

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study has been to offer an investigation into the architecture of the Mount Royal Club's new building erected in 1906 and of their art collection assembled between the years 1899-1920. By approaching this thesis under the rubric of the social and cultural context of that time, I have endeavored to illustrate, using Pierre Bourdieu's theories on capital, that social and cultural power was centered in the hands of an overlapping business elite who were a dominant presence in all major activities of the city. This power and influence played an important role in the successful construction of the Mount Royal Club's building on Sherbrooke Street and in the assemblage of a small collection of paintings by club members that, over 100 years later, is still significant to Montreal's heritage and prestige. Because the Mount Royal Club represented a place where taste and cultural awareness became important emblems of identity, it demonstrates how the common lifestyles and similar backgrounds of the members influenced their aesthetic choices both in the design of their new building and in the collection of paintings.

From its beginning the Mount Royal Club has been a source of pride, as well as intrigue to the population of Montreal, since the life in private men's clubs was so carefully guarded from the eyes of outsiders. Lengthy newspaper reports on the disastrous fire of January 1904 and the inquiry following the fire were published in the *Montreal Gazette*¹ and the *Montreal Star*.² Later on 7 March 1905 an article was

¹ "Mount Royal Fire Cost Two Lives," *The Gazette* 6 January 1904.

² "Throws Little Light on the Cause of Fire," *Montreal Star* 14 January 1904.

written on the proposed new clubhouse in ² *The Daily Star*,³ followed by an article in the same newspaper *entitled* “New Mount Royal Club Opened Tomorrow” of 29 October 1906.⁴ After the Club’s official opening, a three-column account of the event and a description of the interior were published in *The Daily Star* on 13 December 1906.⁵ Such newspaper coverage demonstrated the interest the city had in the Club and the lifestyles of its powerful and wealthy members. Another indicator of the Mount Royal Club’s position in the city is exemplified by the production of postcards featuring the Mount Royal Club. (figs. 38,39) At the turn of the century it was customary to create postcards of Montreal’s cultural landmarks and the Mount Royal Club’s new building façade was reproduced on two separate images and, with their diffusion, both at home and abroad, these postcards could reinforce the notion of the Mount Royal Club as a cultural and symbolic icon of Montreal.

Over the years the Mount Royal Club building has remained virtually unchanged, except that a large Dutch Elm tree planted in 1842 in front of the building was cut down in 1961 to make room for a larger sidewalk on Sherbrooke Street. There has been no major renovation or change to the building’s interior, although the functions of some of the rooms have altered. For example, the billiard rooms have now been converted into lounges and all administrative activities are conducted below stairs. Most important was the change in attitude towards women in the club. Up until 1989 the Mount Royal Club was the only club left in Montreal without full-fledged women members. At a General

³ “Mount Royal Club’s Magnificent Home: To Cost Quarter of Million,” *The Daily Star*, 7 March 1905, 5.

⁴ “New Mount Royal Club Opened Tomorrow” *The Daily Star*, 29 October, 1906, 6.

⁵ “Mount Royal Club Formally Opened Last Night – A Brilliant Gathering of Members and Friends” *The Daily Star*, 13 December 1906, 5.

Meeting held in October 1990 Jeanne Sauv , recently retired as Canada's Governor General, was proposed and accepted as the Mount Royal Club's first woman member.⁶

The two rooms in the former ladies section have been converted into a dining room (the Lord Shaughnessy Dining Room) and a small lounge now known as the Lord Shaughnessy Lounge. Membership now includes both Francophone and Anglophone men and women. Today the resident membership is made of 53% Francophone and 47% Anglophone while the non-resident membership is comprised of 90% Anglophone and 10% Francophone.⁷

The art collection continues to grow and is now comprised of close to eighty paintings of which over ninety percent are executed by Canadian artists. This collection has increased with the addition over the years of paintings by Cornelius Krieghoff and more modern works by Goodridge Roberts, Henri Masson, John Lyman, Robert Pilot, Jacques de Tonnacour, Charles Gagnon and John Fox, all of whom are prominent Quebec artists. Five portraits were added to the collection after 1920: Sir Herbert Samuel Holt and Sir Vincent Meredith by d'Alphonse Jongers (1872-1945) and portraits of Hugh Paton, Lord Shaughnessy and Hugh Andrew Allan by George Horne Russell (1861-1933).

The Mount Royal Club and its building (fig. 40) is a reflection of the social, economic and cultural development of Montreal at the turn of the century. The Club's founding fathers were not only influential in the building and growth of Montreal but with their involvement with the CPR became builders of a continent. Their endowment and support of the AAM (now the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts), McGill University,

⁶ Stikeman, 96, 97.

⁷ I am grateful to Mr. Juan Llano, General Manger of the Mount Royal Club for giving me these statistics.

and several Montreal hospitals, churches, universities and benevolent institutions have given Montreal a tangible important legacy that is a testament to their taste, industry and generosity. The founders and members of the Mount Royal Club were responsible not only for its construction, but for securing McKim, Mead and White of New York as the Club's architects. It is for this reason that the Mount Royal Club continues to hold a pride of place in Montreal's architectural history and to maintain a dignified and elegant presence on Sherbrooke Street nearly one hundred years after it was constructed.