

Notes and Comments

As noted earlier, the Haemmerles had a strong Danish connection. This side of the family survived the dislocations of the war although various members scattered, resulting, in part, in the English branch that Anatole eventually met and with whom he corresponded. These relatives were successful on their own so Anatole was never directly involved in their well-being. Instead he enjoyed a lively and happy social relationship with them, cemented by a shared concern for the welfare of the twin aunts.

The story of Anatole Haemmerle is only part of the tale of this fascinating family. One can only surmise what the contents of his own letters to these correspondents might have revealed. In this day of telephones, fax machines and computers, the art of letter writing has diminished considerably. The McGill University Archives is fortunate to possess such a large collection of correspondence. Many of these letters await the scholar who can translate the Russian. There is, undoubtedly, a world of social history to be uncovered. Anatole's personal reminiscences provide just a glimpse of the struggles and successes of formerly well-to-do Russian emigrés in various parts of the world.

The McCord Museum's Inaugural Exhibition Programme

by Elizabeth H. Kennell

Head, Exhibition Services, McCord Museum of Canadian History

The Executive Director of the McCord Museum, Luke Rombout, gave the curatorial staff the mandate to develop over a six-month period the concepts for the inaugural exhibitions for the Museum's re-opening in May 1992. The concepts chosen reflect not only the richness of the McCord's collections, representing the strengths and range, but also the expertise of the curators. Although the research phase only began officially in January 1990, the results attest in many cases to the curators' long term interests and endeavours.

In the creation of the inaugural exhibition programme, much effort went into achieving a balance between thematic exhibitions and those which are collection-based, in deference to the McCord's appellation as a "history museum." In addition, while ensuring that the emphasis was on the McCord's own collections, adequate temporary exhibition space had to be set aside in order to receive exhibitions from outside sources. Therefore, while the inaugural exhibitions were the prime concern, a structure for the future, to build upon and maintain the public's interest, was also considered crucial.

Because the year of the re-opening, 1992, coincides with the 350th anniversary of the founding of Montreal many of the inaugural exhibitions pay particular attention to this fact. However, it is *Victoria Bridge: The Vital Link* that represents the McCord's official contribution to the anniversary celebration. It is one part of a major historical overview, collectively entitled: *Montreal: A History to Treasure*.

With almost 20,000 square feet, or double the previous amount of exhibition space at our disposal, it was felt that we now have the opportunity to accommodate permanent galleries devoted to the presentation of the McCord's collections. The Notman Photographic Archives, Costume and Textiles, Archives, Prints and Drawings, and Ethnology and Archaeology each now have specifically designated areas, including Paintings and Decorative Arts in the newly-renovated Nobbs Gallery (named after the architect, Percy Nobbs, who designed the building



R. A. Sproule, *Place d'Armes, Montreal*, watercolour, 1828, David Ross McCord collection (M385).

Notes and Comments



Urn Presented to James McGill by an Unidentified Friend, 1808, gift of McGill University (M20292).

Notes and Comments



Dinner Dress, old-rose silk satin brocade, 1890-1891, gift of Mme Charles Taschereau (M968.2.1.1-2).

Notes and Comments

in 1906, then known as the McGill Student Union). With the re-opening, it was also deemed essential to devote a space for the story of David Ross McCord, the Museum's founder.

Some of the inaugural exhibitions will be on view for limited periods of time depending on the fragility of the artifacts' and accepted conservation norms. These exhibitions will be replaced by a succession of shows with very specific foci – highlighting other aspects of the permanent collection hitherto unseen by the public. Where possible, even more exposure to the collections of the McCord Museum will be sought through travelling exhibitions, such as *Mont Royal-Ville Marie: Early Plans and Views of Montreal* which, following its presentation at the McCord, will be on view at the Courtauld Institute in London in January 1993.

Eight of the ten inaugural exhibitions are accompanied by fully-illustrated bilingual publications that together will provide a permanent record of parts of the McCord's collections. It is through these in-depth examinations – both in terms of the publications and the exhibitions – that the McCord Museum will be making significant contributions to research as well as appealing to the general public. Specialists in various fields have been consulted and some have contributed to the publications. Dr. Brian Young, Professor of History at McGill University, played an active role as consultant historian to a number of our inaugural exhibition projects, particularly *The McCord Family* and *Victoria Bridge: The Vital Link*.

The production schedule for these exhibitions and publications can be divided largely into four phases beginning in January 1990: a research phase which included the selection of objects and writing of texts; immediately followed by an object preparation phase which included the conservation treatments; an exhibition design phase including the installation which was initiated six months after the research began; and finally the publication production phase which began in January 1991.

We benefitted enormously from having been closed to the public during the three-year period of renovation and expansion during which time we were able to concentrate almost entirely on the development of these exhibitions. The challenge for the future will be to continue to meet the high standards achieved and to develop a dynamic exhibition programme.

List of Inaugural Exhibitions:

1. *Introduction to the McCord Museum* in the Court of the Museum.
2. *The McCord Family: A Passionate Vision*, May 9, 1992 -
Curator Responsible: Pamala Miller, Curator of Archival Collections; Contributing Authors: Moira McCaffrey, Curator of Ethnology and Archaeology; Brian Young, McGill University; Don Fyson, Université de Montréal; Don Wright, McGill University.

The origins of the McCord family from 1760 in Ireland to the time of David Ross McCord (1844-1930) are traced in this exhibition and the accompanying publication. While very much a man of his times, David Ross McCord's insatiable appetite for collecting in addition to his pursuit of a dream to build a national museum of Canadian history set him apart. With a marked taste for the unusual and a profound sense of history, McCord amassed a vast number and range of objects. It is to his thirst for knowledge and his passion for collecting that we owe the existence of the McCord Museum of Canadian History.

3. *Mont Royal-Ville Marie: Early Plans and View of Montreal*, May 9 – August 1, 1992
Curator Responsible: Conrad Graham, Curator of Decorative Arts; Contributing Author: Shahin Farzaneh, Courtauld Institute.

While other exhibitions and publications have treated early views of other Canadian cities, to date Montreal has not been examined. More than 100 very fragile watercolours and drawings of Montreal, dating primarily from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries are on view, many

Notes and Comments

lent from private and public collections, such as the British Library and the New York Historical Society.

4. *Wrapped in the Colours of the Earth: Cultural Heritage of the First Nations*, May 9, 1992 –

Curator Responsible: Moira McCaffrey, Curator of Ethnology and Archaeology; Contributing Authors: Claude Chapdelaine, Université de Montréal; Bruce Jamieson, McGill University; Ruth Holmes Whitehead, Nova Scotia Museum; Ludger Müller-Wille, McGill University; Taamusi Qumaq, Povungnituk Elder.

For this inaugural exhibition and the accompanying publication, the focus is on three eastern nations. *Marks of the Micmac Nation* explores the artistry of costume and quillwork designs, and the ongoing significance of these traditions to Micmac artists. *A Village called Hochelaga* illustrates Iroquoian lifeways on the Island of Montreal prior to European contact. *Names and Lives in Nunavik* describes Inuit toponomy and explores the critical link between language, culture and ancestral lands.

5. *Victoria Bridge: The Vital Link*, May 9 – October 15, 1992

Curator Responsible: Stanley Triggs, Curator of the Notman Photographic Archives; Contributing Authors: Conrad Graham, Curator of Decorative Arts; Brian Young, McGill University; Gilles Lauzon, Université du Québec à Montréal.

With the opening of the Victoria bridge in 1860, a year-round port was established for Montreal at Portland, Maine, not to mention connections via the railway to Upper Canada and to the mid-western United States. Divided into four parts, the setting, the bridge, the celebration and the impact, the exhibition and accompanying publication provide an in-depth examination of the period from 1845 to 1875, Montreal's industrialization.

6. *William Notman's Studio: The Canadian Picture*, May 9, 1992 –

Curator Responsible: Stanley Triggs, Curator of the Notman Photographic Archives.

The story of the pre-eminent Canadian photographer William Notman and his empire of photographic studios begun in 1856 is the focus of this exhibition and the accompanying publication. Selected from the extensive holdings of the Notman collection, which includes more than 400,000 photographs, a variety of portraits, urban scenes and landscapes are on view.

A second area is devoted to the presentation of a series of daguerreotypes dating from the period 1840 to 1860, and largely consisting of portraits of Canadians by various photographers.

7. *Turning Point: Quebec 1900*, May 9, 1992 – November 9, 1993

Curator Responsible: France Gascon, Chief Curator and Curator of Paintings, Prints and Drawings.

The period 1890-1914 was a time of major transition in the history of Quebec. What was still a very traditional society was changed forever by industrial development. The exhibition introduces visitors to this exceptionally rich period through some of its personalities, places and representative objects. More than fifty artifacts are complemented by almost 100 photographs and archival documents from the permanent holdings of the McCord.

8. *The McCord Museum Archives*, May 9 – November 9, 1992

Curator Responsible: Pamala Miller, Curator of Archival Collections.

While the McCord's archives traditionally have been a rich source of documentary support material to exhibitions, this is the first time that a gallery space has been devoted to the presentation of documents from the Archives. This is opportune as Montreal was host to some 3000 archivists attending international association meetings in September 1992. Together with an accompanying publication, a wide range of archival material will be on display, from the

Notes and Comments

informative Dessaulles and Riel papers to visually appealing scrapbooks, cards and even a milk-bottle top collection.

9. *Eclectic Tastes: Fine and Decorative Arts from the McCord*, May 9, 1992 –

Curator Responsible: Conrad Graham, Curator of Decorative Arts; Contributing Authors: Sarah Ivory, Concordia University; Robert Derome, Université du Québec à Montréal.

Highlighting the nineteenth century, where the McCord holdings of paintings and decorative arts are strong, this exhibition and accompanying catalogue feature both secular and religious silver, furniture, ceramics, glass and wood sculpture. Sometimes important for their documentary value, sometimes for their inherent art-historical value, the artifacts on view underline the duality of the McCord's collecting mandate.

10. *Form and Fashion: Nineteenth-century Feminine Dress*, May 9, 1992 – January 15, 1993

Curator Responsible: Jacqueline Beaudoin-Ross, Curator of Costume and Textiles.

The form in the evolution of nineteenth-century costume is emphasized in this exhibition and accompanying catalogue. The selection of costumes from the McCord's extensive collection demonstrates that not only are styles in dress revised throughout history, but also that particular elements in attire re-appear again and again. For the first time, photographs from the McCord's Notman Photographic Archives will be used not only to date the costumes but also to demonstrate the evolution of the form. The dissemination of European fashion plates in Montreal is traced to show the extent to which Montreal was a "fashionable venue."

Breaking the Silence and Bridging the Gap: Documenting Personal Memories of the Holocaust

by Yehudi Lindeman, *Associate Professor of English, McGill University*

...I never thought that I would be able to sit here and talk about these things. I never had the courage to do it. And then I saw other people coming out... And then, a few times, I heard people say, about people like me, you are actually an endangered species, because after you are done there will be nobody else, there will be no one else left to tell the real story. And my children really wanted me to do it. And maybe because it is fifty years now, 1939-1989, I feel that everything is coming full circle, that I have to do it, that maybe my time is running out.

Renata Skotnicka-Zajdman, *in the McGill studio, June 1989.*

Renata Skotnicka-Zajdman is one of the many survivors of the Holocaust now in Montreal. Living in increasing fear with "Aryan papers," she managed to survive World War II as a 13 to 18 year old, dodging selections by hiding in cellars and safe-houses, and burrowing her way in and out of the ghettos of Bialystok and of Warsaw, where she witnessed the ghetto uprising. There are thousands of other survivors in the Montreal area.

In June, 1989, Renata was among the first survivors of the Holocaust to be interviewed by "Living Testimonies," McGill University's Video Archive. The Archive's goal is to record on studio-quality video-tape, eye-witness accounts of the Holocaust. Though the focus is on survivors, witness testimony by liberators and rescuers is also included.¹