

In peril on the sea

When John Molson set sail from the Thames River to settle in Montreal in the spring of 1782, he had an adventurous journey over the Atlantic. Those were dangerous days at sea. Great Britain was at war both with France and with her own American colonies, which became the United States. The sea lanes were menaced.

It was perilous for merchant ships to sail the Atlantic alone. Most sailed in fleets, convoyed by one or more ships of the Royal Navy. The glimpse of any sails on the horizon was enough to put the merchant ship in a state of alarm and the ships of the navy into readiness for battle.

Young John Molson, later founder of the brewery, was then only 18 years of age. He was making the voyage under the care of an old family friend, James Pell. Journeying with them was Pell's son, James Pell, Jr., probably about John Molson's age.

The merchant fleet and its convoy set out in fine weather. They lost sight of Land's End on May 5. They were now at sea, with a seven weeks' journey ahead of them, not knowing what enemy ships they might encounter along the route.

Captain got drunk

James Pell came to distrust the ship in which they were sailing. Twice she had lost touch, in stormy weather, with the convoy. Twice she had sprung a leak, and water, several feet deep, splashed about in her hold. The captain, moreover, "frequently got drunk and slept the whole night."

Pell managed to transfer himself, his son and Molson to the warship that was convoying them. The journey was nearing its end when four sails were sighted. This seemed the moment they had feared all the way over the Atlantic.

The commander had the guns ready for action. Orders were shouted for the crew to take up positions ready for defence. He ordered James Pell to the cockpit, to be on hand to help the surgeons to care for the wounded. He sent young Molson and Pell to the foretopsail braces.

The strange ships were closing in.

Spyglasses were trained on them. One was sailing considerably ahead of the others. As she approached, her flags were seen to be British.

Tension at once subsided. But John Molson was rather sorry that it had turned out to be only a scare. A fight at sea would have been a lively experience. "I was sorry," he wrote in his diary. He would have liked to have "seen something of the kind."

In time of war every nation encouraged attacks on enemy shipping. Officers and men of the Royal Navy were given the lure of "prize money." Any enemy merchant ship they seized would be their "prize." The ship and its cargo would be sold and the proceeds divided, in varying amounts, among the officers and seamen.

This was an attractive arrangement. Officers could grow rich. When peace returned, they could retire in comfort, even in luxury.

Not only naval officers were urged on by prize money. Private owners of ships of any kind were licensed as "privateers." If they seized merchant ships of the enemy, they would own them and any cargoes found in them.

Privateering was risky. But it was the best get-rich-quick scheme of the time. Even the fishermen of Nova Scotia joined the game.

Montreal had its privateers. One of them was James Richardson, later a founder of the Bank of Montreal, the Montreal General Hospital and the Montreal Board of Trade.

As a young man he joined a privateering expedition. They had initial success, capturing several prizes. Then they ran into misfortune. They met a British man-of-war, which opened fire on them, thinking they were enemies.

Several of the crew were killed; the ship was crippled. The British commander realized his mistake. But he simply sailed off. The privateers were left to creep back to port as best they could.

The only security the sea offered was for those who sailed in convoy. Montreal had one ship in particular that regularly crossed the Atlantic, in the convoyed fleets of merchantmen. This ship was the *Eweretta*, commanded by a Scot, Capt. Alex-

ander Patterson.

The *Eweretta* was often the first ship from overseas to reach Montreal in spring. All summer she lay in the river, near the foot of St. Sulpice St. Then, at the season's end, she sailed for England, laden with the furs of the North West Company, and with such passengers as wished to spend the winter overseas.

In those years the *Eweretta* would sail downstream to Bic in the Lower St. Lawrence. There she would take her place in the fleet of merchantmen and wait for the warships that would accompany them across the ocean.

Sailed in convoy

There is a reminder of those convoys in Nelson's Monument, on Notre Dame St., at Place Jacques Cartier. The original ornamental stone work on that monument was brought to Montreal aboard the *Eweretta*, sailing under convoy in 1808.

The bill of lading for that shipment reads:

"Shipped by the Grace of God, in good order and well-conditioned ... upon the good ship called the *Eweretta* whereof is Master, under God, for the present Voyage, Alexander Patterson, and now riding at Anchor in the River Thames, and by God's Grace bound for Quebec & Montreal with Convoy: Seventeen Cases containing Ornamental Stone Work for a pillar to be erected at Montreal to the Memory of the Immortal Nelson ..."

The monument is also a reminder that Horatio Nelson himself, in his younger days, commanded the ship *Albermarle*, which convoyed fleets of merchant ships sailing from the Lower St. Lawrence to England.

Capt. Nelson did not like his service in Canada. The weather appalled him. On April 2, 1782 he wrote to a friend: "I am now ordered to get the old ship *Albermarle* out of harbor ... to go with ... a convoy to Quebec, where, worse than all to tell, I understand I am to winter. I want much to get off this confounded voyage ..."

In the following October he wrote to another friend that he had orders to convoy a fleet from Bic in the



Lower St. Lawrence to England. "A very pretty job at this late season of the year," he said, "for our sails are at this moment frozen to the yards."

Not all merchant ships sailed as fleets in convoy. Some ventured out alone, taking their chances.

Sailing in convoy had some disadvantages. A ship had to be at a certain gathering place at a certain time. On the journey over the Atlantic a fast ship had to slacken speed, for a convoy could move only as quickly as the slowest ship in the fleet.

Yet any ship that set out alone ran great risks. Such were the risks taken by the Holmes family from Scotland, when they sailed for Canada in 1797.

Their ship was captured by a French frigate. They were brought

into the port of Cadiz in Spain, as Spain was then the ally of France.

Mrs. Holmes was pregnant. Her child was born in Cadiz. The parents wanted the child to be baptized. When no Protestant church could be found in Cadiz, they took him for baptism to the Roman Catholic Church of St. Jago. As a reminder of the unusual circumstances of his birth, he was given, as his middle name, the Spanish name of Fernando.

Four years later the Holmes family reached Montreal. The boy born in Cadiz became in later years an eminent Montreal physician, one of the founders of the Montreal Medical Institution, which in 1829 was "engrafted" on to McGill, as its faculty of medicine. Dr. Holmes was dean of the faculty when he died in 1860.

He lies buried in Mount Royal Cemetery. On his stone may still be read his name — "Andrew Fernando Holmes," that surprising middle name recalling the old adventurous days at sea. Dr. Holmes had the unusual distinction in Montreal of being able to say that he had been captured at sea before he was born.

The Gazette

FOUNDED JUNE 3, 1778

Printed and published by Southam Inc. at 250 St. Antoine Street, Montreal H2Y 3R7. All rights of republication are reserved.

Registration number 0619.

relations with the U.S. meant a great deal to them. They went out of their way to be hospitable, on occasion stiflingly so.

Was it a ruse to lull us while the Kremlin prepared a geopolitical offensive? Or were the Soviets sobered by Nixon's firmness into settling for a period of restraint reinforced by the possible gains from economic relations? Did they seek detente only as a tactical manoeuvre? Or was there a serious possibility for a long period of stability in U.S.-Soviet relations? Could the Moscow summit of 1972 have been a turning point, or was it always destined simply to be an ephemeral moment of euphoria?

Victorian opulence

We can never know, and probably neither can the Soviet leaders. Within 12 months, both Nixon's capacity to oppose Soviet expansion and his authority to negotiate realistically had been undermined by Watergate...

The American party was housed in an East German-built villa resembling an oversized Swiss chalet blown out of scale by the heavy stolidity that in the communist world denotes status. The exterior looked vaguely Alpine; the inside was all velvet-covered Victorian opulence.

The largest private residence in the compound belonged to Brezhnev. It was a two-story chalet built in the same style as my residence, though on an even grander scale. The ground floor contained a number of large reception rooms filled with heavily upholstered furniture, a dining room and a movie theatre.

Brezhnev invited my colleagues and me to dinner at his villa, which he first showed off with all the pride of a self-made entrepreneur.

William Hyland, Peter Rodman and Richard Campbell — had the usual problem of how to communicate with one another without becoming immortalized in the KGB tape library. In a strange way we felt somewhat more secure in the Politburo hunting lodge than in our usual haunt of the state guest house in Moscow.

We came equipped, of course, with the so-called babblers, the cassette tape machine emitting incoherent gibberish that allegedly drowned out the sound of our voices for eager listeners. I do not know whether it worked and I hate to think that I may have subjected my emotional balance to that infernal noise-making machine to no avail. It was a close race between KGB technology and our sanity...

The dominant impression from the potpourri of buoyancy, watchfulness and random negotiation was Brezhnev's insecurity about his forthcoming trip to the U.S.

Brezhnev endlessly sought reassurance that he would be courteously received in America, would not be exposed to hostile demonstrations, and would have a chance to meet "ordinary" people. This was a tall order and its various elements were not necessarily consistent with each other.

He would suddenly appear and whisk me off to some excursion in the rolling countryside of lakes, meadows and vast forests. One day he called for me in the black Cadillac sedan that Anatoly Dobrynin, Soviet ambassador to Washington, had suggested might be a suitable state gift for Nixon to bring the year before.

With Brezhnev at the wheel we took off along narrow winding country roads at speeds that made one pray hopelessly for some policeman's intervention, unlikely as it was that a traffic cop — if indeed they

As dusk was settling, a herd of wild boar came toward the bait. A very large boar emerged from the forest. One could see easily why it had attained such a size...

It examined the ground before every step. It looked carefully behind every tree. It advanced in a measured pace. It had clearly survived and thrived by taking no unnecessary chances.

All its precautions attracted Brezhnev's attention, however, and he felled it with a single shot. Only Brezhnev's jubilation prevented me from launching on another train of thought about the perils of excessive intellectualism.

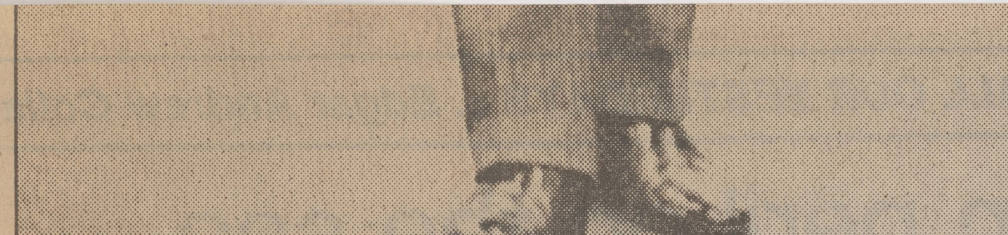
Split personality

Brezhnev's hunting instinct propelled him to move us to another stand even deeper in the forest. By then, fortunately for the boars — for whom I was rooting — night was beginning to fall and Brezhnev missed two shots at long range.

Brezhnev and I remained in the second stand for some hours, and someone brought cold cuts, dark bread and beer from the jeep. Brezhnev's split personality — alternately boastful and insecure, belligerent and mellow — was in plain view as we ate together in this alfresco setting.

The truculence appeared in his discussion of China. He began describing the experiences of his brother, who had worked there as an engineer before Nikita Khrushchev removed all Soviet advisers. He had found the Chinese treacherous, arrogant, beyond the human pale.

They were cannibalistic in the way they destroyed their top leaders (an amazing comment from a man who had launched his career during Stalin's purges); they might well, in fact, be cannibals. Now China was



Leonid Brezhnev at Camp David during visit to the United States.

acquiring a nuclear arsenal. The Soviet Union could not accept this passively; something would have to be done. He did not say what.

China's growing military might was a menace to everybody. Any military assistance to it by the U.S. would lead to war. I reminded him (irrelevantly) that we did not even have diplomatic relations with Peking.

But the Soviet leaders were not content to let the matter rest on that note; the next day Dobrynin took me aside to stress that the China portion of the discussion in the hunting blind was not to be treated as social. Brezhnev had meant every word of it.

Reflecting the duality of the national character and of his own personality, Brezhnev shifted suddenly from menace to sentimentality. He spoke of his youth in the Ukraine and his father's experience in the First World War. His father had learned from that carnage that peace was the noblest goal; he had never stopped insisting on this theme. Brezhnev agreed: We had reached the point in history where we should stop building monuments for military heroes...

Brezhnev reminisced about his rise through the communist hierarchy, his sudden elevation in 1936, and the human im-

past of the Second World War. Before he went off to serve in that war, his wife and he had pledged never to question each other about the interval no matter how long it might be; it turned out to be four years.

He described movingly their reunion over the gulf of a long separation and how both kept their promise and their trust...

In this account he spoke gently, with none of the braggadoccio so evident even a few moments earlier. His theme now was peace. And with his slightly slurred and halting speech he was suddenly an old man somewhat drained by a lifetime of struggle.

Which was the real Brezhnev? The leader who spoke so threateningly of China or the old man who recited his devotion to peace? Probably both were genuine.

Was the peace of which he spoke only the stillness of Soviet hegemony, or an acceptance of the imperatives of coexistence? Again, the answer is almost surely both.

Which strand predominated would depend on circumstance and opportunity. And probably the West's ability to address the two trends of Soviet policy simultaneously and effectively would decide the issue of peace or war.

• Brezhnev's successor. Page B-7.

'So tell me,' said the mayor, 'how is it looking in the west end?'

By ANTHONY WILSON-SMITH
of The Gazette

It is a measure of the unpredictability surrounding tomorrow's Montreal city election that even a Living Legend gets a little curious now and then.

"So tell me," Mayor Jean Drapeau said to a journalist during a telephone conversation this week.

"You're from the west end: How's it looking out there?"

The mayor's Civic Party, he was told, is scrambling in virtually every sector of the west end, save for St. Henri.

Hmmph, said the mayor, whose conversations with the working press are rarities in themselves.

Well, then, he continued, appearing to weigh his words carefully, in what specific districts is the party supposed to be in trouble?

Off they went over the list, with Drapeau occasionally interrupting to say "no, we're safe there" to some suggestions and sitting silently through others.

"Well," the mayor finally sighed. "I want all my people to come through, but I guess it's inevitable that some of them may not."

"We'll just have to make sure that's as few as possible of them."

All of which just goes to show that not even Drapeau is pretending to be able to read the minds of Montrealers as they prepare to go to the polls.

About the only certainty seems to be that the mayor will be re-elected to an unprecedented eighth term over his main challengers, Henri-Paul Vignola of the Municipal Action Group (MAG) and Jean Dore of the Montreal Citizens Movement (MCM).

It's also generally expected that his Civic Party will be returned with a majority of seats.

After the party weathered the Olympic spending controversy storms of 1974 and 1978, the issue has faded into virtual obscurity this time around.

Despite the mayor repeatedly postponing his reply to the provincial Malouf report blaming him for Olympic cost overruns, most voters clearly don't care.

As a result, exchanges between Drapeau and reporters on the subject have become something of a predictable, standing joke.

In fact, there has been no central issue dominating this campaign, other than the MAG and MCM theme that it's time for a change.

But city hall, where tame Civic Party councillors have held 52 of 54 seats for the past four years, may be

in for a significant change of face — and faces — on Monday morning.

For the first time since 1974 (when the MCM took 18 seats) and only the second time in the past 22 years, the Civic Party may find itself facing an opposition with real numerical strength.

Civic Party members privately think the opposition parties will likely hold a minimum of seven and a maximum of 17 seats on the 57-seat council after tomorrow. (Three seats have been added since the annexation of Pointe-aux-Trembles.)

The MCM and MAG, meanwhile, are hoping that a slumbering electorate will shake off its uncertainty and turn towards them.

Although the first three weeks of the campaign were marked chiefly by the indifference of most voters, workers from all parties say there

has been a palpable change in the air in the last week.

One sign of interest was that turnout for advance polls last week was at a record level: A heavy turnout is considered by analysts to be good for the Civic Party.

But with a recent poll showing 41 per cent of voters undecided on which council candidates to vote for, MAG's Nick Auf der Maur sums up the hopes of both opposition groups when he says: "The way things are out there, I wouldn't be surprised if we take 30 seats — and I wouldn't be surprised if we take only five."

The MCM's Michael Fainstat, meanwhile — who formed the other half of the opposition along with Auf der Maur these past four years — says: "Our soundings tell us there are a good 32 or 33 ridings out there

(See SO TELL, Page B-4)



JEAN DRAPEAU
Going for an eighth term