Being Irish O'Quebec

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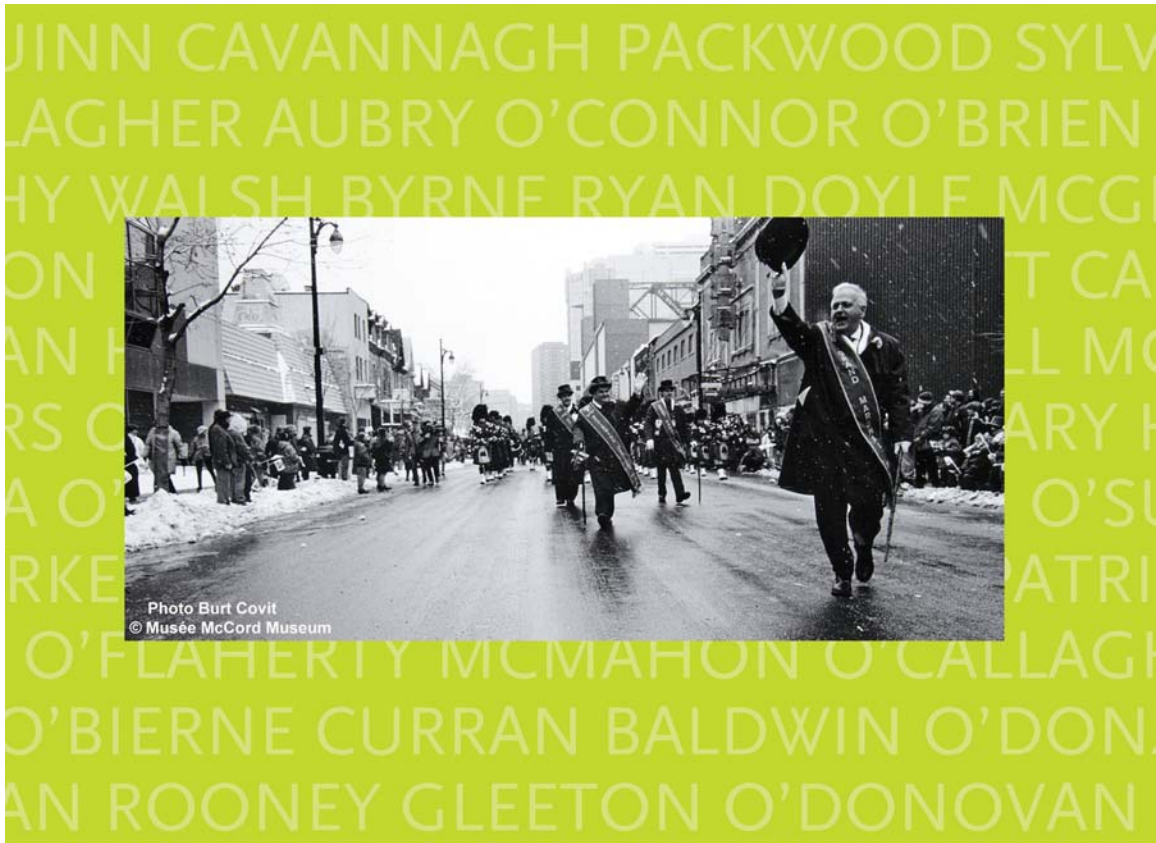
**Complete texts of the exhibition
Presented at the McCord Museum
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Introduction

How Irish is Quebec?
The province's population has always been a mix of ethno-cultural groups, but the Irish represent one of the most significant, both in numbers and historical impact.

Being Irish O'Quebec explores how, for over three centuries, Irish people have shaped and been shaped by this place. Ireland's emigrants and their descendants brought with them collective memories and symbols that have helped build the province's common identity. Their history and their contributions show how newcomers, living within their host societies, can create new traditions and shared histories.

1. A long way from home

For several hundred years people have been leaving Ireland for the land that was first occupied by Aboriginal peoples and later became, by turn, a French colony, a British colony and a Canadian province called Quebec.

Many factors pushed Irish men and women to leave their small island in the North Atlantic. By the 17th century Ireland had been invaded and occupied by the English, who imposed harsh restrictions on Irish Catholics and Presbyterians. This led to widespread poverty, made worse by evictions, epidemic disease and the final catastrophe of 1845-1850 – the Great Potato Famine.

The Irish who emigrated to this new, vaster land, with its more rigorous climate and rugged geography, included farmers, labourers, servants, builders and all kinds of artisans. A few of the more fortunate Irish, some of them members of the elite "Protestant Ascendancy," also came after the 1759 Conquest of New France to help govern and run the new British colony.

- *Map from the Atlas of Canada*. Revised and enlarged edition. Prepared under the direction of J. E. Chalifour, Chief Geographer (detail), Ottawa, Department of the Interior, 1915, McCord Museum, M2008X.6.6.

- *The Ejectment*, illustration published in the *Illustrated London News*, December 16, 1848.

- *Emigrants Arrival at Cork: A Scene on the Quay*, illustration published in the *Illustrated London News*, May 10, 1851.

- *The Departure*, illustration published in the *Illustrated London News*, December 15, 1849.

- *Wishing Arch – Giant's Causeway, Ireland*, by W. J. Topley Studios, 1912, photograph, Library and Archives Canada, Topley Studio Fonds, PA-010788.

- *Killarney, Ireland*, anonymous photograph, undated, Library and Archives Canada, James Ballantyne Fonds, PA-134163.

- *Wishing Chair – Giant's Causeway, Ireland*, by W. J. Topley Studios, 1912, photograph, Library and Archives Canada, Topley Studio Fonds, PA-010784.

- *Glenariff, Ireland*, anonymous photograph, undated, Library and Archives Canada, James Ballantyne Fonds, PA-134162.

- *Mrs. Whitney and her three daughters, Freda, Gladys and Adele, Ireland*, by the Fergus studio, about 1905, McCord Museum, M2002.122.6.1.11, gift of Joan E. Foster.

- *Mrs. Whitney, Dublin, Ireland*, by the Lafayette studio, about 1885, McCord Museum, M2002.122.6.1.4, gift of Joan E. Foster.

- *Mr. Whitney(?), Enniscorthy, Ireland*, by the Andrews studio, about 1885, McCord Museum, M2002.122.6.1.1, gift of Joan E. Foster.

- *Two Irish girls*, anonymous photograph, undated, Library and Archives Canada, John Edward Gardiner Curran Fonds, C-055231.

- *Immigrants' arrival, Quebec (Quebec)*, anonymous photograph, about 1910, National Film Board/Library and Archives Canada, PA-048695.

2. Biographies

2.1. Tec Aubry (Tadhg Cornelius O'Brennan), about 1630-1687

An Irishman in New France
Tadhg Cornelius O'Brennan was probably the first Irishman to arrive here. Old records tell us he was born in Ireland during the 1630s and decades later lived in Ville-Marie, now Montreal. They also tell us he died in Pointe-aux-Trembles in 1687, still only in his fifties. But they are silent about his emigration.

Many 17th-century Irish Catholics sought refuge in Europe from war, bad harvests and harsh Penal Laws. Those who served in foreign armies were called "Wild Geese."

Was O'Brennan one of these "Wild Geese," who sought his fortune first in France and then in its overseas colony? We may never know.

- *Certificate of marriage between Tecq (Tècle – Thècle-Cornelius) Aubrenaue (Aubry – Aubrenane – O'Brenam), a settler residing at the Assomption River, near the island of Montreal … and Jeanne Chartier …,* (detail), September 6, 1670, BANQ (Centre Québec), CR301, P112.

… father of a large family
Newlyweds Tec Aubry and Jeanne Chartier settled on a farm at Pointe-aux-Trembles on the island of Montreal, then moved to Lachenaie, north of the island. By the time of the 1681 census, they owned five farm animals and five acres of land.

Tec was already an experienced farmer. He had been working on Urbain Tessier's land in 1661 when a group of Iroquois kidnapped him. Upon his release seven months later, he returned to work on farms around Ville-Marie.

The couple had seven children. The youngest, François, had fourteen of his own. Today, thousands of Aubrys can trace their lineage back to Quebec's first Irishman and his *Fille du roi* wife. Abbé Tanguay's classic genealogical reference book, *Dictionnaire généalogique des familles canadiennes*, documents this important founding family.

- Page from the *Dictionnaire généalogique des familles canadiennes-françaises depuis la fondation de la colonie jusqu'à nos jours*, by Abbé Cyprien Tanguay, volume I, Montreal, Eusèbe Sénécal, 1871, McCord Museum, M2008X.6.3.

A coureur des bois …

The *coureurs des bois* (literally, "runners of the woods") epitomize New France. Ruggedly independent, these unlicensed fur traders and their Aboriginal partners helped build the new colony.

Documents detail legal agreements between "Corneille Tecle" and a group of trading partners in New France. Corneille Tecle was undoubtedly Tadhg Cornelius O'Brennan.

O'Brennan's new French-speaking compatriots had difficulty spelling his Gaelic name. He appears in documents variously as Thecle, Teque and Tecq, Aubrenam, Aubrenane, Aubrenaue and O'Brenam. Present-day historians and genealogists refer to him as "Tec Aubry." The Gaelic or English names of many other early Irish settlers underwent similarly surprising transformations.

… husband of a *Fille du roi*

Like the coureurs des bois, the *Filles du roi*, or King's daughters, are emblematic of New France. Between 1663 and 1673, 770 young women arrived in New France – whose European inhabitants were mostly male – under the sponsorship of the French King, Louis XIV. They were sent to marry and have children. The plan worked: New France became a viable community.

At Quebec City on September 10, 1670, Fille du roi Jeanne Chartier, daughter of Pierre Chartier and Marie Gaudon of Paris, married "Tecq Aubrenaue," son of Connehour Aubrenaue and Honorée Iconnehour (probably Connor O'Brennan and Honora O'Connor), of Diasony, a small village in Ireland. Tec is described as a settler from the Assomption River area. Among the wedding guests were a master armourer and the widow of a seigneur (an important landowner). Tec Aubry had traveled very far from his Irish origins.

- *Ruling drawn up at the request of Corneille Tecle, Mathurin Normandin and Robert Cachelièvre, concerning a trade agreement between them and six other partners, since deceased, who had travelled to Outaouais territory to trade, 1670*
  Manuscript ledger (reproduction)
  Centre d'archives de Québec de Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec, TP1,S28,P715

- *Record of the marriage between Tecq (Tècle – Thècle-Cornelius) Aubrenaue (Aubry – Aubrenane – O'Brenam), a settler residing at the Assomption River, near the island of Montreal, and Jeanne Chartier, 1670*
  Manuscript ledger
  Centre d'archives de Québec de Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec, CR301,P112

- *Historiæ Canadensis, sev Novæ-Franciæ Libri Decem, Ad Annum usque Christi, MDCLVI,* 1664
  François Du Creux
  Published by Sebastian Cramoisy and Sebastian Mabre-Cramoisy, Paris
  McCord Museum, M11712, gift of Ward C. Pitfield

  This early history of Canada contains illustrations of New France during Tec Aubry's era.

- Coins, late 17th century
  Copper
  McCord Museum, M994X.2.700-704

  The *Filles du roi* brought dowries to the colony. These coins were in use in New France during the late 17th century, when Aubry got married.

- Cooking pot, late 17th century
  Cast iron
  McCord Museum, M996X.2.480

  Cookware like this was in common use among New France families.

2.2. Guy Carleton (1st Baron Dorchester), 1724-1808

The exercise of tolerance
Protestants as well as Catholics came to Quebec. Guy Carleton, an Irish Protestant, helped preserve the Catholic colony's heritage.

Carleton was born in 1724 in Strabane, County Tyrone, in what is now Northern Ireland. During the 16th and 17th centuries it was the site of Plantations – or settlements – of English and Scottish Protestants. By the 18th century, their descendents formed a political, social and economic elite known as the Protestant Ascendancy. This was Carleton's heritage.

Surprisingly, as Governor of the new British colony, he worked to obtain liberties for Quebec's Catholics that their co-religionists in Ireland would not enjoy for decades to come.

- *General Sir Guy Carleton*, by Mabel B. Messer, 1923, oil on canvas, copy of the original portrait that hung in Rideau Hall, Library and Archives Canada, 1997-8-1.

The Quebec Act and French Canada
In 1774, Carleton, now Governor of Quebec, signed the Quebec Act. Reversing an earlier British policy of anglicization, it allowed the French-Canadian population – les Canadiens – to hold public office, own property and retain much of their civil code. The Act granted the Catholics of Quebec more privileges than those in Carleton's native Ireland. It was an important first step towards eventual Catholic emancipation in the British Empire.

Was Carleton intentionally creating a new climate of freedom? Historians once believed that Carleton's real motive was to secure French-Canadian support for the British regime against the threat of the rebellious Thirteen Colonies to the south. A more recent view is that Carleton and some of his peers were deliberately seeking to avoid the blunders of Ireland's Protestant Ascendancy. Carleton consciously aimed to accommodate and preserve Quebec's society and culture.

- *This, Sir, Is the Meaning of the Quebec Act*, anonymous, 1774, mezzotint, McCord Museum, M22326, gift of Louis Mulligan.

  The Quebec Act is debated by historians to this day. The energetic discussion taking place in this image symbolizes the mixed reactions inspired by the Act, which guaranteed religious freedom to Catholics while denying Quebec an elected assembly. The American colonies included it among the so-called Intolerable Acts perpetrated by the British government. The men portrayed here are probably two British government

officials, possibly Lord Mansfield and the Earl of Sandwich, although this remains unverified.

- *Sir Guy Carleton, 1st Baron Dorchester (1724-1808)*, 1778-1786
  Anonymous
  Miniature: watercolour on ivory in leather case
  McCord Museum, M2459, gift of David Ross McCord

- *Shade of Cromwell – Has England Then Come to This*, 1759
  George Townshend (1724-1807)
  Sepia ink and watercolour on laid paper
  McCord Museum, M19856, gift of Sir Frederick Williams Taylor

George Townshend served as brigadier general under James Wolfe (1724-1807) during the Seven Years' War. A brilliant caricaturist, he disliked Wolfe intensely and drew several cartoons satirizing what he felt was the General's cruelty towards French Canadians.

In this drawing, Townshend associates Wolfe with Oliver Cromwell (1599-1658), the English Puritan military commander notorious for his mistreatment of Catholics in Ireland. Would England repeat this sad episode by discriminating against another Catholic population?

Townshend later became lord lieutenant of Ireland, and he, in turn, became embroiled in Irish politics, eventually earning a reputation as another Englishman who oppressed the Irish.

- *Head from a Bust of George III*, 1765
  Joseph Wilton (1722-1803)
  Marble
  McCord Museum, M15885, gift of the Natural History Society of Montreal

Carleton sailed to Montreal in 1766 as Governor of Quebec, bringing with him a marble bust of George III.

The King approved Carleton's appointment, calling him a "sensible man" and continuing to support him throughout his career.

Carleton was not always judged so favourably. The Quebec Act left many people furious because it denied Quebecers the right to an elected assembly. After the Act passed in 1774, a group of British Montrealers beheaded the bust. Then in 1775 invading American soldiers pitched the hapless head down a well. Clearly, neither the king, Carleton, nor the Quebec Act was universally popular.

- *An Act for making more effectual Provision for the Government of the Province of Quebec in North America*, 1774
  Printed copy of the Quebec Act
  Published by Charles Eyre and William Strahan, London
  McCord Museum, M2471, gift of David Ross McCord

2.3. Marie Louise O'Flaherty, about 1756-1824

A religious lif e in 18th-century Montreal
Irish-born Marie O'Flaherty was a baby when she was captured by Iroquois, then liberated and taken to live in Montreal with the Grey Nuns, the order founded by Marguerite d'Youville (1701-1771). O'Flaherty would spend her whole life there.

A strange fate for an Irish lass? Many Irish Presbyterians emigrated to New England, where kidnapping raids were common. Several American girls ended up living with nuns in New France, and Marie Louise may have been one of them.

Marguerite d'Youville's own stepfather, Timothy O'Sullivan, was an Irish physician, who became naturalized under the name Timothée Sylvain.

- Page from *Glanures spirituelles* (detail), late 18th century, notebook once belonging to Marie Louise O'Flaherty, Services des Archives et des collections des Soeurs grises, G7,0024.02.

  The page shows her signature as "Flerte," "Flerter" and "Flertez" – all versions of Flaherty rendered in French.

Beauty and faith: the freedom to worship
Needlework and singing were important features of religious life in New France, serving to embellish both chapel and mass, and enabling the Catholic Church to portray God as the creator and provider of all beauty. It was a far cry from the situation in Ireland, where churches had been destroyed and open Catholic practice banned.

Sister O'Flaherty was a skilful practitioner of the church music called plainsong, as well as being an accomplished needlewoman. While no surviving objects are attributed directly to her, we know that several nuns often worked together on a single piece. She likely had a hand in this beautiful chasuble, credited in the records to two other members of her order.

Sister O'Flaherty died in 1824, the last Grey Nun to have known Marguerite d'Youville – the religious pioneer who had offered her a home when she was a child in need.

- *Plan of the Montreal General Hospital*, by Étienne Montgolfier p.s.s, 1758, Services des Archives et des collections des Sœurs grises, C/A-53. At this period, the Montreal General Hospital was run by the Grey Nuns.

- *Glanures spirituelles*, late 18th century
  Collection d'objets et archives des Sœurs Grises de Montréal, G7,0024-02

  This notebook once belonged to Sister Marie Louise O'Flaherty.

  By nature, Marie was pious, timid and private, and her decision to become a nun was made early. This notebook contains prayers, religious exercises and the Lord's name, inscribed by the young woman in careful French.

  She also practiced her signature, as young people do today. She signed Soeur (Sister) Flerter or Flertez. Like others in New France, O'Flaherty had to adapt her Irish name to French, so she dropped the typically Irish *O'* – a prefix that originally meant "grandson" or "descendant".

  Few notebooks like this survive. It is an exceptional piece, providing an intimate glimpse into a young woman's spirituality.

- *Act of Profession of Marie Louise O'Flaherty*, 1776
  Collection d'objets et archives des Sœurs Grises de Montréal, G7,0024.01

  Becoming a nun was a step-by-step process for Marie O'Flaherty.

  At the age of eighteen, she became a postulant. Postulants live and pray in community with nuns, but have not yet taken their vows. The following year she became a novice. Novices prepare intensively for life in the community, and are addressed as "Sister." O'Flaherty took her perpetual vows in 1776. This signalled her full entry into the religious life.

  Sister O'Flaherty's Act of Profession embodies her decision to live in service of the poor and to abide by her vows of poverty, chastity and obedience.

- *Registre des professes perpétuelles des Sœurs grises*, 1737-1932
  Collection d'objets et archives des Sœurs Grises de Montréal, G5-R.pp1732-1932

  In 1776 Marie Louise O'Flaherty's name was entered in this register of the "perpetually professed" Grey Nuns of Montreal.

  The leather-bound volume *Professes perp*[étuelles] lists the women who entered the ranks of the "perpetually professed" Grey Nuns of Montreal.

  The book's first inscription dates from 1737. In 1776 an entry was made for "Sister O'Flaherty, Marie Louise, born in Ireland, 19 June around 1756." She was one of the earliest Grey Nuns and possibly the first

Irishwoman in the Montreal congregation. In 1830 a second Irishwoman was listed – Catherine Hurley (1799-1865). Out of the congregation's several hundred members, at least thirty are known to have been Irish, and there may have been more whose origins went unrecorded.

- Embroidered textile, metal sequins, glass beads
  Collection d'objets et archives des Sœurs Grises de Montréal, 1980.J.013.1

  This chasuble was created by Grey Nuns during Marie O'Flaherty's time at the convent.

2.4. Patrick McMahon, 1796-1851

The leader of Quebec's Irish church
There were already thousands of Irish Catholics in Quebec City when in 1822 their fellow countryman Patrick McMahon became curate at the city's principal church, Notre-Dame de Québec.

McMahon was very outspoken, and tradition has it that this is why he was sent off to New Brunswick in the mid-1820s.

On his return to Quebec City, he found the local Irish residents determined to have their own church. Under his leadership, a committee of prominent laymen pursued the goal, and in 1833 Father McMahon celebrated the first mass at the new St. Patrick's Church.

- *Father Patrick McMahon* (detail), by Théophile Hamel (1817-1870), 1847, oil on canvas, Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec, 67.300 (photo: MNBAQ, Patrick Altman), gift of St. Patrick's parish, Quebec City.

Irish: A distinct language
For thousands of years, the Irish have spoken and written a distinct language. Called Gaeilge in Irish, this Celtic language is known in English as Irish, Gaelic or Irish Gaelic.

In the 17th century, the use of Gaelic began to decline and it was gradually replaced by English throughout most of Ireland. Famine and migration hastened this process.

But the language remained beloved to many. As the great 19th-century Irish poet James Clarence Mangan wrote: "It is music, the sweetest of music..."

Father McMahon valued the Irish language too. This lovely English-Irish dictionary, which uses a Gaelic typeface, once belonged to him.

- *Father Patrick McMahon*, 1847
  Théophile Hamel (1817-1870)
  Oil on canvas
  Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec, 67.300, gift of the Parish of St. Patrick's, Quebec City. Restoration undertaken by the Centre de conservation du Québec. Gilding of the frame made possible by a contribution from the Guilde du Foyer St. Brigid's, Quebec City

  Serving Quebec's Irish community
  During the 1830s and 1840s Quebec City became home to an increasing number of Irish immigrants, mostly Catholic. They were being pushed from

their homeland by worsening circumstances, including the disastrous Potato Famine of 1845-1850. McMahon worked closely with immigration officials to promote their interests. He also supported initiatives to provide new social services, including a Christian Brothers school and a Grey Nuns orphanage.

On the silver jubilee of his ordination in 1847 the citizens of Quebec City presented him with a magnificent altar service by well-known silversmith François Sasseville (1797-1864) and this exceptional full-length portrait by Théophile Hamel, the Province of Canada's foremost painter.

- *English-Irish Dictionary* once belonging to Father Patrick McMahon, 1732
  Conor Begley and Hugh MacCurtin
  Published by Seamus Guerin, Paris
  Lent by Marianna O'Gallagher

- *Manuel des cérémonies romaines* (vol. 2) once belonging to Father Patrick McMahon, 1815
  Published by Cormon et Blanc, Lyon
  Lent by Marianna O'Gallagher

This Manuel des cérémonies romaines outlines a number of Roman Catholic rites, including the various types of Masses, the sacraments and funeral services.

McMahon wrote his name in the book in 1822, the year he became a priest. He had received some of his training in French, at the Collège de Saint-Hyacinthe in Lower Canada, and may have received the book as an ordination gift.

2.5. Edmund Bailey O'Callaghan, 1797-1880

A Patriote and Louis-Joseph Papineau's right-hand man
Talented, intelligent and multilingual, Edmund Bailey O'Callaghan participated in an important transatlantic exchange of people, ideas and politics that shaped Lower-Canadian identities. He brought his militant Irish nationalism with him when he immigrated to Canada in 1823 and soon aligned himself with the reformers, or Patriotes.

Elected to the Legislative Assembly for the county of Yamaska in 1834, O'Callaghan was known for his fiery speeches and loyal support of the Patriotes and their leader, Louis-Joseph Papineau (1786-1871).

The Patriotes were both a political party and a popular movement. Liberal, nationalist and anti-colonialist, they participated in the Lower Canada Rebellions of 1837-1838.

- *Edmund B. O'Callaghan, 1797-1880*, by Robert Bross, 1880-1900, engraving, McCord Museum, M3890, gift of David Ross McCord.

Agitate, Agitate, Agitate!
As soon as O'Callaghan entered the Legislative Assembly in 1834, Louis-Joseph Papineau made him his right-hand man. Like Papineau, O'Callaghan was an intellectual. He was also Catholic and perfectly bilingual – he had studied for two years in France – and could serve as liaison between the Patriote party's English-speakers, who represented one-quarter of its membership, and the francophone majority.

As a journalist and editor of the Vindicator, O'Callaghan could also influence the British reformist community. Most importantly, he was a prominent Quebec supporter of Daniel O'Connell and the reformers in Ireland, and could help Papineau obtain their backing in the British Parliament.

O'Callaghan believed in non-violent action and reiterated O'Connell's famous motto – "Agitate! Agitate!! Agitate!!!" – in a furious article published in the *Vindicator*. He organized meetings, demonstrations, debates and petitions, all aimed at pressuring the governor of Lower Canada and the British Parliament to concede the right to responsible government to the colony.

- *A Canadian Group Lobbying in London (O'Callaghan, Papineau, John Viger, Nelson, Montfeiraud),* print of a sketch by John Doyle (1797-1868), January 26, 1838, Library and Archives Canada, C-030282.

- *Demonstration of Canadians against the English Government, at Saint-Charles, in 1837, also called The Assembly of the Six Counties*, by Charles Alexander (1864-1915), 1891, oil on canvas, Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec, 37.54 (photo: MNBAQ, Patrick Altman).

- *Hurrah for Agitation*, extract from an article published in the *Vindicator and Canadian Advertiser*, Montreal, April 21, 1837.

  "Henceforth, there must be no peace in the Province, no quarter for the plunderers. Agitate! Agitate!! Agitate!!! Destroy the Revenue; denounce the oppressors. Everything is lawful when our fundamental liberties are in danger. 'The guards die – they never surrender'"

- *Letter from E. B. O'Callaghan to Michael Quigley*, Montreal, July 22, 1833
  Lent by Bernadine Quigley Ratté

  O'Callaghan spent some of his early years as an immigrant in Quebec City, where he practiced medicine and participated in Irish political and religious life. It was there he met Michael Quigley, an Irish-born master mason and plasterer.

  Both men were intent on furthering Irish causes. They helped found the colony's first Irish church, St. Patrick's of Quebec City, and were members of associations that linked the Quebec Patriotes with Irish nationalist movements.

  O'Callaghan moved to Montreal in 1833 to take over the *Vindicator* after its Irish editor, Daniel Tracey, died in the 1832 cholera epidemic. He remained in contact with Michael Quigley, whose descendants preserved their 1833-1837 correspondence.

- *Louis-Joseph Papineau*, 1887
  Louis-Philippe Hébert (1850-1917)
  Bronze
  McCord Museum, M2003.26.1, gift of Raymond Brodeur, Encadrements Marcel

- *Daniel O'Connell's Statue, Sackville St., Dublin, Ireland*, 1902
  B. L. Singley
  Stereograph
  Published by Keystone View Company
  Royal Alberta Museum, Edmonton, H76.17.682

- *Attack on St. Charles, 25 November 1837*, 1840
  Lord Charles Beauclerk (1813-1861)
  Hand-coloured lithograph by Nathaniel Hartnell (1831-1853)
  McCord Museum, M972.81.10

  In the fall of 1837, the situation deteriorated and events spiralled out of Papineau and O'Callaghan's control. Condemned by Catholic Church authorities, overwhelmed by calls for armed revolt from the Patriote movement's extremist wing, Papineau and O'Callaghan – disguised as women – fled Montreal for the Richelieu valley, a price on their heads.

  On November 25, 1837, the Patriotes were defeated at Saint-Charles-sur-Richelieu. Papineau and O'Callaghan escaped to the United States. O'Callaghan would never reside in Canada again.

- *Documents relative to the colonial history of the state of New York; Procured in Holland, England and France by John Romeyn Brodhead, Esq (vol. 1),* 1856
  Edited by Edmund Bailey O'Callaghan
  Published by Weed and Parsons, Albany
  McCord Museum, M2008X.6.5

  Following the events of 1837, the once radical O'Callaghan settled down to a quiet life in exile in the United States.

  In 1848 he took up the post of state archivist for New York. O'Callaghan edited eleven volumes of archival documents from New York's colonial period. Several of his numerous scholarly works, including this series, represent pioneering landmarks in the translation and publication of French documents pertaining to relations between New France and America.

2.6. Sir William Hales Hingston, 1829-1907

A visionary leader in Victoria in Montreal
Nineteenth-century Montreal was a boomtown, but poverty and poor sanitation threatened the health of the growing population that laboured in its new factories.

A son of Irish immigrants, William Hales Hingston was a brilliant medical man and a visionary leader of Victorian Quebec. Twice elected mayor, he was a passionate advocate of public health reforms. He also served as a director of the Montreal City and District Savings Bank (now the Laurentian Bank of Canada) and as president of the Montreal Safe Deposit Company and of the Montreal Street Railway Company. He was knighted by Queen Victoria in 1895.

- *Dr. William Hales Hingston, Montreal, QC*, by William Notman (1826-1891), 1863, carte de visite photograph, McCord Museum, I-5592.1.

A complex cultural heritage
Hingston was the son of an Anglo-Irish Presbyterian widower and an Irish Catholic housekeeper. Although his parents wed at Montreal's St. Gabriel Street Presbyterian Church, they raised their children as Catholics. His father's previous wife had also been Catholic, but the children of this first marriage were raised Presbyterian. Hingston's sisters both married Protestants.

Although McGill University, where Hingston studied, was non-denominational, he always believed his Catholicism was the reason that the institution did not grant him a medical license, obliging him to obtain one abroad. He did benefit from his McGill years, however, for it was thanks to a contact made there that he became physician to Lady Dufferin (1843-1936), wife of the Governor General of Canada. It was through her that he met his wife, Margaret Macdonald – a Scottish Catholic from Ontario and the daughter of Canada's postmaster general. The Prime Minister of Canada attended their wedding.

- *Dr. William Hales Hingston and his siblings, Montreal, QC*, by William Notman (1826-1891), 1867, cabinet card photograph, McCord Museum, I-28701.1.

- *Mrs. Dr. William H. Hingston, Margaret Josephine Macdonald, in fancy dress costume as "A Lady of the Time of James V," Montreal, QC*, by William Notman (1826-1891), 1876, cabinet card photograph, McCord Museum, II-24694.1.

- *Montreal's Coat of Arms, sketch by Jacques Viger (1787-1858)*, 1833, Archives de la ville de Montréal, BM99,S1,D1.

Mayor of Montreal from 1833 to 1836, Viger designed the city's coat of arms, which features the shamrock.

A labour of love

Hingston studied medicine at McGill University, completed his training abroad and received his medical license from the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh.

On his return to Montreal in 1853, Hingston set up practice on McGill Street, the eastern boundary of a working-class Irish district called Griffintown. When a cholera epidemic ravaged the city the following year, Hingston devoted countless hours to helping the neighbourhood's sick. Often refusing payment from the poorest families, he later wrote that it was "a labour of love."

Hingston began his career at St. Patrick's Hospital, a modest institution for indigent Irish and English Catholics. He went on to become a renowned surgeon and professor of surgery, earning many honours and serving near the end of his life as honorary president of the international congress of surgery held in Paris in 1906.

- *St. George (Mayor Hingston) and the Dragon (Smallpox), Montreal, QC*, by Henri Julien (1852-1908), photolithograph, published in the *Canadian Illustrated News*, November 4, 1876, McCord Museum, M993X.5.1135.

   Hingston was an advocate of vaccination, and laboured tirelessly to contain Montreal's successive smallpox epidemics.

- *The Honourable Sir William Hingston*, 1903
   Portrait after a photograph by Laprés & Lavergne
   Oil on canvas
   Banque Laurentienne

- Medical instrument case once belonging to William Hales Hingston, late 19th century
   Metal, wood, textile
   Musée des Hospitalières de l'Hôtel-Dieu de Montréal, 1990.21.226.1-32

- Montreal Hunt Club steeplechase trophy won by William Hales Hingston, 1874
   Silver, painted wood
   McCord Museum, M993.81.1.1-3, gift of E. Hingston

2.7. Thomas d'Arcy McGee, 1825-1868

Poet, politician and Canada's great orator

First in Ireland and later in the United States, Thomas D'Arcy McGee was an angry young nationalist. But after he arrived in Montreal in 1857, he began to promote the vision of a new blended nationality that in Quebec today might be called interculturalism:

> Should the nationality we desire draw near in a short time, distinct Irish*ism*, like every other *ism* founded on race, will gradually dissolve in it as drift ice does in the gulf stream… We believe the new patriotism itself must perform the part of solvent, and by its genial and generous atmosphere mould the materials already existing in the soil.

- *The Honourable Thomas D'Arcy McGee, Montreal, QC*, by William Notman (1826-1891), 1863, carte de visite photograph. McCord Museum, I-7383.1.

A Father of Canadian Confederation

Like many disciples of the Irish Emancipator Daniel O'Connell (1775-1847), the young McGee advocated non-violent action, or public "agitation," in favour of political and constitutional change for Ireland. But, like many others, McGee felt change was slow in coming, and moved closer to more radical factions.

Once in Montreal, McGee returned to non-violent agitation. Was he struck by how the colony had obtained responsible government more through agitation than violence?

McGee ran for election in Montreal, entering parliament in 1857. Ten years later he participated in the creation of the Dominion of Canada. Once a rebel, later a conservative Catholic, he became a Father of Confederation.

- *The Fathers of Confederation*, anonymous, 1910, reproductions of two glass magic-lantern slides used for teaching, McCord Museum, MP-0000.25.947-948, gift of Stanley G. Triggs.

The Fenian threat

Fenianism was a transatlantic movement that promoted Irish independence and armed revolution. The Catholic Church denounced this militant movement, as did the reformers for whom political ends could never justify violent means.

McGee also opposed the Fenian fraternity, which had branches in the United States and in Canada – including supporters in his own Griffintown constituency. He called on Irish Canadians to "give the highest practical proof possible that an

Irishman well governed becomes one of the best subjects of the law and the Sovereign."

When a group of American Fenians unsuccessfully raided Canada in 1866, planning to hold the country hostage in exchange for Irish independence, the New York Times reported that McGee "dressed them off in his well-known eloquent and scathing fashion."

To the Fenians, the formerly militant McGee was a traitor to the cause, and his betrayal demanded retribution.

- *Fenian Raid*, by John Henry Walker (1831-1899), 1870, wood engraving, McCord Museum, M930.50.8.380, gift of David Ross McCord.

  The Fenians made a second attempt at invasion of Canada in 1870, crossing the border from Vermont into Quebec.

- *Welcome address to returning volunteers from the Fenian Raids, Champ de Mars, Montreal, QC*, by William Notman (1826-1891), 1866, photograph, McCord Museum, I-21691.0.1

Thomas D'Arcy McGee assassinated!
Early on April 7, 1868, McGee was assassinated on his doorstep in Ottawa, struck down by a bullet to the head.

At the time, his murder was seen as a Fenian plot, but doubts have since been raised. No proof was found that Irish immigrant Patrick James Whelan, who was tried and publicly hanged for the crime, was a Fenian. He was, however, part of an Irish nationalist subculture in Montreal that was linked to the Fenian movement.

Thomas D'Arcy McGee's state funeral was held in Montreal on what would have been his forty-third birthday. Thirty thousand people of all classes and creeds marched in the procession. He was buried in the city's Catholic Notre-Dame-des-Neiges cemetery.

- *Funeral Procession of the Late Honourable Thomas D'Arcy McGee, at Montreal, Canada*, illustration published in the *Illustrated London News*, May 9, 1868, McCord Museum, M967.138.5, gift of Charles deVolpi.

- *The Honourable Thomas D'Arcy McGee's mausoleum, Mount Royal Cemetery, Montreal, QC*, by William Notman & Son, 1927, photograph, McCord Museum, VIEW-24167.

Journalist, author, poet

A brilliant and prolific writer, McGee published his first article on his nineteenth birthday. He went on to found several newspapers, including Montreal's *New Era*, and to publish a number of books on Irish and Canadian history that reflected his belief in the importance of developing a distinct national identity.

He also wrote hundreds of poems, praising saints, heroes, his wife Mary, and above all, his beloved Ireland. "The Exile's Devotion" hints that in his heart he remained forever Irish:

> My native land! my native land!
> Live in my memory still;
> Break on my brain, ye surges grand!
> Stand up! mist-cover'd hill.
> Still in the mirror of the mind
> The scenes I love I see;
> Would I could fly on the western wind,
> My native land! to thee.

- *Canadian Ballads, and Occasional Verses, by Thomas D'Arcy McGee*, 1858
  Published by John Lovell, Montreal
  McCord Museum, RB-0733

- Musket, 1862
  Wood, metal
  Missisquoi Museum, H220

  This musket was used by Fenians during the 1866 raid in Frelighsburg, Quebec. The letters IN stand for "Irish National."

- Plaster cast of Thomas D'Arcy McGee's hand
  Contemporary replica of the one made after his death in 1868
  Bytown Museum, Ottawa

- Cane once belonging to Thomas D'Arcy McGee, 1863
  Bamboo, metal
  Concordia University Archives, Montreal, Fonds P030

  McGee, who suffered painful leg problems, used a cane. This is the cane he was carrying when he was assassinated. It was found lying beneath his body by the doctor who first examined him. McGee's hat, gloves and cigar were also nearby, along with the bullet that killed him.

  Since the bullet had passed through McGee's head from back to front, leaving a grisly exit wound, it was not possible to produce a plaster death

mask – a common custom on both sides of the Atlantic in Victorian times. Instead, a cast was made of his hand.

- Ribbon commemorating Thomas D'Arcy McGee's death, 1868
  Silk, brass, tintype
  McCord Museum, M12401, gift of David Ross McCord

- Ribbon commemorating Thomas D'Arcy McGee's death, 1868
  Textile, card, thread, tintype
  McCord Museum, M12402, gift of David Ross McCord

2.8. Yvonne Audet (Duckett), 1889-1970

Quebec's Irish godmother, fierce defender of "*la bonne diction* " !
Madame Jean-Louis Audet was a beloved diction and dramatic arts teacher to generations of Montreal children and actors. In fact, some of the biggest names in Quebec show business passed through her door. Her name even pops up in a popular 1971 song by the famous Quebec singer Robert Charlebois, about a beauty queen manqué who has studied with Audet.

But did the song's fans realize that Madame Audet, fierce defender of correct French, was actually born Yvonne Duckett? She was proud of her Irish blood, and loved the colour green!

- *Portrait of Yvonne Duckett*, by Albert Dumas, 1912, photograph, courtesy of Pierre Audet.

Francophile and polyglot
English was important to Duckett, who used it for teasing and jokes – what she liked to call her "Irish side." She was also proficient in Latin and Greek, and spoke fluent German and Italian.

Her real linguistic love, however, was French. In 1933 Duckett opened her own studio, where with almost missionary zeal, she instructed children and adult actors in "Standard French," purified (as she put it) of regional accents. She also taught French and international phonetics, diction and dramatic expression at schools, conservatories and the Université de Montréal.

Hundreds of leading Quebec actors – including Geneviève Bujold – received instruction chez Duckett. And generations of children gained self-assurance performing in her recitals and radio plays. So dedicated was Duckett to her work that she accepted all students, even those who could not afford to pay. The wooden box in which she kept tuition fees was rarely full.

- *Duckett family genealogical chart*, reproduction, 1960s, courtesy of Pierre Audet. Yvonne's name appears in the third column.

  This genealogical chart shows the family tree of the Ducketts in Quebec, but their story starts in Ireland.

  Yvonne Duckett's great-grand uncle William was in the Society of United Irishmen. It aimed to free Ireland from English rule, eventually instigating the bloody Rebellion of 1798. Involved in a pre-Rebellion raid, William had a price put on his head and his home burnt down. Destitute, William Jr., who shared his uncle's name, left Ireland as a stowaway. He arrived in Montreal in 1821 and eventually settled in the Vaudreuil Peninsula. His

son Richard was Yvonne Duckett's father. Delia Tellier, her mother, was French Canadian, making Yvonne a classic Quebec mix of Catholic Irish and Catholic French Canadian.

- Photo album created by Jean-Louis Audet, husband of Yvonne Duckett, 1912-1916
  Lent by Anne-Marie J. Audet, MD, MSc, SM

- Bracelet and four-leaf clover pendant once belonging to Yvonne Duckett, early 20th century
  Stone, metal, glass
  Lent by Pierre Audet

Yvonne Duckett's husband, Jean-Louis Audet, put together this photograph album in the early 20th century. He also gave her the green bracelet and pendant, wich reminded his wife of her Irish roots.

Ireland, with its lush green fields, has long been known as the Emerald Isle. Green is also associated with Irish nationalism. For many, the colour is symbolic of Ireland.

The pendant is in the form of a four-leaf clover. The three-leaf clover, or "shamrock" in anglicized Irish, is another symbol of Ireland. Many people wear shamrocks in March on St. Patrick's Day. Four-leaf clovers are rare, and finding one is considered good luck. The four leaves symbolize faith, hope, love and luck.

- Jar once belonging to Yvonne Ducket, 1920s
  Cut glass, silver
  Lent by Anne-Marie J. Audet, MD, MSc, SM

- Box used by Yvonne Duckett to hold her students' tuition fees, mid-20th century
  Painted wood, metal
  Lent by Pierre Audet

- Les monologues du petit-monde, 1967
  Madame Jean-Louis Audet
  Published by Éditions Beauchemin, Montreal
  Lent by Pierre Audet

2.9. Mary Bolduc (Travers), 1894-1941

Irish roots, the voice of Quebec
Mary Travers was born at the end of the 19th century in Newport, on the Gaspé peninsula, of half-Irish, half-French-Canadian descent – a common heritage in the Quebec of that time.

Travers, who became famous as "La Bolduc," forged a bright new musical style from her dual birthright. She sang Irish reel rhythms but in the distinctly Québécois French known as joual. Through her songs she expressed to perfection the joys and sorrows of humble folk during the Great Depression, and Quebecers cherished her for it.

- *Publicity photograph of Mary Bolduc*, by the Famous Studio, Montreal, undated, Library and Archives Canada, Fonds Philippe-Laframboise (MUS 281), nlc-2547.

A French-Canadian music queen with Irish roots
In the Gaspé, Mary Travers's home, people enjoyed music as an escape from the hard work of fishing, woodcutting and homemaking.

The Travers family, headed by an Acadian mother and an Irish immigrant father, was no exception. Under her father's tutelage, Mary mastered the fiddle and harmonica. She also picked up the old Irish and Scottish tradition, popular in the Gaspé, of singing nonsense syllables to a melody – "mouth" music, or turlutage in French.

While still a teenager, she entertained neighbours with French-Canadian and Irish folk tunes. Once she moved to Montreal and started recording her own songs, her Irish turlutes made her performances unique. Every St. Patrick's Day, Travers celebrated her Irish heritage, decorating her house and getting all dressed up in green.

- *Mary Bolduc holding her violin*, anonymous photograph, undated, Library and Archives Canada, nlc-2558.

- *Mary Bolduc and fellow musicians playing traditional folk instruments*, anonymous photograph, 1928, Library and Archives Canada, nlc-2618.

- *Members of Les veillées du bon vieux temps*, anonymous photograph, 1928, Library and Archives Canada, Music Collection, nlc-4605.

  Madame Bolduc began her career on stage at the Monument-National theatre in Montreal, playing fiddle in Conrad Gauthier's troupe Les veillées du bon vieux temps.

Madame Bolduc, an inspiration to her people

Work, family, poverty and endurance: Mary Travers drew on her own experience for her lively, often comical songs.

As a teenager she left the Gaspé for Montreal, working as a servant and factory hand. At age twenty she married Édouard Bolduc, a plumber, and lived the life of so many Quebec housewives of the era, marked by poverty, cramped housing and the tragedy of losing children to illness.

Madame Bolduc turned her joys and heartbreaks into songs, and by the 1930s her records were selling in the thousands. As radio spread, record sales diminished, and she decided to tour Quebec and New England – a remarkable achievement for a woman raised in a conservative Catholic culture.

Madame Bolduc provided for her family during the frequent periods when her husband was unemployed. She also felt a close connection to her fans. On her deathbed, she asked her daughter, "Que va dire mon monde?" – "What will my people say?"

- *Édouard and Mary Bolduc and their children Denise, Jeannette and Lucienne*, anonymous photograph, 1919, Library and Archives Canada, nlc-2541.

  Jeannette died in 1921.

- *Mary Travers Bolduc*, anonymous photograph, undated, Library and Archives Canada, nlc-2567.

- Stamp, *Mary Travers* "La Bolduc," issued August 12, 1994
  Bernard Leduc (illustrator), Pierre Fontaine (graphic designer)
  Colour lithograph
  Published by the Canadian Bank Note Company Limited
  Canada Post Corporation/Library and Archives Canada, R169-5.512

- Radio, 1931
  Made by Fada Radio Limited
  Wood, metal, textile, glass
  McCord Museum, M973.37.4, gift of Eleanor W. Earle

  During the early 1930s, as radio became more popular and her record sales declined, Madame Bolduc began touring.

- Final design for the stamp *Mary Travers* "La Bolduc," 1994
  Bernard Leduc (illustrator), Pierre Fontaine (graphic designer)
  Mixed media and gouache on board with acetate overlay
  Canada Post Corporation/Library and Archives Canada, 1996-084.1526-2

- *Swing la baquaise* (soundtrack of the film and other songs), 1968 Madame Édouard Bolduc
  33⅓ rpm vinyl record
  Published by Carnaval, Compo
  Collection de Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec, Collection patrimoniale, M350 CON

- *Ça va venir*, about 1930
  Madame Édouard Bolduc, arrangement by Maurice Dela
  Manuscript sheet music
  Collection de Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec, Collection patrimoniale bec, 349310 CON

- Advertising leaflet for "Les cinq jumelles," "Le vendeur de légumes" and "Les maringouins" by Madame Édouard Bolduc, 1930s
  Published by Compo
  Lent by Fernande Bolduc-Travers

- Advertising flyer for "Tout l'monde a la grippe" and "Si je pouvais tenir Hitler" (verso)
  by Madame Édouard Bolduc, 1930s
  Published by Compo
  Lent by Fernande Bolduc-Travers

- Advertising flyer for "Le nouveau gouvernement" by Madame Édouard Bolduc, 1930s
  Published by Compo
  Lent by Fernande Bolduc-Travers

- Harmonicas, late 20th century
  Lent by Fernande Bolduc-Travers

  These two harmonicas – the Marine Band and the Hero – belong to Madame Bolduc's daughter and are similar to the ones used by the singer towards the end of her career.

2.10. Marianna O'Gallagher, born in 1929

At the heart of Irish Quebec
Marianna O'Gallagher grew up in a large, lively family full of Irish tales and traditions.

Exploring her own heritage through graduate studies in history seemed a natural path. She became one of the first people to systematically research the Quebec City region's strong Irish roots.

O'Gallagher subsequently gained widespread recognition as an authority in all things Irish by sharing her knowledge through community activities, numerous publications and the initiation of major commemoration projects. Today, she continues to document Quebec City's significant Irish past.

- *Marianna O'Gallagher*, by Martin Dignard, 2009, photograph, McCord Museum.

Champion of Irish Heritage
O'Gallagher assumed a leadership role among Quebec City's Irish in 1973, when she helped found the community group Irish Heritage Quebec. She had already begun her extensive historical research into the fate of Irish immigrants held at the quarantine station on Grosse-Île, near Quebec City. She published the results of her investigations in 1984 in *Grosse Île: Gateway to Canada, 1832-1937*.

Inspired by this book, which lists the children orphaned during the terrible typhus epidemic that afflicted Famine emigrants, Irish dramatist Jim Minogue wrote the play *Flight to Grosse Île*. It was performed by inmates of Dublin's Mountjoy Prison in 1999, who honoured O'Gallagher with the gift of a magnificent mahogany cross, which they carved themselves.

Due in part to her efforts, the Canadian government designated Grosse-Île a national historic site in 1984. Grosse-Île now includes restored quarantine buildings, interpretation centres and a famine memorial.

- Spoon once belonging to Marianna O'Gallagher's grandfather, 19th century
  Silver
  Lent by Marianna O'Gallagher

  The silver spoon once belonged to Marianna O'Gallagher's grandfather Jeremiah. The *G* on the handle stands for Gallagher. He did not add the *O'* to his name until after the birth of his first son. This *O'*, which precedes many Irish names, means "grandson", or "descendant."

Jeremiah immigrated to Canada in 1859. A civil engineer, he became head of the Quebec City waterworks and later designed the monument to the victims of the Famine on Grosse-Île, the quarantine station near Quebec City – a massive Celtic cross.

Jeremiah's son, Dermot, married Norma O'Neil, also of Irish heritage. Marianna O'Gallagher is 100% old-stock Irish Quebecer.

- *Grosse Île: Gateway to Canada, 1832-1937*, 1984
  Marianna O'Gallagher
  Published by Carraig Books, Sainte-Foy, Quebec
  Lent by Marianna O'Gallagher

- Celtic cross carved by inmates of Dublin's Mountjoy Prison, 1999
  Brazilian mahogany
  Lent by Marianna O'Gallagher

- *Order of Canada* awarded to Marianna O'Gallagher, 2002
  Enamelled metal, metal, textile
  Lent by Marianna O'Gallagher

- *Ordre national du Québec* awarded to Marianna O'Gallagher, 1998
  Metal, textile
  Lent by Marianna O'Gallagher

- *Queen Elizabeth Jubilee medal* awarded to Marianna O'Gallagher, 2002
  Metal, textile
  Lent by Marianna O'Gallagher

Marianna O'Gallagher has received public recognition for her role as a leader of Quebec City's Irish community and a scholar of its history.

The government of Quebec awarded her the Ordre national du Québec in 1998. The Canadian government followed suit in 2002, appointing her a Member of the Order of Canada. Recipients for that year also received the Queen Elizabeth Golden Jubilee Medal.

In addition, O'Gallagher has been acknowledged by community groups across the province for her "infectious enthusiasm, wit and passion for community history." She was guest of honour at Montreal's St. Patrick's Day parade in 2008.

3. Grosse-Île

Grosse-Île: a tragic history
After it became a British colony, hundreds of thousands of immigrants from Ireland flooded into Quebec. Some were infected with contagious diseases, and Quebec residents, concerned for the health of their own community, mobilized to cope with the problem.

In 1832 a quarantine station was built on an island in the St. Lawrence River near Quebec City. Ships discharged their passengers at Grosse-Île, where they would remain for a period of observation. Weakened by illness and the hard voyage – especially during the years of Ireland's Great Famine – many immigrants died. Residents again responded, taking care of the sick and orphaned.

3.1. Three centuries of the Irish in Quebec

1604-1759: NEW FRANCE• Soldiers, prisoners, and adventurers – the small population of New France included a few Irishmen who had fled the English invasion and Ireland's harsh Penal Laws.

1760-1815: PROVINCE OF QUEBEC • Many Irish people arrived after the British Conquest in 1760. Protestant officials and soldiers were followed by small farmers and other relatively prosperous Presbyterians of Scottish descent (known as Ulster Scots), harassed by the Penal Laws.

1815-1850: LOWER CANADA • After the Napoleonic Wars, depression, eviction, epidemics and crop failures led to massive Irish emigration. In 1844 Irish immigrants represented 6.3% of the colony's population.

The Great Potato Famine of 1845-1850 was a disaster. Of Ireland's eight million people, a million died of starvation and another million emigrated. In 1847, 80,000 disembarked at Quebec.

After 1850: CANADA EAST • In 1851 the Irish population of Quebec was at its highest level. In Montreal, the Irish accounted for one-fifth of the population.

Today: QUEBEC • In the 2006 census, 406,085 residents claimed Irish origins.

- *Map of Ireland*, 1807, hand-coloured engraving, made for the C. Mitchel & Co. edition of William Guthrie's A New Geographical, Historical and Commercial Grammar and Present State of the Several Kingdoms of the World, McCord Museum, M9869.8, gift of the Estate of Miss Anne McCord.

- *The Galway Starvation Riots: Attack on a Potato Store*, illustration published in the *Illustrated London News*, June 25, 1842.

  The accompanying article reports "an attack upon a potato store in the town of Galway, on the 13th of the present month, when the distress had become too great for the poor squalid and unpitied inhabitants to endure their misery any longer."

- *The arrival from Ireland of Mrs. Eva Pierce and her seven children at Montreal, Quebec*, 1959, photograph, Ed Bermingham/Library and Archives Canada, Department of Citizenship and Immigration Collection, C-045086.

3.2. A place hallowed by suffering

1832: Cholera raged in Europe, and many emigrants to North America – including the Irish – carried the disease. A quarantine station was built on Grosse-Île downriver from Quebec City, a major port of entry.

1847-1848: Typhus swept Europe, and 5,000 Irish emigrants, weakened by famine, died. Doctors, nurses and priests – Catholic and Protestant – worked tirelessly, but failed to save them.

1854: Cholera returned, but better facilities and more effective treatments improved conditions.

1937: By the 1930s fewer immigrants and medical advances reduced the need for quarantine. The station was closed.

Thousands of Irish people died at Grosse-Île, leaving it forever altered by their suffering. Among the countless individual tragedies, let us recall the name of the first victim in the terrible year of 1847: Ellen Keane, who was only four years old.

When the President of Ireland, Mary Robinson, visited the island in 1994, she said what all who go there sense: "This is a hallowed place."

- *Map of Quebec City and Region*, chromolithograph, taken from the Illustrated Atlas of the Dominion of Canada, Toronto, H. Belden & Co., 1881, McCord Museum, M987.253.59, gift of Colin McMichael.

- *Quarantine station on Grosse-Île: The western wharf with the steamer "Druid,"* anonymous photograph, about 1900-1905, D. A. McLaughlin/Library and Archives Canada, PA-148834 MIKAN 3223259.

3.3. 1847: Montreal's typhus year

The number of immigrants who arrived in Montreal in 1847 exceeded the city's existing population. Three large steamers plied the St. Lawrence between Grosse-Île and Montreal, carrying thousands of Irish immigrants released from the quarantine station to Pointe-Saint-Charles. Others arrived directly from Quebec City.

No adequate arrangements had been made to receive the flood of the destitute and ill. Too late, the government erected large sheds at Windmill Point, on the shores of the St. Lawrence, to house those who had fallen sick from typhus.

Thousands died at Windmill Point in that terrible year, despite the sacrifices of men and women from medical and religious communities in Montreal, a number of whom also died while helping the Irish in need.

- *Quarantine sheds at Windmill Point, seen from the top of Victoria Bridge, Montreal*, by William Notman (1826-1891),1858-1859, photograph, McCord Museum, N-0000.392.2.2, gift of Mrs. Henry W. Hill.

- *Map of the City of Montreal, Showing the Victoria Bridge*, lithograph, Montreal, John Lovell, 1859, McCord Museum, M13999.1, gift of David Ross McCord.

- *Typhus*, by Théophile Hamel (1817-1870), 19th century, oil on canvas, Marguerite-Bourgeoys Museum, Montreal (photo: Normand Rajotte).

3.4. The Famine orphans

Down where the blue St. Lawrence tide
Sweeps onward wave on wave,
They lie old Ireland's exiled dead
In cross-crowned lonely grave.

Thomas O'Hagan (1855-1939, Irish-Canadian poet)

About 1,500 children lost their parents in 1847 as a result of the typhus epidemic that decimated the Famine immigrants. Quebecers responded generously, and many orphans were sent to relatives or placed in orphanages – Protestant or Catholic, depending on the family's religion. In response to the need, Montreal's St. Patrick's Orphan Asylum was founded by the Grey Nuns with the assistance of Father Patrick Dowd.

Parish priests and ministers also helped place many children with families across Quebec. Some of the households were Irish, but hundreds of children were

adopted by French-Canadian families, a gesture of compassion remembered to this day.

- *Father Patrick Quinn*, memorial card, 1915, Archives du Séminaire de Nicolet, F085-P6396.

- *The three O'Reilly sisters, Irish orphans taken in by the Augustinians of Quebec City*, anonymous photograph, 1847, Archives des Augustines du Monastère de l'Hôpital général de Québec.

- *Father Thomas Quinn*, anonymous photograph, around 1900, Archives du Séminaire de Nicolet, F002-O18-175.

3.5. Honouring the dead

Several monumental stones mark the commemoration by Quebec's Irish of the famine victims who fell to typhus in the land of hope.

In 1859 Irish labourers working on Montreal's Victoria Bridge hauled an enormous rock to a spot near Windmill Point, where thousands of typhus victims had been buried in 1847-1848. Montreal's Irish community makes an annual march to this site.

In 1909 the Ancient Order of Hibernians erected a Celtic cross atop a Grosse-Île cliff to commemorate that island's victims. The Order organizes an annual pilgrimage to the monument.

In 1997 Quebec City's Irish community, under the leadership of Marianna O'Gallagher, organized an "Irish Summer" to mark the 150th anniversary of the Great Famine. The following year, Irish Quebec leaders and the President of Ireland attended the inauguration of a national memorial on Grosse-Île that honours both the immigrants who perished and those who died caring for them.

- *Laying the monumental stone commemorating the 6,000 immigrant deaths by ship fever, Victoria Bridge, Montreal, QC*, by William Notman (1826-1891), 1859, stereograph, McCord Museum, N-0000.193.138.1-2, gift of James Geoffrey Notman.

- *The monumental stone commemorating the 6,000 immigrant deaths by ship fever, Pointe-Saint-Charles, Montreal, QC*, by Alfred Walter Roper, 1898, photograph, McCord Museum, MP-1977.76.64, gift of Vennor Roper.

- *Monument to the Irish immigrant victims of typhus, Grosse-Île, QC*, about 1910, photoengraving, McCord Museum, MP-0000.1255.9, gift of Stanley G. Triggs.

- Wooden suitcase, early 19th century
Stained wood, leather, iron
Missisquoi Museum, C871

  This suitcase once belonged to James McCorkill Sr. of Letterkenny, County Donegal, Ireland, who arrived at Farnham, Quebec, in 1814.

- Cunard Steamship Company Limited boarding pass issued to J. Hinton, 1885
Lent by Carol Joy Lodge

- *Kinsella Family portrait, Montreal, QC*, about 1900
Anonymous photograph
Lent by Carol Joy Lodge

- Pottery shards from a vessel brought from Ireland to Grosse-Île during the Great Famine, about 1847-1848
Ceramic
Parks Canada Collection, Quebec, 76G

- Shoe once belonging to an Irish immigrant who arrived at Grosse-Île during the Great Famine, about 1847-1848
Leather
Parks Canada Collection, Quebec, 76G80B4-3Q

- Fragments of a shawl once belonging to an Irish immigrant who arrived at Grosse-Île during the Great Famine, about 1847-1848
Silk
Parks Canada Collection, Quebec, 76G80K1-2Q

- *St. Patrick's Church, Dorchester Street, Montreal, QC*, 1915
William Notman & Son
Photograph
McCord Museum, View-15125

  By the 1840s, time of the Great Potato Famine, Montreal's Irish community was already well established. Their church was a symbol of their success.

  From 1817 to 1847, Montreal's Irish Catholics worshipped in French-Canadian parish churches. But the burgeoning community, fed by

immigration, demanded its own place of worship, both as a sanctuary for national feelings and as a shrine to Ireland's patron saint.

On March 17, 1847, the first Mass was held in Montreal's new St. Patrick's Church, a symbol of hope and faith during the dreadful year of typhus that followed.

- Grey Nun's habit, 1940s
  Textile
  Collection d'objets et archives des Sœurs Grises de Montréal, 1993.J.049; 1993.J.044; 1993.J.100; 2008.12.15; 2007.246; 1993.J.96.1-2; 2008.G.212.1

  This habit is in the same style as those worn by Grey Nuns during the Great Famine.

- Grey Nuns' document pertaining to the 1847-1848 typhus epidemic
  Category of the orphans at Pointe-Saint-Charles, dated March 19, 1848
  Collection d'objets et archives des Sœurs Grises de Montréal, G6,7.33

- Jacket once belonging to Patrick Quinn, a 6-year-old Irish Famine orphan, 1847
  Textile
  Archives du Séminaire de Nicolet, 1990.21.226.1-32

  Patrick and Thomas Quinn were just two of the many children orphaned in 1847. The brothers were among 619 children taken in at the orphanage run by La Société charitable des Dames catholiques de Québec. According to the Société's list, Thomas and Patrick were the young sons of James Quinn and Peggy Lyons of Lisanuffy parish, who had crossed the Atlantic on the vessel *Naomi*.

  The boys were placed with the family of George Bourke in Nicolet, southwest of Quebec City. Both became priests. They were among the lucky ones – children who found stability and meaning in their new lives.

- Pyx, 1837
  Silver
  Fabrique of the Parish of Saint Patrick's, Montreal

  This pyx, used for carrying consecrated Eucharistic wafers, was made in Dublin. It once belonged to Father Patrick Dowd and was probably an ordination gift.

- Celtic cross, 1940s
  Wood
  Lent by Marianna O'Gallagher

  A replica of the Grosse-Île monument, this Celtic cross was carved by soldier H. Morrin, a member of the small garrison based on Grosse-Île during the Second World War.

- The Grosse-Isle Tragedy and the Monument to the Irish Fever Victims, 1909
  J. A. Jordon
  Published by the Telegraph Printing Co., Quebec City
  Lent by John O'Connor

- Medal from the "Irish Summer" event held in Quebec City to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the Great Famine, 1997
  Metal
  Lent by Marianna O'Gallagher

4. Town

Griffintown: Montreal's Irish quarter
The streets of this neighbourhood once rang withIrish voices.

Thousands of 19th-century Irish workers and businessmen streamed into Griffintown and nearby areas around Montreal's port. Their labour helped make it the hub of Quebec's emerging industrial economy. Flourishing Irish families built homes, churches, schools and taverns.

In their work, play and prayer, these Irish immigrants and their descendants preserved old traditions and created new ones adapted to Montreal's complex, polyglot society. A distinctive Irish Quebec urban culture was born.

4.1. A stormy beginning

Griffintown was founded on disputed land. In the early 1790s the Irish-born merchant Thomas McCord took out 99-year leases on two tracts of farmland known as the Nazareth and Sainte-Anne fiefs. After exploring the possibility of cultivating raspberries, he subleased some of the land to Irish merchant Robert Griffin. McCord then returned to Ireland on business, and the Irish Rebellion of 1798 delayed his return until 1805.

During McCord's prolonged absence, Robert Griffin and his wife Mary purchased the leases illegally and had the land surveyed into streets for suburban development. McCord eventually recovered his property, but by then the area had become known as Griffintown.

During the 19th century Griffintown, bounded by the Lachine Canal to the south, became a working-class suburb. Pointe-Saint-Charles (known locally as "The Point") developed on the other side of the canal, encompassing the tiny neighbourhood of Victoriatown – also known as Windmill Point and Goose Village – near the Victoria Bridge.

- *Map of the City of Montreal, Canada, and Vicinity*, by Charles E. Goad (1848-1910), 1890, lithograph, McCord Museum, M19761, gift of the Estate of Miss Dorothy Coles.

- *Thomas McCord's house "The Grange," built in 1819 and situated opposite Black's Bridge, at the first lock of the Lachine Canal, Nazareth Fief, Montreal*, by Alexander Henderson (1831-1913), 1872, photograph, McCord Museum, MP-0000.33.6, gift of David Ross McCord.

4.2. The " city below the hill "

Griffintown was Canada's first industrial slum. In the 19th and early 20th centuries, poverty, illness and hardship were the lot of the mostly Irish families who lived there, crammed into substandard housing.

In his 1897 book *The City Below the Hill*, urban reformer Herbert Brown Ames singled Griffintown out for the low income of its residents, its overcrowding and the number of outdoor privies. On this latter point he wrote: "It is reserved … for 'Griffintown' to surpass all other localities in unenviable pre-eminence in this regard."

The area's inhabitants also suffered periodic floods, caused by the ice dams that built up on the St. Lawrence River. The crises were severe enough to mobilize the larger community, and when the Irish Protestant Benevolent Society sent help in 1886 it reported "all denominations giving relief to those in need, independent of creed or nationality."

- *Houses photographed for Mr. Meredith, Barre Street, Griffintown, Montreal, QC*, by William Notman & Son, 1903, photograph, McCord Museum, II-146722.

- *Goose Village children, Griffintown, Montreal, QC*, by the Art Studio, about 1910, photograph, McCord Museum, MP-1979.131, gift of John Stanley Kennedy.

- *Montreal – The Spring Floods, Griffintown*, by Edward Jump (1832-1883), 1873, print, McCord Museum, M985.230.5356.

4.3. From immigrant workers to organized labour

Quebec's 19th-century capitalists faced a challenge. How could they transform a landscape of rivers and fields into a modern economic environment? Part of the solution was Irish brawn.

Irish immigrants dug canals, worked on the railways and built the great Victoria Bridge, dubbed the Eighth Wonder of the World. Opened in 1859, this architectural marvel was the first bridge to span the vast St. Lawrence, from Pointe-Saint-Charles to the opposite shore.

Many of the workers of the 1820s were Protestant, later to be replaced by Catholics. Peasants in Ireland, they were rough, poor and often illiterate, signing pay stubs with a telltale X, but they were also courageous. They fought to improve working conditions, sometimes resorting to strikes – among the first in

Canada. These Irish navvies helped build Quebec's strong tradition of organized labour, as well as its infrastructures.

- *Grand Trunk Railway of Canada, Victoria Bridge, Now Constructing Across the St. Lawrence River at Montreal, QC*, by S. Russel, 1854, hand-coloured lithograph, London, Day & Sons, McCord Museum, M969.81.

- *View of workmen's houses and workshops (formerly used to house victims of the typhus, 1847), Montreal, QC*, chromolithograph after a photograph by William Notman (1826-1891), from the album *Construction of the Great Victoria Bridge in Canada*, by James Hodges, London, John Weale, 1860, McCord Museum, M15934.46, gift of David Ross McCord.

- *Loading ship with square timber through the bow port, Quebec City, QC*, by William Notman (1826-1891), 1872, photograph, McCord Museum, I-76319.2.

4.4. Griffintown industry

Iron and steel were essential to Griffintown's industrial activity, and a number of Irish entrepreneurs made their fortunes in foundries and metalworks.

WILLIAM and THOMAS WORKMAN: Irish Protestant immigrants, they began as partners in a hardware firm. Both became leading businessmen, and William was elected mayor of Montreal in 1868.

WILLIAM CLENDINENG: Among the items produced by the Clendinneng foundry were iron stoves and some of the decorative ironwork that still graces many Montreal buildings, including the St. James Methodist Church, attended by the company's Irish founder, William Clendinneng.

MARTIN KIELY: Son of a Catholic Irish immigrant and born in Griffintown, Kiely opened a machine shop that was run by the family for over a century, before it finally closed in 2008.

- *Clendinning's [sic] Foundry, Griffintown, Montreal, QC*, photolithograph published in the Canadian Illustrated News, May 4, 1872, McCord Museum, M979.87.5024. gift of Charles deVolpi.

- *Montreal from street railway power house chimney, QC*, by William Notman & Son, 1896, photograph, McCord Museum, VIEW-2942.

- *Frothingham and Workman, Iron Mongers, Montreal, QC*, by John Henry Walker (1831-1899), about 1850-1885, engraving, McCord Museum, M930.50.7.309, gift of David Ross McCord.

4.5. Quebec City's Irish neighbourhoods…

Little Champlain Street was Quebec City's Griffintown. Here, and in another Lower Town dockside area, the Saint-Pierre district, Irish labouring families lived and often worked. They made up much of the city's Irish population, which numbered around 12,000 people in the 1860s, four-fifths of them Catholic.

Quebec City's Irish working class had a rich culture centred on St. Patrick's Church, established in 1833, and numerous community organizations, in particular the Quebec Ship Labourers' Benevolent Society. The Society successfully negotiated improved working conditions for its members, and some 5,000 people attended its fifteenth anniversary march in 1877.

- *Little Champlain Street, Quebec City, QC,* by William Notman & Son, 1916, photograph, McCord Museum, VIEW-5686.

- *Little Champlain Street, Quebec City, QC*, by Mina M. Hare, 1898, photograph, McCord Museum, MP-1989.27.2.78, gift of the Estate of J. R. Beattie.

- *Little Champlain Street, Quebec City, QC*, by William Notman & Son, about 1890, photograph, McCord Museum, VIEW-2335.0.

4.6. Joe Beef, the " poor man's friend "

In 1868 Charles McKiernan, an Irish Anglican immigrant known as "Joe Beef," opened a tavern in Montreal's harbour district, near Griffintown. The day labourers working at the nearby port quickly adopted Joe Beef's tavern for hard drinking, debating and brawling. Joe kept a celebrated menagerie, which included beer-drinking bears, and he himself would expound on the hot topics of the day – in rhyming verse. Highly popular with his working-class clientele, Joe Beef was not a favourite among the Montreal bourgeoisie.

McKiernan was a pioneer in what we now call social services, providing free room and board to hundreds. He also supported the Lachine Canal workers' labour dispute of 1877, supplying the mostly Irish and French-Canadian strikers with soup and bread.

Thousands attended his public funeral in 1889, and the Montreal *Gazette* described McKiernan as the "poor man's friend." Today, his memory is honoured in Joe Beef Park, in the city's Pointe-Saint-Charles neighbourhood.

- *The Happy Family of the Canteen, Montreal, QC*, attributed to John Henry Walker (1831-1899), about 1885, wood engraving, McCord Museum, M995X.5.35.14.

- *Joe Beef, the Son of the People*, by John Henry Walker (1831-1899), about 1875, wood engraving, McCord Museum, M931.38.1.

- *The Day Labourers' Strike, Montreal, QC*, photolithograph published in L'*Opinion publique*, May 3, 1880, McCord Museum, M979.87.28.

4.7. Church and community

St. Ann's Church opened in Griffintown in 1854, and before long the parish was serving two thousand families.

In 1884 Belgian Redemptorist priests came to run St. Ann's. One of them said ruefully: "It did not please Divine Providence to make us Irish by birth – that is none of our faults," adding that they were Irish at heart. The Redemptorists won over the Griffintown residents, introducing popular devotions and associations. Many women joined the sodalities, or devotional confraternities, and the St. Ann's Young Men's Society, which aimed to promote "moral, upright living," proved equally successful.

Like the rest of Griffintown, however, the parish declined after the Second World War, and St. Ann's was torn down in 1970. Heartbroken parishioners kept a few relics, and some still attend Tuesday devotions to the Mother of Perpetual Help, once held at St. Ann's and now held at St. Patrick's Basilica.

- *St. Ann's Church, Pointe-Saint-Charles, Montreal, QC*, anonymous photograph, 1960-1978, McCord Museum, MP-1978.186.1.4774.

- *Shamrock hockey team with Stanley Cup, Montreal, QC*, 1899, copy by William Notman & Son, 1900, photograph, McCord Museum, II-133942.0.

- *Shamrock Club lacrosse team, Champions of the World*, anonymous composite photograph, 1879, McCord Museum, M2000.21.7.13, gift of Irene and Wilfrid St-Pierre.

4.8. Griffintown today: still Irish in memory

After the Second World War, Griffintown changed. Many Irish Quebec families left for the suburbs, making way for new arrivals from Africa or Italy.

Griffintown was re-zoned industrial, and the new Bonaventure Expressway cut it in half. The Lachine canal closed, St. Ann's church was demolished, factories shut down. By 1990 part of the area was renamed Faubourg des Récollets, after an early missionary group, further erasing memory of the Irish presence.

Only the Horse Palace – the stables for the horses that pull Montreal's tourist carriages – and a few other Irish-era businesses remain, but the spirit of Irish Griffintown endures. People still gather for reunions and masses for the Feast of St. Ann at the spot where the church once stood. Now former residents are joining with students, artists and other citizens to commemorate the neighbourhood's past and design its future.

- *"Nous sommes des citoyens du Griffintown," graffiti on a wall, Montreal*, QC, by David Wallace Marvin, about 1970, photograph, McCord Museum, MP-1978.186.1.3883, gift of Mrs. David Marvin.

- *Side wall of St. Ann's Church during demolition, Pointe-Saint-Charles, Montreal, QC*, by David Wallace Marvin, 1970, photograph, McCord Museum, MP-1978.186.1.2482, gift of Mrs. David Marvin.

- *Montreal's Coat of Arms*, 1857-1890
  Anonymous
  Carved oak mounted on painted plywood
  Musée des Maîtres et Artisans du Québec, Montreal, gift of Pierre Joanisse

- *Projected Basins, St. Anne's Ward, Lachine Canal, QC*, 1837
  John Samuel McCord (1801-1865)
  Ink, watercolour and graphite on paper
  McCord Museum, M2293, gift of David Ross McCord

  Thomas McCord made a shrewd investment in the 1790s when he obtained long-term leases of two fiefs in Montreal's southwest. In the early 1800s the area was becoming a suburb that generated rental income, and by the time of Thomas's death in 1824 construction of the Lachine Canal promised additional revenue from factories and shipyards.

  Thomas bequeathed the leases to his sons John Samuel and William King. The brothers hoped to develop the area further, and John Samuel drew up plans for new canal basins.

  While his father had lived in a farmhouse on his fief, John Samuel built himself a villa – called Temple Grove – on Montreal's Mont-Royal, which he bequeathed to his son, David Ross, founder of the McCord Museum.

- *A Plan of the Fief Nazareth Laid Out into Lots under the Name of Griffin Town Drawn by Order of Mrs Mary Griffin*, about 1804
  Black and red ink with watercolour on laid paper
  McCord Museum, M18463, gift of David Ross McCord

- *Receipt book, Lachine Canal*, 1821
  McCord Museum, P070-A/12.1

  This booklet contains receipts of wages given to labourers digging the Lachine Canal.

- *Men's time book, Lachine Canal*, 1821
  McCord Museum, P070-A/13.1

  This book records the hours worked by the labourers constructing the Lachine Canal.

- Forge from the Martin Kiely Company, Griffintown, early 20th century
  Metal, wood
  Lent by Maureen E. Kiely, Ph.D.

- Plaque from the Martin Kiely Company, Montreal, early 20th century
  Embossed metal
  Lent by Maureen E. Kiely, Ph.D.

- Tool handcrafted by Martin Kiely II, early 20th century
  Steel
  Lent by Martin Kiely III

- Box stove from the Clendinneng Foundry, late 19th century
  Cast iron
  Lent by David H. Clendenning

- *Poster advertising Shamrock Big Plug Smoking Tobacco*, early 20th century
  Print
  McCord Museum, M2008.116.1

- Jar found in a root cellar in the Griffintown neighbourhood, early 20th century
  Ceramic
  Lent by Maureen E. Kiely, Ph.D.

- Jar from L. Chaput, Fils & Cie, Wholesale, Grocer & Liquors, early 20th century
  Ceramic
  Lent by Maureen E. Kiely, Ph.D.

- Tablecloth made by one of Martin Kiely I's daughters, early 20th century
  Textile
  Lent by Maureen E. Kiely, Ph.D.

Women's work kept Griffintown going, since unpaid female labour was essential to the family economy. Women ensured that children were fed, washed, dressed and at school on time, and that husbands, brothers and fathers received the nourishment and rest they required for the hard work that was the typical lot of Griffintown men.

Women also frequently supplemented the family income by taking in boarders, doing laundry for other families, or running small stores.

It was hard work, but many women enriched their daily tasks with beauty and delight of their own making – from homemade fruit wines to hand-crocheted lace tablecloths.

- Bottle opener advertising Boswell Ale, early 20th century
  Metal
  McCord Museum, M2002.69.1035, gift of Eddy Echenberg

- Tray advertising the Dawes Brewery, early 20th century
  Printed metal
  McCord Museum, M2002.69.2130, gift of Eddy Echenberg

- Figurine of a horse advertising Dawes Brewery's Black Horse Ale, 1920-1940
  Painted cast iron
  McCord Museum, M980.77

- Whiskey Blanc bottle, 1890-1900
  Glass, printed label, cork
  McCord Museum, M992.6.265.1-2, gift of Mr. and Mrs. Newlands Coburn

- Clock face from St. Ann's Church, Griffintown, 1880-1890
  Painted iron
  McCord Museum, M966.48

- *The Story of a Hundred Years*, 1954
  Booklet commemorating the centenary of St. Ann's Church, Montreal
  McCord Museum, C069/A,316.1

- *St. Ann's Young Men's Society fifty-first anniversary dinner*, 1936
  Anonymous photograph
  Lent by Patricia Burns

- Program for the banquet in honour of the fortieth anniversary of the St. Ann's Young Men's Society, 1925
  Lent by Patricia Burns

- Program for a St. Ann's Young Men's Society production of Joe Murphy's play Shaun Rhue, 1927
  Lent by Patricia Burns

- St. Ann's Young's Men's Society: Provincial senior and intermediate baseball champions, 1934
  Anonymous photograph
  Lent by Patricia Burns

Griffintown children played street games all year round. Summer baseball gave way to winter hockey – with a puck made of frozen horse manure!

The Shamrock lacrosse team, founded in 1867, was made up of typical Griffintowners: Irish, Catholic and working-class. Like the Aboriginal players, they were exceptions in what was increasingly a sport of the white and Protestant middle classes. The championship Griffintown team even toured England, playing exhibition matches against the Kahnawá:ke (Caughnawaga) team.

Hockey too has long had an Irish flavour in Quebec. The Montreal Shamrocks and the Quebec Bulldogs both won hockey's coveted Stanley Cup in its early years.

- *Program for the St. Ann's Boy's School reunion banquet*, 1934
  Lent by Patricia Burns

- Pillar from St. Ann's Church, Griffintown, 1854
  Stone, metal
  Lent by Patricia Burns

- First prize medal for First Communion Catechism, St. Ann's Church, awarded to Catherine Kiely, 1889
  Silver
  Lent by Maureen E. Kiely, Ph.D.

- Sixth year medal, St. Ann's Academy, presented to Catherine Kiely, 1893
  Gold
  Lent by Maureen E. Kiely, Ph.D.

- Catechism exercise book once belonging to Cassie Kiely, St. Ann's Academy, 1894
  Lent by Maureen E. Kiely, Ph.D.

- Catechism exercise book once belonging to Cassie Kiely, St. Ann's Academy, 1895
  Lent by Maureen E. Kiely, Ph.D.

Cassie Kiely, whose Griffintown family ran a machine shop, attended St. Ann's Academy, a Catholic girls' school.

Established in 1857, St. Ann's Academy was run by the Congregation of Notre Dame, founded in the 17th century by Marguerite Bourgeoys. Two other Griffintown schools were also named after St. Ann: the Boys' School, opened in 1843 by the Christian Brothers, and a Kindergarten and Day Nursery, established in 1918 by the Sisters of Providence.

Up until the 1990s, Quebec education was organized along religious lines as well as by language. Children from Irish Quebec families predominated in many English-language Catholic schools.

- *A couple walking arm in arm, Griffintown*, 2006
  André Denis
  Photograph
  McCord Museum, M2008.146.7, gift of Heather Devine

- *Leo's stable, Griffintown*, 2007
  André Denis
  Photograph
  McCord Museum, M2008.146.9, gift of Heather Devine

- *Map of the St. Ann's Ward, by Charles E. Goad (1848-1910), 1881, Atlas of the city of Montreal from special survey and official plans showing all buildings & names of owners*, McCord Museum, RB-1333.

5. Country

Irish in the countryside
The Quebec landscape is dotted with Irish place names – testaments to Irish immigrants and their descendants, who helped settle and develop the province.

Some places, like the town of Shannon, northwest of Quebec City, are distinctly Irish even today. The way people make music, dance and socialize remains deeply inflected by traditions from the "old country."

In other areas, like Saint-Colomban, just west of Saint-Jérôme, most of the local Irish moved away or blended into Quebec's predominantly French-Canadian culture. Traces of an Irish past can nonetheless be glimpsed in local customs and the Celtic crosses that mark Irish graves in the cemetery.

5.1. Leaving their mark

The final destination for many Irish immigrants was the Quebec countryside.

They sought a better life, although in the early decades of the 19th century many immigrants were already relatively well off. An 1833 letter to his brother from Corporal Robert McKee, a native of Ireland stationed in Lower Canada, listed what to bring for the trip over. It begins: "You can fat a little pig for yourself and butter & eggs and plenty of fowl in place of salt beef…"

The early Irish immigrants congregated in what are now known as the Laurentian, Lanaudière, Chaudière-Appalaches, Quebec City, Eastern Townships, Montéregie and Outaouais regions.

Far from home, rural dwellers often gave their new homes familiar names. Places in rural Quebec pay homage to Ireland, with names like Armagh, Saint-Patrice, Antrim River and Ulster Lake.

- *Map: Johnson's Quebec, of the Dominion of Canada*, about 1867, lithograph, New York, A. J. Johnson, 1867, McCord Museum, UAPT999.

5.2. Farms from forests

Irish immigrants turned Lower Canada's dense woods and rocky fields intoworking farms, but their first years were not always easy.

According to a story handed down through generations, when the Blanchfield, Norton and McCarthy families arrived in Saint-Colomban in the 1820s, they spent

their first winter all together in a lean-to shelter consisting of a towering rock, logs, brush and snow.

The immigrants and their descendants had to learn how to extract a livelihood from a land that was not as rich or as temperate as the one they had left behind.

- *Margaret Mary Casey (wife of William Elliott) milking a cow*, anonymous photograph, late 20th century, courtesy of Mrs. Gertrude Elliott.

- *Farm house, lot 159*, anonymous photograph, 1980, courtesy of Mr. Claude Bourguignon.

  According to local accounts, the house was built by Patrick Elliott around 1856.

- *Group with horses and farm implements, Saint-Colomban*, anonymous photograph, late 20th century, courtesy of Mrs. Gertrude Elliott.

5.3. True confessions?

Religion gave structure and meaning to the lives of Quebec's rural Irish, both Protestant and Catholic. Irish Protestants often shared their churches with English and Scots worshippers. The Catholic Irish had some Irish priests, but had to adapt to French-Canadian Catholicism.

The culture shock was mutual. In 1831, the French-Canadian Father Naud complained to his superior that his Irish charges, who had settled in Saint-Colomban under the leadership of an Irish priest, Patrick Phelan, made their confessions much too quickly and without any detail. They simply declared: "I cursit, I sworn, I got in a passion." Worse, their swearing involved the most terrible imprecations, often against their own children: "The devil take you ... kill you ... pitch you ... sweep you!" Eventually, the two groups grew closer, and intermarriage between Irish and French Canadians became a common feature of Quebec Catholic culture.

- *Monsignor Bruchési making a pastoral visit in Saint-Colomban, on June 13, 1902*, anonymous photograph, courtesy of Mrs. Gertrude Elliott.

- *Celtic cross gravestone, Saint-Colomban*, anonymous photograph, late 20th century, courtesy of Mr. Claude Bourguignon.

Rural Quebec culture is steeped in Irish traditions.

The Irish shared their music with their French-speaking neighbours to the point that what we know as traditional "Québécois" music is a vibrant blend of French and Irish sounds, with Scottish and English tunes thrown in the mix.

Irish and French-Canadian storytelling customs also mingled. In houses in both Quebec and Ireland, visitors were invited in to sit by the front door on the *banc de quêteux* – literally, beggar's bench – to tell their tales.

Irish immigrants also adapted their food practices to local produce and supplies, and exchanged their recipes and preparations with their neighbours. What is an Irish stew but a French ragoût? And what Québécois household would give up its potatoes?

The popularity of beer in Quebec today also reflects the persistence and transfer of Irish as well as Scottish and English traditions.

- *Group of children from the McGlynn and Curran families*, anonymous photograph, late 20th century, courtesy of Ms. Colleen Curran.

- *Wearing of the Green*, St. Patrick Day's postcard, courtesy of Mr. Jeff Legault.

- *David Paddy and fiddle, Mistassini, QC*, by Paul Conklin, 1967, photograph, McCord Museum, MP-0000.275.385.11, courtesy of Paul Conklin.

- Letter from Corporal Robert McKee encouraging his brother in Ireland to emigrate, 1833 Missisquoi Museum, V-480-7-3

- *Silas Peron*, about 1810
  Anonymous
  Miniature: watercolour on ivory
  Missisquoi Museum, Ic814

  Silas Peron of Warren Point, County Down, Ireland, arrived at Sutton, Quebec in 1837.

- Pistol once belonging to Samuel Wickcliffe Sr., about 1800
  Wood, metal
  Missisquoi Museum, H190

- Samuel Wickcliffe Sr. of Tullynewbane, Ireland, arrived at Saint-Armand, Quebec, in 1844.

- Headstone commemorating Thomas Maloney, early 20th century
Marble
Lent by Steve Cameron

  Thomas Maloney (1833-1906) emigrated from Kill, County Waterford, Ireland, to Sainte-Agathe, Quebec.

- *Thomas Maloney and family*, 1884
Anonymous tintype
Lent by Steve Cameron

- Axe used by Irish settlers in Saint-Colomban, early 19th century
Iron, wood
Lent by Henri Simard

- *St. Columba*, early 20th century
Painted plaster
Fabrique de l'Église de Saint-Colomban

- Bible once belonging to a Saint-Colomban family, 1875
Published by John E. Potter and Co., Philadelphia
Lent by Claude Bourguignon

- Chest once belonging to the Phelan family of Saint-Colomban, early 19th century
Painted wood, metal
Lent by Claude Bourguignon

- Noisemaker used by Irish settlers in Saint-Colomban, early 19th century
Wood, metal
Lent by Henri Simard

  At Easter time, when – as in many Catholic communities – the Saint-Colomban church bells remained silent, this noisemaker was used to call people to Mass.

- Butter dish used by a Saint-Colomban family, 1897-1898
Glass
Lent by Kelley O'Rourke

- Tea caddy once belonging to Eleanor Holmes, about 1800
Plated metal
Missisquoi Museum, P137

Eleanor Holmes of Mount Mellick, Queen's County, Ireland, arrived at Quebec City in 1821.

Irish women treasured these objects and handed them down from one generation to the next – a sign of strong family ties.

The tea caddy belonged to Eleanor Holmes of Mount Mellick, Queen's County, Ireland. It is believed that she was born in 1786 and arrived in Quebec in 1821. Her tea caddy would have been brightly painted and displayed with pride, for tea was a luxury item.

The dishes have been passed down from mother to daughter in the O'Rourke family, which traces its roots to the Skellys who settled Saint-Colomban in the 1820s.

- Violin once belonging to Annie Skelly O'Rourke of Saint-Colomban, early 20th century
  Wood, metal, horse hair
  Lent by Kelley O'Rourke

- Violin brought from Ireland to Quebec in the 1820s, early 19th century
  Wood, metal
  Lent by Phyllis Egan Walker

Violins or fiddles are treasured heirlooms in rural Quebec's Irish families.

Michael Egan and Catherine Ryan brought one from Ireland in the 1820s. They settled in the area later known as Sainte-Agathe-de-Lotbinière. Their descendant Steve Cameron writes that their fiddle has been played by members of the family "until this generation … as little musical talent is left!"

According to Skelly family lore, their ancestors brought their fiddle to Saint-Colomban from County Westmeath. Annie Skelly's sister gave her the instrument around 1912. Annie was a talented musician and played at local dances well into old age. The fiddle now belongs to her granddaughter, Kelly O'Rourke.

- Ribbon of the Loyal Orange Lodge, Sherbrooke, Quebec, 1860-1880
  Printed slik, metal thread, metal sequins, paper
  McCord Museum, M978.107.12, gift of Miss Emily LeBaron

The Corrigan Affair
Not all imported Irish traditions were associated with life's pleasures. The political ones could have deadly consequences.

In Ireland, many 19th-century Catholics became "Ribbonmen," members of nationalist, anti-British rule and anti-Protestant secret societies. Large numbers of Protestants were "Orangemen," supporters of an anti-Catholic and pro-British group that celebrated the Protestant King William of Orange's 1690 victory over Catholic King James.

Both groups had supporters in Quebec, and in 1855 tensions flared in the rural Beauce region when Catholics killed Robert Corrigan, an Irish convert to Protestantism, over an incident at an agricultural fair. The suspects were acquitted, leaving Protestants furious.

Fortunately, some of the old-country traditions failed to flourish in the new land.

- Dance costume used by the Shannon Irish Dancers, Shannon, Quebec, late 20th century
  Textile
  Lent by Kerry Ann King

Shannon's pioneers farmed and worked in the lumber industry.

As well as boasting a historical centre, the town celebrates its heritage through music and dance. Dozens of girls and boys perform in the Shannon Irish Dancers troupe, long a highlight of the town's famous St. Patrick's Day festivities. An Ulster-born resident, himself a dance champion, prepared the dancers for the first show in 1966, enriching the local traditions.

The dancers wear handmade traditionalstyle dresses with Celtic knots, symbols of eternity. Each dance school uses a different embroidery design.

- Sugar bowl used by a Saint-Colomban family, 1897-1898
  Glass
  Lent by Kelley O'Rourke

6. Parade

A moveable feast

Strictly speaking, a "moveable feast" is a holy day whose date changes yearly, like Easter. But what better way to describe the ambulant extravaganza of sights and sounds that takes over Montreal's streets every March?

Since 1824, the St. Patrick's Day parade has celebrated the Irish community that organizes it and highlighted the various emblems of Irishness: shamrocks, leprechauns and, most notably, the colour green. But over the years more and more Montrealers have joined in the fun, and the event has become an end-of-winter party for the whole city. Now, at the St. Patrick's Day parade, all Quebecers are Irish!

6.1. A patron saint

The parade is named after St. Patrick, patron saint of Ireland, whose feast dayfalls on March 17.

As a boy Patrick was neither saintly nor Irish. Born in the late 4th century in Roman Britain, he showed little interest in Christianity until he was kidnapped and spent six years in Ireland as a slave.

After his escape, he felt the call to share the Gospel with his former oppressors. Patrick made Ireland Christian.

Legends say that he drove all the snakes out of Ireland, and that he used the shamrock to explain the Holy Trinity. He is even credited with saving classical learning, since Irish monasteries preserved the knowledge of the Roman Empire after its collapse in Europe.

Irish immigrants to Quebec, both Catholic and Protestant, loved their homeland's patron saint and bestowed his name on institutions, societies and places. Irish Protestant soldiers who arrived with the British in 1760 were among the first to celebrate St. Patrick's feast day in Quebec.

- Transcription of an extract from an article published in the *Quebec Gazette*, March 21, 1765.

  The article describes the St. Patrick's Day events, which included a service at the Recollets Church, used by Anglicans.

  > Sunday last, being the Feast of St. PATRICK, the Tutelar of Ireland, the Chief Justice of the Province, with other Civil and Military Officers, Gentlemen, and Merchants, of that Ancient and Loyal

Kingdom, attended Divine Service at the Recolets Church … From Church they proceeded to the Sun-Tavern, where an Entertainment was prepared for them … And on Monday Evening they gave a Ball, … and the whole was carried on … with becoming Cheerfulness, perfect Harmony, and Decorum.

- *Picnic in aid of the St. Patrick's orphan asylum, Montreal, QC*, by Edward Jump (1832-1883), photolithograph published in the Canadian Illustrated News, July 20, 1872, McCord Museum, M982.530.5210.

- *St. Patrick's Church, Quebec City, QC*, about 1910, photolithograph, McCord Museum, MP-0000.64.

6.2. Societies on parade

The history of the St. Patrick's Day parade reflects the history of Irish communityorganizations in Quebec.

Ten years after the parade began in 1824, Montreal's Irish founded the St. Patrick's Society. Officially non-sectarian but at first mainly Protestant, the Society became increasingly Catholic as more Irish Catholics immigrated to the city. In 1856, Protestant members left and formed the Irish Protestant Benevolent Society (IPBS).For more than a century the parade was a procession of Montreal's Irish Catholic parishes – until 1957, when the IPBS president served as Grand Marshal.

Parade organizers have also included the Ancient Order of Hibernians, and the United Irish Societies, created in 1928. All these groups are still going strong.

Quebec City also had branches of the St. Patrick's Society, the Irish Protestant Benevolent Society and the Ancient Order of Hibernians. For almost a century, up to the 1920s, they held their own St. Patrick's Day parade – despite the city's ferocious mid-March weather.

- *Balloon ascension at Irish Protestant Benevolent Society's picnic,* photolithograph published in the *Canadian Illustrated News*, June 28, 1879, McCord Museum, M990X.627.1.5.

- *St. Patrick's Society's picnic on the grounds belonging to J. Howley, Esq., Montreal, QC*, photolithograph published in the *Canadian Illustrated News*, July 15, 1871, McCord Museum, M985.230.460, gift of Colin McMichael.

6.3. Protocols and notables

The St. Patrick's Day parade has its own protocols and notables.

A bright sash distinguishes the Grand Marshal, who leads the procession. He wears an elegant black top hat – unless "he" is a "she!" The one woman to be named Montreal's Grand Marshal, Margaret Healy, had a green hat made for the occasion. The Grand Marshal, who used to ride on horseback, now receives a porcelain horse to commemorate this old tradition.

Behind the Marshal march the community groups. Once exclusively Irish, they now encompass a multitude of others, reflecting Montreal's diverse population. Montreal's parade is distinctive for its inclusiveness.

The parade queen and her princesses ride on a special float. Chosen for her speaking talent, poise and personality, the queen – in full regalia – represents the Irish community in the year that follows, until a new parade cycle begins.

- *Queen and princesses*, anonymous photograph, 1960s, courtesy of the United Irish Societies.

- *Thomas Patrick Healy, MP, marching in the parade*, anonymous photograph, 1940s, courtesy of Mrs. Margaret Healy.

- *Mr. P. Kennedy, Marshal-in-Chief of the St. Patrick's Day Parade, Montreal, QC*, by Notman & Sandham, 1879, photograph, McCord Museum, II-51725.1.

6.4. The secret of Montreal's parade

What makes St. Patrick's Day parade so special to Montrealers? Could it be the weather? There always seems to be a snowstorm, or at least a bitter cold snap. Maybe some kind of "triumph through adversity" mentality brings people together. Certainly, everyone always seems to be smiling, despite waiting for ages with cold feet. Even the frozen instruments of the marching bands manage to sound great!

Maybe the secret is that everyone in the city turns Irish for the day, like magic. Or maybe it's the tacky green top hats and "shamrockery" that make us laugh. Who can resist those ridiculous "Kiss Me I'm Irish" buttons? But whether you call the St. Patrick's Day celebration a ceileigh, a fête or a party, consider yourself invited. Just don't forget to dress warmly – and to wear green.

- *St. Patrick's Day Celebration, Montreal, QC*, by James Weston (about 1815-1906), photolithograph published in the Canadian Illustrated News, March 29, 1879, McCord Museum, M982.530.5379.

- *Watching the parade, St. Patrick's Day, Montreal, QC*, by Burt Covit, 1988, McCord Museum, M2006.80.1, gift of Burt Covit.

- *Flyers*, by Burt Covit, 2003, McCord Museum, M2006.80.8, gift of Burt Covit.

- *Extracts from the Journals of Lawrence P. Byrne, 1940 to 1983*, McCord Museum, P646/A.03, P646/A.09, P646/A.15, P646/A.46, gift of Mr. Richard Trombley.

St. Patrick's Day adds rhythm and meaning to the lives of ordinary Irish Quebecers.

Take Lawrence Byrne. Born in 1920 to Irish immigrant parents, he spent most of his life in Montreal. His diaries chronicle daily routines and noteworthy events, like joining the army, finding work, getting married… and, year after year, celebrating March 17.

In 1942 he recorded walking in the Parade with a rather ragtag group that marched out of step. On March 17,1950, newly married, he reported a quiet day of work then home for dinner. All in all, he concluded, "it wasn't a bad day for the Irish."

- *St. Patrick*, 2001
  Ceramic, metal
  Lent by Margaret Healy

- *St. Patrick*, late 19th century
  Tapestry: textile, metal thread, glass and steel beads
  Fabrique of the Parish of Saint Patrick's, Montreal

- *Exterior view of Saint Patrick's Basilica*, 1852
  Photograph (late 20th-century print)
  Fabrique of the Parish of Saint Patrick's, Montreal

- Monstrance, 1910
  Silver, metal, enamel, stone
  Fabrique of the Parish of Saint Patrick's, Montreal

- Water pitcher, 1862
  Robert Hendery (active 1837-1897)
  Sterling silver
  McCord Museum, M2006.77.1, gift of The Rev. Dr. Davena Davis

  This pitcher was presented by the St. Patrick's Total Abstinence Society to Edward Murphy as a token of gratitude for his twenty-one years of service as Secretary.

- Badge, St. Patrick's Society of Montreal, 1856
  Wood composite, textile, metal thread, paint, metal leaf, varnish
  Concordia University Archives, Montreal, Fonds P026

- Ceremonial collar, Irish Protestant Benevolent Society of Quebec City, 20th century
  Embroidered textile
  Morrin Centre, Quebec City, 2008-04

- Minute book, Irish Protestant Benevolent Society of Quebec City, 1869-1997
  Morrin Centre, Quebec City

- *United Irish Societies of Montreal Dinner and Social, Queen's Hotel*, 1945
  Ferdinand E. Marsan
  Photograph
  Lent by Patricia Burns

- Menu of the St. Patrick's Society Centennial Dinner, Windsor Hotel, Montreal, 1934
  McCord Museum, M17858, gift of John Loye

- Act of Incorporation, Constitution and By-Laws of the Irish Protestant Benevolent Society of Montreal, 1877
  Booklet
  McCord Museum, P196-D04/059.1

- Booklet commemorating the 150th Anniversary of Montreal's St. Patrick's Day parade, 1974
  Lent by Joan O'Donnell

- Chain of office of the President of the Irish Protestant Benevolent Society, about 1856
  Gold-plated silver, gold, stone, glass
  Irish Protestant Benevolent Society of Montreal

- Parade sash worn by an executive of the United Irish Societies of Montreal, 20th century
  Synthetic textile, plastic
  Lent by Richard McConomy

- Chief Reviewing Officer parade sash, 1979
  Synthetic textile, plastic
  Lent by Richard McConomy

- Grand Marshal parade sash, 2005
  Synthetic textile
  Lent by Margaret Healy

- Top hats worn during the St. Patrick's Day parade, 1979-1992
  Textile, metal, cardboard
  Lent by Richard McConomy

- Hat worn by Margaret Healy, Grand Marshal of Montreal's parade, 2005
  Textile, feathers
  Lent by Margaret Healy

- Figurine of a horse presented to the parade's Grand Marshal, late 20th century
  Ceramic
  Lent by Richard McConomy

- Figurine of a horse presented to the parade's Grand Marshal, 1992
  Ceramic
  Lent by Richard McConomy

- Figurine of a horse presented to the parade's Grand Marshal, 1983
  Ceramic
  Lent by Richard McConomy

- Figurine of a horse presented to the Grand Marshal Margaret Healy, 2005
  Ceramic
  Lent by Margaret Healy

- Cape and tiara worn by the Montreal St. Patrick's Day parade queen, late 20th century
  Textile, glass, metal
  United Irish Societies of Montreal

- *True Witness*, St. Patrick's Day souvenir issue, Montreal, 1908
  Lent by Joan O'Donnell

- Placard carried in the St. Patrick's Day parade by May Cutler, mayor of Westmount, Quebec, 1987-1991
  Acrylic on canvas mounted on plywood
  McCord Museum, M2007.44.1, gift of May Cutler

- St. Patrick's Day parade banner, late 20th century
  Plastic
  United Irish Societies of Montreal

- St. Patrick's Day shooter mug and necklace, 2005
  Plastic
  Lent by Jesse Radz

- Blackthorn stick presented to Reverend M. O'Brien by the staff of the Edward Murphy School, 1915
  Wood, brass
  Lent by Peter Murphy

- St. Patrick's Day "shamrockery," late 20th century
  Lent by Colleen Curran

- *Emblem of the St. Patrick's Society, Montreal, QC*, by John Henry Walker (1831-1899), about 1856, wood engraving, McCord Museum, M930.50.1.565, don de David Ross McCord.

- *Emblem of the St. Patrick's Benevolent Society, Montreal, QC*, by John Henry Walker (1831-1899), 1862-1885, wood engraving, McCord Museum, M930.50.7.375, don de David Ross McCord.

- *Emblem of the Irish Protestant Benevolent Society, Montreal, QC*, by John Henry Walker (1831-1899), about 1856, engraving, McCord Museum, M930.50.1.603, don de David Ross McCord.

- *Emblem of the Young Men's Irish Protestant Benevolent Society, Montreal, QC*, by John Henry Walker (1831-1899), about 1859, engraving, McCord Museum, M930.50.1.588, don de David Ross McCord.

7. Why do these stories of Irish Quebec matter?

They matter because they provide a glimpse into the vast – and crucial – process of creating a common culture. Whether through small individual choices, like Sister O'Flaherty signing her name as *Flertez*, or joint action, like Irish labourers agitating for economic rights alongside their French-Canadian co-workers, the Irish gradually came to belong in this place, and in so doing helped build Quebec's distinct national identity. Through effort and negotiation, sometimes peaceful, sometimes turbulent, the great *ragoût* of Quebec's New World society absorbed an Irish flavour.

Perhaps Quebec's Irish stories, taken as a whole, should serve as a model of how people can come together to create shared histories and diverse, tolerant communities.

- M2001.96.4
  St. Patrick's Day, 1998
  Aislin (alias Terry Mosher)

- M2001.96.48
  The Irish Canadiens, 1996
  Aislin (alias Terry Mosher)

- MP-1978.107.84
  Mounted gentleman with top hat, St. Patrick's Day Parade(?), Montreal, QC, about 1930
  Anonymous

- M999.27.40
  Kilkee, County Clare, Ireland, view published in 1841
  William Henry Bartlett

- M1472
  Saint Patrick's Society symbol, about 1835
  Anonymous

- M1471
  Saint Patrick's Society symbol, about 1835
  Anonymous

- MP-1977.76.64 (aussi dans Grosse-Île et Borne Grosse-Île)
  Stone commemorating 6000 immigrant deaths, Point St. Charles, QC, 1898
  Alfred Walter Roper

Credits of the exhibition *Beign Irish O'Quebec*

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