

Montreal: The Great Fire of 1852

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Montreal’s biggest fire that destroyed one half of the city’s buildings and left one fifth of the city’s population homeless



Artist depiction of the destruction of The Hayes House during the fire



The two areas effected most by the fire were the St. Lawrence and Quebec neighborhoods, now located in Downtown Montreal.

-Both neighborhoods were primarily made up of poor laborers and artisans, who’s houses were built with wood.

Before

- **Abnormal Weather**
It was a hot, dry and windy summer, it had been above 85 degrees for more than a week before the fire
- **Poor City Management**
Montreal’s fire department during the time had poor leadership and was made up of only 6 volunteers
- **Cheap Building Materials**
The areas effected by the fire were poor working class neighborhoods that had cheaply built buildings made from wood

During

- **Started June 9th at Brown’s Tavern in St. Lawrence Neighborhood**
- **Fire Spread to hundreds of homes in less than 30 minutes**
- **Second Fire Started at The Hay’s House Hotel in Quebec Neighborhood**
- **Thousands quickly became homeless and had to take shelter in various public squares**
- **Fire lasted 36 hours, 1/2 of the city was destroyed and 1/5 of the population bame homeless**

After

- **Montreal was rebuilt using more flame retardant materials like brick and stone**
- **More aqueducts and resevours were built**
- **The volunteer fire department was disbanded and a new full-time department was established.**

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