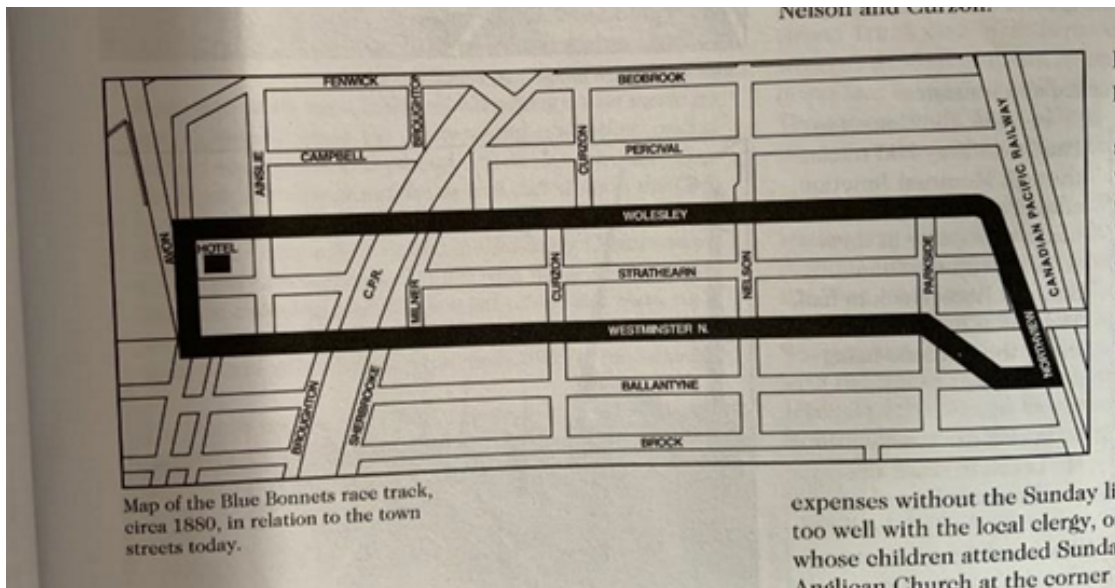


Montreal West Walks 3 – the BlueBonnetts Raceway (3.8KM)

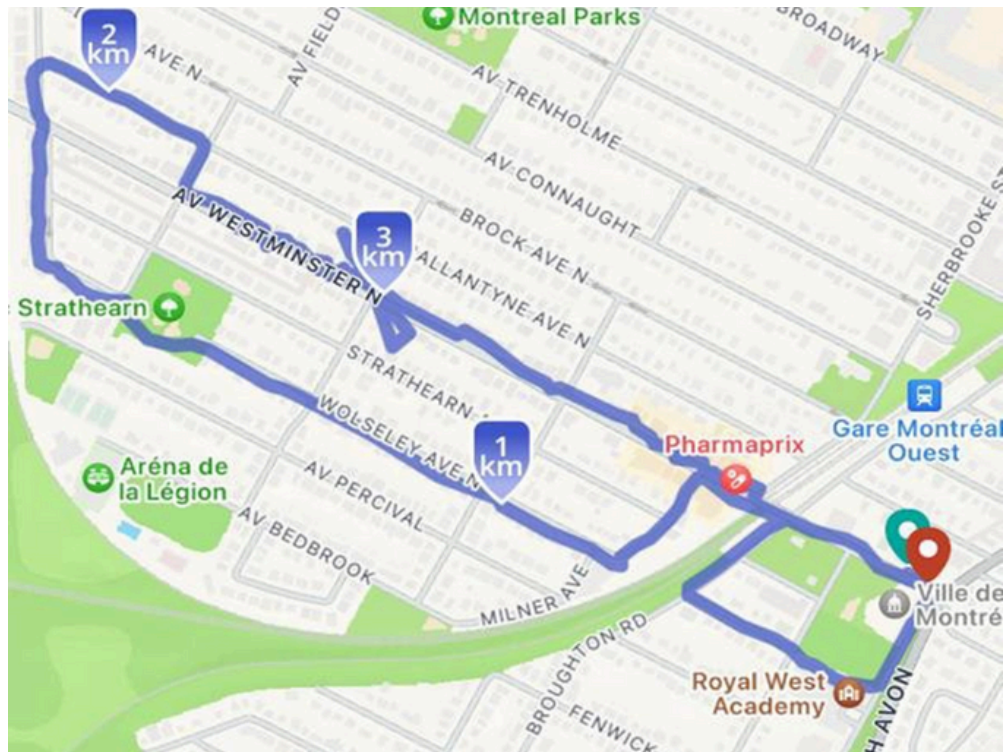
Author: Fred Braman

This walk retraces the famed raceway for horses in old Montreal West. It certainly began with the Blue Bonnetts Regiment along Easton with their Clubhouse in the parking lot behind the present Town Hall and a barracks at 100 Easton to protect the escarpment – and Montréal – from our American friends. Their horses needed exercise and they used a rough trail based on modern Westminster (then the Public Road) to the East and modern Wolseley to the West from Easton up to at least to the St-Pierre River (now Westover) or historic Cote Saint Luc Road. You can just imagine the wild sound of horses' hooves on Westminster! A bit later (how much?) the Raceway was an attraction in the country for downtown folk at least from 1875 who could visit the Raceway on the Grand Trunk line established in 1855 until 1931 well before the the CPR was put through in 1886.

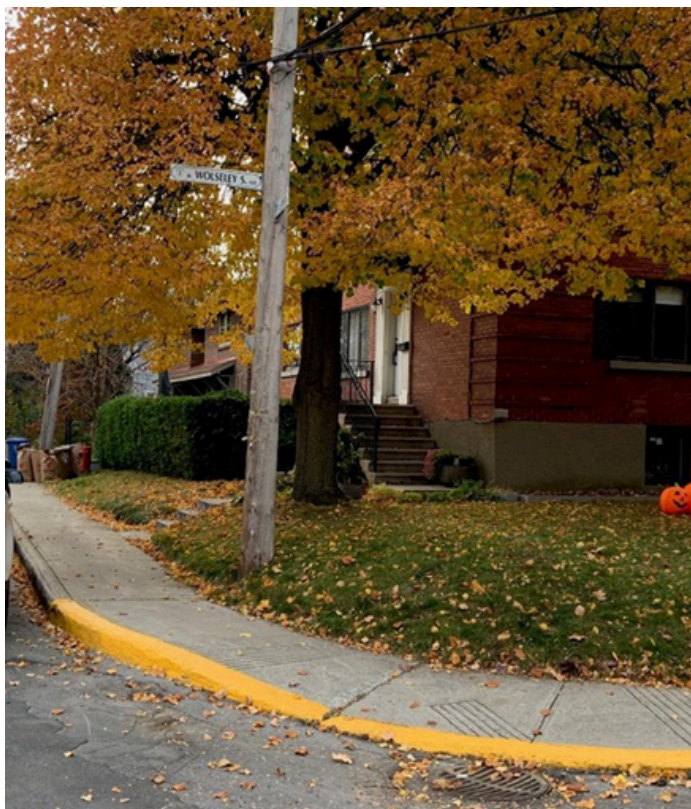


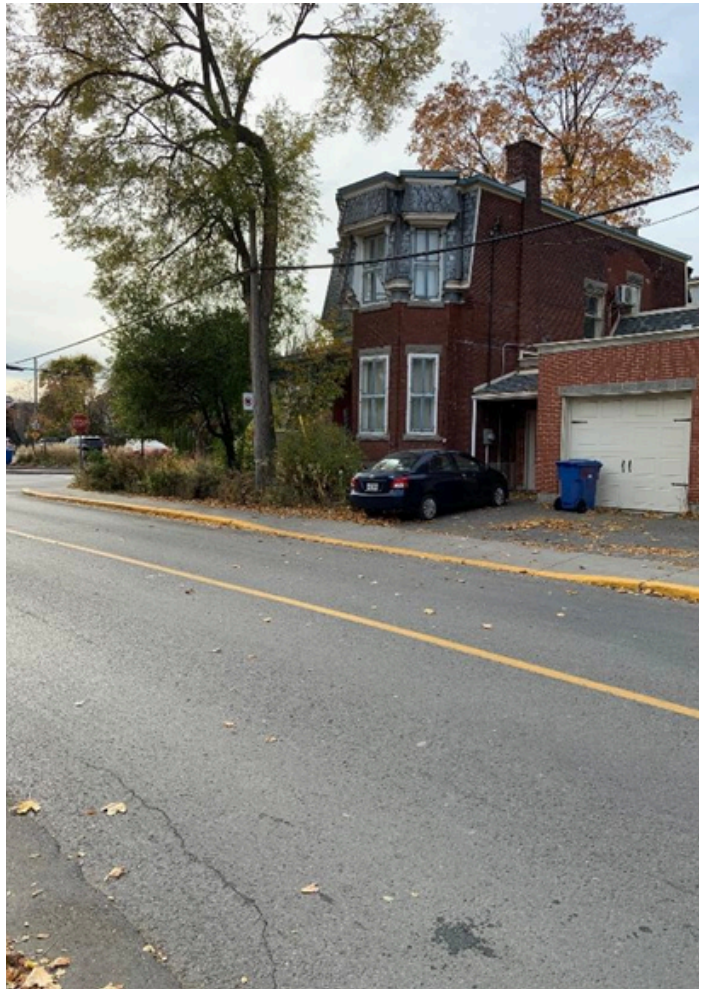
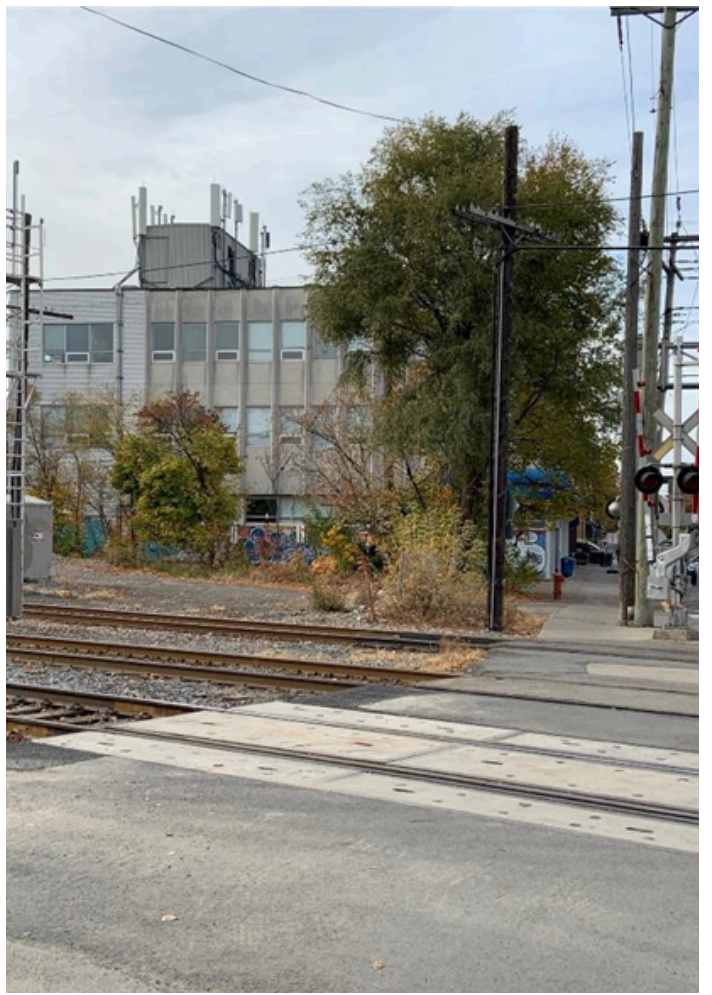
Above the map that David Watson used in his 1997 treasured book "Montreal West - Looking Back - Montreal Junction". The 1889 Railway cut the raceway off at the Hump tracks, but you get the idea.

Our modern walk below.



So begin again at Town Hall (corner Westminster and Easton) but turn sharply right on Easton to go to the sidewalk leading right just before the modern Royal West Academy. You have passed in the yard where the club house for the Regiment was, and the path becomes Wolseley, originally uninterrupted by the CPR until 1889! Then we must deviate right on Broughton until Westminster.







Then cross the tracks past the CPR Tower (now a museum) and the former A&P grocer (the white building) to turn left on Milner at the Royal Bank and pass the old house on Milner behind the Bank (which was on Westminster before the Bank but was turned around).

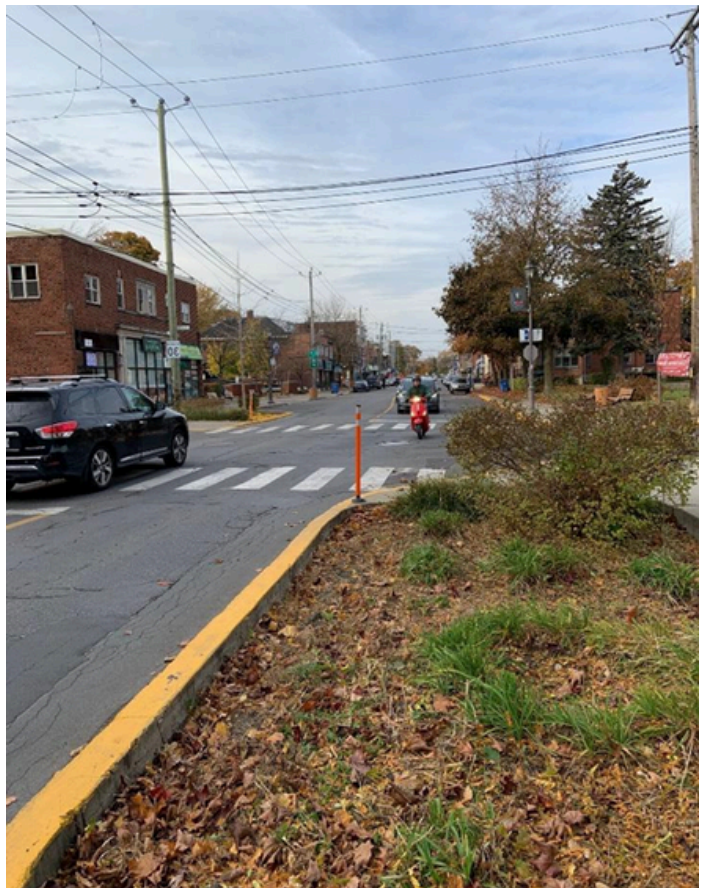
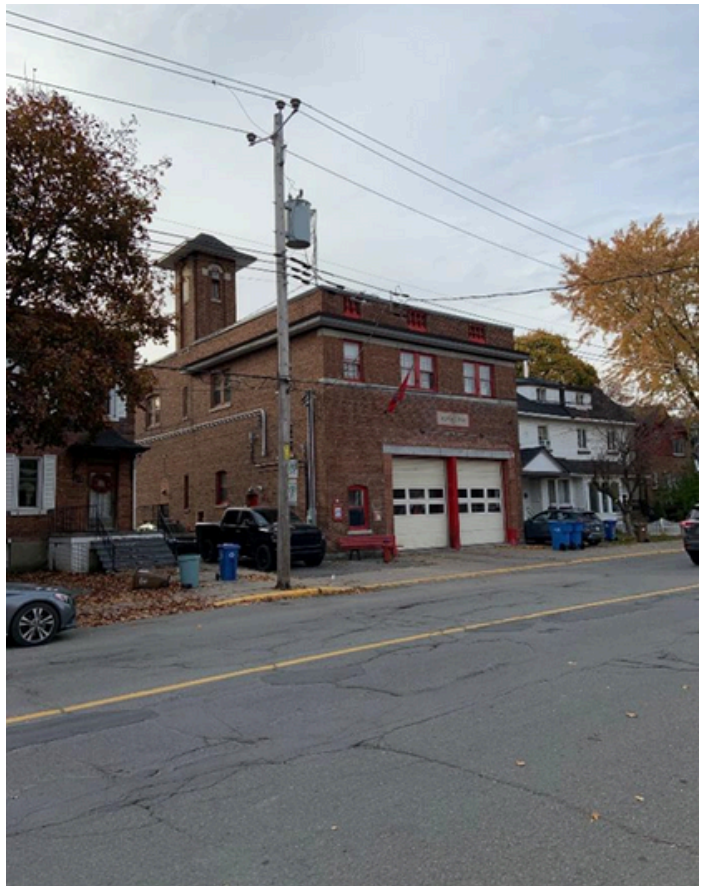
Then turn right all the way North on historic Wolseley.





The grandstand and stables for the raceway were apparently to the west between Curzon and Nelson. Then modern Strathearn Park (formerly Northern Park), past Elizabeth Ballantyne school, before turning right on Northview to come to Westminster at the Hump Bridge. Cross Westminster and because the horses had to make the sharp turn, continue to Ballantyne to the right to make the turn and come roaring back down Westminster. You will be thrilled to pass many busy sights like the Fire Hall, the Presbyterian Church, the United Church and the commercial district.







Then cross the tracks again on Westminster South and proceed to the starting point at Town Hall!

