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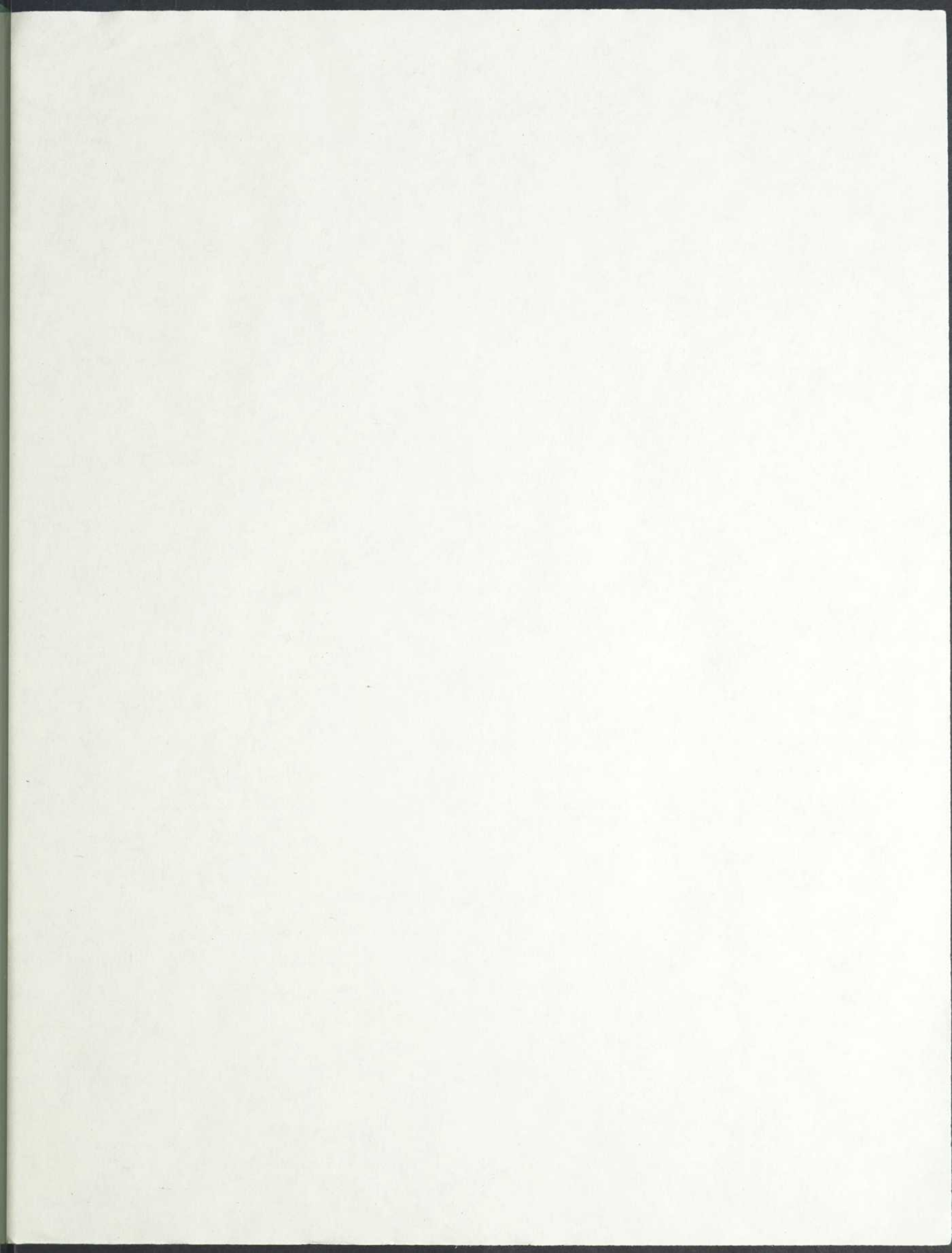
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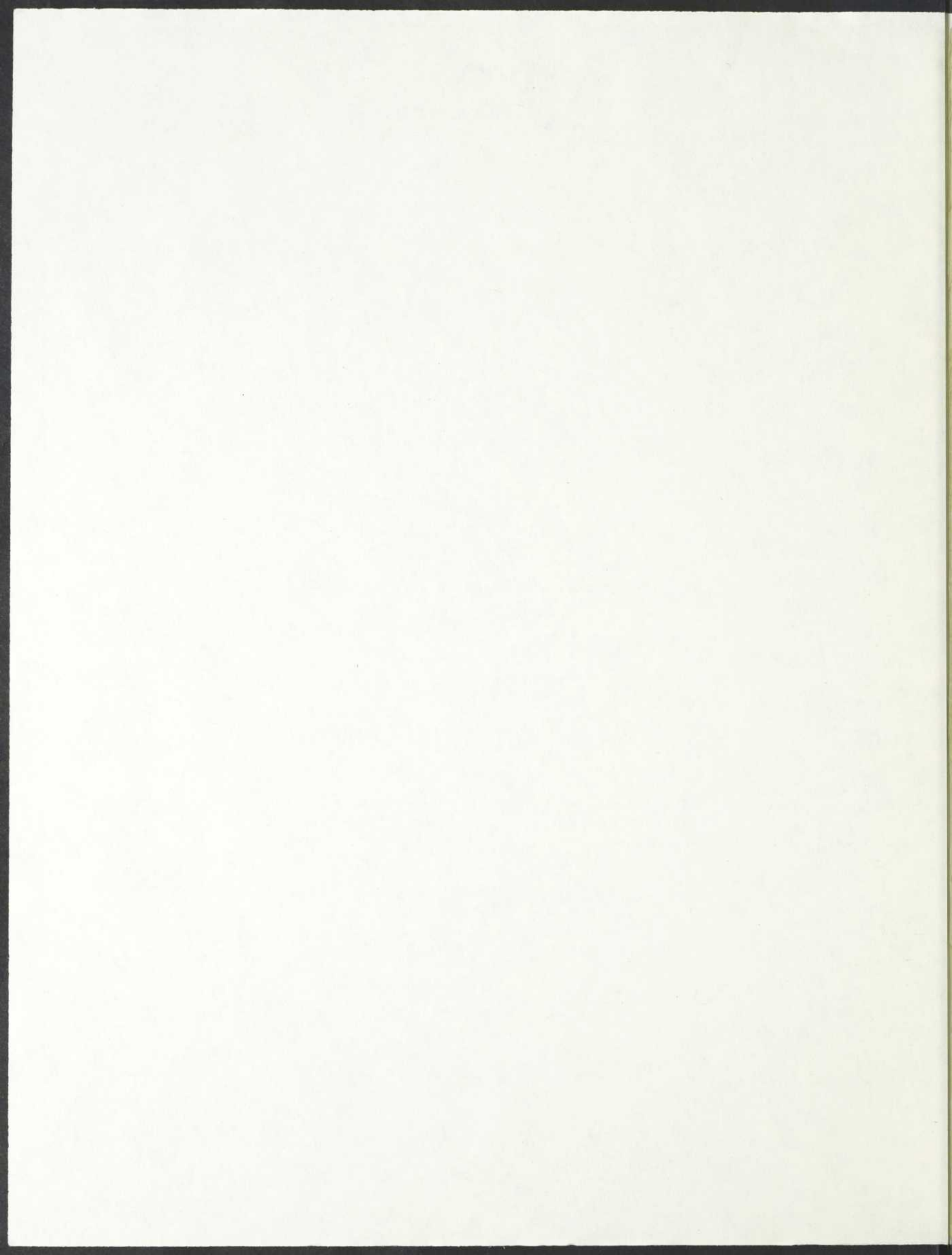
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THE
CHURCH OF THE VISITATION

SAULT-AU-RECOLLET, QUEBEC

By

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AND

E. R. ADAIR, M.A.

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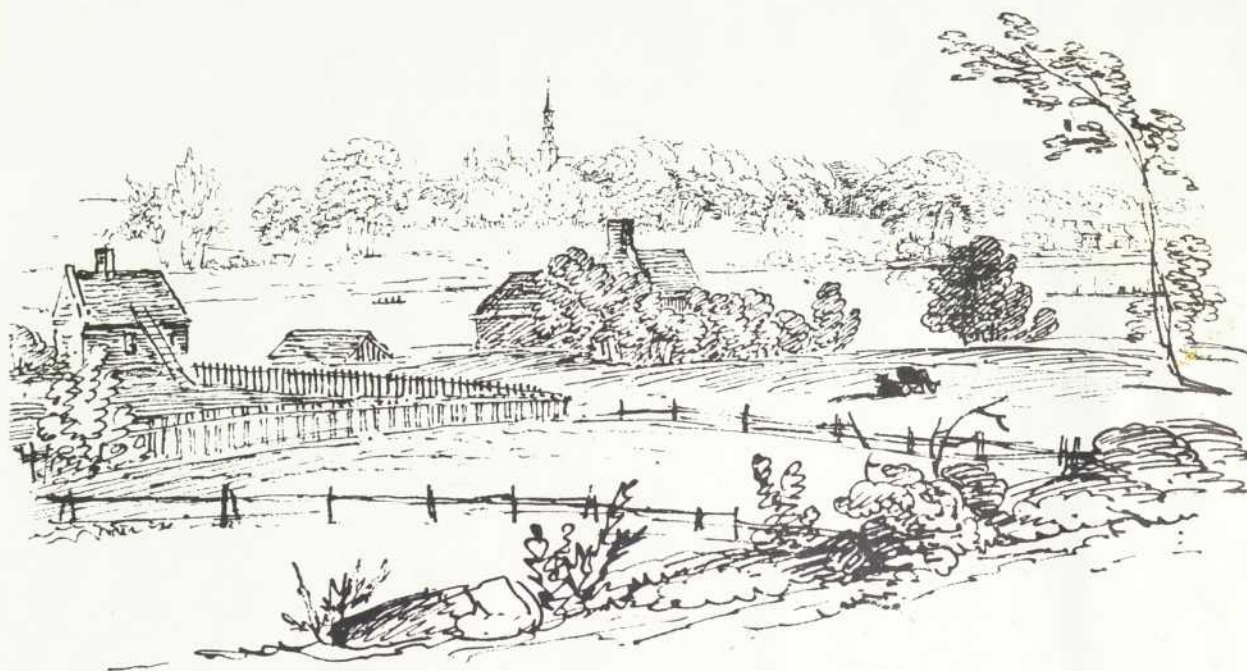
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WINDOW IN THE CHURCH OF THE VISITATION



SAULT-AU-RECOLLET, P.Q.

From a sketch by James Duncan, 1831. By Permission of the McCord National Museum

The Church of the Visitation—Sault-au-Récollet, Quebec

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*The excerpts from the Church Records were made by
Miss Beatrice Lyman, of McGill University*

THE parish of Sault-au-Récollet is situated on the north side of the Island of Montreal on the banks of the Rivière des Prairies and north-west of the City of Montreal. It takes its name from the death here in 1625 of the Récollet Father Nicholas Viel who was drowned with his young Indian disciple Ahuntsic in the rapids below the present site of the church, not without grave suspicion of foul play. To this spot in 1696 it was resolved to move the Indian converts who were living in and around the Sulpician mission of "Notre Dame des Neiges de la Montagne".

The Sulpician Fathers, as lords of the manor, enclosed a considerable area with strong palisades, and within this fort erected a seigneurial manor house and, at the eastern angle, the mission church of Notre Dame de Lorette or, as it was commonly called "La Nouvelle Lorette."¹ This was a wooden structure with a bell tower² probably similar to other early churches of New France. The fort, the manor house and the church are

said to have been due to the generosity of the Superior of the Sulpicians, M. de Belmont.

As the colonisation of the island progressed, Sault-au-Récollet was in turn found unsuitable for an Indian mission. Towards the end of 1720, or early in 1721, the three fathers in charge, MM. Robert Gay, Maurice Queré de Tréguron and Hamon Gouin, decided to move to Oka on the other side of the Lake of Two Mountains.¹ The population along the Rivière des Prairies was rapidly increasing, and in 1730 the Bishop of Quebec appointed M. Girouard to serve the parishes of Sault-au-Récollet and Rivière des Prairies; he was followed by M. Prévost and in 1733 by M. Chaboillez².

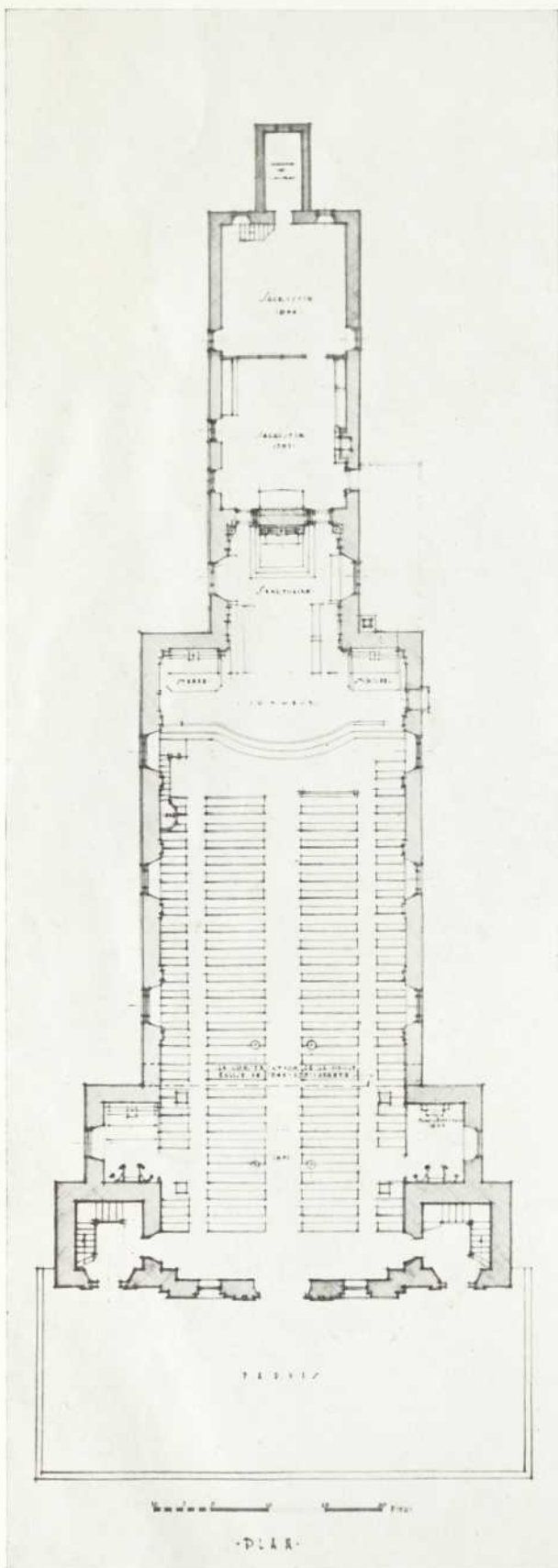
The oldest documents in the parish records date from 1736, and we have to consider whether the old mission chapel continued in use as a parish church until 1751, when the present church was built, or whether a second church was built about 1736. On the one hand a document in the parish archives, rather doubtfully dated 1736, records a meeting of the parishioners "sur

¹ C. P. Beaubien. *Le Sault-au-Récollet*. (Montreal, 1898) pp. 143-4, 149.

² It was repaired in 1747. (*Livres de Compte de la Fabrique*. I fo. 5.)

¹ Faillon. *Vie de la Soeur Bourgeois*. II 264-266.

² Beaubien pp. 284-286.



PLAN
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les travaux qu'on devoit faire pour l'église." The resolution calls for contribution from all parishoners, mentions mason work on the foundations of the church, and indicates, at the least,

very extensive repairs. There are no accounts for 1736 but a note in M. Chambon's handwriting of that year in the records reads: "Il n'y a point de conte de la première année. M. Desenclaves, pretre et premier missionnaire de la ditte paroisse, n'en ayant point laissé et ayant dechargé le marguillier en charge, Jean Turcot, de tout ce qu'il pouvoit avoir reçu la plus grande partie de ce que est a l'église ayant eues faiste et achevé de cette année la, ou mon dit sieur Desenclaves a fourni beaucoup plus que ne pouvoit le revenues de la ditte fabrique.

Fait au Récollet
Desenclaves, Pretre
Chambon, Pretre¹.

This indicates a very extensive reconstruction. As casting further light on what was done we may consider the facts: (1) that in the records is a copy of a deed dated March 15, 1736, granting in perpetuity a specified pew in the church of Sault-au-Récollet; this would hardly have been done if the church were not then built; and (2) that we have two unimpeachable accounts of its dilapidated condition in 1747-9.

On June 30, 1747, Mgr. de Pontbriand, Bishop of Quebec, wrote: "Votre église, nos tres chers enfants, menace une ruine si prochaine et par la meme est si peu décente que nous aurions été obligés de defendre d'y celebrer les Saintes Mystères si on ne nous avoit pas assuré qu'elle pourroit durer encore une année. Nous vous ordonnons de profiter de ce terme pour batir une nouvelle église au dela du fort."² and on September 23, 1749, a Swedish naturalist, Peter Kalm, wrote: "c'est alors que les sauvages vinrent s'établir au Sault-au-Récollet où, plus tard, on leur construisit l'église qui existe encore . . . celle . . . est un vieil édifice en bois d'apparence décrépite, mais l'intérieur en vaut mieux que le dehors et les Francais y suivent les offices religieux. D'ailleurs, on ne tardera pas à bâtir une église neuve; la pierre qui devra entrer dans sa construction est déjà rendue sur les lieux."³ A church newly built in 1736 could hardly have fallen into this state in 1747. M. Kalm evidently saw the old church and the work done in 1736 consisted in very extensive repairs and possibly some enlargement.

Decorative work was certainly done in the church between 1737 and 1741. In 1739 the tabernacle was increased in size at a cost of 24 livres and regilded by "les soeurs" for 40 livres. La Brosse, sculptor, was paid "6 minots de blé," value 24 livres, in 1737 and a similar sum in 1741⁴. The letter already quoted from the Bishop of Quebec in 1747 goes on to order that a plan and estimate for the new church should be drawn up and approved by M. Norman, the "Grand Vicaire,"⁵ and that measures be taken to obtain from the parish the wherewithal to build the church. It states that M. Norman has verbally granted an area of four arpents⁶ for

¹ Livres de compte de la Fabrique I fol. 1. M. Desenclaves, the first curé to be appointed by the Sulpicians, served from January to October 1736 and was succeeded by M. Chambon.

² Letter in the actes de la Fabrique.

³ Mémoires de la Société historique de Montréal. Livre VII: Voyage de P. Kalm, traduit par L. W. Marchand p. 220.

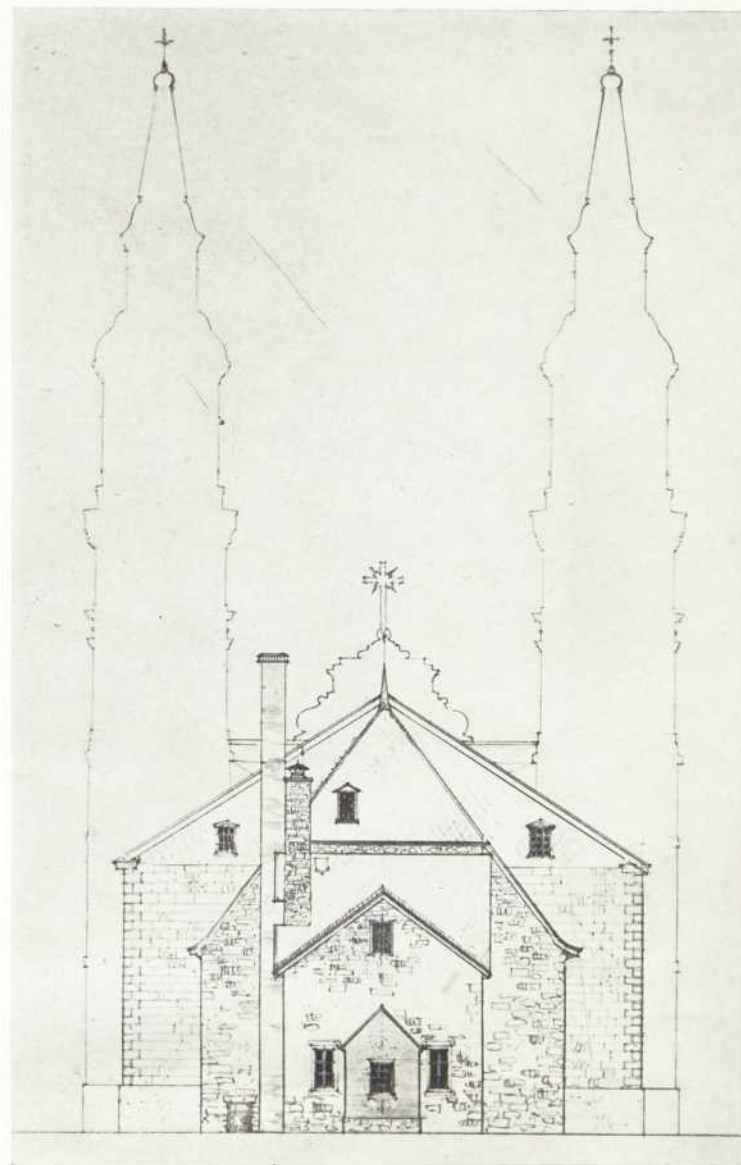
⁴ Livres de Compte I fos. 1(b), 3(b).

⁵ He had succeeded M. de Belmont as Superior of the Sulpicians.

⁶ The arpent contained 100 square perches, and varied in different provinces. The present French arpent is about one and a half English acres. The old linear arpent of Paris was 180 French feet, the common arpent 200, the standard arpent 220 feet.



FRONT ELEVATION
By permission of the P.Q.A.A.



END ELEVATION
By permission of the P.Q.A.A.

the site of the church, the presbytery and the cemetery; this lies beyond the fort and at a distance of one arpent from the maison seigneuriale¹.

The curé continued to live in the maison seigneuriale until 1787 when the then incumbent, M. Chenet, complained strongly of its ruinous condition. A new presbytery was then built² to which extensive repairs were made between 1834 and 1836. By 1870 it was again in bad repair and finally in 1880 it was pulled down and the present building erected.

To return to the church: in obedience to the Bishop's letter a general assembly of the inhabitants was held on July 27, 1749, when the marguilliers laid before them the need for contributions proportional to their holdings in land. This was agreed to, the payments to be made in money, labour and materials, "pour la Ière année chacun une toise de pierre de maçonnerie, chacun deux voyages pierre de carrière soit pour la chaux soit pour les escousson. Chacun une pistole en argent scavoir cent sols des le quinze du janvier prochain et 100 sols au quinze de juin pour tout terme et delà. La seconde année pareillement une pistole payable dans les memes termes, une semaine de leur temps et une piece de bois de pin, ceci pour estre sciée au moulin en planche ou madrier de douze poulce d'echantilon. La troisieme année pareillement et ainsy d'année en année jusqu'a la perfection de l'ouvrage."³

This gives quite a vivid picture of a community engaged in building its church.

The general conduct of the building works was entrusted to Charles Guilbaut "maçon entrepreneur de la batisse de l'église" and a native of the parish. He would be quite competent to make any simple plans that might be required.

The church seems to have been finished sufficiently for divine service to be held in it by 1751. In 1752 it was consecrated by the Bishop of Quebec in person, and in 1753, after the work had been surveyed by two outside experts, Paul Tesier and Toussaint Perineau, each "maçon et expert nommé pour procéder au toisage". Guilbert was paid 1912 livres out of the 2200 livres which he ultimately received⁴.

The complete accounts are detailed in the Actes de Fabrique.

Depances de la Batisse de l'Eglise	
Payes a Guilbaut.....	2200
a Asselin Valade. pierre de taille et travail au fourneau.....	210
a Joseph Valade.....	2000
a Boutin LaCroix.....	136
a Delorme, meunier.....	760
a Lecuyer, pour bois.....	300
Pour les manoeuvres, chariages et compris les (vivres).....	4600
Pour les cloux.....	200
Pour cinq caisses vittres.....	175
Pour la couverture.....	662

¹ This land was legally ceded by the Sulpicians to the Fabrique of Sault-au-Récollet on August 13, 1749, at a quit rent of one sou per annum. (Livre terrier du Séminaire de Saint Sulpice).

² A note in the Actes de la Fabrique Vol. I, November 1, 1787, gives a full account of the proposed building.

³ Acte de l'assemblée générale en Actes de la Fabrique.

⁴ Quittance de Charles Guilbaut in the Actes de la Fabrique Jan. 13, 1753.

a Langlois, forgeron.....	225-10
Pour 4 serrures.....	60
Pour fer blanc.....	24
Pour mastique.....	80
Pour 12 chandeliers.....	24

11656-10

Joseph Valade was the carpenter, as we learn from various items in the Livres de Compte. It will be seen that the contracts were practically for labour only. The proprietors were expected to supply or to pay separately for, such materials as nails, wood, glass, ironwork and tinplate, and for carriage. The cut stone is charged separately and we know that the parishoners supplied the rubble stone.

Of the total cost apparently only 6840 livres 10 sous was paid by the parish; the rest was advanced by M. Chambon the curé; whether it was ever repaid the accounts do not show.

The sacristy was commenced in 1761 and finished in 1773¹. It was lengthened in 1844 in stone, at a cost of slightly over 4000 livres². In 1852 a small extension in red brick was added to provide a confessional for deaf parishoners³. In 1816 the church safe was installed in the wall of the sacristy at the back of the altar. In consequence the doors were strengthened and the serrated iron bars which are still there were placed in the windows⁴.

It seems probable that a tabernacle and other ornaments were transferred from the old church to the new in 1751. We hear of 12 gilded vases (at 3 livres each), an altar frontal of gilded leather (45 livres), 2 little bells "chez St. Luc" (10 livres), a holy water stoup, silver on copper (45 livres) and other furnishings being purchased between 1751 and 1755, whilst in 1749 M. Chambon bought in France a processional cross (24 livres) and a silver ciborium (122 livres)⁵. In 1764 220 livres was paid for carving on the retable of the high altar and in the following year a "tabernacle cadre" was acquired for 250 livres. The gilding paid for in 1773 at the rate of 400 livres was probably the finishing touch to this work. At the same time (1772-3) 400 livres was paid for the reconstruction of the wooden vaulting. It is impossible to say whether the "Hebert, esculpteur" who was paid in 1773 1420 livres was responsible for retable, tabernacle and vaulting alike or for the vaulting only, but it is quite probable that to him can be ascribed the whole of the work⁶.

In 1789 we find Louis Quevillon engaged upon a great west door, "similar to that of St. Martin in the Isle Jesus, except that the fan was not to be in glass, but panelled with a shell in the centre." Quevillon at this time also made the chest for church ornaments which still stands in the sacristy⁷.

In 1791 it was decided to have a pulpit in the same style as that in the Hôtel Dieu. Several sculptors gave estimates and a certain Liebert

¹ Livres de Compte I fos. 8 (b), 9 (b), 15.

² Actes de la Fabrique II pl. 1, pp. 56, 59.

³ Actes de la Fabrique II p. 79.

⁴ Actes de la Fabrique I fo. 13 (b). Livres de compte fos. 57, 57 (b).

⁵ Beaubien pp. 318-319. Livres de compte I fos. 6-7 (b).

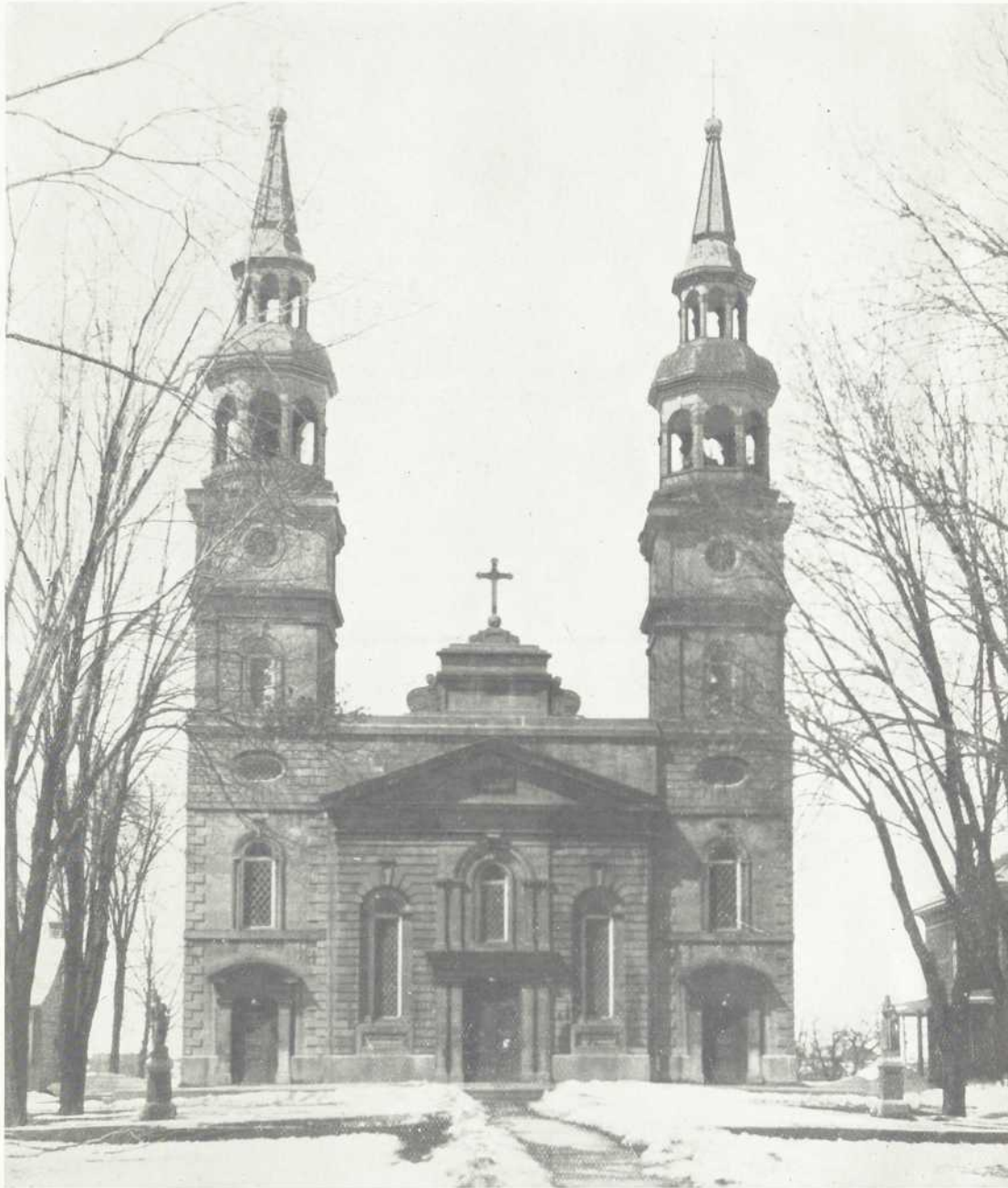
⁶ Livres de compte I fos. 11 11(b), 14, 15. The 1420 livres had been provided from the estate of M. Chambon.

⁷ Actes de la Fabrique I fo. 3. Livres de compte I fo. 32 (b).

received the contract for 800 livres on the ground that "celui-ci a demandé moins à proportion de l'ouvrage qu'on lui avait augmenté."¹

In 1836 the marguilliers decided to make a contract with René St. James or a new pulpit, but shortly afterwards gave the work to Vincent

sous.¹ In 1800 Louis Quevillon reappears in the records with a contract for a "Banc d'oeuvre" or churchwarden's pew. In October, 1802, he was further commissioned to make two tabernacles for the chapels of St. Michel and Ste. Anne at a cost of 700 livres for the two, not



THE FRONT
John Ostell, 1851

Chartrand of St. Vincent de Paul for 2000 livres. This pulpit is still in the church. The old one, by Liebert, was given to the church of St. Augustin² but is now no longer there.

In 1792 Liebert was employed to carve a tabernacle for the high altar similar to that at St. Martin and received 1000 livres for the work. It was gilded in 1794 at a cost of 810 livres³

including painting or gliding².

In 1806 he was again commissioned to furnish an "autel à la Romaine" for the high altar for 900 livres, and two similar ones for the side chapels for 700 livres each³. These are the actual altar tables or "tombeaux". All these, together with the two tabernacles of the side chapels made in 1802 are still in their original places.

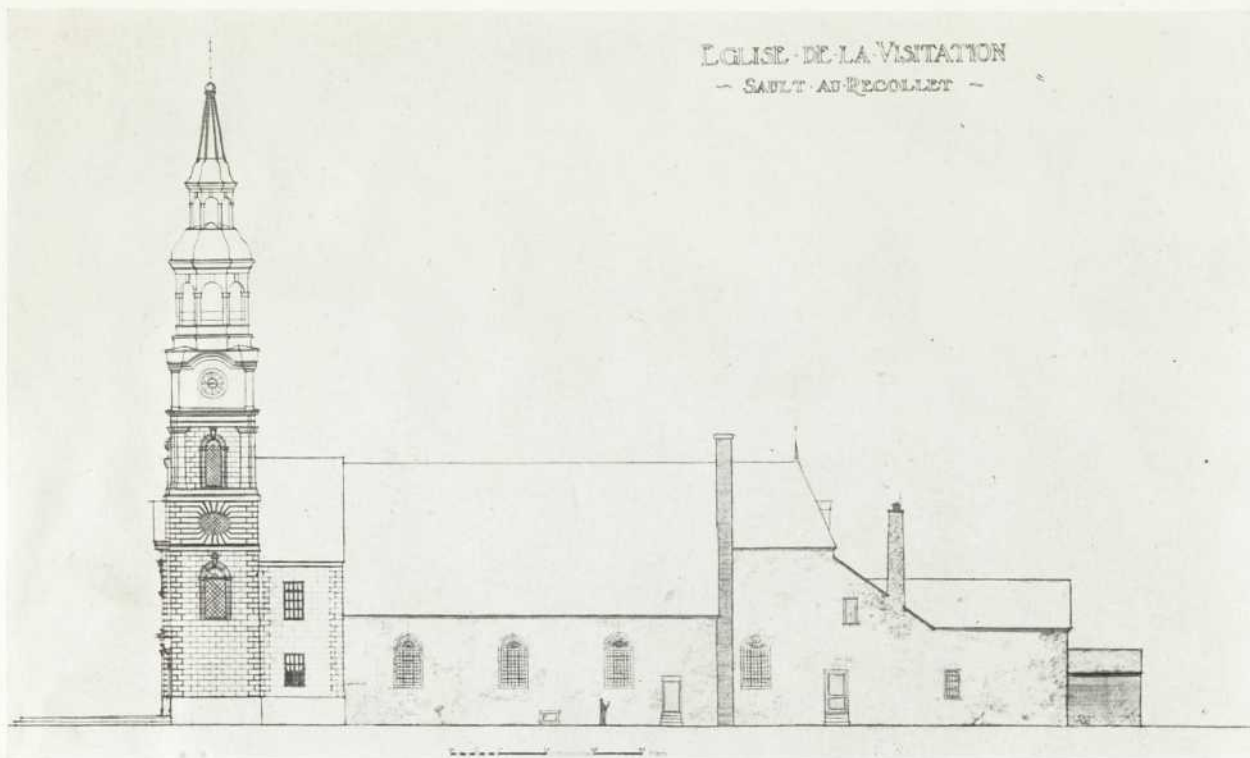
¹ Actes de la Fabrique I fo. 5.

² Actes de la Fabrique II, pt. 1, pp. 33, 34, 49. Livres de Compte II pp. 61, 63.

¹ Actes de la Fabrique. I fos. 5 (b), 6. Livres de Compte I fo. 36.

² Actes de la Fabrique I, fos. 8, 9. Livres de Compte I, fos. 43, 46.

³ Actes de la Fabrique I, fo. 10 (b). Quevillon was paid in full 2330 livres in 1806.

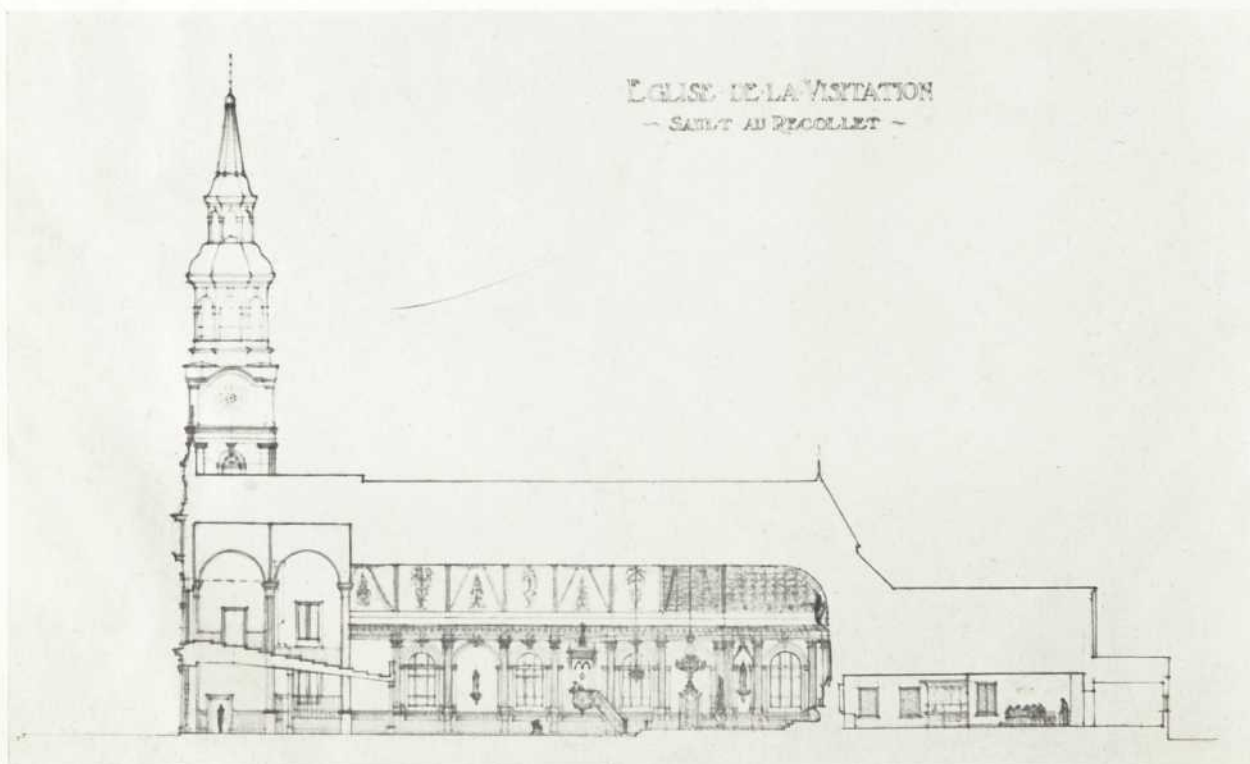


SIDE ELEVATION
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Louis-Amable Quevillon was a well known sculptor and woodworker. He was baptized at Sault-au-Récollet in 1749, and had family connections with the parish. Liebert is probably Philippe Liebert of Pointe aux Trembles (baptized 1734). He almost certainly had some con-

nection with Quevillon whose family also came from Pointe-aux-Trembles¹. At any rate until 1802 the marguilliers evidently considered him to be a more important sculptor than Quevillon, for Liebert's pulpit and tabernacle are larger

¹ For Liebert and Quevillon families see Tanguay.



LONGITUDINAL SECTION
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pieces of work than Quevillon's door and chest; nor could it have been simply a question of price, for Quevillon appears on the whole to have charged at a slightly lower rate. Liebert was a well-known sculptor, we meet his work again at St. Michel de Vaudreuil, and probably as the older man he had the more established reputation.

The church was roofed in 1813-14 at a cost of 1620 livres.¹ This evidently involved the reconstruction of the wooden vault and, in 1816, the marguilliers embarked upon a complete scheme of redecoration under the direction of David Fleury David, "maître sculpteur" and a native of the parish. From this date until 1831 he was constantly engaged upon the woodwork of the church, and to him we owe in the main the present interior.

By 1820 he had completed the delicately ornamented vault and received a new contract for three retables and a cornice round the church of the corinthian order, for wood lining to the choir, nave and gallery, for a baptismal font and for a banc d'oeuvre, the whole to cost 18000 livres paid in yearly installments of 2000 livres starting as soon as the payments for David's previous work had been completed. David undertook to accomplish the work during the summers of 1821, 1822 and 1823². In 1827 he received a fresh contract for a new floor and pews, and for a new door to replace the west door which Quevillon had put up and which was showing signs of age³.

These extensive works were a serious drain upon the finances of the Fabrique and payments to David were slow. In 1816 he was promised the pew rents of the gallery on account, and received for these 486 livres in 1818, and 435 livres in 1822¹. On one occasion (Dec. 28, 1823) the marguilliers were reduced to agreeing to hand over to the sculptor all the money they had in the safe². However, in September 1831 his work was formally inspected by the marguilliers and found satisfactory with the result that on September 30, 1831, the final payment was made to him. He received in all 46,000 livres³.

No great change was now made in the church until 1850. In January of that year the majority of the inhabitants petitioned the Bishop to be allowed to lengthen the church by 20 to 25 feet and to erect two towers at the west end. This was on the ground that the church was too small to accommodate the worshippers and that the west porch was too old to be repaired further. The petition was granted and work was commenced immediately to the designs of John Ostell, an English architect who executed much church work in and near Montreal about this time. As was usually the case, the towers were left unfinished, and it was not until 1863 that the present wooden belfries were added by François Dutrisac, who had had charge of the carpentry work in the recent enlargement⁴. Fleury David's west door seems to have been re-erected in the façade of

¹ Livres de Compte I, fo. 54.

² Actes de la Fabrique. I, fos. 12-13 (b). 18 (b).

³ Actes de la Fabrique II, pt I p. 4.

¹ Actes de la Fabrique I fos. 12-13 (b). Livres de compte I fos. 60 65 (b).

² Actes de la Fabrique I, fo. 23 (b).

³ Actes de la Fabrique II, pt I, pp. 13, 17, 18.

⁴ Actes de la Fabrique II, pt I, pp. 73, 78. Livres de Compte II, pp. 124, 128, 131-2, 150, 202, 215, 221, 273



THE INTERIOR, LOOKING TOWARDS THE CHOIR

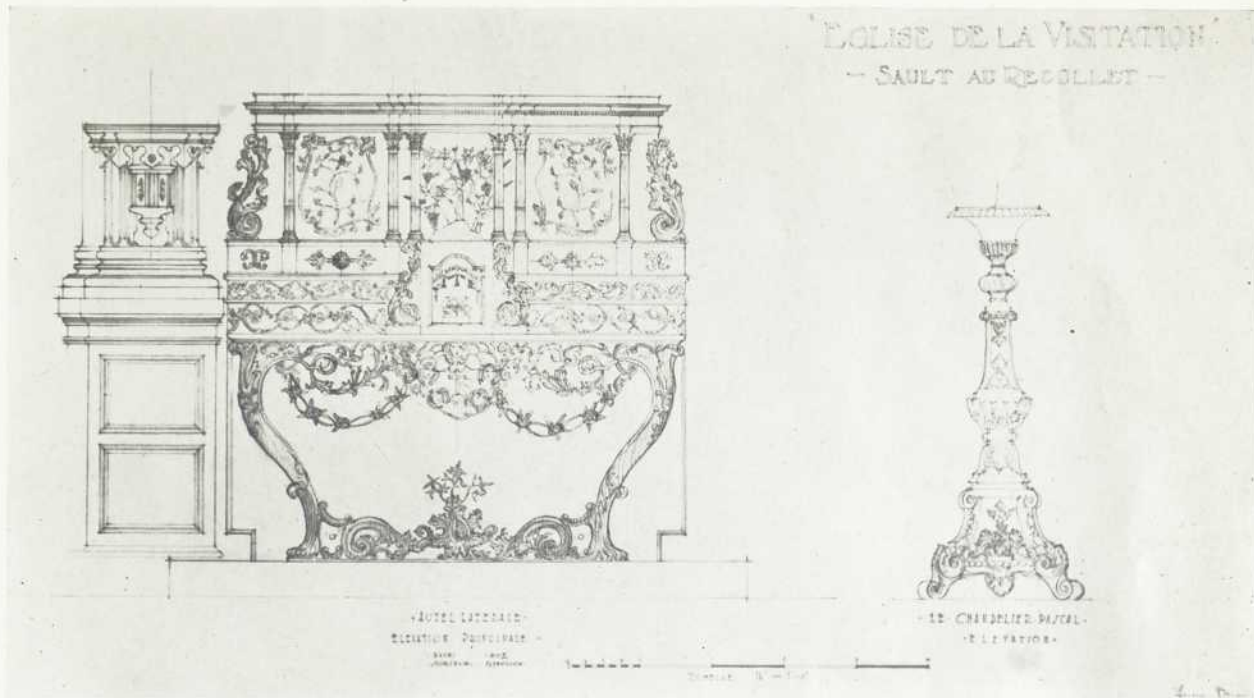
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THE CHOIR AND HIGH ALTAR



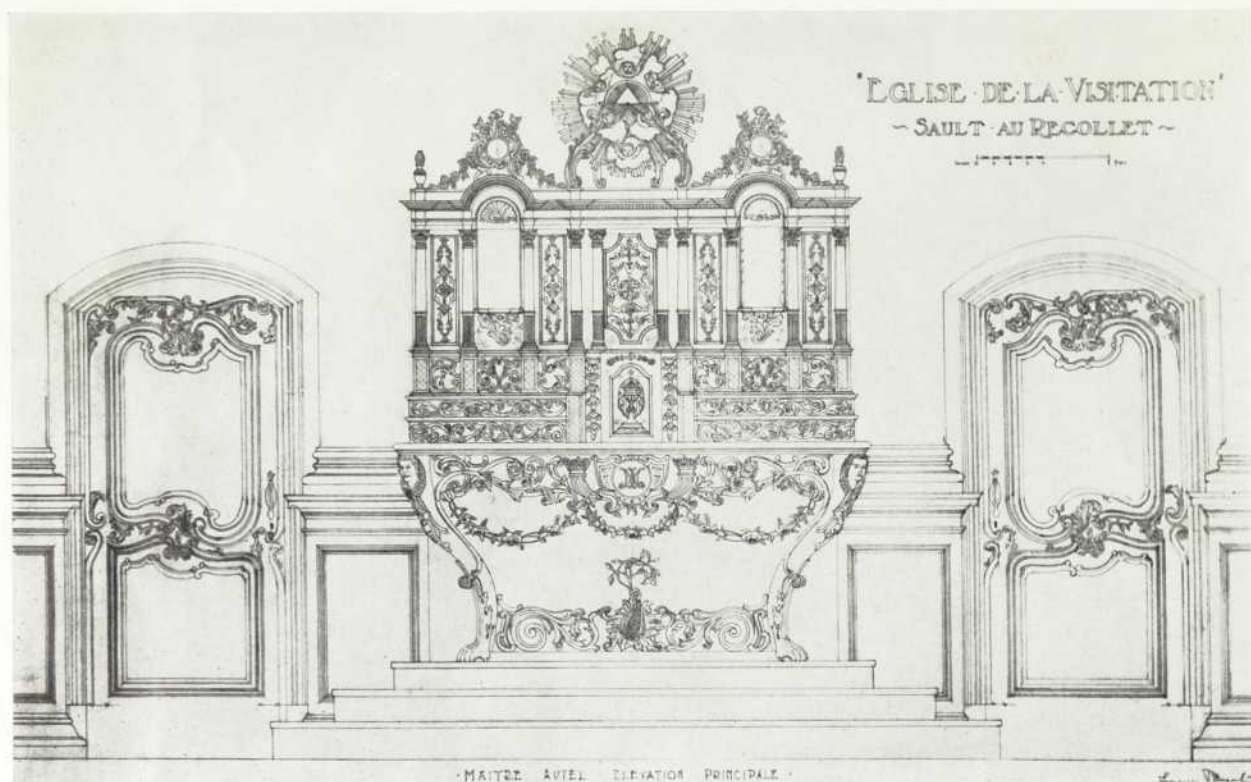
DETAIL OF THE RETABLE OF THE HIGH ALTAR
Liebert, 1792



DETAIL OF A SIDE ALTAR
By permission of the P.Q.A.A.



ONE OF THE SIDE ALTARS
Quevillon, 1806



DETAIL OF THE HIGH ALTAR
By permission of the P.Q.A.A.

the "Chapelle reposoir" of Saints-Anges, but this has now disappeared. The left hand belfry at present contains two small bells. One, inscribed "T. Mears of London Fecit 1815", is evidently the bell bought from William Maitland & Co. in obedience to an episcopal letter of June, 1808. The second is an elaborately ornamented bell, cast in Rome, and presented in 1864 by Mgr. Vinet, then curé of the parish. In the right hand tower hang three bells purchased in 1880 from Mears and Stainbanks. M. Beaubien writes of finding an old bell which he presented to the Noviciate of St. Gabriel close by. This bell still hangs over the building to which he gave it, now a provincial house of the order. It is decorated with a delicately arabesqued latin cross on three grades, and bears the inscription "MOYNE MA FAIT L'AN 1752." It was evidently bought at the building of the new church; it is in excellent condition and must be one of the oldest church bells in Canada.

THE BUILDING

The church consists of a nave, 43 feet broad by 119 feet long internal measurement, terminating in a rectangular sanctuary. Beyond this is a double sacristy with a small brick annex. The walls are of rough rubble masonry, three feet thick in the church and about two feet thick in the sacristy. The large windows have raised dressings of grey limestone, the remainder of the walling is of field stones heavily pointed with mortar. In the end wall of the sanctuary, under the roof, the pointing has been omitted and we can see the waterworn faces of the field stones, levelled at heights of from 4 ft. 6 in. to

5 ft. 6 in. This is evidently the stone collected by the inhabitants which Mr. Kalm saw on the site in 1749.

The church is oriented to the N.W. The walls, as also those of the first sacristy, belong to the original building from 1749 to 1773. The front of the building was taken down when the new front and towers were added in 1851. Its position was probably just beyond the present point of junction of the old nave with the more recent chapels. At this point there are at present two built up doorways which probably were made to open into the end of the nave, behind the last seats.

The old front was gabled with a wooden porch, and was surmounted by a wooden flèche with two open belfries. The sketch made in 1831 by James Duncan and now in the McCord National Museum, shows it rising above the trees. In 1818 the gable was repaired, plastered and painted in squares to imitate cut stone¹.

John Ostell's new front is of a severe Italian type which is not uncommon in the larger churches near Montreal. Ste. Geneviève, Ste. Rose, St. Eustache and Assomption are good examples, all built about the middle of the XIX century. Like Sault-au-Récollet they are of grey limestone, formal, dignified and rather cold. In all of them the towers were left unfinished to be completed later with wooden belfries, probably in all cases the work of the village carpenter. These follow the old Canadian tradition and give a welcome touch of lightness and a local quality to the rather learned and sophisticated architecture of the lower parts. At Sault-au-

¹ Actes de la Fabrique fos. 16, b), 17 (b), Dec. 6, 1818 May 2, 1819

Récollet we know that they were the work of François Dutrisac, the carpenter. They are covered with metal shingles and painted grey.

The object of the new front was to provide additional seating. Accordingly the nave is carried through at full width, with a large gallery above, and the towers with the side chapels are placed outside it. This gives a front of 80 feet wide with a screen wall connecting the towers. On this screen is set the pedimented and rusticated central feature. The side doors open into the towers, which contain the stairs to the gallery. Behind are two side chapels, of which that on the right hand side contains the wooden font made by Fleury David in 1820¹. It is not so interesting as most of his work.

The nave is decorated with an arcaded corinthian order resting on a panelled dado somewhat higher than the pews. It is all in wood, the carving good if not of any very great distinction. The egg and dart of the cornice is a variant of the usual form.

The vault is divided into bays by cross ribs over the pilasters, seven bays from the back of the gallery to the sanctuary. These are treated alternately with diagonal ribs, rising to a large rosette, and with carved arabesques. The bay next to the sanctuary and the vault of the sanctuary itself are richly coffered, and in the span-drills over the side altars are cornucopias from which issue a tangle of vine branches, fruit and leaves. These are the "2 cornes d'abondance fort riches" for which Fleury David was paid

8 louis extra in 1818¹. The corne d'abondance is often found in this position; it was so used in St. Jean I.O.² and Notre Dame de Bonsecours at Montreal (before restoration). The carving is very delicate and crisp, and the design is full of variety. As is usual in Quebec it is nailed on to a background of wood boarding. The execution of the detail and the general effect of the whole ceiling are very attractive, and it must be regarded as one of the finest wood vaults in the Province.

The sanctuary is rectangular. Although the semicircular apse is more usual yet this form is by no means unique. It was used naturally in the chapels of institutions, where the semicircular end would have fitted in badly with other buildings, as in the Hôpital Général or the Convent of the Ursulines in Quebec. But it occurs also in parish churches. The old church of Ste Anne de Beaupré, Notre Dame des Anges at Charlesbourg and quite a number of other churches have rectangular terminations.

The side altars are placed as usual against the end returns of the nave. These and the sides of the sanctuary are treated with a corinthian plaster order similar to that of the nave. The end of the sanctuary has four detached columns over which the entablature breaks forward, the centre pair supporting a low scroll canopy. The ceiling here is very richly coffered and the

¹ Actes de la Fabrique I, fo. 16 (a).

² Probably by Louis Basil David who is said to have been a pupil of Quevillon. Whether he was connected with Fleury David is not at present known, but he lived at about the same time and apparently came from the same part of the country.

¹ Actes de la Fabrique Vol. I, fo. 18 (b).



THE DOOR ON THE LEFT HAND OF THE HIGH ALTAR



THE DOOR ON THE RIGHT HAND OF THE HIGH ALTAR

panels filled with rosettes and scroll-work. The two angels in the corners are of plaster and modern, the rest is wood, the work of Fleury David. This is the part referred to in the Actes de la Fabrique as the "Retable".

The two doors which lead from the sanctuary to the sacristy must be particularly noticed. They are in two panels, with shaped ends and floriated mouldings of the type found in France in the time of Louis XV. The panels are carved with scenes in relief of half to three-quarters of an inch. The upper panels depict the feats of Sampson. On the left hand door he is shown killing the lion, on the right hand door carrying off the gates of Gaza. The lower panels show, below Sampson and the lion, the curé going to the church, below Gaza, the curé going to visit the sick. Each scene has in the background a hill with trees and houses, and to these we must give particular attention. On the hill behind Sampson and the lion stand two little figures, a man in skirted coat and knee breeches, and a woman; behind them are two houses. The lower panel of the door shows one half of a church evidently of masonry, with a single arched door flanked by niches and a circular window in the gable. This is surmounted by a single belfry with a pointed spire and weathercock. In the background are two houses, one of two storeys, apparently connected by a palisade.

The City of Gaza, in the right hand door, is of a conventional architecture with towers and battlements. In the lower panel the curé is approaching a house with rusticated angles. In the background is a group of two buildings set in an L plan with a tower between them. It has a palisaded enclosure. On the hill at the back is a windmill. The fine convention and carving of the trees should be noticed. All four panels are painted in polychrome; the painting is evidently old, and may even be the original treatment. It is certainly very successful. The houses are of a type to which we are accustomed in XVIII century Canada. The dress of the man seems to indicate a date of the middle of the century, the type of the design and moulding is of about the same date. Stone churches must have been very rare in Canada before about 1730. The palisaded houses seem to suggest a time when defence might still be necessary.

The doors have been much repaired. The lowest bar has been renewed, losing the original bottom mouldings. The top has been cut to the arch shape, apparently to fit the present doorways, and both doors have been rebacked. They look as if they had originally been made for square headed doorways, in any case they are not part of Fleury David's design but are valued relics, carefully preserved.

There is no mention of the doors in the church records. They were evidently not separately purchased but formed part of some older scheme of decoration.

The old mission chapel was decorated. Kalm says: "l'intérieur en vaut mieux que le dehors", and we have accounts for sculpture work previous to the rebuilding of 1751. Again from 1764 to 1772 considerable sums were paid for a "retable", a "tabernacle cadre", vaulting and other works,

whilst in 1773 Hébert the sculptor was paid 1420 livres for some work undefined. The doors were presumably made for one or other of these schemes, but it must be remembered that we have no evidence of a stone sacristy before 1761. It seems hardly likely that these elaborate doors were made to enter a temporary wooden sacristy, and the later date is therefore more probable. They are unique of their kind in Canada; there cannot be any doubt that they are local work and very precious relics of the artistic skill and ability of the old Quebec artists.

The two side altars, both tombeaux and tabernacles and the tombeau of the high altar, are by Louis Quevillon, and are typical Quevillon work. The altars are of the curved console type with side trusses, scrolls and garlands; in the centre of the high altar is the monogram of the Sulpicians, the lords of the manor. The tabernacles to the side altars have very pleasantly designed shaped panels filled with loose foliage sprays. In the centre is a group of vine and wheat, symbolic of the sacramental elements. The design is governed and controlled by the "appliqué" method of the carving.

The tabernacle of the high altar is of a different character. The general design follows the customary lines. Over the tabernacle is a central niche surmounted by a scroll canopy and a glory of rays and cherubs' heads surrounding a symbolic triangle. At the sides are two niches containing statues, on the left hand St. John with the eagle, on the right St. Stephen with a chalice. The panels on either side of the niches and in the centre are filled in with strapwork patterns closely resembling the ironwork of the eighteenth century. Above the niches are reliquaries in rococo frames. The work is of a stiffer and more restrained character than that of the side altars.

In 1792 Liebert was employed to carve a tabernacle for the high altar and since that date the records contain no further reference to the tabernacle of the high altar. Presumably it has not been altered since 1792.

This tabernacle is very similar in design to that of the high altar of St. Michel de Vaudreuil. A few minor details are different, but the cornice mouldings, the strapwork infillings, the character of the acanthus scrolls on the grades, as well as the general design, are so similar in the two tabernacles as to leave no doubt that they are from the same workshop. The statue of St. John is identical in both tabernacles.

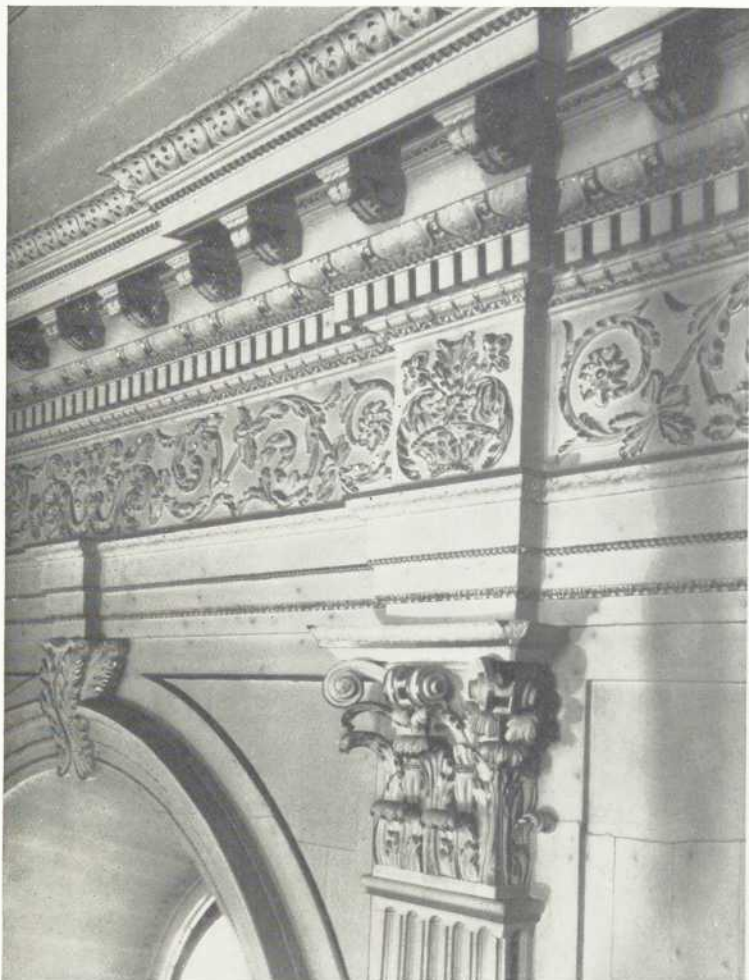
The records of Vaudreuil contain no definite account for their tabernacle, but in 1792 syndics were appointed to make arrangements for having made a tabernacle, candlesticks and altar covering, and in 1798 the Fabrique agreed that there should be made by Maître Liebert two tabernacles, two altars and the candlesticks for the two chapels in the church. This seems conclusive. The tabernacles of the high altars in both churches were made by Maître Liebert at the same time and to the same design. The statues were part of the design and are probably not the "compagnons pour le retable" purchased in 1773¹, unless indeed Liebert fitted them into

¹Livres de Compte I, fo. 15.

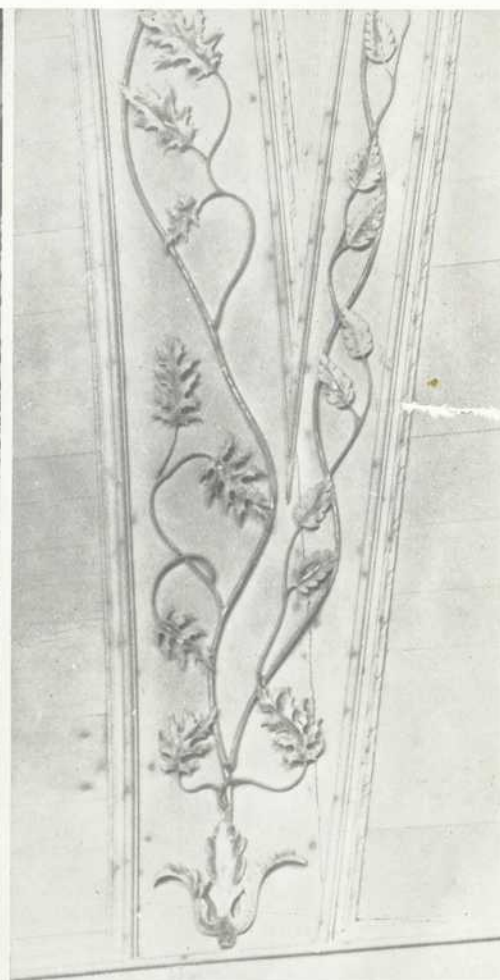
his design for Sault-au-Récollet and then copied one of them for Vaudreuil.

The present pulpit is that made by Vincent Chartrand in 1836. It is circular with a curved body decorated with swags and flower panels. The canopy is also circular and is surmounted by an angel. The pointed and cusped arches at the back show the creeping influence of the Gothic revival, reaching the Quebec artists in its most degraded form only. The design lacks firmness and is rather pretty in character, though the panels themselves are well designed in the tradition of Quevillon.

Quevillon in 1789. It is a well made piece of furniture with a marble top and curved front. There are large shallow drawers in the centre for altar frontals, and deeper small drawers at the sides. The processional cross which is still in use seems to be that bought by M. Chambon in 1749 for 24 livres, and the church owns a very nice silver ciborium which one is tempted to trace to the same source. The wooden Easter candlestick is probably that bought in 1795; it is a good example of its kind. The wooden statue of the Madonna and Child was bought in 1818¹. We do not know who made either of



THE MAIN ORDER OF THE CHURCH
Fleury David, 1820-23



A DETAIL FROM THE NAVE VAULT
Fleury David, 1816-20

The roof was reconstructed in 1813-14. It is a double collar roof with rafters 6 in. by 7 in., lower collars 10 in. by 8 in., king posts 8½ in. by 6 in. and struts 5 in. by 5 in. The couples are at about 5 ft. 4 in. centres and are wind-braced below the ridge with cross struts. The members are halved and pinned with wooden pins, and are dressed. In design and construction the roof follows the tradition of the XVII century.

As has been said, the sacristy was built in two stages, the first between 1761 and 1773, the second in 1844, and the break in the masonry is visible on the outside walls. The buildings are of a severely practical character. In the first sacristy is the chest of drawers made by

these. In the church safe is preserved the head of a bishop's crook mounted upon a modern staff. It is a plain spiral carved in wood, and is reported to be the crook used officially by the Bishop of Quebec when visiting the church. If so it may date from the early days of the mission.

The church has escaped the hand of the modern restorer; it is a Quebec church of the genuine tradition. The two carved doors, the tabernacle by Liebert, the altars by Quevillon, the decoration and carved ceiling by Fleury David and the pulpit by Chartrand form a continuous record

¹ Livres de Comptes I, fo. 37 (b); Actes de la Fabrique I, fo. 15 (b).

of design by local artists from the mid XVIII to the mid XIX centuries. Even the front by Mr. Ostell is not altogether out of the picture. Such a church with such a history is one of which any parish may well be proud. It is one of the most distinguished monuments of the French-Canadian tradition in the Province of Quebec.

DOCUMENTS

Archives of the Fabrique prior to 1880.
Vol. I.—Livres de Compte 1736 to 1823 bound up with Actes de la Fabrique 1787 to 1824 and other matters such as pew rents.

Vol. II.—pt. I Actes de la Fabrique 1825 to 1878.
pt. II Livres de Compte 1824 to 1878.

A considerable number of miscellaneous documents loosely inserted in the Actes de la Fabrique.

The registers of births, deaths and marriages start on January 18, 1736.

Acknowledgements must be made to:—

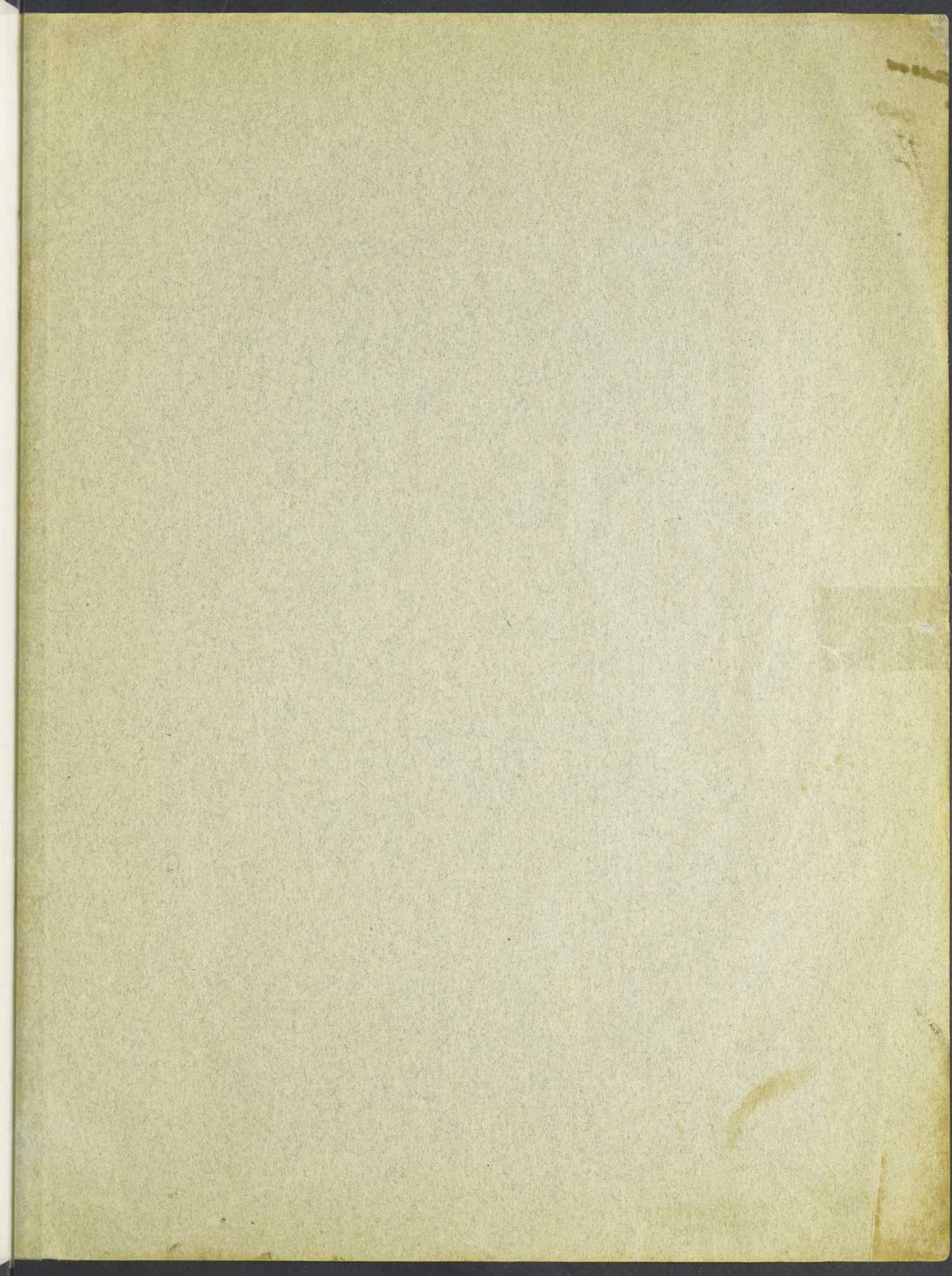
The Rev. H. Longpré, curé, and the Rev. L. Charron, vicaire, of Sault-au-Récollet for their courtesy in giving full access to the documents and to the church.

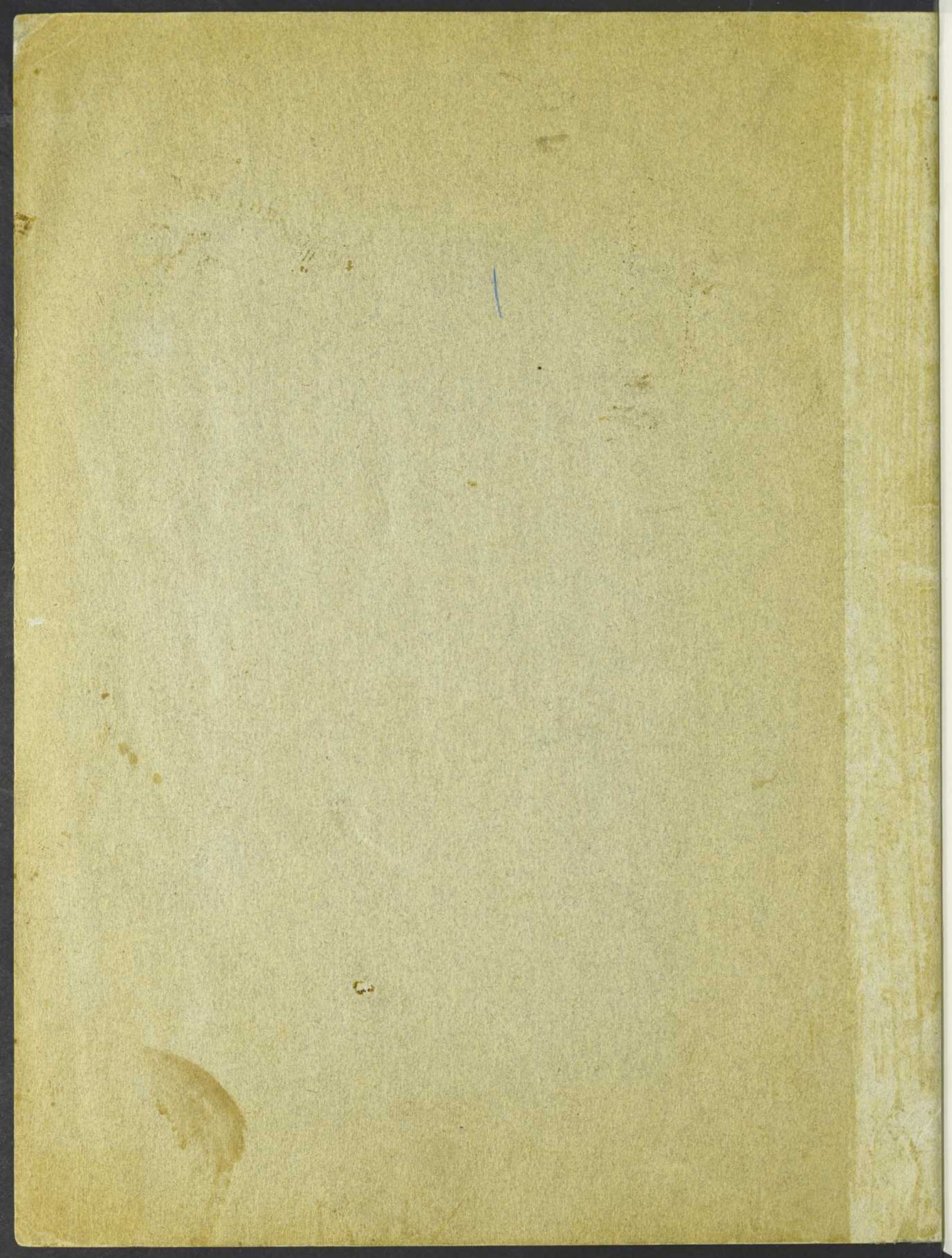
The Province of Quebec Association of Architects for the use of the measured drawings of the church, made by M. Louis Parent and Mr. Albert Macduff, travelling scholars of the Association.

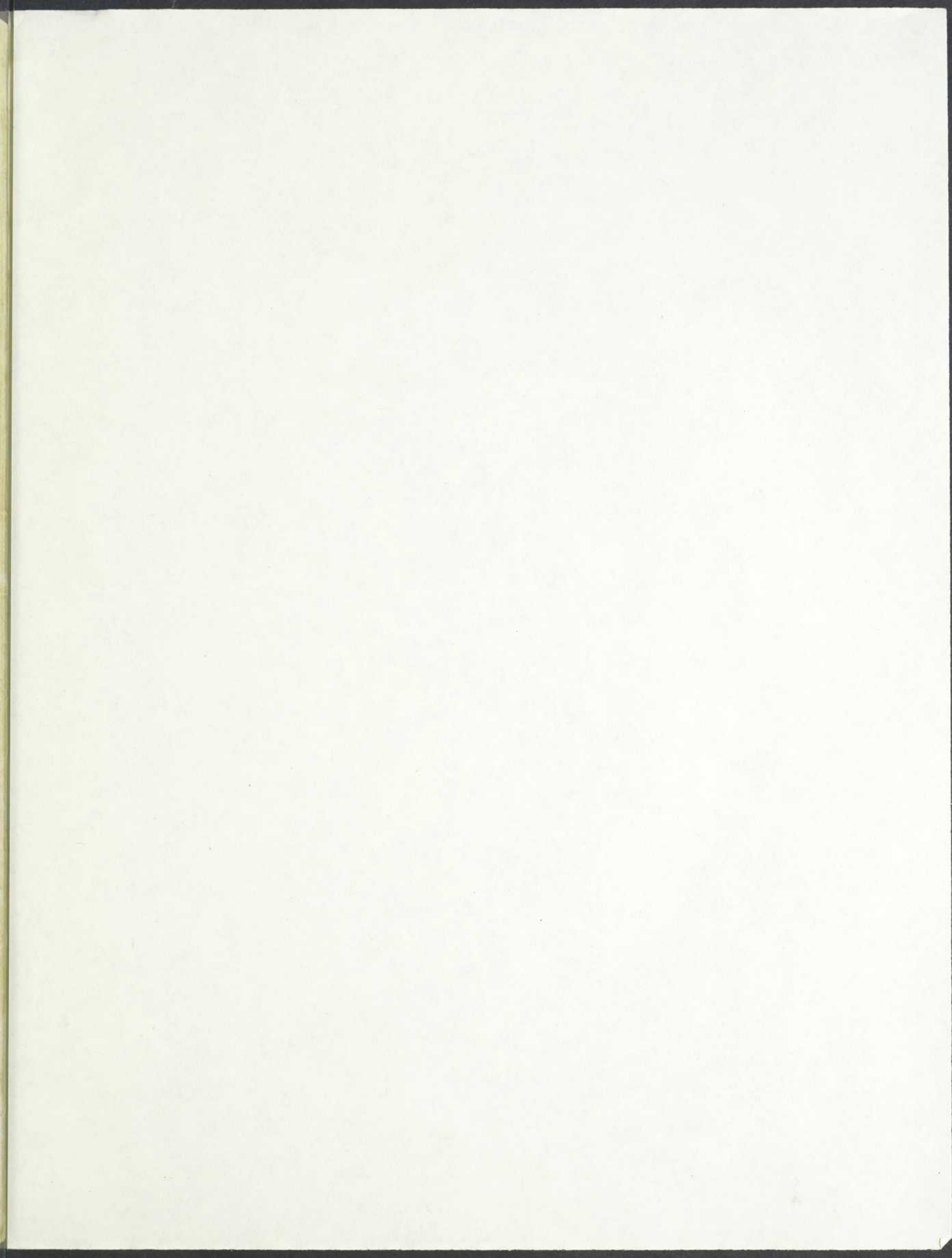
CHRONOLOGY

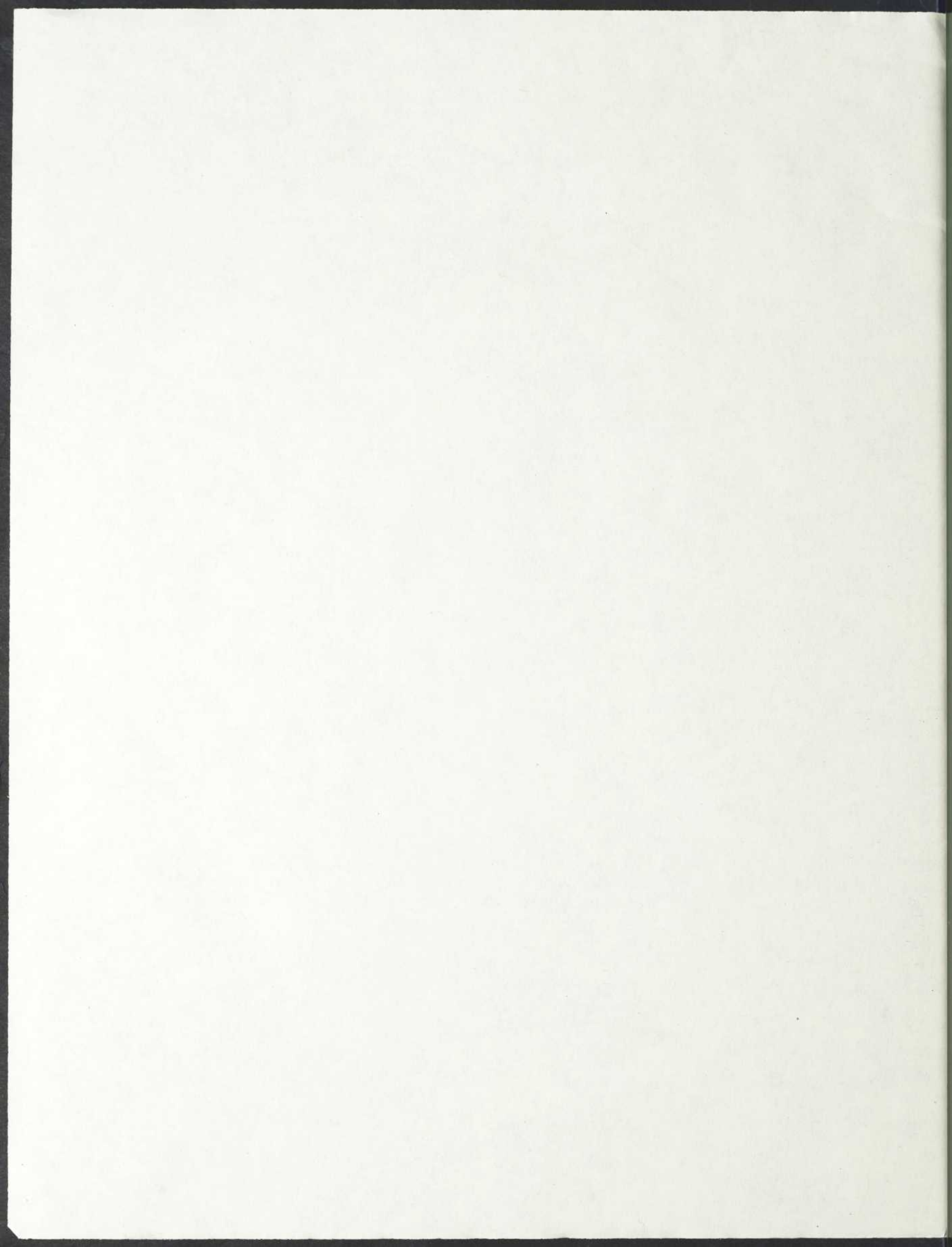
- 1696—Mission moved to Sault-au-Récollet. 1st Church "La Nouvelle Lorette" built.
- 1720-21—Mission moved to Oka.
- 1749-51—Church built on new site.
- 1761—Sacristy commenced.
- 1764—A retable for the high altar.
- 1705—"Tabernacle cadre" acquired.
- 1772-3—Vaulting of church.
- 1773—"Hébert esculpteur" paid 1420 livres for decorative work.
- 1789—West door and chest of drawers made by L. Quevillon.
- 1791—Pulpit by Liebert.
- 1792—Tabernacle for high altar by Liebert.
- 1800—Banc d'oeuvre by Quevillon.
- 1802—Two tabernacles (for side altars) by Quevillon.
- 1806—Three altar tables for high and side altars by Quevillon.
- 1813-14—Church re-roofed.
- 1816-20—Vault by David Fleury David.
- 1820-23—Retables by David. Choir-cornices and nave decorated.
- 1827—West door by David.
- 1836—Pulpit by Vincent Chartrand.
- 1850-2—Present façade by John Ostell.
- 1863—Belfries by François Dutrisac.













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