



Sir George-Étienne Cartier National Historic Site of Canada

Lower Canada's most influential politician lived here



Sir George-Étienne Cartier
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Montréal, Quebec, Canada

HISTORY

The Sir George-Étienne Cartier National Historic Site of Canada commemorates the George-Étienne Cartier's (1814-1873) importance in the creation of Canada and in Canadian politics. Born in Saint-Antoine-sur-Richelieu, Cartier became a lawyer in 1835 and quickly became involved in politics.

He began his political career in 1848, and obtained his first position as a minister in 1855. One year later, he became Attorney General (Minister of Justice) of Lower Canada, and formed an alliance with John A. MacDonal, leader of the Conservative Party and Attorney General of Upper Canada. Despite a few minor disagreements, the two men worked together until Cartier's death. From 1858 to 1862, they jointly led the province of United-Canada.

George-Étienne Cartier participated in the Charlottetown, Québec and London Conferences that led to the adoption of the British North America Act of 1867. His contribution put him among the Fathers of Confederation. Cartier convinced John A. Macdonald to keep the provinces as basic parts of the new Canada. He also assisted in acquiring the North-West Territories, creating Manitoba, and bringing British Columbia into Confederation. He therefore originated the current Canadian political system. To celebrate the part he played in the country's

development, Queen Victoria created him a baronet in 1868. He thus obtained the title of Sir George-Étienne Cartier.

In 1872, Cartier proposed a bill on the construction of the Canadian Pacific railway line. He died a year later. The effects of this railway eventually reached all the way to Cartier's homes in Montréal, located near the Canadian Pacific station. These semi-attached houses, representative of the architectural tastes of the 19th century Montréal bourgeoisie, were transformed. One of the two houses became a hotel in 1872, annexing part of the second in 1893.

The semi-attached houses were designated as the Sir George-Étienne Cartier National Historic Site of Canada in 1964. Parks Canada acquired them in 1973 and began a research program in order to learn more about the politician and his era. The site was restored in 1984 and 1985; it then opened to the public, giving people an opportunity to discover Cartier and his work, life in Montréal in his era, and the habits and customs of the time.

REASONS FOR NATIONAL HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE

The Sir George-Étienne Cartier National Historic Site was designated in 1964, because:

- these two semi-detached houses served as the family residence of a notable Canadian politician, Sir George-Étienne Cartier;
- George-Étienne Cartier was Prime Minister of Canada from August 1858 to May 1862;
- he was one of the main Fathers of Confederation;
- he was one of the most influential members of the first Canadian Cabinet.

Western Quebec Field Unit: *Énoncé d'intégrité commémorative : Lieu historique national de Sir-George-Étienne-Cartier*, 2004, p. 5.





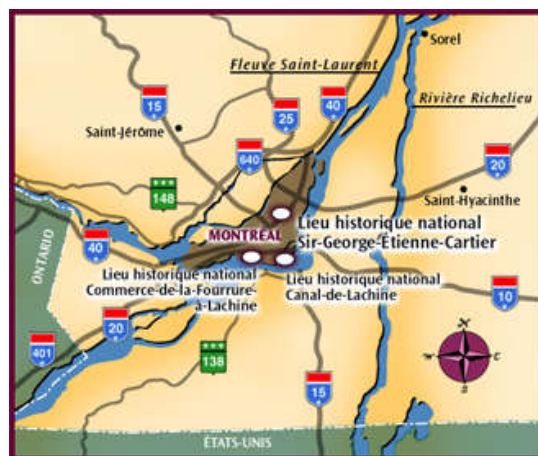
Sir George-Étienne Cartier's house after 1818
© Service de la culture, City of Montréal
Georges Delfosse (1869-1939)

IMPORTANT DATES

- 1814** Birth of George-Étienne Cartier.
- 1835** George-Étienne Cartier is called to the bar and becomes a lawyer.
- 1856** Cartier is nominated Attorney General of Lower Canada.
- 1858** George-Étienne Cartier is elected co-Prime Minister of the Province of Canada, together with John A. Macdonald.
- 1867** Confederation.
- 1867** George-Étienne Cartier is nominated Federal Minister of Militia.
- 1868** Cartier is created a baronet by Queen Victoria; obtaining the title of *Sir*.
- 1872** Proposal of the bill on the construction of the Canadian Pacific railway line.
- 1873** Death of George-Étienne Cartier.
- 1964** The houses are designated a national historic site of Canada.
- 1973** The semi-detached houses are acquired by Parks Canada.
- 1985** The site opens to the public.

LOCATION

The Sir George-Étienne Cartier National Historic Site of Canada is located at the corner of Notre-Dame Street and Berri Street, at the eastern end of the Old Montréal historic district. It can be reached by metro (Champ-de Mars station), by bus (route 13) or by bike.



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INFORMATION

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