



The Irish Protestant Benevolent Society

HISTORICAL PROFILE

March 2022

IRON WILL – STORY OF WILLIAM CLENDINNENG 1833-1907

William C. Clendinneng was a Quebec manufacturer, merchant, philanthropist and political figure. He was born on June 22, 1833 in Cavan, Ireland. He was the owner of The William Clendinneng & Son Company, one of Canada's most important foundries, in operation from 1868 to 1904.

The origins of the company date back to a forge which started in Montreal in 1810 by Samuel Hedge, an American expatriate, making axes and scales for use in the fur and lumber trade and for settlers of the land. The forge developed into a foundry by 1838, now called Hedge & Bonner. The early owners (Samuel Hedge, William Hedge, Samuel Bonner. Calvin P. Ladd) were part of the American (New England) colony of Montreal.

Acquired by Irish Protestant born William Rodden in 1842, the foundry, located in Griffintown near the Lachine canal, was a significant player in the early industrial growth of Montreal. The firm went under the name The Montreal City and Foundry Works before becoming Wm Rodden & Co.

William Clendinneng arrived in Montreal in 1847 at the age of 14 and soon began his rise in society when he joined the Wm. Rodden foundry as a clerk in 1852, at age 19. He became a partner in 1858 and its owner in 1868; the firm now known as the Wm. Clendinneng foundry.

Although the firm had been in a precarious financial position in the 1840s, under Clendinneng's ownership and untiring perseverance and industry, the integrated foundry was now on a solid footing and by 1874 had developed into the most extensive industry of its kind in Montreal and in the Dominion. After he brought his son William Clendinneng, Jr. on board in 1884, his company took the name Wm. Clendinneng & Son Company. The foundry was federally incorporated on August 15, 1893

Cast-Iron Architectural Era

By 1886, the foundry's 450 workers cast ironworks of all types such as builders', agriculture and railway castings, cast drain and gas pipes, store fronts, stoves, ranges, furnaces, hollow ware and household goods. The firm produced ornamental decoration (iron furniture, gates and fencing) for many public buildings, residences, parks and cemeteries in Quebec and other parts of Canada. The firm's clients included some of Montreal's most powerful families.

In 1868, the foundry designed and cast the stately main gates and original fence of Rideau Hall (the residence of the Governor-General of Canada), the gates of the Mount Royal Cemetery (1862) and iron decoration of many residences in the Golden Square Mile, including Shaughnessy House, built in 1874, now part of the Canadian Centre for Architecture.

From the beginning of the 18th century to the end of the 19th century, the cast-iron stove was the most popular means of heating the Canadian home. Clendinneng's stoves and ranges were seen in homes, public and commercial buildings throughout Quebec, Eastern Ontario and in the United States. Many immigrants bound for the West had a Clendinneng box stove in their possession, an essential item for survival.

The foundry participated in the Great Crystal Palace Exhibition of 1851 in London, England and in the Paris 1855 Exposition, France's first international exhibition. Canada's first industrial design, registered in 1861, was the famous Clendinneng double stove called "The Prince of Wales", to honour Prince Arthur's visit to Canada in 1860.

William Clendinneng, a dedicated Methodist, was active in a number of charitable organizations. He was a

founding member of the Irish Protestant Benevolent Society (IPBS) in 1856 (following its separation from the St. Patrick's society) and its President in 1875. The Society was directly involved in helping the sick and destitute immigrants. At the time, churches and benevolent societies were extremely important to all inhabitants, catholic and protestant alike.

Throughout the 1880s, Clendinneng was a board member in a number of Montreal-area organizations: the Montreal Protestant House of Industry and Refuge (est.1863), the Canadian Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (est.1869), the Montreal General Hospital (est.1819), the Young Men's Christian Association (est.1851), first in North America, and the Montreal Board of Trade (est.1822).

For over twenty-five years, Clendinneng played a prominent role in the civic life of Montreal. He was elected city alderman in the Sainte-Antoine riding from 1876 to 1879 and from 1888 to 1893 (serving on the committees for finance, light and health). He was a co-committee leader in raising the first civic loan in London, England and Deputy Mayor of Montreal in 1888. He represented Montreal division No. 4 in the Legislative Assembly of Quebec from 1890 to 1892 as a Conservative. William Clendinneng greatly contributed to the social, political and economic life of Montreal and to its trade development. He introduced many improvements in the civic regulations and bye-laws of the city.

In Montreal, William Clendinneng, Sr. and his son, William Clendinneng, Jr were names above all associated with iron manufacturing. They took pride in the links forged with the ironmasters and master craftsmen of their foundry, and can be considered worthy heirs of the tradition passed down by the pioneer ironworkers of the 18th and 19th centuries.

The foundry ceased operations in 1904 primarily due to the collapse of its major banker, the Banque du Peuple in 1895 which lead to a series of defaults by its debtors.

William Clendinneng, Sr. was struck and killed by a passenger train in Depew, New York on June 21, 1907 and is buried in the Mount Royal Cemetery, Montreal.

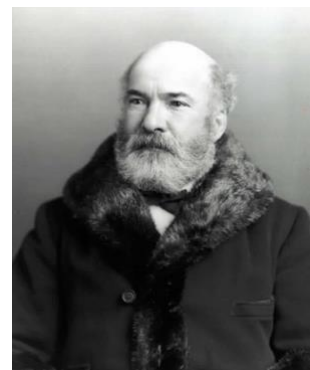
*By David H. Clendenning, IPBS Council member, February, 2022
(David is the great-grand son of the original owner)*

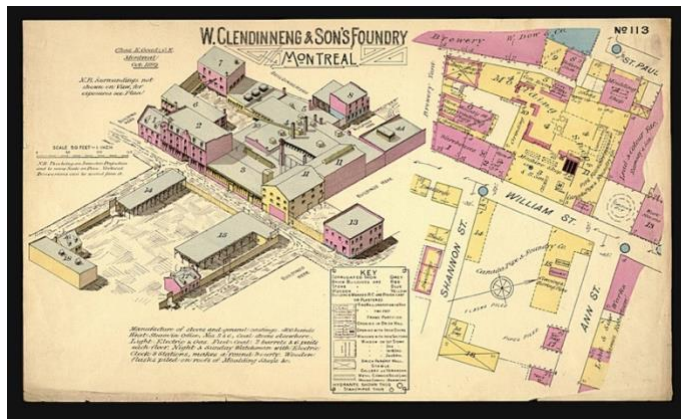
William Clendinneng, Senior. Portrait. 1888,
Notman Collection (11-86093), McCord Museum, Montreal, QC.

William Clendinneng (1833-1907) became one of Montreal's most successful industrialists thanks to his foundry, one of the largest in Canada. He was also a philanthropist, helping to fund a shelter for the needy and fighting against cruelty to animals.

"An affable man, a man of the people, a committed citizen, an active industrialist whom everyone holds in high regard because he is good, charitable, and kindly to the workers, to whom he is a sincere friend."

- *La Press of Montreal*





Clendinneng Foundry Fire Insurance Map, 1892

Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa. NMC 16283.

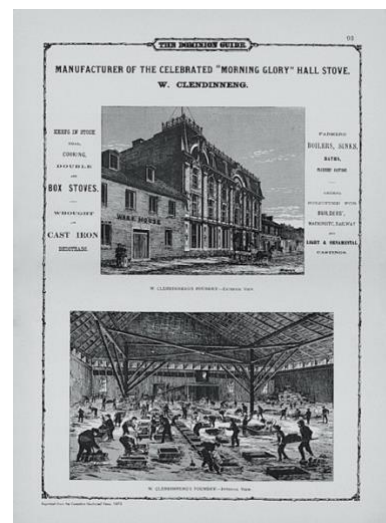
Large-scale maps of many North American cities and industrial companies were produced for and by fire insurance companies to help them assess the risk they were insuring. They were constantly updated and containing all manner of information. The introduction of lithography about 1840 meant that these maps could be printed quickly and cheaply. A number of specialized firms sprang up, employing their own surveyors and cartographers. In Canada one of the most important was the Charles G. Goad Company

which produced the Clendinneng foundry map of 1892, with colour-coding on both the plan and the isometric three-dimensional view. Red-pink denotes brick buildings, stone structures are light blue, and yellow ones are wood.

W. Clendinning Foundry Illustration, Canadian Illustrated News, 1873.

Sketch shows the exterior view of the red brick foundry building with its cast-iron façade on the first floor. The interior view is the only known drawing of an early Canadian foundry. It shows the moulding core room and at the back stands two furnaces (cupolas), one on full blast pouring out hot metal; the other crammed to the throat with pig iron and scrap, ready for firing and commencing operations.

Source: Poster obtained by the Clendinning family from the Montreal Board of Trade, 1965.



Clendinneng Foundry Advertisement and Base Burner Stove Poster, 1880.

Stove shown is a "Carnival" Double Heater base burner, patent August 14, 1884, and listed in the Clendinneng Trade Catalogue of 1894, pg. 55.

Source: Poster obtained by the Clendinning family from the Montreal Board of Trade, 1965.

The Victoria Buildings, corner of Victoria Square and Craig Street (now Saint Antoine street). Canadian Illustrated News (CIN): Vol. no. 23 (June 3, 1876)., Pg. 363. (<https://www.canadiana.ca/digital> adjustments by David Clendenning, 2022)

The sketch represents the magnificent pile of buildings erected on Victoria Square, at the corner of Craig street, by Alderman Clendinneng and Messrs. McIntyre, French & Co., the whole covering the site of the old St. Patrick's Hall. The portion on the right is occupied by the proprietors, McIntyre, French & Co. and by Robert Dunn & Co.



The Corner of Craig street and Victoria Square (Clendinneng block) is occupied by Mr. Clendinneng himself and a sample and sale room for his store and general Foundry business. The remainder of the block is occupied by Messrs. Greenshields Son & Co., wholesale dry goods merchants. This part of the building is built after the design of Mr. J. J. Brown, architect (an IPBS member). The edifice's splendid appearance from the outside would do honor to any of the business streets of London or New York.

The 12th July, 1877 Riot. The murder of Thomas Hackett took place on the steps of Dunn & Co., Victoria Square, next to the Clendinneng block. (Canadian Illustrated News: Vol. 16, no. 3. July 21, 1877), pg.33.



The Van Horne/Shaugnessy House, Montreal.

This Second Empire luxury residence (1874-75) is made of two symmetrical houses. The east side house was first occupied by Duncan McIntyre, and was sold to Sir Donald Alexander Smith, Lord Strathcona. In 1888, William Van Horne bought the west side house from Robert Brown in 1882. Thomas Shaughnessy purchased it in 1891. These men had in common to be senior representatives of the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR). Van Horne was president of the CPR from 1888 to 1899 and Lord Strathcona, who co-founded the CPR, drove the last spike to open the railway.

The building's iron decoration (i.e., window grilles, the beautiful semicircular greenhouse/tea House (added in

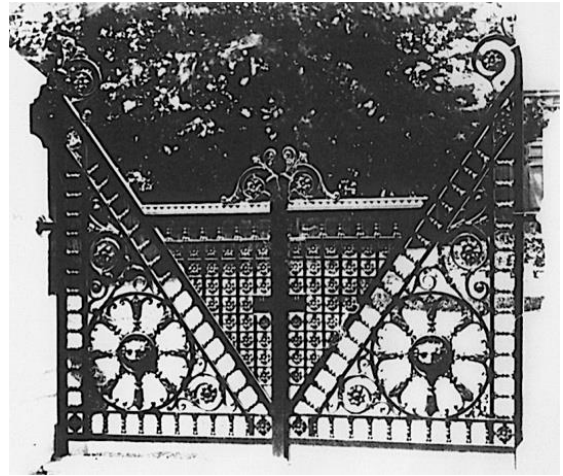
1890) and roof cresting) came from the Clendinneng foundry as well as the ornamental fence and gates (Patent June 8, 1881) which, sadly, were demolished sometime after 1948.

The Shaughnessy family sold their house to St. Mary Hospital (of 45 beds), which in 1941 sold it to the Sisters of Service. Both houses were for sale in 1973. Architect Phyllis Lambert, daughter of industrialist Sam Bronfman, purchased the property and created the Canadian Centre of Architecture in 1989. In 1973, both the Canadian and Quebec Governments designated it as a National heritage site. Old photo: About 1880, private collection of David Clendenning (McCord collection MP-1981.207.13)

Clendinneng Iron fence with large and small gates

Industrial Design patent, June 8, 1881,

Source: Corporations Canada, Patent office. Photo by David Clendenning



Lt. Randall Davidson Lowry Clendenning (1904-1968), Irish Regiment of Canada.



Lt. R. D. Clendenning was the son of Wm. Clendinneng, Jr (1859-1934) and Isabella Lowry and grew up in Montreal. He served with the 1st Machine Gun Brigade of Montreal, 1928-1935, (now amalgamated with the Royal Canadian Hussars, Montreal). During the 1920s, he worked for the Royal Bank and was an active in the Montreal AAA (football), played hockey for the Royal Bank and rowed in eights at Lachine. He moved to Toronto in 1935.

In Toronto, he served with the Irish Regiment of Canada, 1935-1946, and saw action overseas in England, Italy and Holland, retiring with the rank of Lt. Colonel, E.D. (Mentioned in dispatches).

After the war, he lived in Guelph, Ontario and was a Vice-President of a major sporting goods company. He was an active golfer with a 10 handicap, and served in the Guelph Lyons Club, becoming its president and zone chairman.

He married Dorothy Helen Hamlin in Toronto in 1941 and they had twin sons, David Hamlin Clendenning and Philip Hamlin Clendenning, born September 16, 1941. Philip, an historian and publisher, has two children, Max Hamlin Clendenning, b.1974, and Sara Clendenning, b. 1992. Max has one child, Autumn Pirie, b. 2002.

David Hamlin Clendenning (1941-), Portrait taken 2016, Ottawa.

Wealth management advisor, civil servant, diplomat and Trade Commissioner, fine art photographer. Born 16 September 1941 in Toronto. Living in Ottawa.

In 2004, the foundry's 1893 charter was updated and today the Clendinneng firm is a private family holding Company. The current president is David H. Clendenning, the great grandson of the original owner.

