

MacLeod Nine Productions Présente - Presents
Un film de G. Scott MacLeod / A film by G. Scott MacLeod

Dans l'Griff – *In Griffintown*

Un documentaire sur la vie
de la famille Mercier

A life history documentary
on the Mercier family

LEARNING
GUIDE

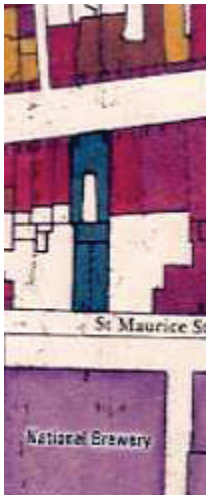
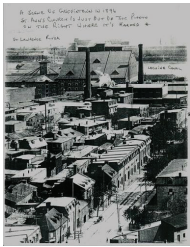
Dans l'Griff – *In Griffintown*



FOCUS STATEMENT

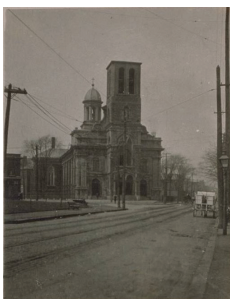
Through personal recollections and anecdotes, *In Griffintown* tells the story of a French-Canadian family living in the working class Montreal neighbourhood of Griffintown in the mid-20th century. The film offers a vivid look at a once-thriving community, which for a variety of reasons has all but disappeared.

This learning guide is designed to help educators explore ideas of home, community, oral history and memory and raise awareness of a range of issues that affect communities everywhere, including urban renewal and the preservation of historic buildings..



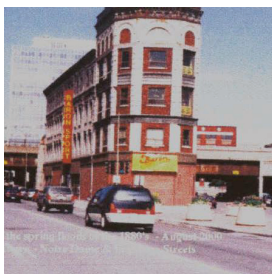
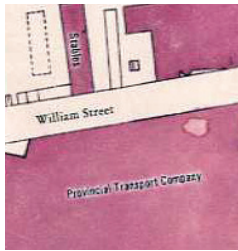
Before Screening the Video

- 1 Do you know of a neighbourhood that has disappeared or almost disappeared? Where was the neighbourhood and why did this happen?
- 2 How do you feel when you look at old photos of your grandparents or parents? How do they react when they see these photos? Is it important to preserve these types of photos? Why?
- 3 Do you know of any historic buildings where you live? What is the significance of these buildings? Why is it important to preserve these sorts of structures?
- 4 What are the things that make a community? What does it mean to belong? What is the difference between a physical community and an online community? Why is community important?
- 5 Is the history of the community where you live written down in a book? If not, how does this history exist? What are the advantages of oral history – stories that we tell about our lives and communities? What are the disadvantages? How is oral history preserved?
- 6 How do you define progress? Think about neighbourhoods and communities you know. Have they changed over time? Are the changes for the better or worse? Why?



After Screening the Video

- 1 How did Lise Mercier characterize the relationship between the French-Canadian and Irish-Canadian residents of Griffintown? Why do you think it was mostly harmonious?
- 2 What was the Sunday afternoon tradition that the Merciers followed, no matter what else was happening in their lives? What kind of importance do these types of rituals have in creating a sense of family and home? Does your family have any similar traditions?
- 3 According to Lise Mercier, how many children did the average Griffintown family have in those days? What impact did this average family size have on the community? How does this compare to the community where you live today?
- 4 What types of vehicles does Stefan Mercier remember seeing driving through the neighbourhood? Why is it important for Stefan that the fire station is still in the same location as when he was a child?
- 5 What was Chez Willie? What significance did it have for Claude Mercier? What other public buildings are mentioned in the film? Why are these types of buildings important to communities?
- 6 Why do you think the Merciers choose to live beside their old neighbourhood? What kinds of emotions do you think this living situation stirs in them? What would they like to see happen to help preserve the history of Griffintown? Do you agree that a museum would be a good idea? What kinds of things would you put in the museum?



Follow-Up Projects

- 1 Do some research on the history of Griffintown. What peoples originally settled the area? Why? What kinds of industries existed there? Describe the important role this community played in the history of Canada.
- 2 Find a photo from an era you do not know anything about. Write a fictional story about the scene depicted in the photo. Tell the story to the class.
- 3 Frank Hanley, Reverend Tom McEntee and May Cutler are three famous Canadians who hailed from Griffintown. Research one of these or another famous former Griffintown resident and write a short biographical report, highlighting the role that the community may have had in making them who they were.
- 4 Using a digital video recorder and a few old photos, make a mini biopic about your grandmother, grandfather or other older relative, having them talk about the photos. This process is called photo-elicitation. If possible, visit one of the sites depicted in the photos with your relative and film them telling the story. Was the site preserved? Why or why not?
- 5 Many communities around the world have taken steps to preserve historical neighbourhoods. Research one such community and describe it to the class using text and photos. Explain why it is important to preserve these types of historical neighbourhoods.
- 6 Choose two or three buildings in your community. They can be historic structures or relatively new constructions. Research and write short histories of each building. Visit the buildings with your class, telling them the history of each one. If you can't visit the buildings, use photographs for your presentation.



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PRODUCTIONS

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