


**Clarence Epstein**

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# MONTREAL, CITY OF SPIRES

## Church Architecture during the British Colonial Period 1760-1860

Of the fifty religious buildings discussed in this book, only a precious few remain standing despite the fact that Montreal boasts one of the largest and most eclectic groupings of Georgian and Victorian structures of any city in North America.

Following the British conquest of New France in 1759 a remarkable series of transformations took place in the small, Catholic trading town of Montreal. Given the diversity of settlers forced to live side by side, the new church buildings that were to rise became strategic public spaces, meeting places as well as power bases. It was no wonder that by the time Mark Twain toured Canada's first metropolis in the 1880s, he found that one could not throw a brick in the place without breaking a church window.

By addressing the social, religious and architectural issues surrounding these colonial-era structures, it will become apparent that Montreal was at once a shining jewel in England's imperial crown, a chief outpost of Catholicism in the New World, as well as the British North American headquarters for more than a dozen independent congregations.

## THE AUTHOR

Art and Architectural Historian, **CLARENCE EPSTEIN**, completed degrees at McGill University, the Courtauld Institute of Art and the University of Edinburgh. As Director of Special Projects and Cultural Affairs at Concordia University his dossiers encompass urban planning, museum relations, cultural property, public art and built heritage – including the incorporation of the Grey Nuns motherhouse within Quartier Concordia. Dr. Epstein received the Weil Prize from the Society for the Study of Architecture in Canada for some of the ground-breaking work in this publication. He also sits on the Montreal regional roundtable of the Conseil du patrimoine religieux du Québec.

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