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Meet the Organisations

Chinese Family Services of Greater Montreal

987 Côte, 4th and 3rd floor

We will meet CFSGM's Volunteer Coordinator, Charleen.

- French Language classes are held throughout the week for adults; there is no charge
- Settlement and advocacy services for new arrivals: help with forms, letters, translation, liaising with landlords, other service centres, individual tax service, housing rights consultation, etc.
- Centre Man Sau pour les aînés chinois & SAGES: physical and social activities for elderly.
- Annual Chinatown Cleanup is organised alongside the City, Écoquartier, CCCC and others.
- Comité des femmes, jardin communautaire, conjugal violence programme, and growing!
- In early 2000s, CFSGM helped fend off Loto-Québec's proposal for a Chinatown mini-casino.

THEME: Immigration system; Tourism; Internal conflict—link to HUA REN DA LOU.

Chinese Catholic Mission

979 Côte

History

- Catholic activity in Chinatown began around the turn of the century, initially due to English and French priests focusing on the Chinese. The Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception sent missionaries to Canton 广州 in 1909, and also worked in Chinatown.
- The CCM traces back its origin to July 1st, 1917, when Fr. Romeo Caille was ordained as desservant responsible for the Chinese community.
- Only on January 31st, 1922, was the Chinese Catholic Mission formally established and property purchased. Its first home was next door to 112 de la Gauchetière (home of the Chinese Hospital and the Chinese Association). The ground floor was a chapel, the basement and 2nd floors housed the school, and the 3rd floor was the priest's residence.
- Fr. Eugene Berichon served from 1946 to 1954. He had worked in Manchuria and spoke 普通话. In 1947, he helped mobilise the population in Montreal against the Chinese Exclusion Act.
- In 1957, Father Thomas Tou became the first Chinese priest to lead the Mission.
- Construction of the new Community Center was completed on June 7th, 1981. The CCM itself oversaw the construction, and paid for its entirety without bank loans—though parishioners contributed 26,000\$ in interest-free loans.

Services

- The first Chinese Catholic elementary school was established by the M.I.C. Sisters in September, 1916. Their two units on Anderson street, near Chinatown, held 15 students.
- By the 1960s, the school taught grades one, two and three, as well as kindergarten and language classes.

- However, in 1970, the Ministry of Education closed the elementary school, reasoning that the school's 80% second-generation students should be fully integrated into the public system.
- Today, 2000 students receive language classes in the Centre—Cantonese and Mandarin for Children and English for Adults.
- The Chinese Hospital, which we're visiting later, was started up on October 17th, 1918 with help from the Catholic Mission, Sisters of Immaculate Conception, and other Catholic organisations.
- The CCM still runs the Holy Spirit Chinese Church, which we will visit momentarily.
- There are several low-income housing units built and operated by the CCM, primarily serving elderly Chinese. These initiatives began in the early 80s.

THEME: Social Services. Discuss urban planning with the Church.

112 Rue de la Gauchetière

History

- This building has one of the longest histories in Chinatown, though it was originally built in 1905 to house the Chevra Shaas synagogue. In fact, at the end of the 19th century, the area around de la Gauchetière and St-Laurent was populated by immigrants of all kinds—English, Irish, Jewish, Italian, etc.
- The Chinese Benevolent Society was founded here in 1910, as part of a national network (of the same name). It became dominated by Nationalist (Guomindang or KMT) activity and support in the 1920's and 30's.
- The building was also the second site of the Chinese Hospital. It moved to this building on March 8, 1920, two years after it started.
- It was then, and still is home to the Chinese Association of Montreal. [this is what I believe is in the 3rd floor—housing a reading room and book store]. The basement houses a seniors recreation club and possibly a temple.
- This site is now home to several (6?) Associations, including the Dragon Boat Festival, Chinese Volleyball Association, and the focus of today, The Quebec Chinese Restaurateurs Association.

SKIP TO RESTAURANT ASSOCIATIONS or HOSPITAL

Chinese Christian Mission

81 de la Gauchetiere O, 2nd floor

Formerly the Hong En Christian Community Centre. Original contacts were Julia Yong, Director and Lucie, staff member.

We will meet Betsy Chan, Interim Director.

Services

- Numerous services: family and women's programs, workshops, seminars, tutoring, counseling, references for the elderly/retired, computer resources, leadership/career planning for youth, help with filing income taxes, etc.
- Adjoins the Hong En bookstore, source of Christian and non-Christian Chinese literature.

History

- First established in 1979, this organisation was originally the Hong En Christian Community Centre. It is one of three offices in Canada (first branch established in Calgary and head office in Vancouver)
- One of the younger Christian organizations serving the Chinese and pan-Asian community, though it maintains a close but independent relationship with the Chinese Catholic Mission.

Clan Associations

76 de la Gauchetiere

Focusing on the Wong Wun San Gong Soh / Huang Yun Shan Gongxi

Services

- The Wong Association is a gathering place for members, especially elderly members. It also holds social gatherings and maintains social networks among members.

History

- The Wong Association is Montreal's oldest "Gong Soh" (Chinese family/clan association). It was established in 1888, in a rented space, before moving here to 76 de la Gauchetiere.
- The Lee Association was the next to be founded, in 1898.
- In 1932 the Chau (Zhou), Wan (Weng), Ng (Wu), (Zai), and (Cao) families joined to form the Shan Tak Tong (Shan De Tang) at 82 de la Gauchetiere.

THEME: Social Services; Criminality—link to below.

China Free Masons

Clark & la Gauchitière

History

- The buildings at Clark & la Gauchetière were the sites of raids in the 1930s.
- A series of underground tunnels connecting 15 houses was discovered, and were found to store stolen loot and narcotics [perhaps illegal immigrants, weapons].
- Those arrested were connected with Masonic and other secret societies. Many secret societies at the time had political affiliations to the Nationalists and Communists, and had to meet in secret. Political tensions in Asia frequently spilled-over into the diaspora.
- The Dart Coon Club is [was?] upstairs at 1972 St-Laurent. This organization is now a social club but was once part of the military arm of the Free Mason Society. PS: The Chinese Free Masons were not linked to the international fraternal movement of Free Masons.

THEME: Criminality—linked to above.

Chinese Neighbourhood Society

Clark & Viger, 3rd floor

Services

- Hours of Operation: 10-5 Monday to Friday; 1-5 Saturday
- French Language classes are held throughout the week for adults; there is no charge
- Settlement and advocacy services for new arrivals; help with forms, letters, translation, liaising with landlords, other service centres, individual tax service, etc.
- See the Chinese papers for ads about their seminars and services

History

- Receive Government funding. Similar services to CFSGM. [Director is Kenneth Cheung?]

Chiu Chau 潮州 Association

de Bullion, North of Viger

History

- Chiu Chau Association represents a form of association that is more recent in the history of Chinese people in Canada. As it is based around a region & common language, it is broader than the family association. In fact, it functions more similarly to mainstream community organisations.
- Services include youth programming, sports activities, etc. Activities foster social networks rooted in common language and region.

Centre Communautaire et Culturel de Montreal

de Bullion, North of Viger

History

- The Center was developed and realised by the MCCUC (Montreal Chinese Community United Centre)—a non-partisan organisation encompassing 50+ associations of the Chinese Community. They also operate two housing projects, including the 华人大楼.
- The Centre's goals are to provide community support, particularly, for new immigrants; to promote cultural exchange; to provide a place for studies, training, exhibition, shows and other cultural events.
- Furthermore, the Centre aims to focus locally-born Chinese on Chinatown, and to “reinforce the appeal of Chinatown as a tourist attraction.”

Context

- This is the same organisation that evicted elderly tenants from the 华人大楼.
- It is currently preparing events to celebrate the controversial 2008 Beijing Olympics.

THEME: Tourism; Internal challenge—link to Hua Ren Da Lou.

Growing Community

Montreal Chinese Hospital

189 Viger E

Originally contacted Florence Kuan, head of the volunteer department.

Services

- Out patient (includes: radiology, electrocardiography, nutrition counseling, pediatrics, gynecology), long term, reception centre, day centre medical services
- Primarily care for the elderly, particularly Chinese, Sino-Vietnamese. Providing care to those who have lost their ability to function autonomously.

History

- Founded on October 17, 1918 in two rented units at 66 Clark St, by Mother Marie du St. Esprit (Delia Tetreault), a sister involved with Montreal's Chinese community. The M.I.C. Sisters, the CCM and other Catholic organisations were also involved. [perhaps Mother Marie belonged to M.I.C.?] All the Hospital's funds and resources were raised from within the Chinese community.
- At this time, the Spanish Influenza was raging. Nearby Montreal General Hospital and other hospitals were strained, and would not accept Chinese patients (info from Timothy Chan). Unilingual Chinese speakers would be hard pressed to use such services, in any case.
- This hospital served 55 Chinese men before closing on 26 June 1919.
- A Chinese Hospital re-opened on March 8th, 1920 at 112, de la Gauchetière, taking the first two floors below the Chinese [Benevolent?] Association. There it remained there for the next 45 years.
- Some early tension with the Protestant nursing staff at nearby Montreal General.
- In 1965, Public Health declared the building unfit for use as a hospital—the choice was to either rebuild or perish. Therefore, a new hospital with 55 beds was built at 7500 St. Denis, with government approval and funding.
- In 2000, the hospital moved back to Chinatown, to better serve the elderly, who feel more socially connected and comfortable at this location.
- ~~It remains the ONLY Chinese hospital in North America (this is what they say, though I thought there was one in Vancouver?)~~ Alongside San Francisco, only N. American Chinese Hospitals.
- In 1999, the Supreme Court of Canada ruled that the Hospital could require new nurses to have knowledge of a Cantonese or Taisanese. They had previously been restrained by the Office québécois de la Langue Française.

LINK: 112 Rue de la Gauchetière. THEME: Social Services.

Restaurateurs Association

112 de la Gauchetière O, Suite 200

History

- The Quebec Chinese Restaurateurs Association now has only about 12 members at most, at a given time. Their service now is mainly to assist new restaurateurs to settle in by providing resources and contacts.
- The Quebec Chinese Restaurateurs Association is currently [possibly 2004] celebrating their 30th anniversary. It started as a socialization tool for restaurateurs. They would share ideas, stories, even tips on running a successful restaurant. The Association was also used as a purchasing power for two main reasons. First because many of the Chinese restaurateurs did not speak English or French, the association was the liaison to the suppliers. Secondly, because many of the restaurants were buying the same goods, large bulk amounts of goods were bought, making the prices lower. As the language barriers narrow, restaurants have their own purchasing power.

Context

- From a study done at McGill University titled "Immigration, Ethnicity, Labour Market: Chinese in Montreal", In the early 70's, when the association was formed, Chinese were predominantly in the restaurant business with an increase in the number of restaurants and food services for the next decade.
- In October of 1980, the Gazette cites and unidentified federal study claiming that 54% of heads of Chinese households in Montreal work in Chinese restaurants.

THEME: Labour. LINK: 112 Rue de la Gauchetière.

Sun Yat-Sen Garden Clark & la Gauchetière

The renovated Sun Yat -Sen Garden represents the efforts of the Chinese community to give a cleaner and more welcoming image to Chinatown.

History

- Some of the elderly Chinese women with whom we had conversed with talked about the lack of green space and particularly the lack of an outdoor gathering place for morning exercise, and to relax and chat with others.
- Around the year 2000-2001, the Sun Yat-Sen Garden was fully renovated. It was previously a small green patch, often overrun with pigeons and therefore very dirty. Because of this reason, it was unwelcoming and unattractive to both Chinese and non-Chinese alike.
 - The new Garden was made entirely of concrete, with a few stone round tables and chairs for gathering.
 - The Chinese community hired architects from Shanghai (among them a Chinese) to design and build the "decorative temple" (the East Design).
 - The stone stage to the North was also built. There were a number of shows and performances that took place in the garden and always a stage was constructed for such events. Now there is a permanent one there.
 - At the same time, the East Gate was moved further down on St. Dominique to demarcate all the commercial establishments in front of the Wai Yan Da Low.

THEME: Tourism—links to CFSGM, CCCCCM.

Wah Yan Dai Lau 华人大楼 **St-Dominique & de la Gauchetiere**

History

- The Wai Yan Dai Low was first established in 1984 by the Montreal Chinese Community United Centre to provide low cost housing for the elderly of the Chinese Community. The apartments are subsidized by the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) and Société d'habitation du Québec. Over the years, elderly, unilingual Cantonese or Toisan Chinese who depend solely on government pensions were able to afford the lower rent.
- In 2000 the CMHC lowered its subsidy. In 2002, the Régie du logement allowed the Montreal Chinese Community United Centre to drastically increase its rental rates. Instead of 25% of their income, residents were asked to pay 35% or more, resulting in increases of 50\$ to 700\$ a month.
- The residents have expressed concerns that they are not able to pay the high rents. Many of the elderly residents resisted the increases, by not paying, and seeking a negotiated settlement. Unable to reach a peaceful agreement with the Centre, the elderly protested in front of Montreal courts while their lawyers sought legal action to stop the rent increases. CFSGM was involved in this struggle to defend their tenants' rights.
- As few as 16 and as many as 30 residents were asked to move out if they refused to pay the rent. On July 12, 2005 Lui Pak and Victor Tom—a leader of the resisting tenants—were served with eviction notices, which came to fruition in late November, 2005. 17 other tenants won a Régie hearing by default when the Centre's lawyer failed to show.

THEME: Internal conflict—linked to CCCCCM, CFSGM.

Restricting Growth

Complexe Guy-Favreau

200 René-Levesque O

Covers the North-West corner of Chinatown, beginning at la Gauchetiere and St. Urbain

Services

- houses YMCA as well as a number of businesses (both Chinese and non-Chinese owned)
- location of government offices and apartments
- links Chinatown with Complexe Desjardins along with Place des Arts by way of underground passage

History

- project first proposed in 1972 as one of “Urban Renewal”; decided upon in late 1977 after having been revised several times
- The proposal meant the destruction of a noodle factory, two Chinese churches, a school, as well as small businesses (grocers and handicrafts stores) and residences.
- Chinatown groups, as well as groups like Heritage Montreal, anti-poverty/anti-gentrification groups, and mainstream media denounce the proposal as destructive and unnecessary.
- Chinese businesses and residents were forced to move with little compensation
- The government organizes community consultations in response to intense public criticism. The CFSGM proposes to add a senior’s centre, a children’s reading room, and other spaces & services for the Chinese community. The government makes some changes.
- Chinese community, however, DID have somewhat of a say in the usage of the ground floor of Guy-Favreau – new businesses should be mostly Chinese, the area should be a good gathering space, the YMCA should have programs that are geared to the Chinese community. (There’s not a lot of Chinese folks at the Y though.)
- received limited amounts of protest from the community
- Completed in 1983.

THEME: Urban planning—link to Church below.

Holy Spirit Chinese Church

On Côté

History

- First built by Scottish Presbyterians in 1834.
- Sold to Men’s Association of Notre Dame Parish in 1864. Expanded backward and upward. Only 2 Corinthian columns remain.
- The Federal government used it as an Unemployment Office during the Second World War.

- Later purchased by the School Commission, and housed the CCM's elementary school.
- After the Commission closed the school, the CCM bought the land from the Commission for 110 000\$. The deed was signed on August 17th 1971, and only seven months later, the land was expropriated by the Federal Government, to build Place Guy Favreau. After a court challenge, the CCM would receive 904, 625\$.
- The movement "Save Montreal" had grown powerful enough to save the church from demolition. On March 11th, 1987 it was sold back to the CCM for 1\$.

Services

- Liturgical services run on weekends (Saturday @ 5 and Sunday @ 9 & 11).

LINK: CCM. THEME: Urban planning—linked to Guy Favreau above.

Chinatown Gates

St-Dominique & la Gauchetiere

A good spot to reiterate and take notice of the effects of zoning by-laws—commercial development STOPS HERE!

History

- So what happened with the zoning? In 1985, Chinatown was to expanding, businesses and restaurants wanted to expand east of St. Laurent on de la Gauchetiere. However, this was met by a new zoning by-law passed by the Montreal city council. The by-law, by-law 6513, restricts any commercial buildings east of St. Laurent. Only residential buildings can be located there.
- The by-law's rationale is to consolidate the commercial areas in order not to disturb the residential areas. However, by controlling the neighbourhood's development, the City directly affects Chinatown's growth or decline. The restrictive zoning law has effectively stifled the Chinese community's growth.
 - What about on the **West** side? It was a no go, since the space east of St. Urbain was already under development for the Guy Favreau complexe.
 - On the **North** side? Hydro-Quebec building (1974) and Complexe Desjardins (1976) were barriers to development.
 - And the **South** side? Palais de Congres, the Metro and the Villa Maria Expressway all blocked expansion.

Chinatown was confined to the **two blocks** it still inhabits today.

- When the bylaw was passed, groups in Chinatown started petitions, published bulletins and newsletters, and called press conferences, calling the bylaw racist. On March 10 1985, 100 Chinese people from 15 organizations had a march that went through Chinatown and ended up at the city hall. One of the leaders of the struggle was Kenneth Cheung.

THEME: Urban planning—links to Guy Favreau, Church, CCM.