-Grégoire-d'Iberville, Alfred Bessette (1845–1937), Brother André of the Congrégation de Sainte-Croix was a porter at Collège Notre-Dame de Montréal. Through his devotion, he was able to have a chapel built on Mount Royal, on the site of the current Saint Joseph's Oratory. His religious fervor attracted pilgrims from all over the province and even from the United States. His funeral procession was followed by nearly a million people. He was beatified on May 23, 1982, and his canonization is scheduled for 2010.

This square, previously known as Square du Beaver Hall, was ceded to the city in 1842 by Alfred Phillips at the same time as nearby Square Phillips. In the mid-19th century it was much larger than it is today and surrounded by terrace houses and imposing townhouses.

Place du Frère-André was inaugurated on November 2, 1986, when Mayor Jean Drapeau unveiled a statue by Émile Brunet.



Place Phillips

1844

Square Phillips

1865



A merchant and construction contractor, Thomas Phillips (1771–1842) became a city councilor in 1840 and sat on a number of committees, including those for finance, roads and public improvements. In 1842, he acquired the former Beaver Hall estate from Joseph Frobisher and had a subdivision plan drawn up by the architect William Footner. The plan called for the creation of a public park (Square Phillips) and a 60-foot-wide prestigious street on which only buildings that were “harmonious and beautiful in appearance” would be built. This street, Place Phillips, would serve to connect Square Phillips with Square du Beaver Hall (today, Place du Frère André). Facing the square, on Place Phillips, the Art Association of Montréal inaugurated the first fine arts museum in the entire Dominion on May 26, 1879, built by British architect John W. Hopkins. At the time, the square still had a certain pastoral character, which disappeared at the turn of the century with the arrival of public transport and large department stores.



Rue Cathcart

Date unknown



Charles Murray Cathcart, 2nd Earl Cathcart (1783–1859), was the 17th Governor General of Canada (1846–1847).



Avenue Union

November 30, 1842

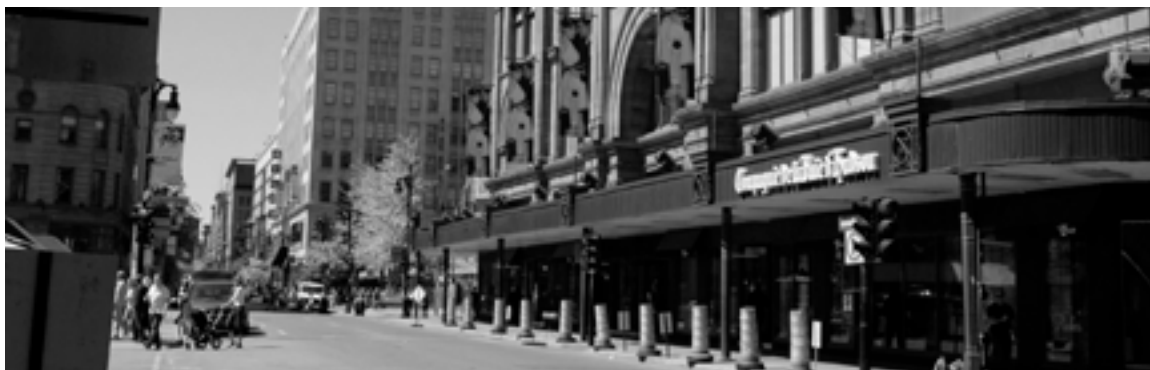


Ceded partly by the heirs of Sir Thomas Phillips, this avenue commemorates the Act of Union (1840), which joined the provinces of Upper Canada and Lower Canada under a single administration.



Rue Sainte-Catherine ouest

Between 1801 and 1817



There is no consensus as to the origins of this name, and with no resolution in the city's archives to go on, there are no fewer than three theories. The first links the name to a certain *chemin Sainte-Catherine*, which once led to a convent of the sisters of the *Congrégation de Notre-Dame*; a second has it commemorating Catherine de Bourbonnais (1749–1805), a young French woman living on this street in the 18th century; and a third points to Jacques Viger, a road inspector, conferring the name to honor Catherine-Élizabeth, a daughter of his wife Marie-Marguerite de La Corne.

In the 19th century, this residential street was also remarkable for its numerous outstanding institutional buildings. Travelling west from Rue Saint-Denis one would have encountered Saint-Jacques Church, the business school Le Plateau and the Institut Nazareth (on the site of Place-des-Arts), Saint-James Church, the Anglican Christ Church Cathedral, and the Montréal Museum of Fine Arts across the street. During the last quarter of the 19th century, the street's vocation began to change, initiated most notably by the construction in the east, near Rue Saint-André, of retail stores. This trend also spread west, with stores such as Morgan (The Bay), Ogilvy, and Birks, so that the street is today Montréal's main commercial artery.



Rue Aylmer

February 23, 1949



Military officer Matthew Whitworth-Aylmer (1775–1850), 5th Baron Aylmer, held the position of Governor General of British North America from 1830 to 1835. Despite his attempts at conciliation, he saw increasing dissatisfaction among the French-Canadian population, which would ultimately lead to the Rebellions of 1837.

In 1833, a portion of the property of Doctor Louis-Benjamin Berthelet, north of Rue Sainte-Catherine, was converted into housing lots; the plans called for the opening of streets named Berthelet (today part of Boulevard De Maisonneuve), Mayor, City Councillors, and Aylmer. However, Rue Aylmer did not become an official public road until 1949.



These streets were part of a block of units subdivided by surveyor J. Hugues in February 1833 on the property of Doctor Louis-Benjamin Berthelet (1796–1847). A Rue Mayor and Rue Conseillers de Ville appear on this plan even before elections for mayor and 16 city councillors were held after the city’s charter was adopted on June 5, 1832. The election took place on June 3, 1833, and the first city council meeting with the elected councillors and mayor (Jacques Viger) was held two days later. According to city archivist Conrad Archambault, naming one street in French and the other in English reflected Montréal’s reality. Similarly, the widespread use of English at city council in the following years led to the adoption of solely English names, i.e., Mayor and City Councillors.



Rue City Councillors

Circa 1842

Rue Mayor

1835

Rue Mayor was extended east from Rue De Bleury on August 24, 2009 as part of the development of the city’s Quartier des Spectacles.



Rue Balmoral

1856

August 24, 2009



Balmoral is a residence of the British royal family located in Scotland, acquired by Queen Victoria in 1848. Rue Balmoral appeared in Lovell's directory as early as 1859–1860 and it was declared a public road in 1889. Although it was closed on December 18, 1984 by city by-law 6605, the street remained on certain maps and was still referred to by many users and specialists. The city reopened Rue Balmoral in 2009 as part of the development of Quartier des Spectacles.



Place des Festivals

August 24, 2009



The name “Place des Festivals” refers to the many festivals that take place in the section of Montréal’s downtown core known as the Quartier des Spectacles. The word *festival* means “a series of performances focusing on an art or an artist,” and the name of the square reflects the cultural vocation of the Quartier des Spectacles.



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