

726.510971447

T774h

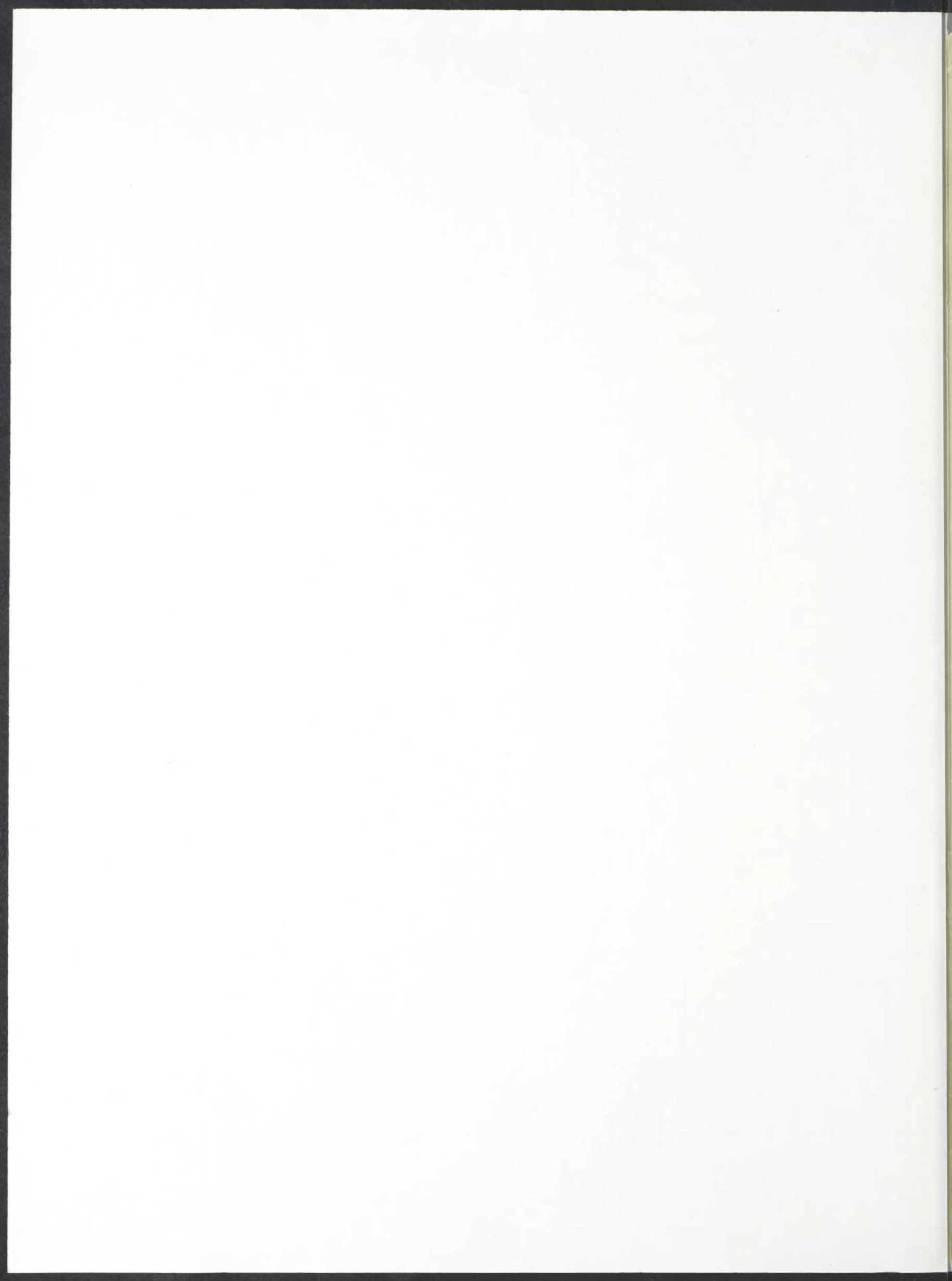
1930



Bibliothèque  
et Archives  
nationales

Québec 





ENV 1514

BIBLIOTHÈQUE de la VILLE de MONTRÉAL  
MONTREAL CITY LIBRARY

1210 RUE SHERBROOKE EST  
MONTRÉAL H2L 1L9

McGILL UNIVERSITY PUBLICATIONS

SERIES XIII

(ART & ARCHITECTURE)

NO. 28

---

---

The Huron Mission Church and Treasure

of

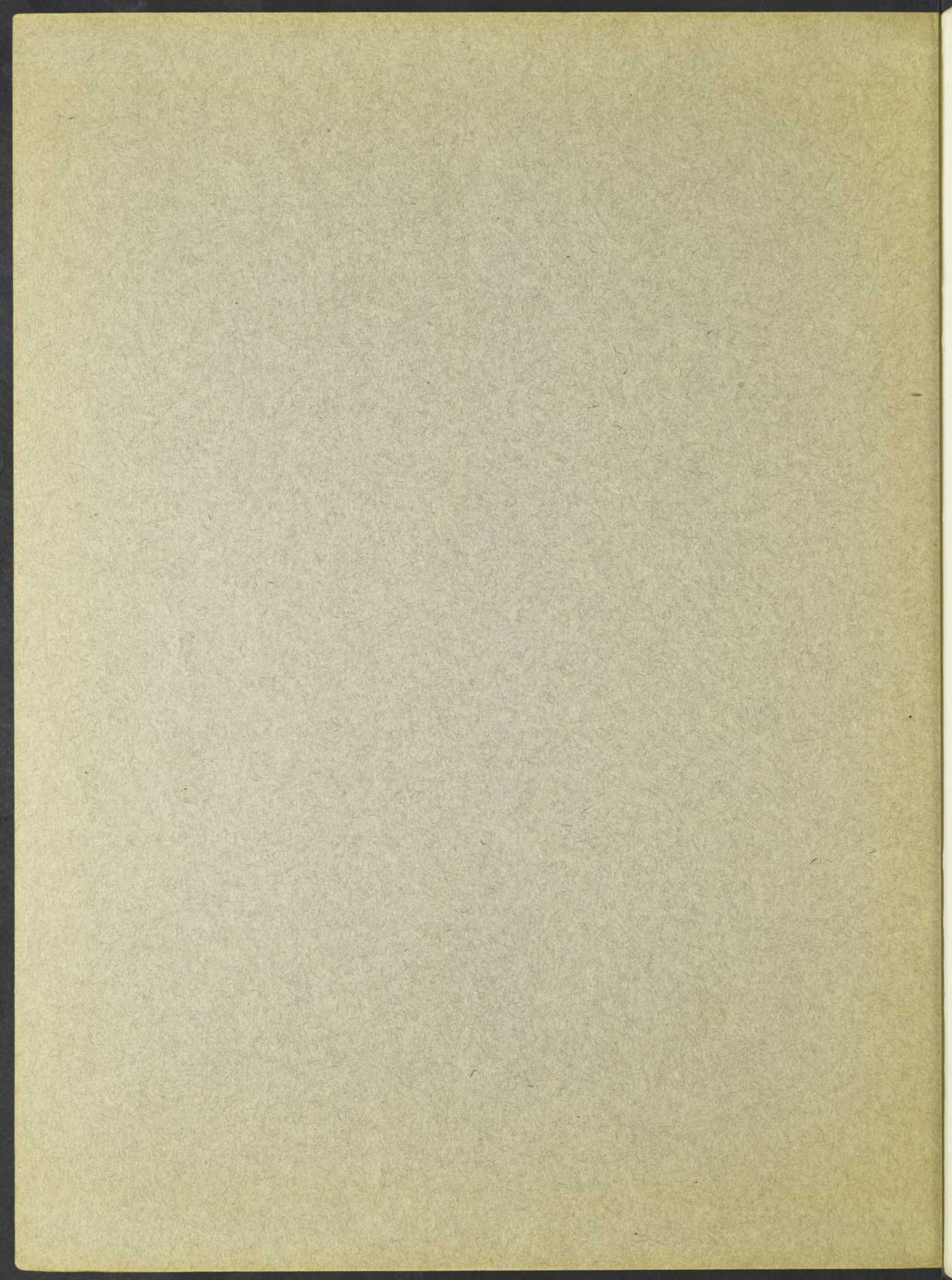
Notre Dame de la Jeune Lorette, Quebec.

by

RAMSAY TRAQUAIR, M.A. (Hon.), F.R.I.B.A.

Reprinted from The Journal Royal Architectural Institute of Canada,  
Sept. and Nov., 1930.

MONTREAL, 1930



THE  
HURON MISSION CHURCH AND TREASURE  
OF  
NOTRE DAME DE LA JEUNE LORETTE  
QUEBEC

By RAMSAY TRAQUAIR  
M.A. (Hon.), F.R.I.B.A.

BIBLIOTHEQUE  
DE  
MONTREAL

REPRINTED FROM  
THE JOURNAL, ROYAL ARCHITECTURAL INSTITUTE OF CANADA  
SEPT. and NOV., 1930.

McLennan 20/10/48 2.00

BUCHANAN  
30  
MONTREY

726.51 097 14 62  
T474 h  
1930

# The Huron Mission Church and Treasure of Notre Dame de la Jeune Lorette, Quebec

By RAMSAY TRAQUAIR, M.A. (Hon.), F.R.I.B.A.

## PART I

**D**RIVEN from their home in Ontario by their old enemies the Iroquois, a band of some 300 Huron families took refuge under French protection in the Island of Orleans in 1651. Even here they

“As the Huron mission, which was at Notre Dame de Foy from the year 1669 until the year 1674, was increasing every day—either through the recruits who came to us from the country of the

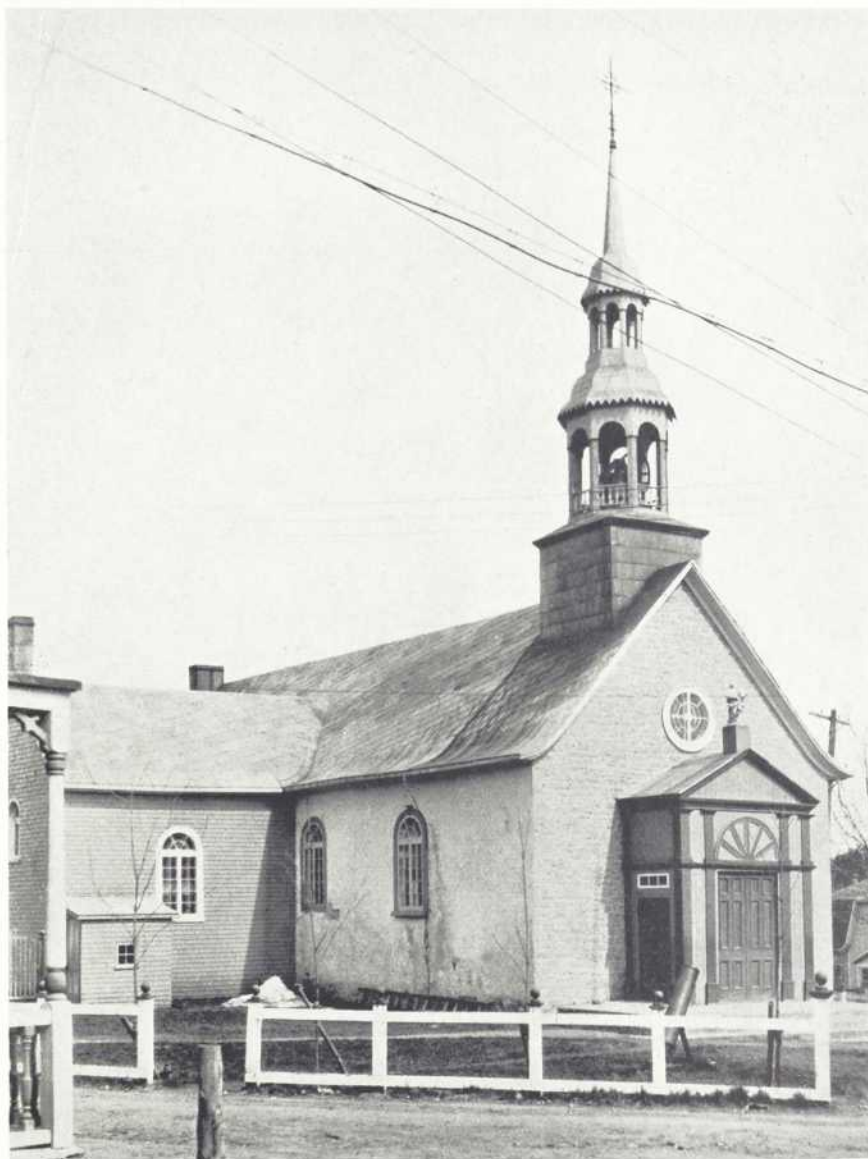


Photo R. T., 1928

THE EXTERIOR FROM THE NORTH WEST

were not safe and in 1668 they were established with their Jesuit missionaries at Notre Dame de Foye, a few miles to the west of Quebec. Père Martin Bouvart has left us an interesting and important “relation” of their subsequent establishment at Ancienne Lorette, which must be quoted here <sup>(1)</sup>.

<sup>(1)</sup> R. G. Thwaites, *The Jesuit Relations*, vol. LX p. 69. De la Chapelle de Notre Dame de Lorette en Canada. Martin Bouvart Lorette Mars 1 et 2 1675. pub. in *L'Abeille* Jan. 1879. The excerpt is the English translation, a few unimportant passages are omitted.

Iroquois, or through the blessing which God gives to the Huron families in order to people them anew—we have been obliged to seek for our savages much more land and wood than they had so near to Quebec. After many searchings and still more prayers, they have not themselves found a place more suitable than that which we have allowed them, three leagues from Quebec, on our Seigniory

of St. Michel, a place to which we have given the name of Lorette. . . .

The Loretto of New France cost us some 5,000 livres . . . .

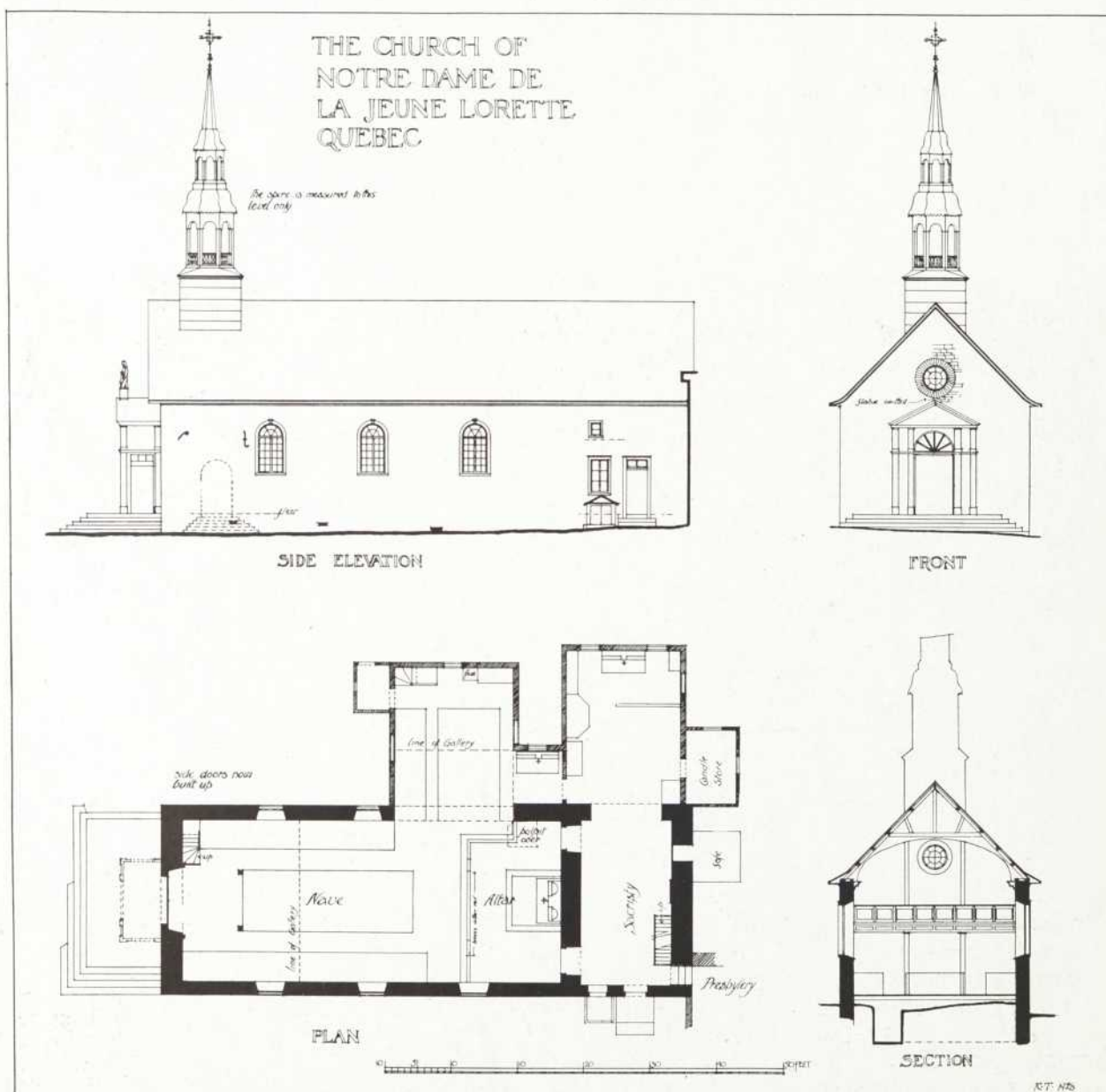
The place being chosen, the plan of the village was almost immediately drawn up; and in that same summer some cabins [cabanes] were hastily built, in which the savages came to dwell the following winter. But, the cabins proving to be too near one another, it was thought best to put them farther apart. Therefore new outlines were drawn, toward the end of the month of April, for the village of Lorette, by placing the chapel at the centre of the quadrangle composing it. A width of 20 feet was given to each of the six cabins which are on the same line, along each of its four sides. Another space of 20 feet was assigned between every two cabins; and in the middle of each row there was also marked off a 20 foot road which ended directly

at the chapel . . . .

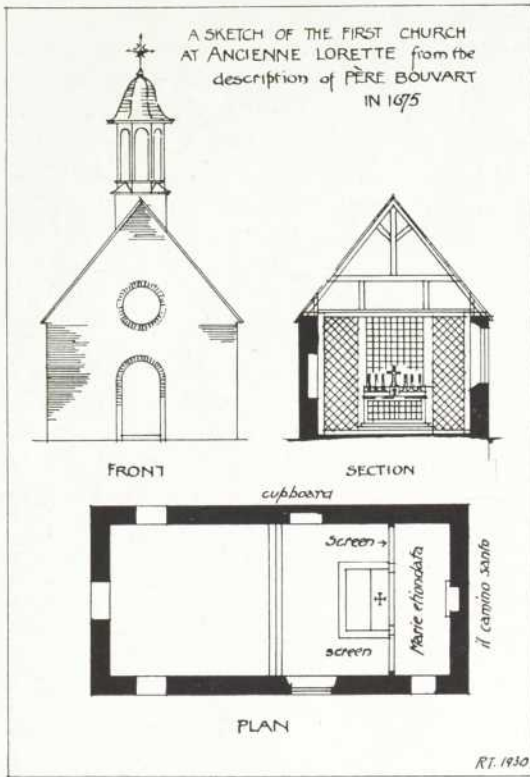
As we wished to build the chapel of bricks, and as no land suitable for making them had yet been discovered in the vicinity, we ordered 24 thousand at côte de Beaupré between Château Richer and Ste. Anne. In the autumn of the same year, 1673, they were brought by water to Sillery in Monsieur Basile's bark and shallop. He would take nothing for boat hire. No doubt he will lose nothing for having contributed this alms to the walls of the House of Mary.

In the following winter trains (1) were used for conveying these same bricks from Sillery to Lorette, as there were not enough, in the spring of the year 1674 another 30 thousand were ordered to be made, a quarter of a league from the chapel. The wood which was necessary for the floors, the

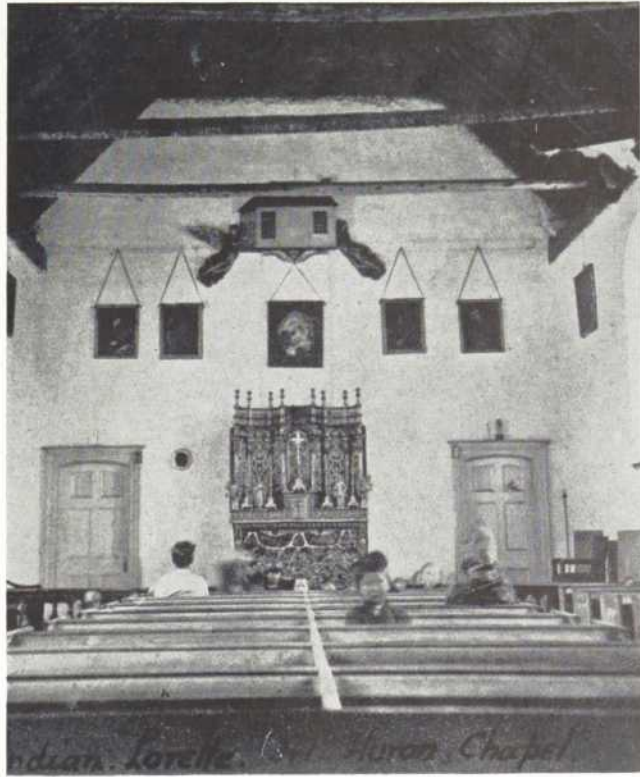
(1) i.e. sledges.



PLAN AND ELEVATIONS OF THE PRESENT CHURCH



SKETCH OF THE FIRST CHURCH AT ANCIENNE LORETTE



THE INTERIOR BEFORE RESTORATION



THE INTERIOR

framework [charpente] and the roof, was obtained much nearer. The only exception was the shingles, some of which were made at côte de St. Michel others half a league or so from Lorette. As for the lime it was brought from Quebec by train, at the same time as the bricks which were at Sillery . . .

being finished, it was blessed on the 4th day of November in the same year 1674.

Of the three images (which were brought to the chapel at its dedication) the first and principal one is that of Our Lady sent here from Loretto and fashioned after the miraculous image that St. Luke



THE ALTAR

*Photo R. T., 1928*

The cabins in which our savages had lodged being too small, too near and hastily built, they built for themselves more spaciouly and with more order in the summer of the year 1674. However as some came back too late from the hunt to strip bark there still remained nine cabins to build in order to finish the square of the village of Lorette . . .

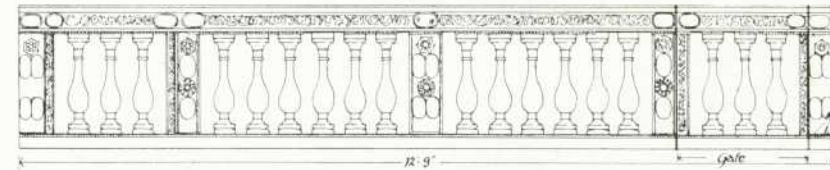
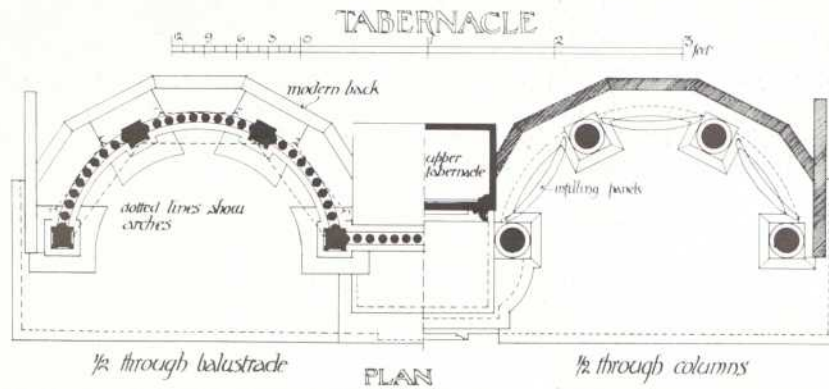
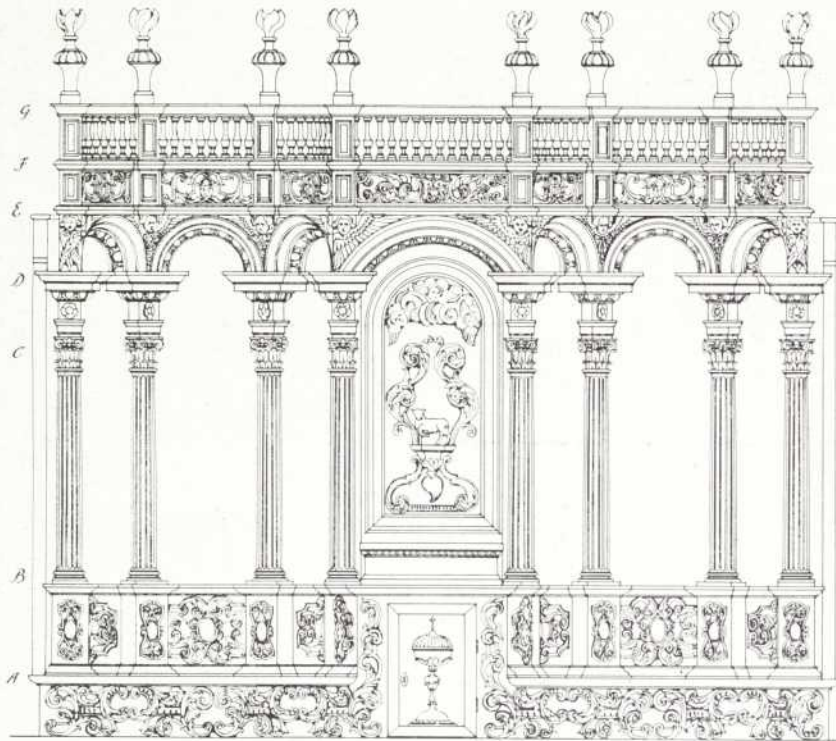
On the 16th day of July in the year 1674, the Reverend Father Claude Dablon, a superior-general of the missions of the Society of Jesus and Rector of the College of Quebec, laid the first stone of the new house of Lorette . . . Finally the chapel

left there . . . The other two are made of the real wood of Notre Dame de Foye. One is a Virgin bearing her son, and it was sent to our savages by the cities of Nancy and Bar. The other which the princes and princesses of the most illustrious and pious house of Lorraine have sent us, is a Saint Joseph, who also holds the infant Jesus upon one of his arms . . .

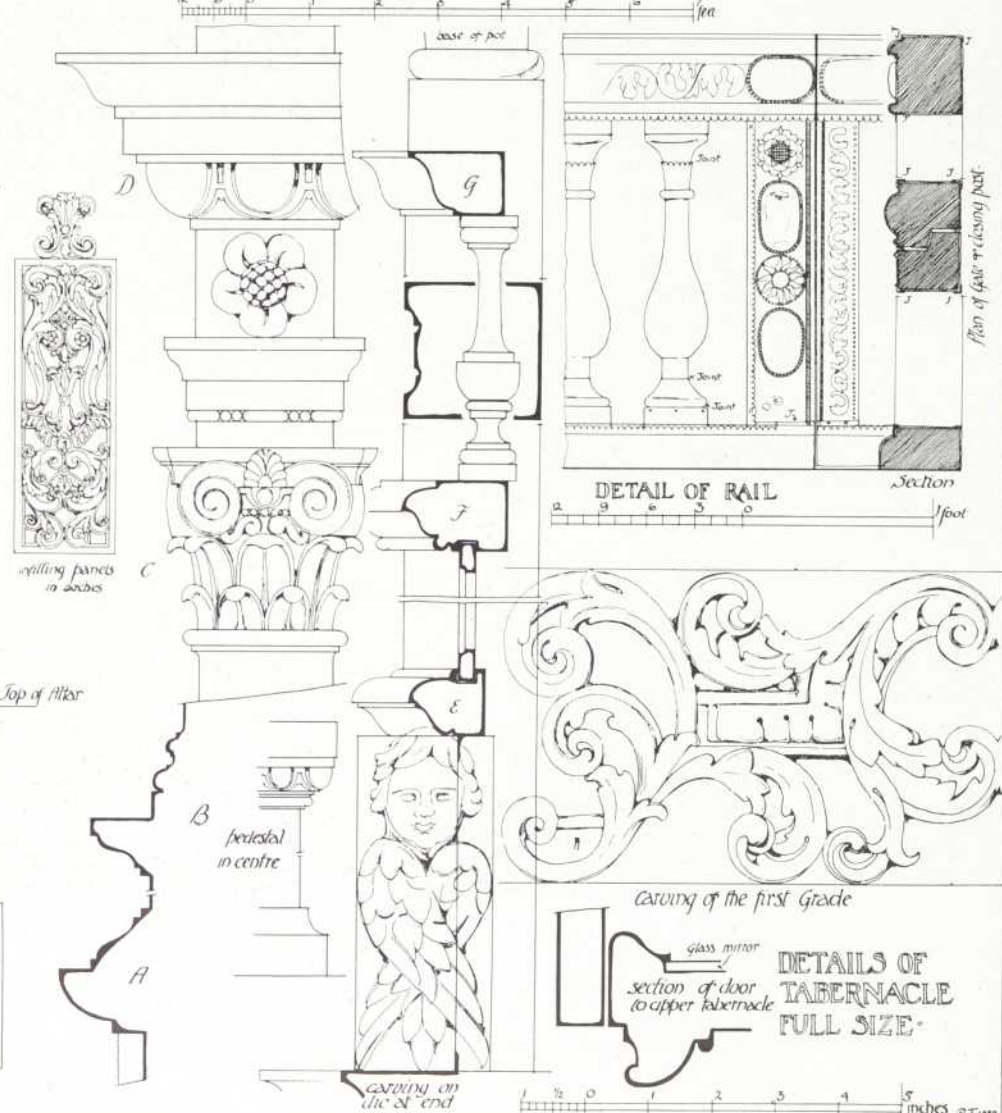
I think that those who cannot betake themselves in person to our new Lorette will be very glad to see it at least on paper. Therefore, to give them a faithful picture thereof, they shall know that this

NOTRE DAME DE LA  
JEUNE LORETTE · QUEBEC  
DETAILS OF THE TABERNACLE  
AND BRASS ALTAR RAIL

(5)



THE BRASS ALTAR RAIL



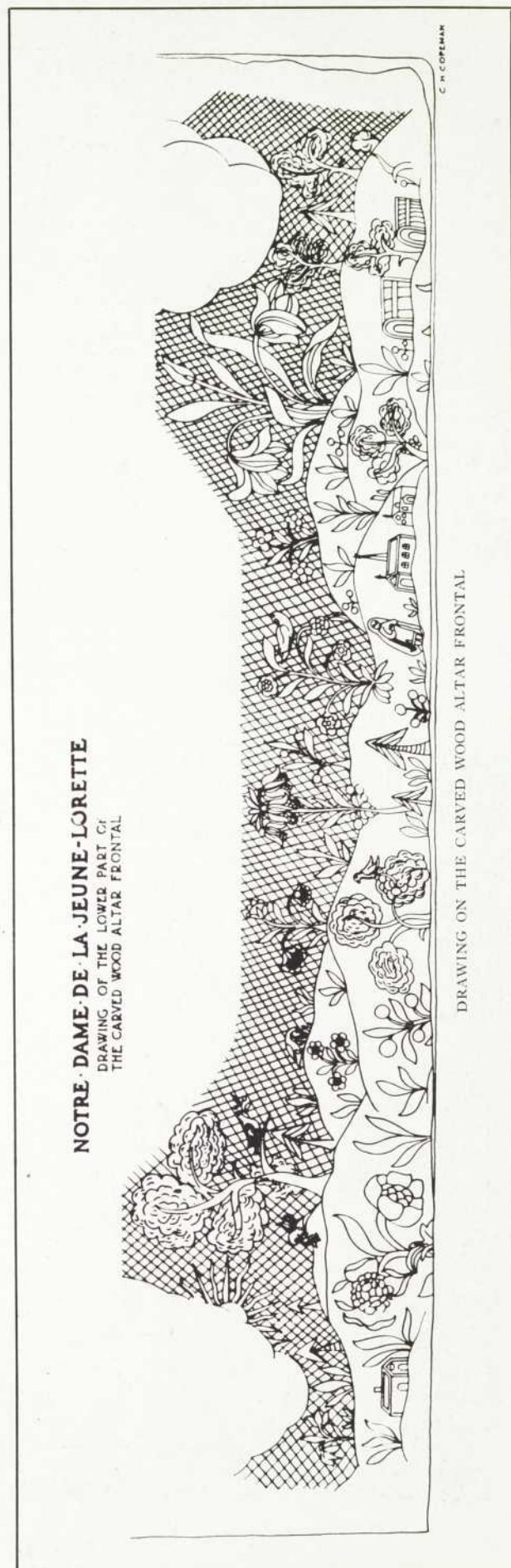
chapel, similar to the true Loretto, is wholly of brick—forty feet long by twenty wide and twenty-five feet high. It is pierced by three doors, a chimney and two windows. There is a steeple above that of the lower gable through which, as is believed, the angel entered when he came to salute the blessed Virgin. It is also held that on that side was St. Joseph's shop. Turcellin<sup>(1)</sup> opines that the main portion of the dwelling is the north side and affirms that the threshold of the door is of wood, which we have observed in the case of the Canadian Loretto. On this same side, toward the altar, is a cupboard quite simply constructed and suitable for locking up plate [de la vaiselle] and other similar articles. As opposite the north door is a south door, there is also on that same side a window which corresponds to the cupboard. As for the altar, it is in quite extraordinary style [d'une manière assez extraordinaire] although pleasing and devotional.

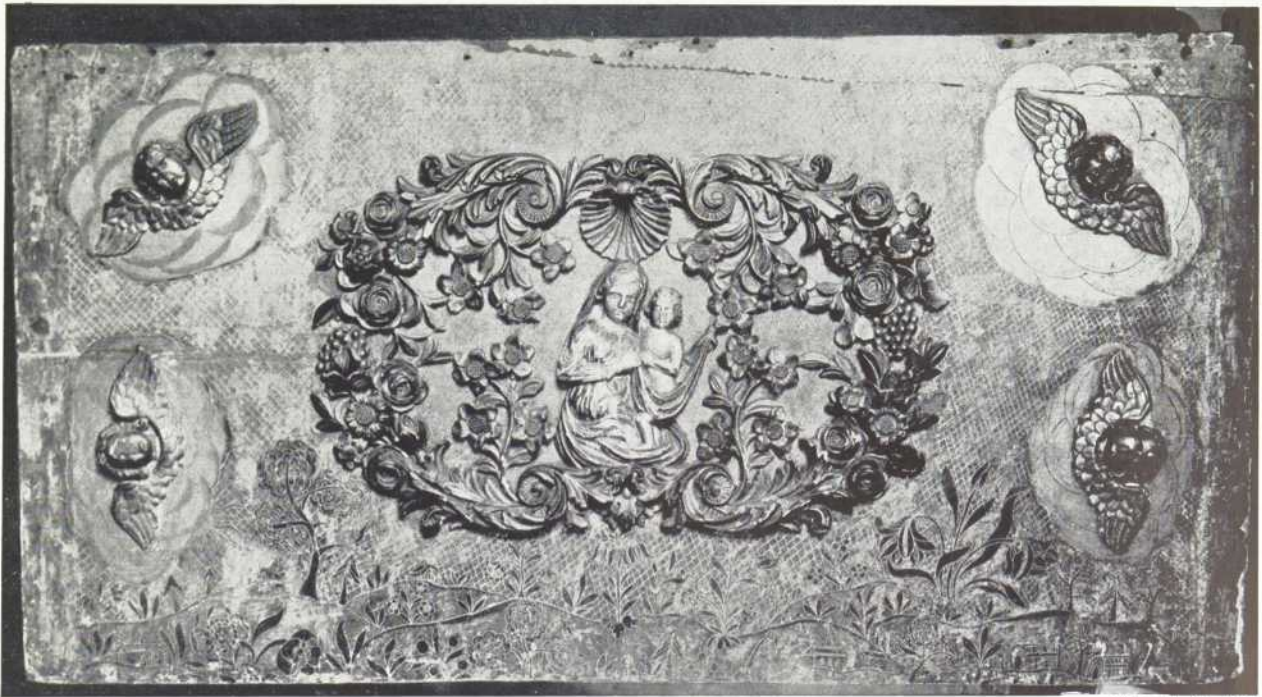
The Apostles who converted the true Loretto into a church, not having deemed it expedient to extend the altar quite over against the chimney, have so separated it therefrom by a little recess that one sees it through three gratings of which the middle one is the length of the altar, and those of the two sides, which have their squares losenge shaped, seem, as their height is much greater than their width, to take the place of columns. Instead of an altar front [devant d'Autel] there is a fourth grating, which is quite like the first, except that it is not nearly as high. In the Loretto of Italy, this grating is set upon a rich table of jasper but in ours it is placed only on a wooden table, painted like jasper.

The small recess which is behind the altar is called by the Italians "il camino santo" because it contains the chimney [cheminée] of the Holy Family, Jesus, Mary and Joseph. Our Hurons name it at least as properly in their language, "*Marie etiondata*" "the apartment of Mary" because that, as is believed, was where the Blessed Virgin had her bed and where it is asserted she often changed the clothing of her divine child and warmed him. One enters this sanctuary by a door which is smaller than the two others; this is on the south, opposite the place where, it is held, the infant Jesus and his mother most commonly took their rest. As in Italy, the image of Our Lady, made by St. Luke, is placed in a niche, on the mantel of the chimney—so the copy which has been sent to us is also in a niche on the mantel of the chimney of our Loretto; and one likewise sees it within the chapel, through the first three gratings of which we have already spoken . . .

Père Bouvart's description was originally accompanied by a plan of the village, which has been

(1) Torsellini, the Italian Historian of Loreto.





*Photo R. T., 1929*

THE CARVED WOOD ALTAR FRONTAL



*Photo R. T., 1929*

PART OF THE CARVED ALTAR FRONTAL SHOWING THE INDIAN WOMAN,  
THE CHURCH, AND THE PRESBYTERY

lost, yet, even without it we can picture the little Huron settlement. The church stands in a central square of about 140 feet, approached by roads on all four sides. Round the square are the bark cabins of the Indians arranged in pairs, six on each side of the square. The use of brick for the church is unique, so far as I know. At this date in Canada the churches were usually of wood whilst the original "*casa santa*" in Loretto is of course of stone.

Strict archaeology was not regarded in the XVII century and the description shows us a little French Canadian Church, with gabled ends. At the end farthest from the altar is the bell-tower, in the gable end is a door surmounted by a window. There are two side doors, as is frequently the case. On the south side is one window and opposite it, on the north wall is the cupboard. A small room, or shrine, "the apartment of Mary" was screened off at the east end of the church by three grilles; in the centre of this screen was the altar, with one screen above it and one at each side, with diamond grilles, through which the fireplace, and its niche and statue, could be seen beyond the altar. A fourth grille was placed in front of the altar, resting apparently upon some kind of pedestal (called "table") of "jasper." Through this would have been seen the actual front of the altar, of what character we are not told. The arrangement fully justifies Père Bouvart's description as "d'une manière assez extraordinaire."

But colonisation was spreading northwards from Quebec and it was always the policy of the missionaries to keep their charges somewhat with drawn from the French. In 1698 the Huron mission was moved from Ancienne Lorette to a new Lorette on the banks of the St. Charles river. By a deed of 7th January, 1698, <sup>(1)</sup> the brick church, with four arpents of land, was given to the new French parish.

In moving to Jeune Lorette the Hurons carried with them everything they could from their old chapel. Père Bouvart, who remained to serve the new French parish complains mildly—"le Père de Couvert en quittant a tout emporté à la Nouvelle Lorette, ornements autels serrures vitres gonds."

Unfortunately the archives of Jeune Lorette contain no ancient records. Père E. T. de Ville-neuve-Girault, the last Jesuit Missionary, must have taken many of them with him when he left the mission in 1790 <sup>(2)</sup> and the remainder seem to

have disappeared after the fire of 1862. We have accordingly very little record of the building of a new church. In 1698 Mgr. de St. Vallier promised 100 ecus towards the building of the new chapel. In October 1700 P. Bouvart writes "40 Français ont travaillé pendant trois jours à la Nouvelle-Lorette, and, a few days later P. de Couvert 'Les Français n'ont travaillé que quelques jours à couper le bois pour la nouvelle chapelle.'" <sup>(1)</sup>

The letter of P. Davangour of 1710 from Lorette seems to infer that a church of some kind existed at that date. He writes "—conferunt se in templum" and "—orantes ante ostium templi expectantes dum aperiretur." <sup>(2)</sup>

This would seem to show that a wooden church was built about 1700. Lindsay, reviewing the scanty evidences, considers that Père Richer in 1722 built a stone chapel, which later, in 1730, was converted into a residence for the missionaries when the present church was built. The mill, whose ruins still stand on the steep bank of the river below the church was built also by P. Richer in 1731. <sup>(3)</sup>

But, in 1721, Lorette was visited by the Père de Charlevoix who writes:

"A trois lieuës d'ici vers le Nord-Est, il y a un petit village de Hurons Chrétiens dont la chapelle est bâtie sur le modèle et avec toutes les dimensions de la '*santa casa*' d'Italie d'où l'on a envoyé à nos Neophytes une image de la Vierge, semblable à celle, que l'on voit dans ce celebre sanctuaire." <sup>(4)</sup>

This, of course, may have been the wooden church built about 1700.

Peter Kalm, the Swedish naturalist visited Lorette in 1749, and thus describes the village and church:

"Lorette is a village, three French miles to the westward of Quebec, inhabited chiefly by Indians of the Huron Nation, converted to the Roman Catholic religion. The village lies near a little river which falls over a rock there, with a great noise and turns a sawmill and a flourmill. When the Jesuit, who is now with them, arrived amongst them, they lived in their usual huts, which are made like those of the Laplanders. They have since laid aside this custom, and built all their houses after the French fashion. In each house are two rooms, viz. their bedroom, and the kitchen on the outside before it. In the room is a small oven of stone, covered at top with an iron plate. Here is a fine little church with a steeple and bell. The steeple is raised pretty high and covered with white tin plates. They pretend that there is some similarity between this church in its figure and disposition,

<sup>(1)</sup> Given in full in "Notre Dame de la Jeune Lorette" by the Abbe L. S-G. Lindsay, p. 32. The deed is in the archives of the Archbishopric of Quebec. Registre A p. 692.

<sup>(2)</sup> When P. Casot, the last of the Canadian Jesuits, died in 1800 his effects were seized by the Sheriff of Quebec. Amongst his papers were a number of documents dealing with the Jesuit seignories, including:

A "livre de comptes" covered in parchment and endorsed "des Anges." Papers dealing with the Fief of St. Gabriel, the Fief of Notre Dame de Anges. The Fief and Seignory of Cap de la Magdelaine, Sellery 1719, Ancien and Jeune Lorette, the Fief of Belair. Three Rivers and Batiscan. All these papers have disappeared.

I have been unable to trace the origin of this information. It is contained in several loose leaves of a book in French, numbered pp. 271 to 282, octavo. They give a full list of the possessions of P. Casot (or Cazot) at his death. They were found in this loose condition amongst other papers by Mr. A. G. Neilson; there seems no reason to doubt their trustworthiness.

<sup>(1)</sup> Lindsay p. 37.

<sup>(2)</sup> Relations. Vol. LXVI p.146.

<sup>(3)</sup> Lindsay p.114.

<sup>(4)</sup> P. de Charlevoix, Journal d'un voyage fait par ordre du roi dans l'Amerique Septentrionale. Paris MDCCXLIV Vol. V p.119. 1721 Fevrier Quarie me lettre.

and the *Santa Casa* at Loretto in Italy from whence the village has got its name." (1)

The story of the resemblance to the *Santa Casa* still clings to the church, though it now has no traces of the peculiar arrangements which distinguished the first church at Ancienne Lorette. The mills are now in ruins but otherwise Kalm's description might fit the present village.

The church was partially burnt in 1862 but the Abbé Lindsay, who himself was present, states that the contents were saved, including the old brass altar-rail, the altars, sacred vessels, vestments, paintings, statues, the representation of the sacred house of Loretto with the angels supporting it and everything excepting the ex-vito collars of wampum which hung on the walls. (2)

When the church was repaired these old fittings were replaced and are still there.

In recent times a wing with a gallery has been added on the north side and a certain amount of

re-decoration has been done in the interior. Fortunately we have photographs of both outside and inside, taken probably between 1880 and 1890, before this was done. The existing walls are those of the church built by Père Richer in 1730 and it is doubtful if the exterior is very much changed in appearance since that date.

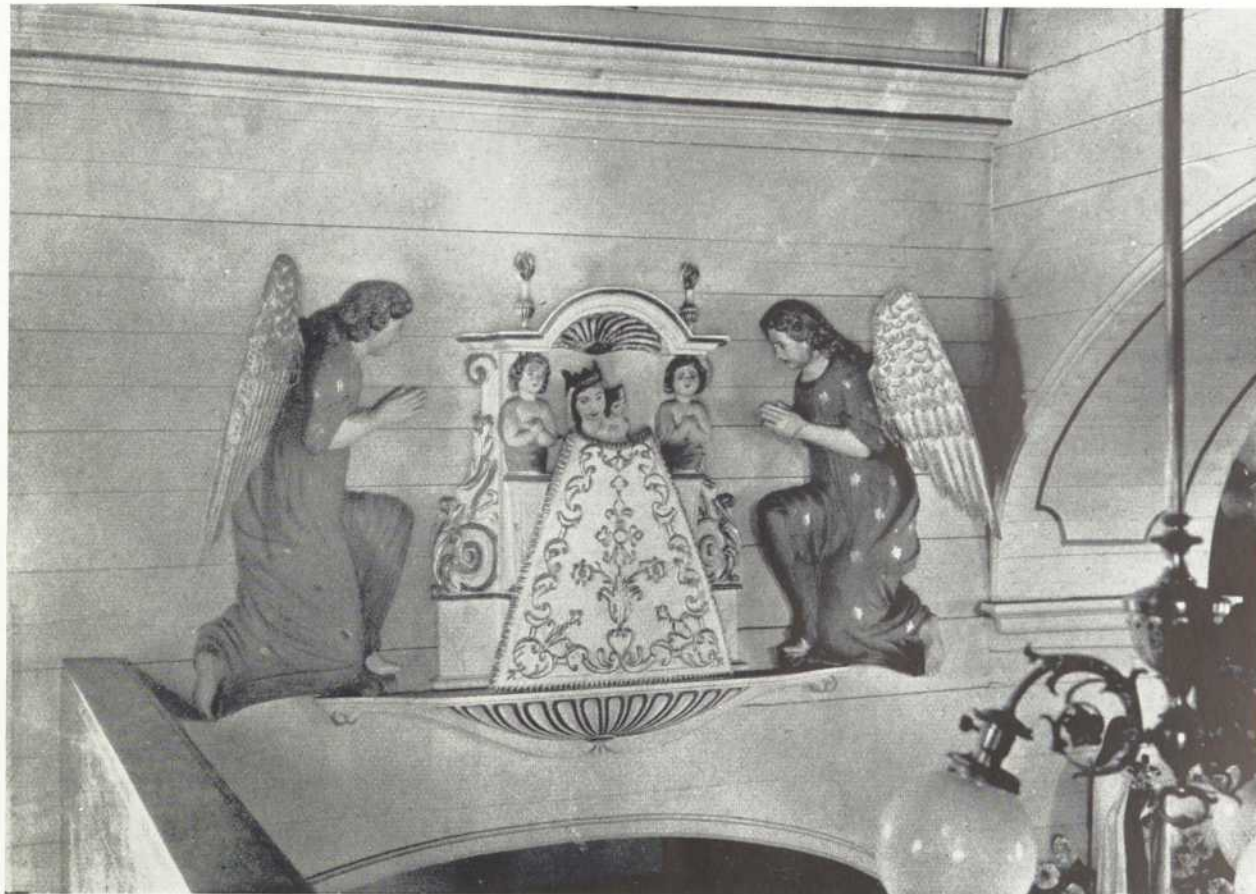
An engraving of the church and village by Bartlett is given in Willis' "Canadian Scenery," misnamed Ancienne Lorette. It is picturesque.

The history of the parish has been written by the Abbé Lionel Lindsay who went thoroughly into the rather scanty sources. (1) His book has been freely used in the account here given, and it seems very improbable that any further evidence of importance will be found, dealing either with the church, or with the very interesting relics which are still preserved in it. It is safe to conclude that the present church was built in the first half of the XVIII century, probably about 1730, and was preceded by a wooden church, built about 1700.

(1) Kalm, P. *Travels into North America*. English translation MDCCLXXI, Vol. 111, p.163. 14 August 1749.

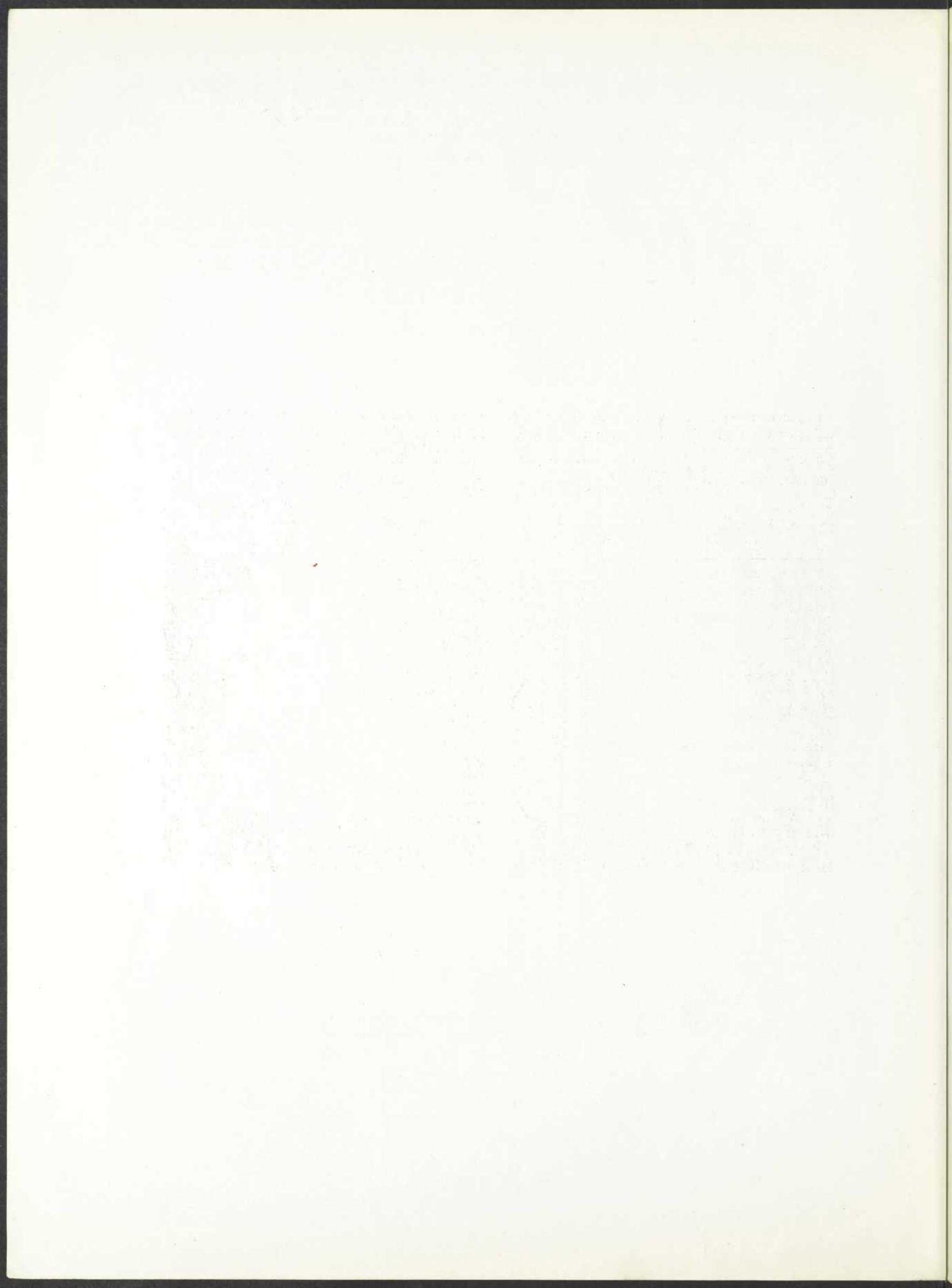
(2) Lindsay p14-15.

(1) L'Abbé Lionel Saint-George Lindsay—*Notre Dame de la Jeune Lorette en la Nouvelle France*. Montreal 1900, 8 vo.



SHRINE IN THE TRANSEPT

Photo R. T., 1929



# The Huron Mission Church and Treasure of Notre Dame de la Jeune Lorette, Quebec

By RAMSAY TRAQUAIR, M.A. (HON.), F.R.I.B.A.,

## PART II

THE church is an oblong hall, fifty-seven feet long by twenty-four inside with stone rubble walls about two feet thick. The little sacristy at the east end is formed by prolonging the building, there is no apse, separate sanctuary, or side chapels. The square east end is not uncommon in Canadian churches, but a plan of this extreme simplicity is unusual. It may be due to the poverty

cellar containing the heating apparatus.

Photographs of the church taken about 1880 show it as it was previous to its decoration in the beginning of this century. At this time the roof was open, the richly carved altar with its embroidered frontal stood against a plain plastered wall. On this, high up, were hung the pictures forming a frieze across the end of the church, and above all



Photo, R.T., 1929

THE RELIQUARY OF OUR LADY OF CHARTRES.—THE FRONT



Photo, R.T., 1929

THE RELIQUARY OF OUR LADY OF CHARTRES.—THE BACK

of the parish at the time it was built or it is just possible that the four-sided plan is a reminiscence of the house form of the first church at Ancienne Lorette.

In recent times a transept and gallery have been added on the north side; the sacristy has been extended and connected to the transept by a short passage in which is an altar. The sacristy is now fitted as a chapel for use in the winter months. All these extensions are in wood frame and of quite a temporary character. Under the church is a small

was the old representation of the Holy House of Loreto upheld by angels, frankly a little habitant cottage with the chimney and two windows of tradition.

Today the beauty of the old tabernacle is hidden by a mass of commonplace decoration. The niches which have been inserted above and on each side of it are quite out of scale with its delicate carving. The Holy House is still above the altar but in the repainting it has come to have three windows. The open roof has been covered in by an elliptical barrel

vault. The bare simplicity, which gave a real dignity to the old church, is gone, replaced by a tawdry elaboration.

On the outside the alterations have been less drastic. A wooden porch has been added to the west door and the two side doors have been built up; but the two storied wood spire is still as it was; it has probably been restored several times and faithfully copied in each restoration, for these wooden fleches require frequent repair.

The interest of Jeune Lorette does not lie in the church, but in its contents, the carved wood tabernacle, the brass altar rail, the three old altar frontals and the treasure. These form a collection unique in Canada, of which the parish may justly be very proud.

The tabernacle has two semicircular niches of four composite columns each with between them the *custode* and a high recess for the monstrance. The lower grade is straight, with scroll and bar carving, the upper grade takes the plan of the niches, with pedestals for the columns. These support broken entablatures and semicircular arches with cherubs in the spandrels. Above this is a frieze of pierced

carving and a balustrade with a range of fire pots forming pinnacles on top. The pierced and carved infilling between the columns is later than the rest, it is just placed between the columns and is not attached in any way. Originally the tabernacle was open and this infilling was probably put in in the early XIX century. As can be seen in the drawing the detail is extremely small, the pierced frieze for instance is barely a quarter of an inch thick, and three inches high. The whole is of pine, as far as can be seen, and is gilt.

The character of the carving, the pierced frieze, the balustrading and indeed the whole quality of the work resembles closely that of the high altar in the chapel of the Hôpital Général made by Levasseur in 1722. The work is certainly early, and

I have little hesitation in assigning it to the first quarter of the XVIII century. This would correspond to the date of 1722 suggested by M. Lindsay for the stone church built by Père Richer.

The church possess three old altar frontals. The most important of these is of carved wood 65 inches by 33½ inches high, from one plank of pine.

In the centre is a Madonna and Child surrounded by a wreath of roses and grapes, in the corners are four cherubs on flat clouds. These carved parts are

gilt, the background is silvered over a thin coat of gesso and on it is drawn, in the lower part, a landscape of hills, trees, flowers and birds. At the left hand corner the sun is shining from behind one of the cherubs, down at the bottom is a gabled house with a chimney in the centre. We can distinguish spruces and greenwood trees, in the centre is a fine lily and on the right hand side is what is evidently a representation of Indian Lorette. First is the church, surmounted by a spire and cross with beside it the presbytery and in front an Indian woman in an attitude of prayer. Further to the right are two Indian bark houses, clearly distinguished from the French houses by their round roofs.

Kalm tells us that the Indians when they first settled at Jeune Lorette, built Indian cabins "like those of the Laplanders" but that they had since taken to houses of the French style. This frontal, with its bark cabins, may have been made at the same time as the tabernacle though one would like to think that it came from Ancienne Lorette. Drawing upon gilt is commonly found in work of the early XVIII century though not in so elaborate and beautiful a manner as here. In some ways it looks like Indian work and it may have been made by some Huron craftsman trained in the art school of the seminary. It is certainly a most unique and beautiful work; to be appreciated it should be seen in position on the altar where its dull gold, silver and black show to their full advantage.



PART OF THE BRASS ALTAR RAIL *Photo, A. L., 1929*

The two other frontals are embroidered. One, which I should judge to be the older, has a design of flowers and swags worked in wool upon linen. The background is formed of long white glass beads, from  $\frac{1}{8}$  to  $\frac{3}{8}$  of an inch long stitched to the linen. In the centre is a small rayed cross, at each side monograms. That on the right hand spells MARIA, on the left JESUS. The work is coarse in execution but good in design and colour.

The second frontal has a pattern of scrolls and flowers issuing from cornucopiae. They are worked in gold, silver and wool, heavily padded, upon a ground of grey silk damask. In the centre is a medallion of Our Lord as a child. There is a very considerable variety of stitches in the work, the scrolls are edged in black chenille, the leaves and flowers in coloured silk cord. The workmanship is finer than that of the other frontal but the design and colour are not so interesting.

Detail photographs and descriptions of these two embroidered frontals were submitted to Mr. Allan Wace, of the Department of Textiles, Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Mr. Wace writes as follows:

"So far as the design and style of the work goes we should date them from the latter part of the 17th century

—unusual features are the use of wool and the beaded background—ordinarily in ecclesiastical embroidery in France and Italy one would expect the work to be done in silk. The use therefore of wool and beads, presumably to hide the linen ground, suggests that the work might have been done in Canada" . . . "I have made some enquiries about glass beads and I am told that it is quite possible that glass beads of this kind from Nevers in France or perhaps Venice could have been exported to Canada in the 17th century and there employed."

The Indians, of course, made bead embroidery in later times; the use of the long beads in the frontal strongly suggests wampum, and the hand of an Indian worker.

A great deal of embroidery was done in Canada by the ladies of the old régime. A fine frontal, of about the same date as these, in silk with a silver thread background, the work of Jeanne le Ber, is preserved in Notre Dame of Montreal, and, in 1758, Mère Saint-Claude de la Croix writes from the Hôpital Général at Quebec:

"Les différentes soies ne m'ont pas moins flattées parce que nous travaillons chez nous en toute sorte des broderies. Les Canadiennes sont naturellement fort adroites à tous ces ouvrages et elles les font en perfection."

On these grounds I am of opinion that the two embroidered frontals were made in Canada about the end of the XVII century.

It has been repeatedly stated that they, as well as the old vestments at Jeune Lorette, were made and presented to the Huron Mission by Madame de Maintenon and the ladies of the French court. It has even been stated that the head of Our Lord is a representation of the Dauphin.

It must be clearly understood that there is no authority or historical record to support these statements. It is most improbable that Madame de Maintenon purchased coloured wools and glass beads for the express purpose

of making embroideries for Jeune Lorette. Had she desired to make any such presentation she would have sent the usual silk embroideries. Unless there is some proof that these beaded and woolen embroideries came from France we are, I think, bound to conclude that they were made in Canada, by Canadian workers.

The church also possesses two old chasubles, one with padded embroidery, similar to that on the altar frontal, the other with a scroll pattern and small red crystals, the same remarks apply to them.

In the centre of the altar rail are four bays of beaten brass, the two sanctuary gates and two bays of balustrading between them. The brass is on thin plates pinned on to a wooden frame.



THE MONSTRANCE, 1664

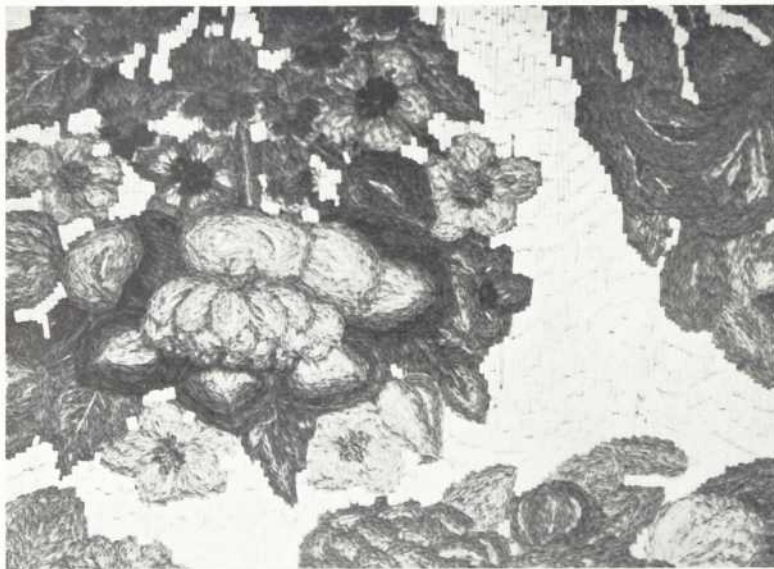
Photo, R.T., 1929

<sup>1</sup> Mgr. de Saint-Vallier et l'Hôpital Général de Québec p. 331.



Photo, R.T., 1929

EMBROIDERED ALTAR FRONTAL WITH BEADED BACKGROUND



Photo, R.T., 1929

DETAIL OF PART OF THE BEADED ALTAR FRONTAL

The forms of the ornament are drawn on the metal with an engraved line, and then bossed up, where the plates overlap a scalloped edge is used.

The rail has a crude leaf scroll with bold oblong bosses above the posts. These are decorated with roses, rayed suns and oblong bosses. The balusters are round, of the usual single flask form.

So far as I know this rail is unique. The pattern is European but the workmanship is rather that of a craftsman who understood indeed what would look well in metal, but who did not altogether understand the patterns which he was asked to follow. For this may be crude work, but it is

astonishingly good metallic design. The bold bosses, the simple beating are well adapted to the polished metal surface and the rail, in its place, is most effective and beautiful.

The brass portion is 12 feet 9 inches long, eked out at the sides with a wooden balustrade. Possibly it was not made for its present position and it may be part of the furnishings of Ancienne Lorette. Like the carved wood frontal it gives the impression of being Indian work done under French supervision.

The usual story is told that it was imported from France and there is the usual lack of any evidence. The story is, of course, based upon the conviction that Canada had no craftsmen and that every good piece of

work must have been imported. But no French workman could have made and no French donor would have presented a piece of work of the combined crudity and effectiveness of this rail. In France it might possibly have been made by some village craftsman, but village crafts were not imported into Canada in the XVII century. The brass sheets were certainly imported, but the work is Canadian made by a Canadian—possibly a Huron craftsman.

The Treasure of Lorette has been very fully described by M. Lindsay<sup>1</sup>, and it is not necessary

<sup>1</sup> Lindsay, p. 183 et seq.



THE "MEDALLION" ALTAR FRONTAL

Photo, R.T., 1929

here to attempt any further description. Indeed this must await a fuller study and knowledge of the old Canadian silverwork, a subject of considerable interest which has hardly been touched as yet. But a few words should be said about some of the more interesting objects.

The finest is the monstrance in silver gilt, upon the base of which is the following inscription: "CLAUDE PREVOST ANTIEN ESCHEVIN DE PARIS ET ELIZABETH LE GENDRE SA FEMME M'ONT DONNE POUR SERVIR A L'EGLISE DES PERES JESUITES AUX TROIS-RIVIERES L'AN 1664." On the base is a coat of arms of three roses. The baluster-formed stem supports a rayed sun which is set with red, green and white crystals and surmounted by a crucifix. The whole is elaborately cast and chased and is a very fine piece of early renaissance work. In the treasure there is also a number of silver forks and spoons of late XVII century pattern and it would appear that the mission at Lorette, one of the last to be held in Canada by the Jesuits, inherited a number of Jesuit possessions. Amongst these we should reckon the five little gilt wood statues which M. Lindsay identifies as St. Ignace, St. François de Borgia, St. François Xavier, St. Louis de Gonzague and St. Stanislas Kostka, all Jesuit saints. There are two very similar statues on the old altar at Batiscan, also an old Jesuit mission.

In Père Bouvart's account of the consecration of the church he mentions three statues, one of Our Lady sent from Loretto and two, of our Lady and



PART OF THE "MEDALLION" ALTAR FRONTAL

Photo, R.T., 1929

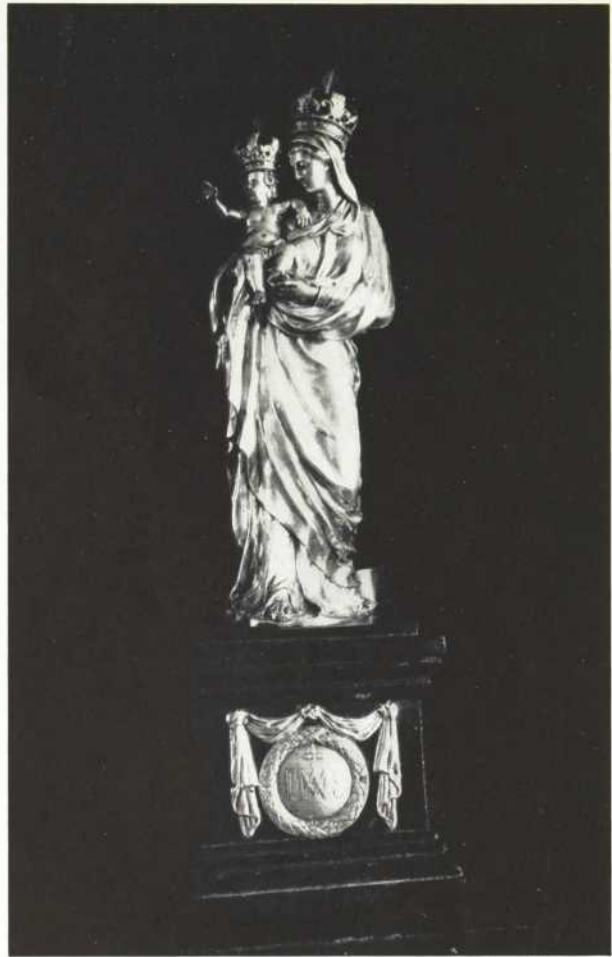
of St. Joseph, made from the wood of N. Dame de Foy and sent from France. These statues are no longer to be found but M. Lindsay suggests,<sup>1</sup> that they have been replaced by the two beaten silver statues now in the treasure. These are about 9 inches high on black wood pedestals and represent Our Lady with the Child and St. Joseph with the lily branch. They are good pieces, probably of the end of the XVII century and in the absence of any evidence we can say nothing more. Possibly they come from one of the Jesuit houses, probably they are of French make. Such small objects were easily carried about.

Lindsay also mentions<sup>2</sup> a statue of Our Lady holding the Child and inscribed: "Je suis donne par

<sup>1</sup> Lindsay, p. 188.  
<sup>2</sup> Lindsay, page 153.



*Photo, R.T., 1929*  
SILVER STATUETTE OF ST. JOSEPH



*Photo, R.T., 1929*  
SILVER STATUETTE OF OUR LADY



TWO OF THE GILT WOOD STATUETTES

*Photo, R.T., 1929*

noel levasseur sculpteur et son Epouse marie madeleine turpin, le 1er Mars 1729, pour faire la procession du scapulaire et du rosaire tous les 1 de chaque mois et troisieme demanche de chaque mois. Priez, Sainte Verge, s'il vous plait, pour eux et leur familles, et soyez leur advocatte pour le temps et pour l'eternite. Amen."

I have been unable to find this statue, but there is a wooden statue of Our Lady and Child upon the porch at the west end. It was impossible to examine this closely enough to discover any inscription but it is quite a good statue and will rapidly fall to pieces if left in this position. If it is really the early statue by Levasseur it would be a great pity that it should be lost.

In the end of the XVII century presents were exchanged between the Cathedral of Chartres, in France, and the Huron Mission of Lorette. The Indians sent a present of wampum to the Canons, the Canons sent a little silver reliquary in the form of the "Shirt of Our Lady of Chartres" containing a fragment of the sacred garment and also a larger silver reliquary of the same form. Both are still in the Treasure of Lorette.

The larger reliquary is 8 inches high without the ring, engraved on one side with Our Lady holding the Child, in a grotto, with the inscription VIRGINI PARITURAE and on the other side with the Annunciation. The reliquary is inscribed as having been made by order of the Canons of Chartres in 1679<sup>1</sup>.

In the new transept, above the archway leading to the sacristy is a curious shrine in carved wood. It shows a bust of Our Lady and Child appearing over the top of a triangular plate with carved scroll decorations. This is set under an arch



Wood Statue on the Porch at Jeune Lorette. 193. R.T.

supported by caryatid children; at each side are large kneeling angels. The carving is rather crude, probably early XIX century, and I have been unable to find out anything about it. Lindsay mentions the precious Madonna which comes from the Holy House of Nazareth "On peut l'y voir et l'y reconnaître dans toute la roideur byzantine de sa pose et de ses vêtements dominant majestueusement la reproduction de la *Santa Casa* et flanquée de deux anges en prière<sup>1</sup>.

Unless this is the shrine intended by M. Lindsay, there is nothing in the church in the least corresponding to his description.

In the sanctuary is preserved a small statue of Our Lord as a child standing upon a serpent. This figure is said to have been brought to Canada in 1632 by the Jesuit Father Paul Le Jeune and given to the Mission at Sillery in 1637<sup>2</sup>. It is however of a type not uncommon in Canada, there is a similar figure in the Seminary at Quebec, and as applied to this statue the story must be regarded as doubtful.

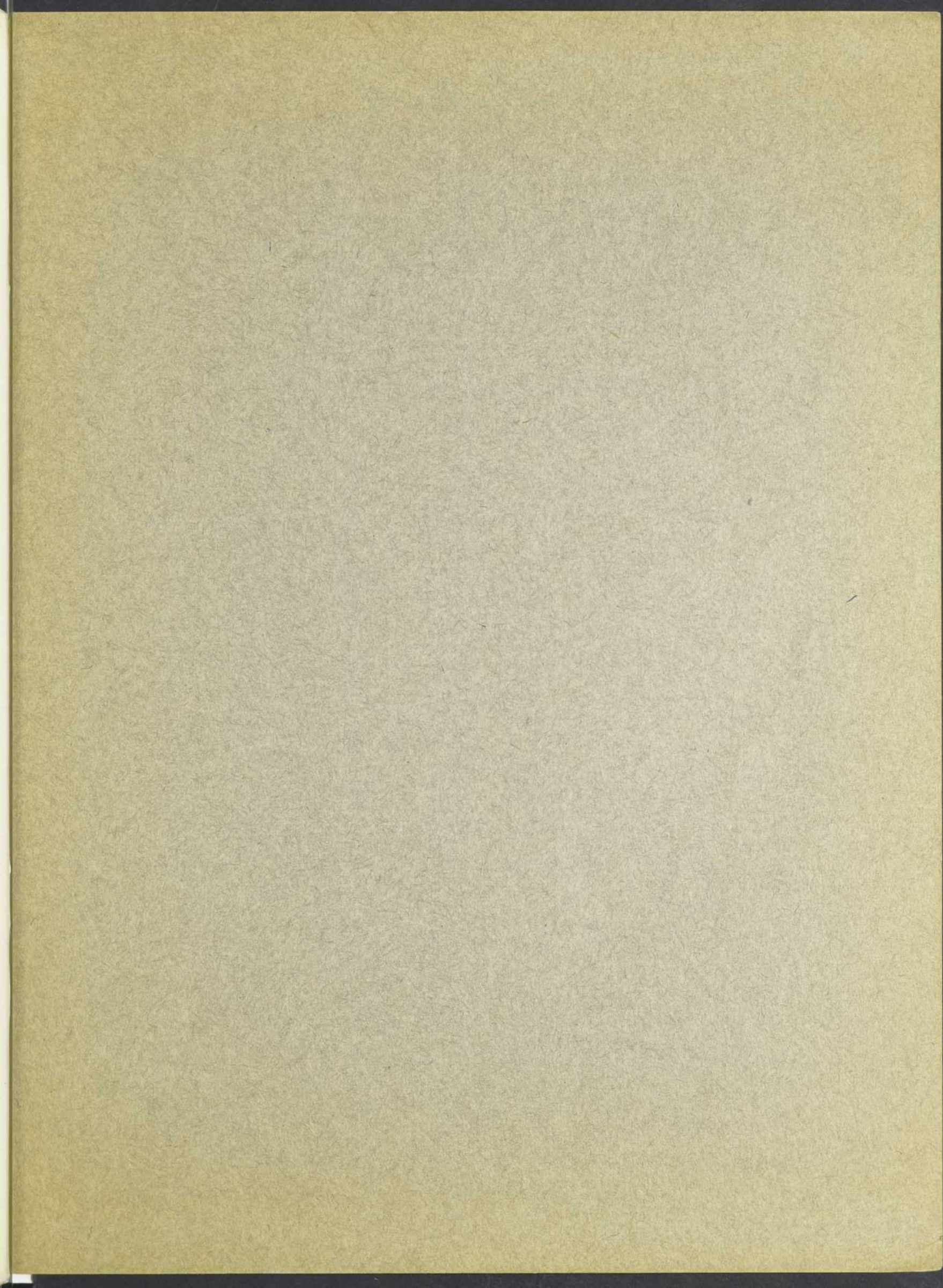
Enough has been written to show the importance of the Huron Church of Our Lady of Lorette in the history of French Canadian art. Over-restored and over-decorated though it is today it is still one of the most attractive churches near Quebec. Through the generosity of Mr. Francis MacLennan the invaluable relics are now kept in a fire proof safe in the presbytery. They are, unfortunately, only a part of the objects which must once have filled the church, for the Wampum relics, which we know were there preserved, have all disappeared. Yet, even as it is, the treasure of Jeune Lorette is historically amongst the most interesting in Quebec; it should be regarded and preserved as a precious national relic.

<sup>1</sup> Lindsay, p. 197, gives the whole story.

<sup>2</sup> Lindsay, p. 149.

<sup>3</sup> Lindsay, p. 188, quoting Ernest Myraud.

PRODUCED BY  
BRIGDEN LIMITED  
TORONTO, CANADA



BAnQ



000 621 772

