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# "Rendezvous" for renewal at "Lake of the Great Spirit": the french pilgrimage and indigenous journey to Lac Ste. Anne, Alberta, 1870-1896

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UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY

“Rendezvous” for Renewal at “Lake of the Great Spirit”: The French Pilgrimage and  
Indigenous Journey to Lac Ste. Anne, Alberta, 1870-1896

by

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A THESIS

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## **Abstract**

The Lac Ste-Anne Pilgrimage is an Indigenous-Catholic gathering that takes place along the lake at Lac Ste-Anne, Alberta, seventy-five kilometres west of Edmonton, and continues to attract approximately 50, 000 pilgrims yearly, most of them of First Nations or Métis heritage. It was initiated on June 6, 1889, by Jean-Marie Lestanc, a Catholic father with the Oblates of Mary Immaculate, a congregation which originated in Marseilles, France. This thesis discusses the long history of both Catholic pilgrimage and aboriginal rendezvous traditions in France and Canada respectively, and addresses the complexity of conversion among North-Western Canadian indigenous peoples in the nineteenth century. It suggests that the event was borne of an implicit negotiation and compromise between the largely francophone Oblate fathers and the local First Nations and Métis peoples over the significance of Lac Ste-Anne, and the “nomadic” ritual journey needed to arrive there.

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## Dedication

This work is dedicated to the First Nations and Métis individuals, as well as the Oblate fathers I interviewed, who have all “kept me honest,” and who have taken my journey with this project beyond the boundaries of traditional academic research. They are:

Louie Auger (Ermineskin Band, Hobbema and head of security at the pilgrimage)

Yvonne Blackhorse (Siksika Nation)

Murleen Crossen née Letendre (Lac Ste-Anne Pilgrimage Board and descended from the first Métis settlers at Lac Ste. Anne)

Father Joseph Goutier, O.M.I. (Foyer Lacombe, St. Albert)

Father Jim Holland, O.M.I. (Sacred Heart Church of the First Peoples, Edmonton)

Doris Lirondelle (descended from the original Iroquois Métis voyageurs to Lac Ste. Anne)

Marlene Morin (Executive Director of the Lac Ste-Anne Pilgrimage Board)

Father Maurice McMahon, O.M.I. (Foyer Lacombe)

Arthur Rain and his sister Mary Rain, (Paul Nakoda First Nation, Duffield, and descended from the Sharphead and Ironhead Nakoda Stoney families)

Father Jean-Paul Vantroys, O.M.I. (Foyer Lacombe)

Another Oblate father from the Foyer Lacombe and a third elder from Paul Band both gave me long interviews, but wished to remain anonymous.

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## INTRODUCTION

During the mid to late eighteenth century, before the arrival of Euro-Canadian newcomers to what would become the Canadian north west plains and woodlands, Lac Ste-Anne, a lake that lies approximately seventy-five kilometres northwest of Edmonton, Alberta, was known to the Cree people of the region as *Manitow Sâkahikan*, and to the neighbouring Nakoda Stoney people as *Wakamne* which respectively mean “Lake of the Great Spirit” and “God’s Lake” or “Holy Lake.”<sup>1</sup> Allegedly, the lake was a place where various bands belonging to the Woodland and Plains Cree peoples, the Nakoda, as well as the Blackfoot Confederacy, had been gathering to hunt, fish, and trade for centuries, and in a spirit of peace, even though the Blackfoot and Cree were traditional enemies.<sup>2</sup> Early Euro-Canadian fur-traders apparently renamed the lake “Devil’s Lake,” either because they

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<sup>1</sup> At least three other lakes in Canada, two in Saskatchewan (*Manitou Lake* west of North Battleford, and *Good Spirit Lake* north of Yorkton) and one in Manitoba (*God’s Lake*, east of Oxford House) have similar names. Oblate archivist Émeric Drouin spells it *Manito Sakahigan*, which seems to be a Gallicized version of what according to Cynthia Chambers is *manitow sâkahikan*, *manitow sâkahikanihk*, and *manitow sâkahigan*. Émeric Drouin, *Lac Ste-Anne Sakahigan* (Edmonton: Éditions de l’Ermitage, 1973), 15. Cynthia Chambers, “Things I Carried with Me...” in *Educational Insights*, Vol. 8 (Vancouver: University of British Columbia, 2003),

<http://www.ccfi.educ.ubc.ca/publication/insights/v08n02/contextualexplorations/curriculum/chambers.html>

(accessed March 22, 2010). The meaning for “Wakamne” was given to me by Mr. Arthur Rain, in an *Interview at Paul First Nation Band Administration Office*, March 11th, 2010. See also Peter Maser, “Mission du Lac-Sainte Anne: The Annual Pilgrimage that Began this Weekend Draws the Faithful in Great Numbers,” *The Edmonton Journal*, Sunday July 18, 2010. Steve Simon, *Healing Waters: The Pilgrimage to Lac Ste. Anne* (Edmonton: The University of Alberta Press, 1995), 2. “Wakamne” also appears on the Lac Ste-Anne Pilgrimage website and the Alexis First Nation website: “Lac St. Anne Pilgrimage: Gathered in Unity,” <http://www.lsap.ca> (accessed March 18, 11). “Alexis Nakota Sioux Nation: One Nation One Tribe One Fire,” Alexis Nakota Sioux Nation, <http://www.alexisnakotasioux.com/default.aspx?ID=9-0>, (accessed March 18th, 2011).

<sup>2</sup> Local history, newspapers, and a CBC “Ideas” radio show about the pilgrimage entitled “Troubled Waters” have maintained the belief that the lake was an ancient sacred gathering place. See Lac Ste. Anne Historical Society Archives Committee, *West of the Fifth: A History of Lac Ste. Anne Municipality* (Edmonton: The Institute of Applied Art Ltd. Educational Publishers, 1959), 11. Helen Fitzpatrick, “20, 000 Indians Flock to Shrine in Lac Ste. Anne Pilgrimage,” *The Toronto Star*, Saturday August 11, 1979, F4. “CBC IDEAS Sales Catalogue,” CBC Radio, <http://www.cbc.ca/ideas/IDEAS-Catalog.pdf>, (July 22, 2012), 107. I have benefited from the research of H  l  ne Chabot, who submitted a report for the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada (HSMBC) requesting that the Lac Ste-Anne Pilgrimage site be considered a national historical site. H  l  ne Chabot, *Submission Report-Place: Lac Ste. Anne Pilgrimage Site*, Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada[2003], 4-5 (450-51). Thank-you to Diane Lamoureux, archivist for the Oblate archives at the Provincial Archives of Alberta for bringing this last report to my attention, and to Lisa Danis from the Heritage Programs Branch Parks Canada for sending it to me.

mistranslated the indigenous names, or because sudden squalls on the lake would overturn boats and cause people to drown.<sup>3</sup> Later, on September 8<sup>th</sup>, 1844, the Catholic diocesan priest Father Jean-Baptiste Thibault, baptized the lake “Lac Ste-Anne” and founded a mission there of the same name after having made a promise to Saint Anne, believed to be the mother of the Holy Virgin Mary and the grandmother of Jesus, that he would name the first mission he founded after her.<sup>4</sup>

Forty-three years later still, in 1887, Father Jean-Marie Lestanc, a Catholic missionary with the nineteenth-century French congregation, the Oblates of Marie Immaculate, and Father Superior of the Lac Ste-Anne Mission, returned to his native Brittany, a region in northwestern France for a holiday. While in Brittany, as the story goes, and following the cultural tradition of the “Bretons,” he visited, or, perhaps we can say, he made a “pilgrimage,” to the church and shrine of Ste-Anne d’Auray, a well-known pilgrimage site dedicated to Saint Anne, the patron saint of the region. While prostrate in front of the statue of Saint Anne in France, Father Lestanc had a personal revelation. He heard Saint Anne speak to him, and chastise him for abandoning in North America, the Lac

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<sup>3</sup> Contrary to what some researchers, such as Cynthia Chambers and Alice Charland have stated, the Oblates did not themselves translate the name to “Devil’s Lake.” Chambers, *Things I Carried with Me...* Alice Charland, *First Nations and the Lac Ste. Anne Pilgrimage* (Master of Theological Studies, Stephen's College, Edmonton), 5, 43. Drouin states that “The White people of the time translated the Cree name as Devil’s Lake – Machimanito Sakahigan –most likely because it being roundish and surrounded by some hills and some forests, it becomes choppy and dangerous at a moment’s notice. Many are those who have drowned in its waters over the decades.” Drouin, *Lac Ste-Anne Sakahigan*, 17. “Devil’s lake” was likely already a local mistranslation of the indigenous name, by Euro-Canadian voyageurs, before the arrival of Thibeault, as suggested by Alexander Taché : “*Première résidence. – Lac Sainte-Anne, --* Ce poste, indiqué sur les cartes par le nom *Manitou-Lake*, et connu des voyageurs sous le nom de *Lac du Diable*, est situé à une quinzaine de lieues à l’ouest du fort Edmonton, chef-lieu du district de la rivière Kisiskatchiwan.” Emile Petitot, “La Rivière-Rouge en 1858: lettre de Mgr. Taché à M. Dawson, Rivière-Rouge, le 7 février, 1859,” *Missions de la Congrégation des Oblats de Marie Immaculée* 3, no. 6 June (1863): 168.

<sup>4</sup> PAA OMI Collection, Argan, Glen, “Pilgrims drawn to Lac Ste. Anne,” *Western Catholic Reporter*, August 9, 1982, 9, in “Coupures de journaux, photos, correspondance au sujet du pèlerinage du Lac Sainte-Anne 1941-1984,” Accession 71.220, Box 101, File 4249. PAA OMI Collection, “*Lac Ste-Anne Codex Historique 1870-72*” Accession 71.220, Box 99, File 4212. PAA OMI Collection, “Historique du Lac Sainte-Anne par le Père Aristide Phillipot, O.M.I.” Accession 71.220 Box 100 File 4240. Drouin, *Lac Ste-Anne Sakahigan*, 13. Lac Ste. Anne Historical Society Archives Committee, *West of the Fifth: A History of Lac Ste. Anne Municipality*, 11, 14. Alexis Tetreault O.M.I., “First Catholic Mission in Alberta, 1844,” *Western Catholic Reporter* (June 7, 1961), 1. This last article is linked to the Lac Ste-Anne Pilgrimage website, <http://www.lsap.ca/pdf%20docs/western%20catholic%20reporter%20articles.pdf> (accessed August 24th, 2010).



Ste-Anne Mission mentioned above, which was losing impetus, and whose chapel was falling into disarray. So moved was Lestanc by his experience that upon returning to what became Alberta, he reinvigorated his flailing mission, rebuilt the church, and commissioned a statue. Most importantly, on June 6<sup>th</sup>, 1889, he officially initiated the Lac Ste-Anne Pilgrimage, where seventy-one pilgrims and about 100 more local people gathered. Today, this pilgrimage remains the major First Nations spiritual gathering north of Guadalupe, Mexico City, and the “largest Native gathering in Canada.”<sup>5</sup> Every year during the week which usually coincides with July 26th, the feast day of Saint Anne, almost 50, 000 people, some of them coming from as far away as California, or Fort Resolution, N.W.T., and most of them of First Nations or Métis heritage, travel to the lakeside community to pray, seek healing, and to reunite with friends and family.<sup>6</sup> How can one explain the success of this pilgrimage? Before beginning to provide historical answers, we can consider an explanation provided by anthropologist Alan Morinis, who observed the Lac Ste-Anne Pilgrimage in 1983. He makes the useful statement about pilgrimages worldwide that:

Pilgrimage is born of desire and belief. The desire is for solution to problems of all kinds that arise within the human situation. The belief is that somewhere beyond the known world there exists a power that can make right the difficulties that appear so insoluble and intractable here and now. All one must do is journey.<sup>7</sup>

Considering the difficulties facing indigenous and Métis people in the Lac Ste-Anne region at the end of the nineteenth century as a result of colonialism and Euro-Canadian settlement, difficulties which they continue to face in varying degrees today, it is very possible that they “believed” that journeying to Lac Ste-Anne would bring them hope and rejuvenation.

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<sup>5</sup> Dr. Wayne A. Holst, "Review of *Healing Waters: The Pilgrimage to Lac Ste. Anne*, by Steve Simon," *Canadian Catholic Review*, September 23rd (1995), 1. Simon, *Healing Waters: The Pilgrimage to Lac Ste. Anne*, 2.

<sup>6</sup> Marlene Morin, *Interview at St. Albert*, February 5th, 2010. Maser, *Mission Du Lac-Sainte Anne: The Annual Pilgrimage that Began this Weekend Draws the Faithful in Great Numbers*, E1. Mr. Louie Auger, *Interview at Ermineskin Band Waste Removal and Treatment Office*, February 4th, 2010.

<sup>7</sup> Alan Morinis, "Introduction," in *Sacred Journeys: The Anthropology of Pilgrimage*, ed. Alan Morinis (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1992), 1.

However health and restoration have long often been the major benefits sought in Christian pilgrimages, thus an examination of the historical process is also necessary. Throughout Canada's history, missionaries of predominantly Catholic, Anglican and Methodist denominations tried to convert indigenous people to Christianity. After Canadian Confederation in 1867 and the transfer of Rupert's Land by the Hudson's Bay Company to the Canadian Dominion in 1870, the large territories, to which Aboriginal people technically had had legal title since the Royal Proclamation Act of 1763, were now wanted for European settlement and the building of a transnational railway.<sup>8</sup> Thus government officials, in tandem with missionaries, worked to complete what was essentially a colonialist nation building project. One of their main priorities was the assimilation, "Christianization and Civilization," of First Nations peoples, who would (it was hoped) gradually be engulfed in the British Euro-Canadian society.<sup>9</sup> Earlier historians looking at the experience of indigenous people in late nineteenth century Canada may have viewed the initiation and development of the Lac Ste-Anne Pilgrimage as a spectacular example of how, with the help of the pragmatic Oblate missionaries, this colonizing and assimilative project succeeded in the region. Certainly, Christian religions, including Catholicism, were to a large degree imposed on First Nations people and their cultural landmarks, and the pilgrimage in Alberta may be viewed in this way. However, through interdisciplinary methods and close archival analysis, the following thesis seeks to inquire critically and historically into the context in which the Catholic Lac Ste-Anne Pilgrimage began, and to analyse it from a broader perspective. Using archival primary source research, and borrowing approaches from religious studies, anthropology, archaeology and geography, this paper will show that since its very inception, the Lac Ste-Anne Pilgrimage has also been a manifestation of the Aboriginal people's will to both adopt and resist aspects of the colonialist mindset, including new religious ideas and a popular form of

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<sup>8</sup> Brian Titley, *The Indian Commissioners: Agents of the State and Indian Policy in Canada's Prairie West, 1873-1932* (Edmonton: The University of Alberta Press, 2009), 3, 9.

<sup>9</sup> Martha McCarthy, *From the Great River to the Ends of the Earth: Oblate Missionaries to the Dene, 1847-1921* (Edmonton: The University of Alberta Press and Western Canadian Publishers, 1995), xviii, xx. Sarah Carter, *Aboriginal People and Colonizers of Western Canada to 1900* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), 111-12.

Catholic worship, while continuing to also adapt older cultural gathering practices of their own to the new event, based on their relationship to the land. It will argue generally that the event was borne out of an implicit negotiation and compromise between the French Catholic Oblate fathers and the local Aboriginal and Métis peoples over the significance of Lac Ste-Anne as a special resting place in what had been a “nomadic” journey needed to arrive there. In the process, and revealing the “diversity of contact experiences,” between natives and newcomers, both Aboriginal pilgrims and the Oblate fathers have developed, and continue to maintain, their own living, breathing, and “modernized” indigenous event.<sup>10</sup> Imbued with the “spiritual magnetism,” or “the power of a pilgrimage shrine to attract devotees,” from both First Nations and European Catholic history, the place was, and is still today, a “negotiated landscape.”<sup>11</sup>

This negotiation happened in two ways. The Oblates were not in an all-powerful position in Lac Ste-Anne during the late 1880s. They needed to affirm their presence in a region where they were losing indigenous converts to nearby Protestant missions and schools who were competing with the Oblates for Aboriginal “souls.” Thus, they pragmatically maintained the event’s “nomadic,” transitory and “outdoor camping” elements at a time when they were supposed to be encouraging the Métis and First Nations people to “settle down” into farming.

For indigenous people, the negotiation at this site had higher stakes. In the second half of the nineteenth century, First Nations’ old ways of life were undergoing drastic change, their futures were uncertain, and in the context of smallpox and flu epidemics and new “Indian policies,” the need to heal and survive was strong. Thus, over time, First Nation peoples, also behaving pragmatically, adapted and adopted the practices of Catholicism to their older gathering activities. Though the pilgrimage’s stories and rituals were foreign, the event nonetheless maintained the importance of the place, becoming a

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 35. I have benefited from the ideas in Tolly Bradford’s *Prophetic Identities: Indigenous Missionaries on British Colonial Frontiers, 1850-75* (Vancouver, UBC Press, 2012), 2.

<sup>11</sup> I borrowed the term “negotiated landscape” from the themes of the Trent-Carleton graduate conference at Trent University in Peterborough, Ontario, Nov 13-15, 2009. For “spiritual magnetism,” see James J. Preston, “Spiritual Magnetism: An Organizing Principle for the Study of Pilgrimage,” in *Sacred Journeys: The Anthropology of Pilgrimage*, ed. Alan Morinis (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1992), 33.

locus of communal exchange, and providing continuity and a kind of reprieve for the indigenous peoples, a way of reasserting themselves and their communities during a time of crisis.

Before describing methods, sources and approaches, and in order to provide an idea of the scope and nature of this event, a brief overview of what happens at the pilgrimage today is in order.

Today, the pilgrimage lasts five days and is structured around traditional Catholic rites. There are up to three Catholic masses with Holy Eucharist per day.<sup>12</sup> Each of these masses is hosted by a different First Nations or Métis community. For example, in 2012, the Alexis and Paul band of the Nakoda First Nations hosted the mass at 10:30 am on Sunday July 22, the Tlicho First Nation of Behchoko, Northwest Territories (who are the Dene, formally known as the “Dogrib” people from Fort Rae), hosted theirs at 3:00 pm on Monday, and the Ermineskin, Louis Bull, Montana, and Samson (Cree) First Nations of Hobbema, Alberta had theirs the same day at 6:30 pm. Pilgrims generally make sure to arrive the day their community is holding mass, but many stay the whole week, and attend more than one mass. Private confessions are an important rite at the pilgrimage, and usually require many different priests, working until late in the evening. They are heard all day in a special chapel, with pilgrims sometimes confessing in their own language, and interestingly, one not always understood by the priest.<sup>13</sup> A procession and prayers to the 13 Stations of the Cross, and a special ceremony for the blessing of the lake takes place on one of the days, and an evening candlelight procession is held at least once during the week. The rosary is said every morning and often every evening as well. There is further the

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<sup>12</sup> It should be kept in mind that the observations described in the following five paragraphs, are largely based on my own personal observations of the pilgrimages in 2009 and 2010, and discussions/interviews I had with both Oblates and pilgrims. I previously cited above a very beautiful book of photographs taken by Steve Simon, a photojournalist with the Edmonton Journal. I also cite below newspaper articles, and the current Lac Ste-Anne website which provides a lot of information as well as pictures so that readers can make their own conclusions about the event today.

<sup>13</sup> Father Joseph Goutier O.M.I., *Interview at Foyer Lacombe*, February 3rd, 2010.

“Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament,” a special ceremony where the host is displayed in a monstrance.<sup>14</sup>

Catholic images and symbolism pervade the place, and explicit efforts are made to remind people of the religious impetus of the gathering. The large outdoor wooden shrine, built in 1980, accommodates up to 7000 people, and features a loudspeaker which broadcasts the masses and prayers throughout the day across a large portion of the site.<sup>15</sup> In 2009 and 2010, the rosary could be heard being recited, sometimes in one of the Amerindian languages, over this loudspeaker early in the morning, before each mass, and also at 9 pm. A painted statue of Saint Anne and her child Mary is the centerpiece of the shrine, flanked by two gilded-winged angels bowing in reverence. Another large white monument of the mother and her child, placed above a Government of Alberta cairn, stands at the entrance of the site.<sup>16</sup> Votive candles line the west entrance of the shrine, and crutches and canes hang on the wall near its east entrance, allegedly left there by those who have miraculously healed from untreatable ailments.

Furthermore, looking at newspaper photographs over the years of the pilgrims, and attending and witnessing the pilgrimage itself, one is struck by the piety and devotion of many of the followers, both during the official ceremonies, and on their own time. Elderly people wade far out into the lake fully clothed, holding onto each other or onto their grandchildren for support. Sometimes several members of one family walk out into the lake together. Elderly women link arms and say the rosary out loud in their own language while sitting or kneeling in front of the outdoor statue of Sainte Anne. Young families, sometimes with newborn children, stand in lengthy line ups to receive blessings from Oblate fathers

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<sup>14</sup> Jessica Buresi, Personal Observation at Lac Ste-Anne Pilgrimages, July 2009, 2010. This year’s schedule is posted on a link from the Lac Ste-Anne Pilgrimage website, <http://www.lsap.ca/2007schedule.htm> (accessed July 21, 2012).

<sup>15</sup> Personal Observation at Lac Ste-Anne Pilgrimages, July 2009, 2010. PAA OMI Collection, Argan, Glen, “Pilgrims drawn to Lac Ste. Anne,” 9. PAA OMI Collection, “Historical Data at Lac Ste-Anne 1844-1980” in *Lac Ste-Anne Codex Historicus 1889-1899*, and documents concerning the first pilgrimages. Accession 71.220 Box 99 File 4214.

<sup>16</sup> Drouin, *Lac Ste-Anne Sakahigan*, 92. In both English and French, the following inscription appears on the cairn: “Site of the First Catholic Mission in Alberta organized by Father J. B. Thibault in 1845 and served by the Oblate Missionaries since 1852.” Ibid., 92.

who sanctify each individual as well as the many religious articles, holy water and holy oil pilgrims buy to protect themselves from harm.<sup>17</sup>

Representations of First Nations figures and some indigenous symbolism are also present, though these are often framed or reformulated in old Catholic terms. At times, Aboriginal cultural activities also take place. Images of saints have long been a part of traditional Catholic pilgrimage symbolism, and at Lac Ste-Anne, images of the “Mohawk Saint,” Kateri Tekakwitha who was beatified in 1980 as “Blessed Catherine Tekakwitha,” are often seen, as a painting in the shrine, or on items such as fridge magnets sold at the store. Saint Kateri, the “Lily of the Mohawks,” is the focus of this year’s pilgrimage.<sup>18</sup> During the processions, an attendant leads the crowd bearing a cross with a First Nations Jesus on it.<sup>19</sup> Another indigenous Jesus floats high above the congregation in the shrine, different coloured ribbons flowing from the wounds in his hands and feet. One of three wooden chairs where the officiating priest and his helpers sit has an eagle carved into it. The podium features a multicoloured cross within a circle, where three different animals and a human figure are seen, representing the four directions, different communities of people, and perhaps different spirits. Prayers and sermons are said in Cree by Oblate fathers, and sometimes traditional First Nations singing and drumming take place before the start of mass.

However, although many people at the pilgrimage participate in the Catholic rites of the event, it is likely that many also do not. Many stay near their tents, trucks and R.V.’s, socializing with other members of their communities, some of them eating and selling moose and caribou meat shipped down to the pilgrimage with them. Authorities throughout the years have overlooked the sale of this meat despite the potential breach of

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<sup>17</sup> "Lac St. Anne Pilgrimage: Gathered in Unity," <http://www.lsap.ca> (accessed March 18, 11). Oblate fathers are not the only people blessing pilgrims. Unofficial “healers” also come to the site to bless and heal people. Simon, *Healing Waters: The Pilgrimage to Lac Ste. Anne*, 41.

<sup>18</sup> Alan Greer, *Mohawk Saint: Catherine Tekakwitha and the Jesuits* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 195. “Lac St. Anne Pilgrimage: Gathered in Unity,” <http://www.lsap.ca/2007schedule.htm> (accessed July 21, 2012) Our Lady of Guadalupe, the “Black Virgin” of Mexico, also seems to be an important figure for certain pilgrims, who leave votive candles in front of her image in the shrine. Personal Observation at Lac Ste-Anne Pilgrimages, July 2009, 2010.

<sup>19</sup> Simon, *Healing Waters: The Pilgrimage to Lac Ste. Anne*, 75.

health and hygiene codes, according to Murleen Crossen, an Alberta Métis activist and member of the Lac Ste-Anne Pilgrimage board, and Marlene Morin, also Métis and executive director of the board.<sup>20</sup> Many people at the pilgrimage also walk to the booths and tents of the unofficial “market,” set up on private property across a stream which marks the border of the pilgrimage landsite. There they buy all sorts of wares from both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal vendors.

Many questions arise regarding this event. Why is one of the largest Catholic pilgrimages in North America primarily attended by First Nations’ and Métis people? Father Lestanc’s experience in Brittany is recounted in the Oblate archives, as well as in *Lac Ste-Anne Sakahigan*, a slim volume written by Oblate archivist Émeric Drouin in 1973.<sup>21</sup> Lestanc’s story is yet another example of “miraculous” or “supernatural” visions which were often the instigator of pilgrimages across Europe, at least from a traditional Catholic perspective. Was Lestanc’s experience in France so powerful and convincing as to “inspire” indigenous pilgrims to come to this North American shrine, or were there other reasons and stories behind the pilgrimage’s beginnings? What was the role of the Catholic missionaries in developing the importance of this place? If they were the principal instigators of the event, how did they manage to convince indigenous people to keep coming back? Did First Nations people already have their own reasons for coming? Was it always an indigenous pilgrimage? What can the history of the Lac Ste-Anne Pilgrimage teach us about the role of missionary work in a colonialist context and conversion? Can it teach us anything about Aboriginal spirituality and Aboriginal culture?

Because a pilgrimage changes and develops through time, and is a “transitory phenomenon,” studying its history poses certain problems.<sup>22</sup> Anthropology professor James J. Preston states that:

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<sup>20</sup> Morin, *Interview at St. Albert*. Mrs. Murleen Crossen, *Interview at Lac Ste-Anne Pilgrimage Rectory and Office*, February 5th, 2010.

<sup>21</sup> Drouin, *Lac Ste-Anne Sakahigan*, 52. PAA OMI Collection, *Lac Ste-Anne Codex Historicus 1900-1964* Accession 71.220, Box 99, File 4215, 18.

<sup>22</sup> Preston, *Spiritual Magnetism: An Organizing Principle for the Study of Pilgrimage*, 32.

Pilgrimage defies the kind of compartmentalized analysis associated with the present style of Western thought that organizes everything into discrete disciplines of inquiry.... No single discipline or theoretical perspective can do it justice. We are challenged, then, to contemplate the potential power of a multidisciplinary methodology.<sup>23</sup>

Like pilgrimages worldwide, the one at Lac Ste-Anne is multifaceted, evolving, and hard to define. A plethora of sources can be used to study it, including as shall be seen, a church log solely dedicated to the pilgrimage, that was kept for seventy-five years from 1889 - 1964. Preston states that “spiritual magnetism” is not “an intrinsic ‘holy’ quality of mysterious origins” that emanates on its own from a pilgrimage site, but that rather “spiritual magnetism derives from human concepts and values, via historical, geographical, social, and other forces that coalesce in a sacred center.”<sup>24</sup> Thus, though this study relies primarily on historical analysis, the methodology that was adopted for this thesis was one inspired by Preston’s use of the term “spiritual magnetism,” and adopts a multi and interdisciplinary approach including Church, environmental and ethno history, as well as religious studies, anthropology, archaeology and geography. Preston identifies four main variables which “endow” a pilgrimage place with spiritual magnetism: 1) miraculous cures, 2) apparitions of supernatural beings, 3) sacred geography, and 4) difficulty of access. The first three variables are definitely applicable to the Lac Ste-Anne Pilgrimage, though the fourth is not. Stories of healing or “miraculous cures” have been linked to the pilgrimage since its inception, and some people continue to attribute overcoming pain, illness, hardship, substance addiction, and alcoholism to the place.<sup>25</sup> Furthermore, worldwide, miraculous cures attract many pilgrims to sacred centres which are often located at or near natural sources of water, such as streams or hot mineral springs, which

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 33.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Mrs. Mary Rain, *Interview at Paul First Nation Band Administration Office*, March 11th, 2010. Mr. Louie Auger, *Interview at Ermineskin Band Waste Removal and Treatment Office*, February 4th, 2010. Father Goutier, *Interview at Foyer Lacombe*. Crossen, *Interview at Lac Ste-Anne Pilgrimage Rectory and Office*. Father Maurice McMahon O.M.I., *Interview at Lac Ste-Anne Pilgrimage*, July 19, 2010. The growing importance at the pilgrimage of the “Cursillo” movement from Spain, is largely dedicated to solving addictions issues, and there has long been a night set aside for “pledging” one of the Alcoholics Anonymous steps. See “Lac St. Anne Pilgrimage: Gathered in Unity,” <http://www.lsap.ca/2007schedule.htm>.



are frequently associated with healing. Some of these cures “involve the reported intervention of a deity or saint....”<sup>26</sup> Thus, the first two variables precisely apply to Lac Ste-Anne, where a natural source of water, a lake, and the power of Saint Anne, a mothering and nurturing figure akin to Mother Mary, was reported to heal people.

The “spiritual magnetism” of the place at Lac Ste-Anne from a Catholic perspective, is thus ascribed to the perceived healing power of Saint Anne, who “spoke” to Father Jean-Marie Lestanc in France. From a more indigenous perspective, it is attached on the one hand to the “sacred geography” of the lake and surroundings where First Nations peoples had gathered for many centuries previously, but also to the believed appearance of certain portentous and extraordinary objects or beings such as large snakes or meteorites, which will not be discussed here, but could form the basis of a future study, with more of a focus on oral interviews.

It should be noted that, in order first to understand the strong Catholic content of the event, this thesis begins by addressing Catholic Church or religious history, going back to very early times in Europe. Church history in general is not well studied or known, particularly in Canada’s North and West, according to Robert Choquette, and needs to be examined if one is to understand its influence in Canadian missionary-native contact history, particularly in relationship to Aboriginal conversion.<sup>27</sup> Part of this thesis’s goal is to raise an awareness of the extent to which the Catholic Church had perfected its conversion techniques, and how zealous it had become in what was known as ultramontane theology by the nineteenth century, when the Lac Ste-Anne Pilgrimage was initiated. The Oblates had inherited the organization, adaptability, and powerful precedents developed

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<sup>26</sup> The cures range from the healing of various medical or physical ills, to mental conditions, to forms of “social healing,” such as the strengthening and reunification of a family, or the gaining of a job. Many of the most known nineteenth century Christian pilgrimage centers developed from the stories of natural cures. With the exception of the pilgrimage to Fatima (Portugal), where penance rather than healing is the emphasis, other Catholic shrines at Knock (Ireland), Lourdes (France), and La Salette (France), are all “healing” pilgrimages attributed to the miraculous appearance of the Virgin Mary. Often specific and special sources of waters, (or, as at Knock, pouring rain that does not affect the visions who keep the ground dry beneath them) are involved. These sites continue to attract hundreds of thousands of pilgrims every year. Preston, *Spiritual Magnetism: An Organizing Principle for the Study of Pilgrimage*, 33.

<sup>27</sup> Robert Choquette, *The Oblate Assault on Canada's Northwest* (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 1995), 24.

over the centuries by the Catholic Church. Gatherings for Catechism, worship and prayer, as well as healing pilgrimages and the miraculous power associated to the mediation of a saint, his or her relics, and usually a nearby source of water, had long been used as effective conversion tools among people from all walks of life, but by the nineteenth century, they had become particularly targeted towards the poor and illiterate peasant classes in Europe. As shall be seen throughout this paper, the early Oblates constantly relied on these traditions at the first pilgrimages, and told the associated narratives, including Father Lestanc's story, the story of Ste-Anne d'Auray in Brittany, France, and the healing miracles that had taken place as a result of Saint Anne's intercession, in order to create and maintain their own "spiritual magnetism" linking the mission site and the lake, and to convince more people to participate in the activities. They did not hesitate to refer to these precedents, and carefully applied these tools, no matter how foreign, in the North West Territories among First Nations people.

However, regional First Nations people also had their own practices, stories, beliefs and elements of "spiritual magnetism" around Lac Ste-Anne. The mostly nomadic ancestors of the Woodland and Plains Cree had almost certainly gathered at the pilgrimage site for centuries, for their "Rites of Solidarity," and/or Renewal and Rebirth ceremonies that were part of their annual seasonal rounds. An archaeological and geographical approach to the archives suggests that likely Lac Ste-Anne had long been a seasonal gathering place for what were various nomadic hunter-gatherer bands, and the site of what fur traders and missionaries later called a "rendez-vous," which was a large gathering characterized by trade and religious ceremony.<sup>28</sup> These gatherings became more frequent beginning in the mid 1850s on the Northwestern Plains, when different First Nations groups and the Métis gathered to coordinate large multi-ethnic buffalo hunts in order to reach the last of the great buffalo herds. There is good reason to believe that these kinds of organizational meetings also took place at Lac Ste-Anne. Thus the place and the lake had undoubtedly been long infused with both practical and sacred significance that certainly predated the pilgrimage and very likely contact with Euro-Canadian newcomers.

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<sup>28</sup> David Meyer and Paul C. Thistle, "Saskatchewan River Rendezvous Centers and Trading Posts: Continuity in a Cree Social Geography," *Ethnohistory* 42, no. 3 (Summer 1995): 435.

The archival research was undertaken in the fonds of the Catholic missionary order of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate, at the Provincial Archives of Alberta in Edmonton. The *Codex Historicus* was the daily log of a Catholic mission, kept by the priest in charge of the parish. The Lac Ste-Anne *Codex Historicus*, which was the official log of the Lac Ste-Anne mission, and written by various Oblate fathers, existed for over seventy-five years. The discussion here focuses on this *Codex*, which, as shall be seen, appeared in 1870 (though the mission had existed since 1844), disappeared in 1872, then reappeared again, but as a special *Codex* for the pilgrimage itself in 1889. Aside from some gaps of a few years, this renewed pilgrimage *Codex* was kept until 1964. As this thesis seeks to better understand the origins of the event, it begins by analyzing the earliest 1870-2 mission *Codex*, written at the end of the buffalo years, and just before the numbered Treaties were signed, followed by an examination of the pilgrimage *Codex* from 1889 to 1896, with some references to the later *Codex*. The year 1896 was chosen as an end point to this study, as that is the year the first Oblate father in charge of serving the renewed mission, Father Zéphirin Lizée, who wrote the *Codex* for the first nine pilgrimages, left for Hobbema and was replaced by Father Valentin Végréville, O.M.I.<sup>29</sup> By the time Father Lizée left, the Lac Ste-Anne Pilgrimage practices were well established. Further, Father Végréville's focus for his portion of the *Codex*, tied to his nationalist character as also revealed in his personal journals, would require further analysis, beyond the scope of this study.

However, we cannot count solely on the *Codex* in order to determine the history and general spirit of the Lac Ste-Anne Pilgrimage, as it was intended as a record of the Church's good work, and at times was cited in the "Mission" journals of the Oblate congregation, which was meant to show adherents in Europe and Quebec the success of the Oblate missionaries in Western Canada.<sup>30</sup> Thus, since nearby Treaty Indians were involved

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<sup>29</sup> "Father Zéphirin Lizée, O.M.I." in *Oblates at Rest: Life and Work Sketches of the Oblate Missionaries in the Saint-Albert Cemetery*, ed. Father Antonio Duhaime, O.M.I. (Edmonton: Inland Printing Ltd., 1983), 103. "Father Valentin Végréville, O.M.I." in *ibid.*, 120. PAA OMI Collection, *Lac Ste-Anne Codex Historicus 1889-1899* Accession 71.220, Box 99, File 4214, 42-3. Drouin, *Lac Ste-Anne Sakahigan*, 81. Brian M. Owens and Claude M. Roberto, eds., *A Guide to the Archives of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate: Province of Alberta-Saskatchewan* (Edmonton: The Missionary Oblates. Grandin Province, 1989), 111-12.

<sup>30</sup> PAA OMI Collection, "Pèlerinage au Lac Ste-Anne," *Missions de la Congrégation des Oblats de Marie Immaculée*. (Décembre 1931), 758-761 (photocopy).

in the event, this discussion also uses a series of correspondence in the RG 10 files of the Department of Indian Affairs Black series from 1886 to 1890. These letters reveal that just prior to his initiation of the pilgrimage, Father Superior Jean-Marie Lestanc had been in a bitter conflict with a Presbyterian minister regarding the opening of a school for Cree Chief Enoch's band in Stoney Plain, a community which lies 40 km south east of Lac Ste-Anne.

Finally, besides archival work, the beginning of an oral research program was developed, which was accepted by the university ethics board, and was initially intended to be a main component of this study. To that end, I travelled to the pilgrimage for the summers of 2009 and 2010, volunteered at the concession stand and in the gift shop, and met and talked to as many people as I could.<sup>31</sup> Thirteen people were interviewed in the months following the initial encounters, including five Oblate priests who either have been or continue to be involved in the pilgrimage, three Métis women with official and/or executive roles in the pilgrimage, and five First Nations people from the Paul Nakoda Band, the Ermineskin band and the Siksika Nation.<sup>32</sup> From these interviews emerged a somewhat different remembered past than that presented in the *Codex*, more potent indigenous reasons for the “spiritual magnetism” of Lac Ste-Anne, as well as great insight into the complexities of indigenous conversion. Though a formal, in depth history of the pilgrimage primarily based on oral interviews has been left for future work, interviewees are cited at times in order to provide an idea of the current scope of the pilgrimage, and it is hoped that the meetings with this relatively small sampling of people can someday form the basis of a larger project. This oral history component also provided me, as I developed a more traditional, archival-based study, far greater understanding and sympathy of the larger

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<sup>31</sup> I formally received permission from the University of Calgary Conjoint Faculties Research Ethics Board (CFREB) to conduct these interviews, on December 17<sup>th</sup>, 2009.

<sup>32</sup> Auger, *Interview at Ermineskin Band Waste Removal and Treatment Office*. Mrs. Yvonne Blackhorse, *Interview at Blackfoot Crossing*, February 26th, 2010. Crossen, *Interview at Lac Ste-Anne Pilgrimage Rectory and Office*. Father Goutier, *Interview at Foyer Lacombe*. Father Jim Holland O.M.I., *Interview at Sacred Heart Church of the First Peoples*, February 4th, 2010. Doris Lirondelle, *Interview at Northland Mall, Calgary*, August 19th, 2010. Father McMahon, *Interview at Lac Ste-Anne Pilgrimage*. Morin, *Interview at St. Albert*. Nakoda (Stoney) Elder Woman (anonymous), *Interview at Paul First Nation Band Council Chamber, Mary Rain present*, March 11th, 2010. Oblate Father (anonymous), *Interview at Foyer Lacombe*, February 3rd, 2010. Mr. Arthur Rain, *Interview at Paul First Nation Band Administration Office*, March 11th, 2010. Mary Rain, *Interview at Paul First Nation Band Administration Office*. Father Jean-Paul Vantroys, O.M.I., *Interview at Foyer Lacombe*, February 3rd, 2010.

complexities and human dimensions of this event and more critical readings of the historical documents themselves.

In the last twenty years, the literature regarding the contact, exchange and conversion between missionary newcomers and indigenous people has ranged in approaches from, on one end, understanding it as an exploitative imposition brought about by the various “conquering” Christian missionaries working in tandem with the federal government, to, on the other, a benign “choice” made by the First Nations people who knew how to “play the system.” One extreme is to say that First Nations peoples were brainwashed victims, and forced through the mechanisms of colonialism to accept this new world view. Certainly Aboriginal peoples in Canada (similarly to indigenous peoples throughout the world) were betrayed by senior government officials, their families destroyed by disease and starvation, their lands taken over by larger settler populations, their children taken away by authorities and put into residential schools, and their communities intruded and imposed upon by Christian missionaries. This kind of strife, particularly the stripping away of one’s family, land, and culture, on its own, even without missionary involvement, no doubt could lead anyone to fundamentally examine and question the nature of power, truth, and the divine, and to change their own worldview. However, to overstate the problems Aboriginal people were faced with in the late nineteenth century, and attribute this directly to their conversion, fails to address the fact that First Nations people pragmatically adapted to a new reality, and were likely also interested in the ideas behind a new religion. It risks the presentation of them as “simple” and superstitious people who were somehow “tricked” into adopting Christianity. The goal in this thesis is to provide a more balanced view both of conversion and spirituality among First Nations people, and of the intents and perceptions of the Oblates. This paper incorporates the view that Aboriginal people were definitely undergoing crisis at the end of the nineteenth century, were in a vulnerable position, and were dealt with according to the goals, biases and prejudices of both the British Victorian Empire, and French Ultramontane Catholicism. Yet meetings between Aboriginal peoples and the Oblates were also cultural exchanges and the Oblates took on many roles among the Aboriginal peoples, who responded to their efforts in varied ways, and for complex reasons. Before looking at some

of the more recent literature, it is useful to also look at the older accounts of the Oblates' work, as they reveal to a certain degree, how the Oblate missionaries recorded events in the archives.

Early works about the Oblates, such as Oblate Father Léon Hermant's biography of Bishop Vital Grandin, *Thy Cross My Stay*, published in 1948, tended to be written by Oblates themselves, and mostly consisted of biographies of the lives and contributions of other Oblates who were considered to be outstanding missionaries.<sup>33</sup> They were generally accounts of the missionaries' adventures on the frontier and their reportedly heroic and benevolent endeavors. More recent scholars have pointed out that these works are examples of "triumphalist hagiography," that they are more narrative than analytical, and that they were denominationally biased.<sup>34</sup> Sarah Carter's description of Protestant Missionary literature in Canada applies equally to early Oblate literature. Coining the subject of the works "missionary heroism and martyrdom," she states that in these books:

The energetic and courageous heroes of these sagas were prepared to face and conquer all difficulties, confident that they were participating in a great scheme of progress aimed at rescuing the shamed and benighted from superstition and ignorance.<sup>35</sup>

Although indigenous peoples are present in these early narratives, they are often referred to in patronizing terms such as "our Indians" and are invariably seen as strange "others" who need to be shown the true way of heaven.<sup>36</sup> Thus, although this literature certainly highlighted the culture of the missionaries at the time, and what they valued, it can only be

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<sup>33</sup> Léon Hermant O.M.I., *Thy Cross My Stay: The Life of the Servant of God Vital Justin Grandin* (Toronto: The Mission Press, 1948), 83-4.

<sup>34</sup> Jacqueline Gresko, "Gender and Mission: The Founding Generations of the Sisters of Saint Ann and the Oblates of Mary Immaculate in British Columbia, 1858-1914" (Doctor of Philosophy, University of British Columbia, 1999), 34. Vincent J. McNally, *The Lord's Distant Vineyard: A History of the Oblates and the Catholic Community in British Columbia* (Edmonton: The University of Alberta Press and Western Canadian Publishers, 2000), xv.

<sup>35</sup> Sarah Carter, "The Missionaries' Indian: The Publications of John McDougall, John Maclean and Egerton Ryerson Young," *Prairie Forum* 9, no. 1 (1984): 27.

<sup>36</sup> David Mulhall, *Will to Power: The Missionary Career of Father Morice* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1986), 175-6.

used very carefully as a critical source, as it presented a “distorted, one-sided view of contact between the Indian and the white man.”<sup>37</sup>

Hence, in the 1970’s and 80’s historians became more critical of missionaries. They began to reveal the evangelists’ eccentric, authoritarian and difficult personalities, their lack of respect for and rejection of indigenous spiritual practices, and their role and complicity in fundamentally altering Aboriginal society. In shedding light on the very real power of the missionaries, however, and the effects on First Nations’ cultures, the first critics then went too far: they neglected both Aboriginal agency, and sometimes, the more “humanitarian” side of the missionaries. Robert Choquette for example, in *The Oblate Assault on the North West*, treats indigenous conversion as a calculated and militarily planned “attack” on the Canadian North West by the Catholic Oblate missionaries. Though his work provides very useful information on the position of the French Catholic Church in the nineteenth century, and shows how the Oblate fathers were at “the cutting edge” of evangelizing the Canadian North West, “whose objectives and battle strategy were set by Euro-Canadian ultramontane Catholicism,” it does not really address the nature of conversion and belief among First Nations people.<sup>38</sup> There is little about the Native response in his book. Although Choquette successfully shows that the reinvigorated nineteenth century Catholic church and its Oblate “deployment” were a zealous and powerful force to be reckoned with in “the New World,” he also calls Aboriginal people “victims,” and there is little room in his analysis for genuine indigenous interest in Christian ideas, or other more practical or even anti-colonial reasons for conversion.<sup>39</sup> All the same, Choquette’s approach is part of a wider literature that sees missionary work as a force of colonization inflicted upon indigenous people.

In the 1980s, however, scholars also began to look at the missionary role in its context. Margaret Whitehead took a groundbreaking look at missionaries in general and Catholic Oblates in particular. In her 1981 book, *The Cariboo Mission: A History of the*

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<sup>37</sup> Carter, *The Missionaries' Indian: The Publications of John McDougall, John Maclean and Egerton Ryerson Young*: 27.

<sup>38</sup> Choquette, *The Oblate Assault on Canada's Northwest*, 21.

<sup>39</sup> “The Oblates frequently stood at the point of contact between the white juggernaut and the proud Indian who was becoming, more often than not, a victim.” Ibid., 20-1.

*Oblates*, she blended interviews of nuns and priests with Oblate correspondence and other sources such as report abstracts of land surveyors, and revealed the complicated extent and consequences of their work. John Webster Grant, in *Moon of Wintertime: Missionaries and the Indians of Canada in Encounters since 1534*, examined the history of relations between missionaries of all denominations and the Native peoples in Canada from 1534 to 1984, and showed that in the context of the treaties, starvation, the disappearance of the buffalo, the appearance of the Canadian Pacific Railway and disease, the role missionaries played was very complicated.<sup>40</sup> As shall be seen, this context was also important in 1889 at Lac Ste-Anne.

The Oblates themselves have taken the initiative, at least in the Canadian West, to produce critical historical studies of Oblate work, in the formation of the Western Oblate Project in 1986, and in at least four Oblate symposia that have been held in Edmonton throughout the 1990s.<sup>41</sup> They have hoped that the important yet controversial work of these missionaries, as well as Oblate theology and culture, can be more widely understood. The initial inspiration for the Western Oblate Project, edited by Raymond Huel, was Gaston Carrière, O.M.I., who published his first volume of a twelve-tome work in 1957, entitled *Histoire documentaire de la congrégation des Oblats de Marie Immaculée dans l'Est du Canada*.<sup>42</sup> It is a history of the Oblates of Eastern Canada in documents. Four books have been subsequently published in Western Canada under this project: in 1995, Oblate father Donat Levasseur's *Les Oblats de Marie Immaculée dans l'Ouest et le Nord du Canada, 1845-1967* and Mary McCarthy's *From the Great River to the Ends of the Earth: Oblate Missions to the Dene, 1847-1921*; in 1996, Raymond Huel's *Proclaiming the Gospel to the*

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<sup>40</sup> John Webster Grant, *Moon of Wintertime: Missionaries and the Indians of Canada in Encounter since 1534* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1984), 150.

<sup>41</sup> Raymond J. A. Huel, *Proclaiming the Gospel to the Indians and the Métis* (Edmonton: The University of Alberta Press and Western Canadian Publishers, 1996), XII, XV. Raymond Huel, ed., *Western Oblate Studies 2: Proceedings of the Second Symposium on the History of the Oblates in Western and Northern Canada, Faculté Saint-Jean, Edmonton, July 1991* (Queenston, ON: Edwin Mellen Press, 1992). Raymond Huel, ed., *Western Oblate Studies 1: Proceedings of the First Symposium on the History of the Oblates in Western and Northern Canada, Faculté Saint-Jean, Edmonton, May 1989*. (Edmonton: Western Canadian Publishers and Institut de Recherche de la Faculté Saint-Jean, 1990).

<sup>42</sup> Carrière's work is referenced by Donat Levasseur, O.M.I., *Les Oblats de Marie Immaculée dans l'Ouest et le Nord du Canada, 1845-1967 : esquisse historique* (Edmonton: The University of Alberta Press and Western Canadian Publishers, 1995), vii.



*Indians and the Métis: The Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate in Western Canada, 1845-1945*; and in 2000, Vincent McNally's *The Lord's Distant Vineyard: A History of the Oblates and the Catholic Community in British Columbia*.

Donat Levasseur's is a very useful "narrative overview" or survey of the Oblate orders' history and workings in the Canadian North and West.<sup>43</sup> McCarthy's work is an examination of the socio-cultural context in which the Oblates operated in Canada's North among the Dene peoples and the complex cultural transmissions that took place there.<sup>44</sup> Significant to her study was her extensive use of primary sources at a time when they were not so readily available to people outside of the Congregation. Huel's book argues that although the Oblate approach was intolerant to Aboriginal culture and spirituality, and that full conversion to Catholicism was practically the same as erasing Native culture, the Oblate fathers nonetheless often served as "guides and protectors of Aboriginal communities," inasmuch as they "became the logical intermediar[ies] between Indians and an impersonal and often uncaring bureaucracy."<sup>45</sup> Hence according to Huel, the missionaries did "humanitarian" work in so much as they genuinely believed they were acting in the best interests of their converts and saving them from extinction. Raymond Huel claims that Vincent McNally's book, the fourth in the Western Oblate series, is "the first scholarly and comprehensive history of the Oblate presence in British Columbia."<sup>46</sup> McNally, who was Professor of church history and patristic theology at Sacred Heart School of Theology in Wisconsin, is more critical than Huel of the proselytizers' efforts:

In their now well-known *Apology* of 1991, the Oblates seemed to realize their own spiritual poverty in their historic treatment of the Native people and their culture, and especially their spirituality that the Oblates tended to dismiss as largely irrelevant, if not evil.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> Ibid. See also Huel, *Proclaiming the Gospel to the Indians and the Métis*. IX.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid. McCarthy, *From the Great River to the Ends of the Earth: Oblate Missionaries to the Dene, 1847-1921*.

<sup>45</sup> Huel, *Proclaiming the Gospel to the Indians and the Métis*, 199.

<sup>46</sup> Vincent J. McNally, *The Lord's Distant Vineyard: A History of the Oblates and the Catholic Community in British Columbia*, x.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., xvii.

However, as shall be seen in chapter three, this comment about dismissing Aboriginal people, spirituality and culture as evil, will apply but with certain nuances when reading Oblate Father Vital Fourmond's observations of First Nations ceremonies at Lac Ste-Anne.

On the other end of the spectrum, scholars wishing to emphasize or re-establish Indigenous "agency" have a tendency to misread or over exaggerate Aboriginal peoples' effective strategies of resistance, adaptation and survival when faced with momentous disruptive forces, and to downplay the very real influence of colonial power. Tina Loo for example, has been criticized for over stating First Nations agency and their capitalizing on their roles as guides and "watchmen" using colonial "law" to their "advantage," thus downplaying the very real colonial mechanisms of power that were forcing indigenous people to give up their lands and traditional way of life, as exemplified by the repression of the potlatch ceremonies, as well as their religion and language.<sup>48</sup>

There is yet a growing literature that examines the complex acceptance/integration of Christianity by proactive First Nations agents. These works suggest ways that, in changing circumstances, some First Nation people converted or even became active "agents" of the Anglican Church Missionary Society, the Oblates or the Methodist missionaries.<sup>49</sup> Tolly Bradford talks about the "remaking of indigeneity" by two indigenous catechists in the British Empire, Cree Reverend Henry Budd in Canada, and Xhosa missionary Tiyo Soga in South Africa. He argues that both men created a new more modern and globalized "indigenous" identity for themselves that was based not only on their Christian missionary zeal, but also on two elements which their Christianity "could not deny: their indigenous language and their ties to ancestral land."<sup>50</sup> Winona Wheeler examined the mission journals written from 1851-1884, by her grandfather's grandfather, the Reverend Charles Pratt, (Askenootow), who for thirty-three years was an Assiniboine-

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<sup>48</sup> Robin Brownlie and Mary Ellen Kelm, "Desperately Seeking Absolution: Native Agency as Colonialist Alibi?" in *Out of the Background: Readings on Canadian Native History*, eds. Ken S. Coates and Robin Fisher, 2nd ed. (Scarborough, Ont.: Irwin Publishing, 1998), 217-19.

<sup>49</sup> Derek Whitehouse-Strong, "'Because I Happen to be a Native Clergyman': The Impact of Race, Ethnicity, Status and Gender on Native Agents of the Church Missionary Society in the Nineteenth Century Canadian North-West" (Doctor of Philosophy in History, University of Manitoba, 2004).

<sup>50</sup> Tolly Bradford, *Prophetic Identities: Indigenous Missionaries on British Colonial Frontiers, 1850-75*, 2.

Cree Catechist with the Anglican Church Missionary Society.<sup>51</sup> Basing herself in part on Hayden White's ideas, she argues for a "rhetorical approach to history – to consider the active role of language, texts and narrative structures, in the creation and description of historical reality," which is essentially submitting historical texts to the same kind of literary analysis one would with fiction.<sup>52</sup> She shows how this rhetorical approach must be used in order to come to terms with Pratt's conventional reliance on Anglo-Anglican "Salvationist discourse" in his journal, but also to reveal, in his use of the "Poor Indian" and "Complaint" genres, his implicit support and sympathy for his people, as is more evident in oral histories.<sup>53</sup> Winona Wheeler is joined by other historians, such as Sarah Carter and Bruce Trigger in raising issues about interpreting Native conversion in written sources, or more generally, about the use of missionary and fur trade records to gain an idea of Aboriginal activities.<sup>54</sup> They argue that if archival documents are used at all, they must be read taking into consideration the context, racism, biases and perspectives of the recording onlookers. As shall be seen, this rhetorical approach will largely be used in chapter three when reading Oblate Father Vital Fourmond's writing from 1870-1872.

Though local knowledge, local newspaper articles and internet sites offer short histories of the Lac Ste-Anne Pilgrimage, very little of an academic nature has been written on the event, few people have read the pilgrimage *Codex*, and no official oral histories have been compiled regarding the gathering. Oblate archivist and priest Father Émeric Drouin published a short history of the Lac Ste-Anne mission and pilgrimage in 1973, *Lac Ste-Anne Sakahigan*, still sold today at the pilgrimage store for \$1.00. It is useful primarily as he was the first to compile information specifically about the pilgrimage from the Oblate archives. It mentions the strong Métis aspect of the pilgrimage, highlights various religious high points from the *Codex*, and provides numbers of pilgrims throughout the years.

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<sup>51</sup> Winona Wheeler, "The Journals and Voices of a Church of England Native Catechist: Askenootow (Charles Pratt), 1851 - 1884," in *Reading Beyond Words: Contexts for Native History*, eds. Jennifer S. H. Brown and Elizabeth Vibert, 2nd ed. (Peterborough, ON: Broadview Press, 2003).

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 249.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, 250 -1.

<sup>54</sup> Bruce Trigger, *Natives and Newcomers: Canada's "Heroic Age" Reconsidered* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1985), 168. Carter, "The Missionaries' Indian: The Publications of John McDougall, John Maclean and Egerton Ryerson Young," 27.

However, he does not critically analyze the relationship between the Oblates and the indigenous people, nor address the colonialist context of the beginnings of the pilgrimage. He further betrays somewhat of a denominational bias. Drouin's work is treated here almost as a primary source, as in some ways, it can be classified in the triumphant hagiographical narratives mentioned previously, though it has more detailed footnotes.

Anthropologist Alan Morinis devoted some attention to the pilgrimage in 1992 as part of a collection of studies on such events entitled *Sacred Journeys: The Anthropology of Pilgrimage*.<sup>55</sup> His analysis, based on what he calls "persistent peregrination," which is the "transmutation of pilgrimage traditions," is a good theoretical framework for explaining how a pilgrimage can continue and accommodate drastic cultural change.<sup>56</sup> Morinis essentially argued that the Lac Ste-Anne Pilgrimage was initiated at a time when traditional indigenous summer ceremonies had been abandoned, leaving a "gaping cultural void into which the new religion stepped," and that it is a continuation of the Sun Dance tradition.<sup>57</sup> Certainly, in the late nineteenth century, the Lac Ste-Anne Pilgrimage, for Aboriginal people, became an event that somewhat fulfilled the social and cultural functions that had been previously done so by ceremonial traditions and buffalo hunting meetings. However there are problems with his thesis, particularly with respect to the actual "disappearance" of Sun Dances, which will be discussed more fully in chapter three. Further, Catholic First Nations informants make strong distinctions between their powwows and/or Sun Dances which often take place today during what they call "Indian Days," and the Catholic pilgrimage, which they associate with other European or American Catholic pilgrimages and/or even travelling to Rome.<sup>58</sup> Further, Morinis only briefly looks at the historical context of the time, and focuses on Cree prairie peoples, which doesn't explain why later pilgrims, who were Woodland people that did not hunt buffalo or have Sun Dances, started coming to the pilgrimage. Finally he states that the Stoney do not attend the pilgrimage,

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<sup>55</sup> Alan Morinis, "Persistent Peregrination: From Sun Dance to Catholic Pilgrimage among Canadian Prairie Indians," in *Sacred Journeys: The Anthropology of Pilgrimage*, ed. Alan Morinis (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1992).

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, 102.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, 102-3.

<sup>58</sup> Arthur Rain, *Interview at Paul First Nation Band Administration Office*. Mary Rain, *Interview at Paul First Nation Band Administration Office*. Blackhorse, *Interview at Blackfoot Crossing*.

though clearly they do and, according to the *Codex* and oral history, they have been for a very long time as well.<sup>59</sup>

Students of theology and/or those interested in spiritual matters in general have also studied the event at Lac Ste-Anne. Alice Charland wrote a Masters of Theology thesis about the Lac Ste-Anne Pilgrimage in 1994.<sup>60</sup> Her work, a very reflective and personal assessment of the pilgrimage, took great care in trying to be sensitive to what she perceived as the First Nations point of view, while conducting research into primary and secondary sources, including some archival records.

However Charland mostly interpreted the pilgrimage based on her own experience as a Catholic woman, on conversations she had with various professors, and on two days spent interviewing pilgrims at the pilgrimage in 1994. She did not rigorously analyze the documents she used, nor the information she gathered from the informal discussions she had with people at the event, but simply cited them and then interpreted them, sometimes writing as if she were thinking aloud.<sup>61</sup> This led her to make the usual assumption that indigenous people cannot really be “Catholic,” and to fall into an oversimplified secular and anti-clerical interpretation of the role or place of the Oblates in Aboriginal communities. She did not address the very devout Catholicism of many indigenous pilgrims. Furthermore, as mentioned earlier, she unduly charged Father Émeric Drouin as having, “misinterpret[ed] the Cree name Manitou Sakahigan to mean Lake of the Devil.”<sup>62</sup> The word “Manitow” in Cree indicates a powerful spirit, which can either be benevolent (*Kisemanitow*), or malevolent, (*Macimanitow*) which Drouin clearly understood as is

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<sup>59</sup> The Paul and Alexis Stoney Nakoda Nations, as previously seen, host masses at the pilgrimage to this day. Yet Morinis states, “The largest contingent of Indians at the gathering is Cree from Saskatchewan, Alberta, the Northwest Territories, and the northern American states. Next in number are the Chipewyan, followed by the Blackfoot and Dogrib. Although the shrine is located immediately adjacent to the territory and reserves of the Stoney, these people do not attend the pilgrimage because they were missionized by Protestants.” Morinis, *Persistent Peregrination: From Sun Dance to Catholic Pilgrimage among Canadian Prairie Indians*, 106.

<sup>60</sup> Charland, *First Nations and the Lac Ste. Anne Pilgrimage*.

<sup>61</sup> Charland states, “While it is true that the grandmother is often the foundation of Native society, for example the clan mother in the Iroquois nation chooses the chief and monitors him or her, I wonder if there might be more to this explanation.” *Ibid.*, 3.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, 5, 43.

evident in his footnote.<sup>63</sup> In order to offer greater explanation and understanding of this pilgrimage, which in many ways is as much a result of continuity, as well as of change, this thesis is divided into four chapters. Chapter one looks at the long history of Catholic pilgrimage, reaching back to early medieval times, and particularly focusing on the two Counter-Reformation pilgrimages of Ste-Anne d'Auray in Brittany, France, and of Ste-Anne de Beaupré on the shores of the St. Lawrence in Québec. The lengthy description of such traditions might seem out of place in a history of a late nineteenth century event. However, the elaborate ritual and meanings of pilgrimage in the Catholic tradition were well known to both early missionaries implementing the cult of Saint Anne among eastern indigenous peoples, and to the Oblates instigating the event at Lac Ste-Anne. Much of the structure of these devotional rites is only comprehensible by a thorough discussion of the long standing precedents of this tradition. Chapter two discusses the arrival of the first Catholic missionaries in the Canadian North West, the establishment of the Lac Ste-Anne mission, and the subsequent arrival there of the Oblates in 1852 who, it will be shown, were characterized by their zeal and their pragmatism. Special attention will be given to Father Jean-Marie Lestanc's conflict with a Presbyterian minister, a few years before the initiation of the pilgrimage, and his subsequent supernatural summoning in France. Finally, for the first time, a close reading will be applied to the early pilgrimage *Codex*, focusing on how the Oblates implemented the structures and practices discussed in chapter one at the event. Chapter three will then go back in time to 1870 and survey the historical Aboriginal "rendez-vous" precedents for a pilgrimage at the lake. Using Winona Wheeler's methods of rhetorical analysis, and adopting approaches from anthropology, archaeology, geography and environmental history, the chapter will glean information from Oblate Father Vital Fourmond's first Lac Ste-Anne mission *Codex*. Finally, chapter four returns to the original pilgrimage *Codex* beginning in 1889, analyzing in particular two official lists of pilgrims

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<sup>63</sup> For the different kind of Cree and Ojibwa spirits, see Jennifer S. H. Brown and Robert Brightman, eds., *"The Orders of the Dreamed": George Nelson on Cree and Northern Ojibwa Religion and Myth, 1823* (Winnipeg: The University of Manitoba Press, 1988), 35-6, 107-8, 160-1. Note three of this introduction quotes Drouin's explanation of "Devil's Lake." There have also been popular accounts of the pilgrimage. Steve Simon, photojournalist with the *Edmonton Journal*, published a photographic book with a very useful introduction containing some critical historical analysis, and providing clues about the archaeological work done in the region. However his book is primarily a visual work, and does not closely examine primary documents. Steve Simon, *Healing Waters: The Pilgrimage to Lac Ste. Anne*.

names from 1889 and 1890 recorded by Father Zéphirin Lizée, O.M.I., who was stationed at the mission, as well as the specific *Codex* of 1891, which describes what shall be called the First Healing Pilgrimage, where the influence of the Iroquois Métis from the eastern mountains will be revealed. This chapter will uncover the somewhat complicated and more indigenous nature of what finally was not a wholly “Catholic” gathering.

Today, Father Lestanc’s personal supernatural experience of hearing Saint Anne speak to him in France is largely forgotten or unknown to pilgrims at Lac Ste-Anne, and even some Oblate fathers who had worked at the Lac Ste-Anne Pilgrimage, and who still operate in the region do not know of it.<sup>64</sup> Throughout time, the focus and emphasis at the pilgrimage has changed to reflect current cultural practices, beliefs, concerns and priorities. Father Lestanc’s story seems to be important only to those specifically interested in the historical roots of the pilgrimage. Following Vatican II in 1968, the story of, and emphasis on, an Oblate Father Superior’s personal revelation in a foreign country perhaps did not reflect the new openness of the church towards the spiritual experiences of all people, rather than those simply of the priests and clergymen. However it and much of the earliest history of the event, does reveal some important aspects of French Catholic belief and practice at the end of the nineteenth century, and more importantly, how the Church justified its presence in, and claims to, a place already named and considered sacred by indigenous people.

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<sup>64</sup> Personal communication with Oblate Fathers. Goutier, *Interview at Foyer Lacombe*. Holland, *Interview at Sacred Heart Church of the First Peoples*. McMahon, *Interview at Lac Ste-Anne Pilgrimage*. Oblate Father (anonymous), *Interview at Foyer Lacombe*. Vantroys, *Interview at Foyer Lacombe*.

## CHAPTER 1: Saint Anne from France to Canada

Early Christian missionaries were predominantly wanderers who attempted, and usually succeeded, in bringing the word of Christ to far flung and foreign lands. Often, they found success in lands afflicted with hardship; war, famine, sickness, and drought. An overview of the nature and origins of Christian pilgrimage in Europe reveals how intrinsic these journeys were to early European missionary history, and how central they were to the acts of evangelization and conversion to Christianity.. Of particular importance to conversion practice was the tradition of healing miracles in Christian pilgrimages, which were directly related to the cult of the saints and their relics. These age-old missionary goals and conversion methods survived long periods of history and were applied in the late nineteenth century, from the start, at the Lac Ste- Anne Pilgrimage in the Canadian North West. Nineteenth century Catholic missionaries' predecessors had long fine-tuned their experience "healing" and converting Celtic and Gaulish "pagans," then Gothic, Frankish and Saxon "barbarians," followed by various, including Protestant, "heretics," and then in North America, what they perceived as wild "heathens" to the Christian then Catholic faith. Saints, water, and relics were almost always part of the narrative that accompanied early Christian pilgrimage and conversion.

Before addressing the Aboriginal perspective in the following chapters, this first chapter examines the history of pilgrimage from a European Oblate perspective, and highlights the French and Québécois cultural origins of the Lac Ste-Anne Pilgrimage. Culturally, the Lac Ste-Anne Pilgrimage's European origins lie in the north-western French region of Brittany and its neighbouring regions, long time Catholic "strongholds" where these stories about healing saints, water and relics were often told, and the birthplace of most of the first settlers to Quebec. The early *Codex Historicus* of the Lac Ste-Anne Pilgrimage reveals that the Oblates, who were predominantly French and Québécois, brought their heritage with them, and hoped to implant it in the Canadian North West Territories. Furthermore, the healing tradition repeatedly referenced in the early Lac Ste-Anne *Codex* had already been established at two Counter-Reformation French and



Québécois pilgrimages, specifically, that of Ste-Anne-d'Auray in Brittany, France and to Ste-Anne-de Beaufort in Québec.

This chapter is divided into two parts. The first deals with European Christian pilgrimage antecedents, tracing in broad strokes the practices and characteristics of Christian pilgrimage, still somewhat maintained at the Lac Ste-Anne Pilgrimage to this day, from the early European Medieval era to the Counter-Reformation. It places special attention on the French pilgrimage to Auray in this period. The second part examines pilgrimages in the New World, specifically, those of Acadia and New France, where the veneration of Saint Anne was imported by Jesuit missionaries. Some of the earliest pilgrimages, implicating missions to First Nations, were established in the Bras D'Or Lake on Cape Breton Island, Nova Scotia, in Malpeque Bay, Prince Edward Island, and finally, at Beaufort, Québec.

Stories about the appearance of saints, the healing power of water, relics, walking sticks and other physical aids left in churches, and concerns about the taint of commercialism, have long been a part of European pilgrimage tradition. It is worthwhile to look in detail at the long tradition of these devotional practices and concerns, since they came to so clearly inform practices in the Canadian Northwest among Aboriginal pilgrims. Looking at these early practices and rituals will allow us to gain an idea from the *Codex*, what was adopted from previous pilgrimages, what remained or was adapted over time, and what was imported from elsewhere. Furthermore, examining such ancient rituals can help determine how and when indigenous peoples influenced the pilgrimage, and introduced their own practices. Admittedly, the task of separating ancient Christian practices from those adapted or innovated upon by aboriginal pilgrims is difficult. For instance, indigenous elders remember as important the blessing of the lake and water at pilgrimages, and the practice of taking lake water home in jugs.<sup>1</sup> Father Jean-Baptiste Thibault's first action when he founded the Lac Ste-Anne mission in 1844, was to bless the lake and rename it after Sainte Anne, and water is clearly important in Christian custom, in the act

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<sup>1</sup> Mr. Arthur Rain, *Interview at Paul First Nation Band Administration Office*. Nakoda (Stoney) Elder Woman (anonymous), *Interview at Paul First Nation Band Council Chamber*, Mrs. Mary Rain present.

of baptism, and always present in the font at the entrance of a Catholic church.<sup>2</sup> At Lourdes, bringing home bottled water from the spring was and still is very popular. More often than not, there were similarities in pilgrimage and aboriginal traditional activities: indigenous spiritual beliefs about water and the lake itself; their own customs in vision quest and walking and their memory of walking many miles to the pilgrimage; immersing themselves into the lake fully clothed, being healed by a priest, obtaining protection from objects such as holy oil and holy water, praying at the statue, or taking confession in one's own language.<sup>3</sup> It is nonetheless important to suggest that although many of these practices have similar equivalents in traditional indigenous spirituality or symbolism, many are also age-old Catholic traditions. They were adopted during a period of great crisis and change for First Nations people, and adapted over time to suit their own needs and to maintain their own indigenous event. Thus in order to better appreciate the Lac Ste-Anne Pilgrimage as an indigenous pilgrimage the first task is to understand how it was shaped by its powerful and historical Catholic and New World pilgrimage precedents.

When the Oblates of Mary Immaculate officially initiated the Lac Ste-Anne Pilgrimage in 1889, they introduced a spiritual tradition of pilgrimage at least as old as Christianity itself. Pilgrimages date back to the third and fourth centuries with the flight of early Christian monks and nuns into the Egyptian and Syrian deserts, the legal acceptance of Christianity in Rome under Emperor Constantine at the Council of Milan in 313, and then the spread of a new religion among the Barbarian "pagan" peoples of early medieval Western Europe.<sup>4</sup> The word "pilgrimage" itself originates from the Latin word "peregrinus" which means "foreigner." For Cicero, the philosopher and senator of ancient Rome, a "peregrinus" was an outsider and not a Roman, and furthermore "in an

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<sup>2</sup> Terry H. Jones, "New Catholic Dictionary- *Holy Water*," Star Quest Production Network (SQPN), <http://saints.sqpn.com/holy-water/> (accessed May 13th, 2010).

<sup>3</sup> Simon, *Healing Waters: The Pilgrimage to Lac Ste. Anne*. "Lac St. Anne Pilgrimage: Gathered in Unity," <http://www.lsap.ca> (accessed March 18, 11). Fitzpatrick, "20 000 Indians Flock to Shrine in Lac Ste. Ann Pilgrimage."

<sup>4</sup> Pierre-André Sigal, *Les marcheurs de Dieu: pèlerinages et pèlerins au Moyen Age* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1974), 6. Roger Collins, *Early Medieval Europe, 300-1000* (London : Macmillan, 1991), 22.

uncomfortable and legally disadvantaged position.”<sup>5</sup> Derivatives of this word were “peregrinatio,” which was a kind of exile, and denoted “the activity or behaviour of wandering around away from one’s place of origin.”<sup>6</sup> A “peregrinus” was thus a wanderer or a traveller. The meaning of “peregrinus” started to slip from “traveller” to “pilgrim” when people started to go into voluntary exile as an ascetic exercise, living in hardship and deprivation for higher spiritual attainment.<sup>7</sup> The history of Christian pilgrimage is thus intrinsically tied to the origins of Christian monasticism, when, beginning in the third and fourth centuries of this era, men and women of southern Europe and Egypt, such as St. Antony of Alexandria, St. Pachomius, St. Jerome of Bethlehem, the elder and younger Melanias, and Paula, all considered to be the first Christian monks and nuns, left their homes and fled into the desert of Egypt to overcome the tragedies of their lives and devote themselves to God.<sup>8</sup> Fleeing Roman Emperor Diocletian’s persecutions in the early fourth century, some believed that the new Christian church in Rome had lost touch with the original spiritual intents of the martyred apostles, and had succumbed to the trappings and corruptions of institutionalized power.<sup>9</sup> Just as many of the early Oblates were disillusioned and concerned with the upheaval and growing secularism in nineteenth century France, and sought merit in converting the “pagan” peoples of the “New World,” the first Christian “pilgrims” were at odds with the world or society around them, and sought refuge, respite and redemption in a foreign land. Leaving one’s familiar surroundings and undertaking a

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 5. Diana Webb, *Pilgrims and Pilgrimage in the Medieval West* (London: I. B. Tauris Publishers, 1999), 7.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 7. Pierre-André Sigal places the origins of the pilgrimage theme in Biblical tradition, which greatly influenced the medieval period. He explains that “perpetua peregrinatio” meant perpetual exile without the idea of constant displacement, and that in this sense the first “exiled” pilgrim was Abraham who left his home in Ur, southern Mesopotamia to start anew in the land of Canaan, the Promised Land. Another biblical theme that greatly affected Christian spirituality was that of Exodus, where the Jewish tribes also undertook a long walk to the Promised Land. The word “Hebrew” itself means “emigrant” or “passer-by.” Sigal, *Les marcheurs de Dieu: pèlerinages et pèlerins au Moyen Age*, 5. See also James Harpur, *Sacred Tracks: 2000 Years of Christian Pilgrimage* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 10-11.

<sup>7</sup> Sigal, *Les marcheurs de Dieu: pèlerinages et pèlerins au Moyen Age*, 6.

<sup>8</sup> Jonathan Sumption, *Pilgrimage: An Image of Mediaeval Religion* (London: Faber & Faber, 1975), 94-5. Collins, *Early Medieval Europe, 300-1000*, 70-73.

<sup>9</sup> Collins, *Early Medieval Europe, 300-1000*, 11, 14. Philip Schaff, “Third Period: The Church in Union with the Roman Empire, From Constantine the Great to Gregory the Great, a.d. 311-590.” Chapter 4 “The Rise and Progress of Monasticism,” in *History of the Christian Church*, Vol. 3, Christian Classics Ethereal Library [http://www.ccel.org/s/schaff/history/3\\_ch04.htm](http://www.ccel.org/s/schaff/history/3_ch04.htm), (accessed July 6<sup>th</sup>, 2011).

perilous journey through unknown lands and over potentially hostile territories, where people spoke a foreign language, the faithful had an opportunity for mortification and could live alone with God.<sup>10</sup> Thus early Christians began travelling to sites in “the Holy Land,” sanctified by the passage of Christ, or to places where the bodies of the Holy apostles or martyrs were buried.<sup>11</sup> Bede, the eighth century English monk who wrote *An Ecclesiastical History of the English People* stated that, as early as the late 6<sup>th</sup> century, travelling to Rome was becoming more and more important for the leaders of the newly Christianized English/Anglo-Saxon kingdoms, who journeyed there either in thanks when they were healed of illness or, or to be “washed in the fountain of baptism within the threshold of the apostles.”<sup>12</sup> Many hoped to die in Rome or Jerusalem, at the tombs of the saints or the holy apostles, in order to gain direct passage to heaven. In the space of fifty years, four Anglo-Saxon kings retired to die in Rome, whereas, “the Lombard king Ratchis walked to Rome with his wife and children in 749 and accepted the monastic habit at the pope’s hands.”<sup>13</sup>

After the barbarian invasions in Rome of the fifth century, and particularly after the sack of Rome in 410, becoming a missionary among the still pagan Germanic tribes of Europe, and thus bringing the word of God to non-Christians, was added as a motive for becoming a wandering pilgrim.<sup>14</sup> This ideal and practice were especially true for the Irish as of the sixth century, whose “distinctive contribution to the spiritual life of the ‘dark ages’ was the idea of the aimless wanderer whose renunciation of the world was the most complete of which man could conceive...,” and whose hermits wandered “freely without destination,” allegedly sometimes setting themselves out to sea in a boat without oars.<sup>15</sup> This kind of random religious wandering was considered a “peculiarly Irish practice,” and is likely of Celtic influence.<sup>16</sup> “‘Why is it’, asked the hagiographer Heiric in a letter to [the

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<sup>10</sup> Sigal, *Les marcheurs de Dieu: pèlerinages et pèlerins au Moyen Age*, 6.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

<sup>12</sup> Webb, *Pilgrims and Pilgrimage in the Medieval West*, 12.

<sup>13</sup> Sumption, *Pilgrimage: An Image of Mediaeval Religion*, 95.

<sup>14</sup> Sigal, *Les marcheurs de Dieu: pèlerinages et pèlerins au Moyen Age*, 6.

<sup>15</sup> Sumption, *Pilgrimage: An Image of Mediaeval Religion*, 95-6.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 96-7.

Carolingian king] Charles the Bald, ‘that almost the entire population of Ireland, contemptuous of the peril of the sea, has migrated to our shores with a great crowd of teachers?’”<sup>17</sup> Though, as shall be seen, the cult of Saint Anne seems to have come to France from the Orient, it is plausible that wandering Irish pilgrims/monks introduced the figure of Saint Anne to the neighboring Celtic peoples of Brittany, “as they trod their erratic paths across western Europe.”<sup>18</sup> Thus, at first wandering “pilgrimages” developed from a mystical or spiritual desire to be closer to God and imitate Christ, by suffering, isolating oneself and living through hardship, and by bringing the word of God to foreign peoples. During the early Medieval era, however, pilgrimage evolved from a personal to a social practice, and took on a penitential and healing element. One went on a pilgrimage to redeem oneself from ill deeds or sins, and also to find healing.

In an act of penitence, either prescribed by the church, or self-imposed, a medieval “peregrinus” was expected to experience danger, deprivation and hardship. In this way, he or she hoped to gain merit, and/or to atone for an act of wrong doing, real or perceived.<sup>19</sup> It was believed that the fear of death and suffering in hell prompted non-Christians to convert, and negligent or lazy Christians to become more pious. Geoffrey Chaucer’s parson, one of the pilgrims to the shrine of Thomas Becket in *The Canterbury Tales*, observed that “the ... cause that oghte moeve a man to contrition is drede of the daye of dome and of the horrible peynes of hell.”<sup>20</sup> At first, wrongdoers were simply sent into exile, without a precise destination, “the roaming in a foreign and hostile land constituting the essential part of the punishment.”<sup>21</sup> However, by the ninth century, penitential pilgrims were being sent to “places that had become famous because of their relics or their saints’ tombs, because saints were considered to be powerful (efficient) intercessors for the remission of sins.”<sup>22</sup> Churches were built dedicated to a particular saint whose body was

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 96 “Hagiography” or “a writer of the lives of the saints” is defined in Judy Pearsall, ed., *The Concise Oxford English Dictionary*, Tenth Edition, Revised ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).

<sup>18</sup> Sumption, *Pilgrimage: An Image of Mediaeval Religion*, 97.

<sup>19</sup> Webb, *Pilgrims and Pilgrimage in the Medieval West*, 7.

<sup>20</sup> Quoted in Sumption, *Pilgrimage: An Image of Mediaeval Religion*, 17.

<sup>21</sup> “...l’errance dans un pays étranger et hostile constituant l’essentiel du châtement.” Sigal, *Les marcheurs de Dieu: pèlerinages et pèlerins au Moyen Age*, 17.

buried there or whose bones (relics) were believed to have been brought there from somewhere else, most often from Rome or the Holy Land.

Most often, pilgrimages began to sites of miracles near churches, fountains or springs-- where a particular saint's bones or "relics" were located.<sup>23</sup> Pilgrims went to these places to ask a saint to intervene on their behalf, by praying near his or her relics.<sup>24</sup> According to Catholic tenets, saints are individuals who live in heaven. People ask them to pray to God for a particular favour. The Virgin Mary is the leading saint. "Next in importance are the angels, as well as Mary's mother Anne, Mary's husband, Joseph, and the apostles."<sup>25</sup> Following these, there are the many Christian martyrs who have been declared saints throughout time. The remains of the first Christian martyrs were venerated very early on in the history of Christianity, but they were only considered to have supernatural powers during the period of the relic cult, which did not start until the fourth century.<sup>26</sup> St. Gregory of Nazianzus (325-389), one of the early "doctors" of the Eastern Church, laid some of the basis for this cult, when he said that "The bodies of the martyrs have the same power as their holy souls, whether we touch them or whether we venerate them."<sup>27</sup> Thus the tombs of the saints around which churches had been built, were rearranged or converted so that the faithful could have close access to the saints' skeletons, without being able to steal or damage them.<sup>28</sup>

During the barbarian invasions of the fourth, fifth and sixth centuries, however, many of the tombs in Rome were raided.<sup>29</sup> During the Carolingian era of the eighth to tenth centuries, the relic tradition was translated in the westward movement from Rome to new

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 17.

<sup>23</sup> Preston, "Spiritual Magnetism: An Organizing Principle for the Study of Pilgrimage," 33.

<sup>24</sup> Sigal, *Les marcheurs de Dieu: pèlerinages et pèlerins au Moyen Age*, 25.

<sup>25</sup> Harald E. L. Prins, *The Mi'Kmaq: Resistance, Accommodation, and Cultural Survival* (Fort Worth: Harcourt Brace College Publishers, 1996), 84.

<sup>26</sup> Sigal, *Les marcheurs de Dieu: pèlerinages et pèlerins au Moyen Age*, 25.

<sup>27</sup> "Les corps des martyrs ont le même pouvoir que leurs saintes âmes, soit qu'on les touche, soit qu'on les vénère." Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 26. Most often, the body of the holy martyr, placed in a coffin, was placed under the altar in a small room, and accessed by a small window called a *cataracta*, through which people could see the coffin or reach through and lay cloth or other objects.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 27.

churches.<sup>30</sup> Later in the ninth and tenth centuries, the Vikings pillaged many French Gaul and Anglo-Saxon tombs.<sup>31</sup> Many relics were thus lost or dispersed.<sup>32</sup> It is possible that the cult of Saint Anne was imported to France during the Carolingian era from the Orient, where it had existed since the 4<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>33</sup> Apparently the relics of Saint Anne had been brought to Constantinople from the Holy Land in 710, and remained in what is today Istanbul, Turkey until 1333.<sup>34</sup> The cult to Saint Anne is believed to have spread to the north western provinces of France from the south, though as shall be seen with regard to the pilgrimage to Auray in Brittany, and as already mentioned, it had perhaps been introduced to Brittany as early as the sixth century, by wandering Irish monks.<sup>35</sup>

Saint Anne, of course, did not come directly from Brittany. She figures as a character in apocryphal texts, particularly the Protoevangelium of James, one of the ancient scriptures important to and accepted by the eastern Christian churches. Devotion to Saint Anne seems to have existed among the people in southern France by the twelfth century.<sup>36</sup> However Saint Anne's importance or existence was not officially recognized by the Catholic Church until the thirteenth century.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Sigal, *Les marcheurs de Dieu: pèlerinages et pèlerins au Moyen Age*, 27-8.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid. See also Sumption, *Pilgrimage: An Image of Mediaeval Religion*, 114-15.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> Chabot, *Submission Report-Place: Lac Ste. Anne Pilgrimage Site*, 17-18 (463-4). Chabot uses the following references for her information on Saint Anne: Frederick Holweck, "St. Anne," in *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol. 1 (New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1907), <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/01538a.htm>, (accessed 13 May 2010). See also ASSELIN, J. P. "Anne and Joachim, Ss." *New Catholic Encyclopedia*. 2nd ed. Vol. 1. Detroit: Gale, 2003. 468-470. *Gale World History In Context*. Web. 27 Aug. 2012. Lucien Gagné C.Ss.R. and Jean-Pierre Asselin, *Saint Anne De Beaupré; Pilgrim's Goal for Three Hundred Years: A Brief History of the Shrine*, trans. Eric W. Gosling (Saint Anne de Beaupré: Saint-Anne de Beaupré, 1984), 4.

<sup>34</sup> According to the folklore of the church of Apt in southern France, however, Saint Anne's body had been brought to France even earlier: St. Lazarus, the friend of Christ, brought Saint Anne's body to Apt where it was hidden by St. Auspicius, who died in 398 CE. It was found again during the reign of Charlemagne. Holweck, "St. Anne."

<sup>35</sup> Chabot, citing the *Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, supports this theory: Chabot, *Submission Report-Place: Lac Ste. Anne Pilgrimage Site*, 18 (464).

<sup>36</sup> Ibid. Holweck, "St. Anne." Gagné and Asselin, *Saint Anne De Beaupré; Pilgrim's Goal for Three Hundred Years: A Brief History of the Shrine*, 4.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid. Chabot, *Submission Report-Place: Lac Ste. Anne Pilgrimage Site*, 18 (464). Holweck, "Saint Anne."

In the Carolingian era, Rome became the largest supplier of relics to western European churches. Many Roman pilgrimages were undertaken with the purpose of acquiring and bringing home high-priced relics, the volume of the trade and purchase of these holy objects eventually raising concerns.<sup>38</sup> The Lateran Council of 1215 finally forbade the sale of holy remains and the buying and selling of relics abated somewhat.<sup>39</sup> However, commercialist motives, and buying, thieving, selling and trade, have all been part of the Christian pilgrimage tradition, at least since the eighth and ninth centuries.

In Western Christendom, the relics tradition was complicated by “representative relics,” solid or liquid objects believed to have come into contact with the saints bodies, and hence to have been imbued with a part of their miraculous power.<sup>40</sup> The most common were pieces of cloth that had touched the saint’s body relic, but also venerated was oil from the lamp kept burning at a saint’s tomb poured in small quantities in small glass or metal flasks, and handed out to the faithful by the priests, as well as many other objects.<sup>41</sup> Relics could include blood, oil, and milk. “The water of St. Thomas,” said to be blood of the martyr of Canterbury diluted in water, was in fact, water dyed red to be convincing in its appearance. Some saints’ bodies were said to emit or transpire special oils. These perfumed, syrupy liquids were sold in bottles and ampoules. Bottles of the Virgin Mary’s milk (probably chalk diluted in water) were also brought back from the Holy Land.<sup>42</sup>

The relic cult contributed significantly to the growth of pilgrimages during the Middle Ages.<sup>43</sup> The wide circulation of relics in Western Europe, either transported from elsewhere, purchased, fragmented, stolen or counterfeited induced many new pilgrimage destinations. The miraculous power of the relics gave them their value: not only did they protect those who carried or lived near to them, they also cured the sick who visited or

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<sup>38</sup> Sigal, *Les marcheurs de Dieu: pèlerinages et pèlerins au Moyen Age*, 28. Sumption, *Pilgrimage: An Image of Mediaeval Religion*, 31.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 35.

<sup>40</sup> Sigal, *Les marcheurs de Dieu: pèlerinages et pèlerins au Moyen Age*, 31.

<sup>41</sup> These other objects were wax from votive candles placed near a saint’s tomb, the dust gathered at the tomb, the moss covering the stones of the coffin, the threads of the cloth that covered the altar, the flowers from the altar, the church bell’s cord, the door’s wood, etc. Ibid., 31-2.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., 32.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 33.



came in contact with them. "...Thus we cannot disassociate the cult of the relics from one of the most traditional aspects of pilgrimage, the quest for healing of the body thanks to divine medicine."<sup>44</sup>

Christian pilgrimages thus became primarily associated with healing, and the final destination of the pilgrimage, the shrine, associated with miracles. Popular in the plague-ridden later medieval era, pilgrimages to the relics of a saint were ways to ensure salvation, escape sickness or, a means by which the ill could be cured by a miracle.<sup>45</sup> Sometimes surviving an epidemic was considered a miracle in itself, which prompted gratitude, piety and compassion, all expressed through the planning and undertaking of a pilgrimage. In the wake of the Black Death, which decimated millions of Medieval Europeans, Pope Clement VI declared 1350 a Jubilee Year, and "Pilgrims from all over Europe rushed to the Eternal City, [Rome] eager to gain the plenary indulgences."<sup>46</sup> Having lived through the epidemic which took their children and loved ones, survivors understood the temerity of their own lives, and planned voyages to Rome in thanks, and in order to assure their own salvation in the afterlife.<sup>47</sup> Having witnessed firsthand illness and death which did not discriminate between rich and poor, and in case they should die before they returned, pilgrims made up their wills where they bequeathed donations of property and money to the various churches and religious orders in their city, and almost always to the local poor.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> "In a social-psychological sense, the High Middle Ages drew to a close with the spread of the bubonic plague through Europe in 1348-49. Within a few years, the population of Western Europe was probably decreased by a third, and shrines dedicated to Saint Roch and other plague saints had become common by the end of the century." Mary Lee Nolan and Sidney Nolan, *Christian Pilgrimage in Modern Western Europe* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1989), 97.

<sup>46</sup> Francine Michaud, "The Pilgrim, the Priest, and the Beguine. Ascetic Tradition vs. Christian Humanism in Late Medieval Religious Practices," in *PECIA Ressources en médiévisique*, vol. 1 (2002), 160. People often went on penitential pilgrimages during what were known as jubilee years. Originally a Jewish concept, the Jubilee, was an amnesty declared every fifty years. Prisoners were liberated and penance performed for past misdeeds. Medieval preachers used the term to refer to any year in which people were presented with an unusual chance to gain their salvation. Sumption, *Pilgrimage: An Image of Mediaeval Religion*, 231.

<sup>47</sup> Francine Michaud, "La peste, la peur et l'espoir. Le pèlerinage jubilaire de romoux marseillais en 1350," in *Le Moyen Age : Revue d'Histoire et de Philologie*, No 3-4, 1998 (5e série, Tome 12), 399-434, 421-22, 427.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., 427, 430-31.

Physical miracles have long been perceived as direct evidence of divine manifestation on earth, and were used very early on to justify or prove Christ's divinity.<sup>49</sup>

In the Bible:

...miracles served to announce the coming of the Savior; during His public life on earth Jesus appealed to His works of power in confirmation of His divinity; and before He ascended into heaven He gave to His Church the power to do the same miraculous works which He did, as a pledge of His assistance and a proof of her authority.<sup>50</sup>

During the three hundred years after Christ's death, Christian apologists and the early Fathers often cited "the miracles of the Gospel to establish the rational foundations of the faith."<sup>51</sup> The modern definition of a "miracle" from a Christian perspective, which is defined in the Oxford dictionary as "an extraordinary and welcome event that is not explicable by natural or scientific laws and is therefore attributed to a divine agency," was developed from a long theological reflection on definitions proposed by St. Augustine in the fourth century and solidified by St. Thomas Aquinas in the thirteenth.<sup>52</sup> Of interest in a later discussion of miracles reported at the Lac Ste-Anne Pilgrimage, is St. Thomas' explanation that miracles could "surpass the powers of nature" in three ways, the second two of which were:

...(b) *Subjectively*, when the miracle consists not in the substance of what is produced but in the subject in which it occurs; for example, the resuscitation of the dead and restoring sight to the blind. Nature can indeed produce life, but not in a corpse; and it can give sight, but not to the blind. (c) *Qualitatively*, when a miracle exceeds the mode or manner in which nature produces a given effect. Thus, for example, when a person is suddenly cured of a long standing disease, without medication and without a period of convalescence which is usual in such cases.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> Hardon, John A., S. J., "The Concept of Miracle from St. Augustine to Modern Apologetics," *Theological Studies ATLA Religion Database with ATLA Serials* 15, no. 2 (1954), 229-30 (accessed June 28, 2010).

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, 229.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>52</sup> Pearsall, *The Concise Oxford English Dictionary*, 909. Hardon, John A., S. J., "The Concept of Miracle from St. Augustine to Modern Apologetics", 230-34. Pierre-André Sigal, *L'Homme Et Le Miracle Dans La France Médiévale (XIe-XIIIe Siècle)* (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1985), 10.

<sup>53</sup> The first type of miracle, which is "absolutely above the capacity of nature" and represents "the highest degree" of miracles, is the *substantial* type, "as when two bodies are together in one place, or the sun is made to turn back, or when the human body is glorified." Hardon, John A., S. J., "The Concept of Miracle from St. Augustine to Modern Apologetics," 232.

These two types of miracles were most often exemplified in an individual's perceived healing which served symbolically as a kind of resurrection, which, along with rebirth and healing, were in turn linked to the presence and/or application of water.

Miracles in the Celtic and Medieval European traditions often allegedly happened at places where there was water. Water, and particularly springs and fountains were worshipped during the Gallo-Roman era in France, as part of the cult of water which was seen as the source of life. Many fountains were then subsequently "Christianized" by the church as "pardons" or sites known for their healing properties.<sup>54</sup>

Water has traditionally been linked to healing in Christianity, most notably in the rite of baptism, which for the early Christian, "was an exalted form of healing."<sup>55</sup> Baptism was considered an initiation into the mystery of Christ which offered eternal life and strengthened people against sickness and sin.<sup>56</sup> Before baptism, early Christian initiates underwent several "exorcisms" in preparation for the rite, among these the anointment of the body with oil as "an aid to expunging demonic influence and sealing the body against demonic penetration."<sup>57</sup> This use of oil before baptism was related to the more common Christian practice of anointing sick people with oil and to the general Judaic belief that people needed to be purified from sin and protected against the evil forces which made them vulnerable to sickness:

Baptismal waters were a burial chamber and drowning ordeal on the one hand, and a quickening fluid that freshened and restored life on the other. Immersion in these waters encouraged visceral sensations of terror and hope and of change from one to the other. The story of Jonah's fall into the sea and into the belly of a whale was part of the background of Christian baptism, as was the story of the flood and God's preservation of Noah. These stories portrayed God's mercy in preserving his people from waters of death. Early Christian thought about baptism also drew from Judaeian depictions of divine mercy, and indeed of God himself as living water.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> Patrick Huchet, *La grande histoire de Sainte-Anne d'Auray* (Paris: Pierre Téqui, éditeur, 2005), 35, 147.

<sup>55</sup> Amanda Porterfield, *Healing in the History of Christianity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 60.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, 60-1.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, 61.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*

Though the waters of Lac Ste-Anne were believed to bring cleansing, healing and life, they were also known at one point to be “waters of death,” as many people drowned in the lake, hence the earlier name “Devil’s Lake.”

In order to commemorate a miraculous cure, offerings called “ex-votos” were left by pilgrims at the church.<sup>59</sup> These offerings had two functions: to thank a saint for granting a wish, and to leave “proof” that a miracle had happened.<sup>60</sup> Examples of offerings, left as proof, were crutches abandoned by paralyzed people who regained the ability to walk, the cord and blindfold from which a convicted man had been saved from hanging, or the “barbarian’s” arrow which had either narrowly missed a man or in fact pierced his flesh.<sup>61</sup> The sick were not the only people to leave offerings of thanks. Wax models of other objects such as anchors, in thanks to a saint for saving a man’s fishing boat, were also left, as were chains by prisoners of wars such as the Crusades in thanks for their freedom.<sup>62</sup> “Ex-voto” can be translated as “after” or “following the making of a vow.”<sup>63</sup>

In France, where the Oblates originated, this Medieval pilgrimage tradition evolved and changed over the passing centuries, but it survived two periods of crisis for the Catholic Church in that country, the Protestant Reformation which began in the mid sixteenth century in Germany but spread across Western Europe, and the French Revolution of 1789. Both dealt severe blows to the power and the integrity of the Catholic Church in France, which had to find ways and means to build up Church loyalty and

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<sup>59</sup> Sumption, *Pilgrimage: An Image of Mediaeval Religion*, 157.

<sup>60</sup> Sigal, *Les marcheurs de Dieu: pèlerinages et pèlerins au Moyen Age*, 78-9. However, according to Jonathan Sumption, ex-voto offerings were also left by those who had not yet been cured but hoped to be. During the middle ages, these were usually wax models of whichever part of the body was afflicted. Sumption, *Pilgrimage: An Image of Mediaeval Religion*, 157. According to Sumption, in the fifth century, pilgrims to Eastern shrines left “pictures of their eyes or models of their feet or hands. Some are made of wood, others of gold....These objects are kept as evidence of countless miraculous cures, mementoes offered by people who have recovered their health.” Thus a pilgrim suffering from a continuous headache left a wax model of his head when he was cured by St. Martial. A woman with an abscess in her nose presented a silver nose to the church of Notre-Dame de Rocamadour in south western France. *Ibid.*, 157.

<sup>61</sup> Sigal, *Les marcheurs de Dieu: pèlerinages et pèlerins au Moyen Age*, 79-80. See also Huchet, *La grande histoire de Sainte-Anne d'Auray*, 132.

<sup>62</sup> Sumption, *Pilgrimage: An Image of Mediaeval Religion*, 158.

<sup>63</sup> Huchet, *La grande histoire de Sainte-Anne d'Auray*, 132.

convince heretics to come back to the fold. Subsequently, the practice of pilgrimage in France underwent at least two reforms and revivals in the midst of these critical periods.<sup>64</sup>

Although there were two distinct crisis periods for Christian pilgrimage practice as mentioned above, throughout the history of Catholicism, pilgrimages had always come under criticism. As early as the sixth century, people questioned the general goals of pilgrimages, citing commercial interests, curiosity and even the sight-seeing impulse as motivators for what were to be purely spiritual journeys.<sup>65</sup> Pilgrims saw abuses in the granting of indulgences, a phenomenon which developed during the First Crusade, and criticized behaviours often accompanying the pilgrimages themselves, such as debauchery, revelry, and brash spending.<sup>66</sup> During the Renaissance, the veneration of saints' relics and their images was deemed superstitious and pagan. Erasmus wrote a *Colloquy* entitled "The Religious Pilgrimage" after having made two pilgrimages himself in 1512 and 1514 to Walsingham and Canterbury, England.<sup>67</sup> Based on his own experience, his lampooning of greedy clergy men, and their profiteering at shrines, the sumptuous ornamentation of sites and questionable authenticity of relics was so influential that some of his contemporaries attributed the drop in numbers of aristocratic journeys to the Holy Land to the power of his pen.<sup>68</sup>

This criticism culminated with the Protestant Reformation which began in 1517, when Martin Luther posted 95 theses requesting reform on the door of an Eastern German church, and was marked by the proclamation of the Lutheran faith in 1530. Anglicanism

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<sup>64</sup> The Counter-Reformation is also known as the Catholic Reformation.

<sup>65</sup> Webb, *Pilgrims and Pilgrimage in the Medieval West*, 235-6.

<sup>66</sup> The practice of granting indulgences, which was the granting of forgiveness and redemption of sins, or penance attributed to them, in return for a donation to the shrine or some other monetary gift, and which had been practiced and developed by the Popes, was criticized because it was being abused. Critics believed that rather than converting people and eradicating the source of sin, indulgences, which were easy to get, did not incite true repentance or encourage inner spiritual progress. Dominique Julia, "Pour une géographie Européenne du pèlerinage à l'époque moderne et contemporaine," in *Pèlerins et pèlerinages dans l'Europe moderne: Actes de la table ronde organisée par le département d'Histoire et Civilisation de l'Institut Universitaire Européen de Florence et l'École Française de Rome (Rome, 4-5 Juin 1993)*, eds. Philippe Boutry and Dominique Julia (Rome: École Française de Rome, 2000), 7-8.

<sup>67</sup> Harpur, *Sacred Tracks: 2000 Years of Christian Pilgrimage*, 130.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, 130.

and Calvinism followed the same decade.<sup>69</sup> Many monasteries were closed, pilgrimages ended or were banned, and holy images or representations, particularly of the Virgin Mary, were destroyed and the veneration of them outlawed.<sup>70</sup> Pilgrimages in Western Europe, as well as the cult of the relics, went into sharp decline during this period. Martin Luther wanted to ban all pilgrimages, including those to Rome, and to only allow people to journey who had proven “enough of a motive and a proper intention,” to both religious and secular authorities.<sup>71</sup> He believed that pilgrimages were undertaken for the wrong reasons: instead of a pilgrim being devoted to his family, his wife and his children, and of serving the poor in his community, he often spent important sums of money during his voyage.<sup>72</sup>

Christian pilgrimages did not disappear, however, perhaps because they had already started to evolve before these upheavals took place. During the Later Medieval era, the Church hierarchy had traditionally dedicated shrines to a saint through his or her relics, and attributed healing to these, rather than as a result of an individual’s experience or miraculous apparitions.<sup>73</sup> However, as early as the period of the Renaissance, pilgrimages, and religious expressions in general, had already started to become more personalized in the sense of being centered on individual interactions with divinity.<sup>74</sup> Thus, many more “origin stories” linked to individual offerings of thanks for the mediation of a saint were reported during this time period, and painted ex-voto offerings, vividly depicting specific miracles for which individuals were offering thanks, appeared.<sup>75</sup> Furthermore, the Virgin Mary began appearing in visions to individual women and children for the first time during the 1420’s and 30’s in Italy and Spain.<sup>76</sup> The times were such that people wanted what James Harpur calls “a more participatory approach” to conventional forms of worship.<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> Ibid., 130-33. Nolan and Nolan, *Christian Pilgrimage in Modern Western Europe*, 99.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid., 99-100. Harpur, *Sacred Tracks: 2000 Years of Christian Pilgrimage*, 135.

<sup>71</sup> Quoted in Julia, *Pour une géographie Européenne du pèlerinage à l'époque moderne et contemporaine*, 8.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid.

<sup>73</sup> Harpur, *Sacred Tracks: 2000 Years of Christian Pilgrimage*, 142.

<sup>74</sup> Nolan and Nolan, *Christian Pilgrimage in Modern Western Europe*, 97.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid., 97-8.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid., 98.

<sup>77</sup> Harpur, *Sacred Tracks: 2000 Years of Christian Pilgrimage*, 13.

In regions that remained Catholic, such as Brittany, France, pilgrimages persisted, and new shrines were established beginning in the 1540's, a decade which saw the Council of Trent, the start of the Catholic Reformation, "and the dawn of a new age of European pilgrimage."<sup>78</sup> Just as Calvinism was dispensing with images or visual representations, the devout in reaction started making pilgrimages to Rome and embarking on geographical pilgrimages in general.<sup>79</sup> Between the jubilee years of 1575 and 1650, the number of pilgrimages to Rome reached its height, based on numbers gathered at the hospice of the arch confraternity of the Santissima Trinità in Rome, where it is assumed only about half of the pilgrims lodged.<sup>80</sup> The other pilgrims stayed at national hospitals which accommodated other German, Flemish, Spanish, Portuguese and French pilgrims.<sup>81</sup> Post-Reformation shrines were established or supported by new orders that came into being during the Catholic Reformation, such as the Jesuits, the Discalced Carmelites, and a branch of the Franciscans known as the Capuchins.<sup>82</sup> Distinctive to this era were pilgrimages initiated around the veneration of images of Christ, and around miraculous visions in which he cried, bled, moved or spoke.<sup>83</sup>

The shrine at Sainte-Anne d'Auray in Brittany, whose pilgrimage began in 1625, is considered to be a very important Post-Reformation shrine.<sup>84</sup> As shall be seen, its origin story is very characteristic of this period, and features a miraculous vision that moved and spoke, that of Saint Anne, who appeared to a pious farmer, Yvon Nicolazic. Further, Marian pilgrimages (dedicated to the Virgin Mary) during the Counter-Reformation were either initiated or saw a fervent resurgence.<sup>85</sup> Notable among these was the pilgrimage to the Santa Casa of Loreto in Loreto, Italy which was believed to be the house of the Virgin

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<sup>78</sup> Nolan and Nolan, *Christian Pilgrimage in Modern Western Europe*, 100.

<sup>79</sup> Julia, *Pour une géographie Européenne du pèlerinage à l'époque moderne et contemporaine*, 18.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, 18-9.

<sup>81</sup> Julia, *Pour une géographie Européenne du pèlerinage à l'époque moderne et contemporaine*, 19.

<sup>82</sup> Nolan and Nolan, *Christian Pilgrimage in Modern Western Europe*, 100.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>85</sup> Julia, *Pour une géographie Européenne du pèlerinage à l'époque moderne et contemporaine*, 19.

in Nazareth, transported from Palestine by angels.<sup>86</sup> Since 1554, it had been administered by the Jesuits, who worked as penitentiaries. Under their guidance, and with the help of the Company in Germany, Austria and Central Europe, the cult of the Santa Casa took on European dimension, as Santa Casas began to be erected all over Europe.<sup>87</sup> According to the Jesuit *Relations*, sometime before 1674, a church dedicated to the Virgin of Loreto was also erected in a Huron colony of New France.<sup>88</sup> This Huron church subsequently sent a wampum belt to the Cathedral of Chartres in France in 1678, whose officials then reciprocated by sending in 1680 “a reliquary containing several precious remains of departed saints.”<sup>89</sup>

During the sixteenth century, conversion techniques were refined with a renewed emphasis on teaching, the dissemination of ideas, and catechism.<sup>90</sup> Notably a new narrative style regarding pilgrimages, centered on personal spiritual devotion, the Eucharist, and life itself as a pilgrimage of the soul was developed. This new narrative style was brought over to North America by the first Catholic missionaries. Catholic religious authorities and clerics, and notably the fathers of the newly created Society of Jesus, took it upon themselves to reassess the spirit in which pilgrimages were undertaken, and to redefine the meaning of pilgrimage. The Catholic Counter-Reformation saw a move towards a more spiritual and personal devotion, and life on earth as a personal journey and pilgrimage towards heaven, an idea that would take hold among Christian Aboriginal pilgrims in Canada. One’s individual spiritual journey became more important than the actual material or geographical voyage for redemption. Influenced by Erasmus’ “Religious Pilgrimage,” and by Protestant Reformers, Catholic pilgrimage became “a way of life based around a

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<sup>86</sup> Thurston, H. (1912). "Santa Casa di Loreto" in *The Catholic Encyclopedia*. New York: Robert Appleton Company, <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/13454b.htm> (accessed November 30, 2010).

<sup>87</sup> Julia, *Pour Une Géographie Européenne Du Pèlerinage à l'Époque Moderne Et Contemporaine*, 19-20.

<sup>88</sup> R.G. Thwaites, ed., *Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents, 1610-1791*, Vol. 59 (Cleveland : The Burrows Brothers Company, 1899), [http://canadachannel.ca/HCO/index.php/Jesuit\\_Relations\\_Volume\\_59](http://canadachannel.ca/HCO/index.php/Jesuit_Relations_Volume_59), (accessed July 22, 2012), 79.

<sup>89</sup> R.G. Thwaites, ed., *Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents, 1610-1791* Vol. 61, (Cleveland : The Burrows Brothers Company, 1899), [http://canadachannel.ca/HCO/index.php/Jesuit\\_Relations\\_Volume\\_61](http://canadachannel.ca/HCO/index.php/Jesuit_Relations_Volume_61), (accessed July 22, 2012), 14, 246, 257-261.

<sup>90</sup> Alain Croix, *La Bretagne aux 16e et 17e siècles. La vie, la mort, la foi*, (Paris : Maloine, 1980-81), 1199-1211, 1220, 1225.



domestic circuit of personal responsibility rather than a linear journey to an external destination.”<sup>91</sup> Pilgrimage renewal of the Counter-Reformation was supported by much devotional literature.<sup>92</sup> The literature sought to “spiritualize” the act of pilgrimage, by inciting pilgrims to go on retreats, precursors perhaps to the ones that the Oblates would use to preach *their* message 300 years later. Pilgrimage began to be seen as a spiritual exercise, where, interestingly enough, along the way, one could contemplate nature (vegetation, animals and the stars) as a way of praising God.<sup>93</sup> Upon arriving in Rome, the pilgrim was then expected to complete the Stations of the Cross in the seven pilgrims’ churches of the city, as a reconstruction of place, dedicated to the Passion of Christ.<sup>94</sup> The notion of making a pilgrimage through the mind and heart lay behind the practice of the Stations of the Cross itself.<sup>95</sup> “From the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries it became increasingly common for images of the stations to be set up in churches all over Europe.”<sup>96</sup> The visual signs at the Stations “transported” the faithful who were unable to make the physical journey to Jerusalem, “through an imagined empathetic journey.”<sup>97</sup> Once again, the Jesuits in particular took an active role in this campaign.

At the end of the sixteenth century, and during the first half of the seventeenth, the ideas behind this apology of pilgrimage were spread across Europe by the ever growing network, then in full expansion, of the Company of Jesus.<sup>98</sup> For example, a text written by Orazio Torsellini, rector of the penitentiary of Loreto, went through thirty-eight editions and translations between 1597 and 1630. The ability of the Jesuits to spread their ideas across Europe was impressive, and shows the extent of their influence: fifteen of these editions were in Latin, thirteen in Italian, four in German, two in Spanish, two in English,

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<sup>91</sup> Harpur, *Sacred Tracks: 2000 Years of Christian Pilgrimage*, 136.

<sup>92</sup> Julia, *Pour Une Géographie Européenne Du Pèlerinage à l'Époque Moderne Et Contemporaine*, 20.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*, 22.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>95</sup> Harpur describes the fourteen representations of the Passion of Christ, which “are linked to specific points on the Via Dolorosa in Jerusalem, the route traditionally taken by Jesus from his condemnation by Pilate to the site of his crucifixion and burial.” Harpur, *Sacred Tracks: 2000 Years of Christian Pilgrimage*, 136.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*, 137.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>98</sup> Julia, *Pour une géographie Européenne du pèlerinage à l'époque moderne et contemporaine*, 22.

one in French and one in Czech.<sup>99</sup> The story of Loreto was used by the Jesuits to underline the idea of pilgrimage as a spiritual rather than geographical quest. Rather than trying to prove that the house was the actual residence of the Virgin, the Jesuits emphasized the number of sinners that would travel there and be healed and converted. The importance of the place then lay in the mystery of the Incarnation, and its power of conversion and piety, rather than on it being the physical earthly residence of Mary.<sup>100</sup> Another Jesuit father, Jacques Gretser published yet another work in 1606 defending pilgrimages against Calvinist criticism. He dedicated the fourth and last book of his work, to the theme of spiritual pilgrimage: "...life henceforth is a pilgrimage and man a pilgrim on this earth, heaven being the sole destination to pursue," the essential idea being to progress in one's Christian life.<sup>101</sup> The humanist, Calvinist and Lutheran criticisms of pilgrimage were thus effective in compelling Catholics, particularly the Jesuits, to more strictly delineate pilgrimage practice, and to offer a deeper definition of their spiritual significance.<sup>102</sup> Thus, the practice of pilgrimage had become more sophisticated, refined, and "spiritualized" by the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century.

In this Counter-Reformation context, a Catholic pilgrimage dedicated to Saint Anne was initiated in 1625 in north-western France, at Ste-Anne d'Auray, in Brittany, which continues to the present day. Thirty-seven years later, another pilgrimage dedicated to Saint Anne, (which also continues to this day), was initiated at Ste-Anne de Beaupré in 1662, along the northern shores of the St. Lawrence River northeast of Quebec City, Quebec. It is worth highlighting some of the story and rituals behind both these French and New World pilgrimages venerating Saint Anne, because they reveal specific and powerful precedents that clearly inspired the Lac Ste-Anne Oblates in the Canadian North West.

Beginning in August of 1623, in the town of Keranna, near Auray in Brittany, France, a pilgrimage dedicated to Saint Anne took root after a pious Breton farmer named Yvon Nicolazic had visions while reciting the rosary in his room and in one of his fields

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<sup>99</sup> Ibid., 22-3.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid., 24.

<sup>101</sup> "...la vie ici bas est pèlerinage et l'homme est un pèlerin sur cette terre, le ciel étant la seule fin à poursuivre." Ibid., 26.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid.

called “Le Bocenno.”<sup>103</sup> These visions continued for nineteen months, and evolved into the figure of a mysterious lady who appeared after sunset to both he and his brother-in-law, Jean Le Roux, while they were stopped at the village fountain to let their oxen drink.<sup>104</sup> Visions of a spirit, generally a woman bathed in light (usually the Virgin Mary but sometimes Saint Anne), appearing to poor people are characteristic of the miracle stories behind other European Counter Reformation pilgrimages, as well as behind the nineteenth and early twentieth century pilgrimages at Lourdes and La Salette in France, Knock in Ireland, and Fatima in Portugal.<sup>105</sup> Nicolazic’s vision at Auray is no different. On the night of July 25<sup>th</sup> to 26<sup>th</sup>, 1624, the eve of Saint Anne’s feast day, Nicolazic had returned, his rosary in hand, from confessing himself and taking communion at the nearby town of Auray, when the woman appeared to him again in his “grange” (barn), where she finally told him she was Saint Anne, mother of Mary.<sup>106</sup> She then bade him rebuild an ancient chapel, the first dedicated to her in Brittany, which had sat in ruins in Nicolazic’s field of “Le Bocenno” for exactly 924 years and 6 months, thus since 700.<sup>107</sup> Hence the chapel would have been built, very conspicuously, sometime during the 135 years between 465 and the sixth and seventh centuries, when the pagan Celts of Armorica (now Brittany) were being converted to Christianity, likely by the wandering Irish monks as previously mentioned, and/or by the original “Bretons,” who were arriving from Wales and Cornwall.<sup>108</sup> The timing is “conspicuous,” because it suggests the long standing experience the Catholic Church has had in implicating Saint Anne in the conversion of so-called “pagans.” Furthermore, there are hypotheses that “Ana” was the name of a Celtic deity, venerated in that region, which would have rendered easier the extension of the cult of

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<sup>103</sup> These appeared sometimes in the form of a very bright light, and often of a hand carrying a torch or a candle. Huchet, *La grande histoire de Sainte-Anne d'Auray*, 51.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*, 52.

<sup>105</sup> Harpur, *Sacred Tracks: 2000 Years of Christian Pilgrimage*, 142-53, 158-163.

<sup>106</sup> Huchet, *La grande histoire de Sainte-Anne d'Auray*, 55.

<sup>107</sup> "Le Sanctuaire: Ste. Anne apparaît à Nicolazic," Sanctuaire Sainte-Anne d'Auray. C.MEDIA, <http://www.sainteanne-sanctuaire.com/01-01.html> (accessed March 16th, 2010).

<sup>108</sup> Huchet, *La grande histoire de Sainte-Anne d'Auray*, 47.

Saint Anne in Brittany.<sup>109</sup> Also, like hundreds of fountains and springs in Brittany, the fountain where Saint Anne appeared to Nicolazic the first time had been worshipped during the pagan Gallo-Roman era as part of the cult of water which, as mentioned earlier, was seen as the source of life.<sup>110</sup> The first pilgrimage to Auray coincided with Nicolazic's discovery, guided by yet another vision and with the help of a group of his neighbours, in March of 1625, of a statue of Saint Anne in his field, "Le Bocenno."<sup>111</sup> This discovery would prompt people to give offerings, which would eventually fund the building of the new chapel, and contributed to the growth of the pilgrimage.

Integral to this pilgrimage were requests for healing, relief or solace, and protection from harm, which in turn led to many reports of miracles. In order to receive a miracle, one had to vow oneself to Saint Anne which was often combined with an act of penitence. Among the most important rituals were masses and communion, the various processions, confession, praying at the statue with family members, the veneration of the relics, and the donation of "ex-votos." The pilgrimage to Auray was principally a pilgrimage of "pardon," where clearing one's conscience, confessing one's sins, and communion were believed to be necessary to show piety towards Saint Anne, gaining her good graces, and ultimately to heal. A pilgrim could actually declare a vow to Saint Anne. Patrick Huchet explains:

When faced with fear, misfortune or danger, it was natural during this time to invoke, to request from a saint, to intercede with God to resolve the problem at hand: most often an illness but also difficulties in conceiving, a court trial, etc. Thus the solemn engagement was made to "vow oneself" to Saint Anne, if one wanted to benefit from her help. This was a promise, valued as a contract, to accomplish an act (most often, to make a pilgrimage to the sanctuary) if the request was granted.<sup>112</sup>

The vow was not always simply to make the pilgrimage. It often went along with an act of penitence, which would "render the vow more efficient, and the journey more meritorious."<sup>113</sup> Thus pilgrims would commit to walk to the pilgrimage instead of coming

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<sup>109</sup> "Le sanctuaire: Ste. Anne apparaît à Nicolazic" <http://www.sainteanne-sanctuaire.com/01-01.html> (accessed March 16th, 2010).

<sup>110</sup> Huchet, *La grande histoire de Sainte-Anne d'Auray*, 35.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*, 63-5.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*, 112.

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*, 129.

on horseback or by wagon, sometimes with the added difficulty of walking barefoot. Some would promise alternately to live only by donations given to them along the way, or to live only on bread and water. Some would pledge to come several times to the pilgrimage, or even to come every year. A “Book of Miracles” exists in the archives of the pilgrimage to Auray. It lists 1267 miracles which allegedly took place there between 1625 and 1684. Those who were sick would gather at the fountain where Nicolazic gave water to his oxen. Miracles at Auray continued to be recorded in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, at least as late as 1968.<sup>114</sup>

The Masses and Holy Communion were central to Auray celebrations, where masses would start at day break on July 26<sup>th</sup>, priests would take turns at the altars until noon, and thousands of people would take communion. The pilgrimage would end with the high (sung) mass. Processions varied and were numerous, many representing a village or a city that would make a collective vow to Saint Anne. After the procession, people would say the rosary, or admire the Blessed Sacrament exposed for adoration. Some would then join the procession of the cross. Confessions would then be said until late into the night.

Saint Anne took on more significance in France when royalty began to endorse the pilgrimage to Auray. Anne of Austria, who had been married to the French King Louis the XIII since 1615, was long without an heir. Beginning in 1628, three years after the pilgrimage to Auray had been initiated, the queen made arrangements with the Bishop of Vannes for daily public prayers to be said in her name, and she sent emissaries to the site to pray for her, that she may be blessed with a child.<sup>115</sup> Although it took ten years, Queen Anne eventually gave birth on September 5<sup>th</sup> 1638, to a boy who was to become one of France’s most illustrious and well-known kings, the sun-king, Louis the XIV.

In thanks the following year, the royal family sent a precious relic, as an ex-voto, to Ste- Anne d’Auray, and took the pilgrimage under their protection. A tradition thus began among the seventeenth and eighteenth century nobility in France to pray to Saint Anne for the birth of princes. The arrival of the relic from Paris at Auray, and its placement in the church there for veneration by the pilgrims, triggered the most numerous and grandiose

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<sup>114</sup> Ibid., 185, 188.

<sup>115</sup> Ibid., 114.

gatherings at the place in the seventeenth century. Numerous ex-votos were left at Auray at least since 1636, when one traveler from the time remarked the objects left in thanks for “...wishes granted, small and large paintings, silver or wax statues and images, crutches, skirts, garments, prison chains and similar objects” that were left in thanks for Saint Anne’s intercession.<sup>116</sup> Thus stories about miraculous appearances, the importance of Saint Anne, and the rituals that took place at Christian pilgrimages, were already very well established, certainly in France, when the first Christian missionaries arrived in North-America.

It was during the Counter-Reformation, with their devotion to Saint Anne, with newly refined definitions, a renewed emphasis on teaching, catechism, and the dissemination of ideas, notably a more demarcated spirituality that emphasized “the walk of life,” or life on earth itself as a pilgrimage, that the Jesuit missionaries, travelled to what they considered the “New World,” and met the First Nations Peoples of what would become Eastern Canada. This Counter-Reformation Jesuit missionary culture, which the Oblates, as predominantly French missionaries inherited in the nineteenth century, would mark Native-Missionary relations for years to come, and contribute to the stories, beliefs and practices of today. Although the Oblate order’s regulations were modeled after the Sulpicians, and their moral theology after Alphonsus Liguori and the Redemptorist Fathers, as Choquette argues, “Oblate missionaries were to the nineteenth century what Jesuits had been to the sixteenth and seventeenth. They were the quintessential product of a new mood in Catholicism, a new militancy, a new urge to conquer the world for Christ and his Church.”<sup>117</sup>

Most of the first French settlers to Eastern Canada originated from the north western provinces of France, such as Normandy, Perche, Poitou, Aunis, Maine and Brittany, as well as the region around Paris.<sup>118</sup> The very first volume of the Jesuit

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<sup>116</sup> “...vœux accomplis, en grands et petits tableaux, statues ou images de cire ou d’argent, béquilles, jupes, habits, fers de prison et choses semblables...”Ibid., 132. Today ex-votos are still a part of the tradition at Sainte-Anne d’Auray. Two Breton French cyclists, Jean Robic who won the Tour de France in 1947, and Bernard Hinault who won the world championship in 1980, each respectively left his jersey, the “maillot jaune” and the “maillot du champion” at the shrine in Auray. Ibid., 132.

<sup>117</sup> Robert Choquette, *The Oblate Assault on Canada's Northwest* (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 1995), 2, 15.

<sup>118</sup> Gagné and Asselin, *Saint Anne De Beaupré; Pilgrim's Goal for Three Hundred Years: A Brief History of the Shrine*, 4.

Relations of 1611, states that one of the two main reasons that the territory in North America visited by the French was given the name “New France,” was because of the people of Brittany and Normandy: “...this country was first discovered by the French Bretons in 1504, 111 years ago, and ... since that time, they have not ceased to frequent it. The Normands too have contributed to this work...”<sup>119</sup> When these settlers arrived in Canada, they brought their devotion to the saints, notably to Saint Anne, with them.<sup>120</sup>

In the mid seventeenth century, people in these French provinces would have been familiar with two centrally located pilgrimage shrines dedicated to Saint Anne, the first at Auray, in Brittany, mentioned above, and the other at the *Chapel of Saint Anne of the Crossroads*, in Perche, near Normandy and Maine.<sup>121</sup> The Jesuits, who were among the first missionaries to have contact with the First Nations Peoples in what would become eastern Canada, often (though not always) also came from Brittany and/or the other regions of France mentioned above, and were instrumental in establishing the devotion to Saint Anne in Canada, both among the French settlers, and among the indigenous peoples they encountered. As Harald Prins explains:

Seeking divine blessings, seventeenth-century priests typically dedicated their particular mission post, chapel, or church to a specific patron saint whose special protection and divine intervention were sought. For instance... when Jesuits established a mission on Cape Breton Island, they honoured their patroness, Anne of Austria, queen mother of France, by dedicating their chapel to her patron, St. Anne. Because this island was named for the Breton fishermen who first ventured there a century earlier, the decision to honor Queen Anne, who was also the patroness of French Brittany, made all the more sense.<sup>122</sup>

Indeed, it was two Jesuit priests, Fathers Barthélémy Vimont and Alexandre Vieux-Pont, along with Captain Charles Daniel, who were the first to dedicate a chapel to Saint Anne in

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<sup>119</sup> “La seconde raison est d’autant que ce país a esté premièrement descouuert par les François bretons l’an 1504, il y a 111 ans, et que depuis ils n’ont cessé de la frequenter. Les Normands de mesme ont contribué à ce travail des premiers,....” *Relations Des Jésuites 1611-1636*, Vol. 1 (Montreal: Éditions du Jour, 1972), 1.

<sup>120</sup> Gagné and Asselin, *Saint Anne De Beaupré; Pilgrim's Goal for Three Hundred Years: A Brief History of the Shrine*, 4.

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.*, 4-5.

<sup>122</sup> Prins, *The Mi'Kmaq: Resistance, Accomodation, and Cultural Survival*, 85.

North-America on Cape Breton Island, in Grand-Cibou Bay, in the fall of 1629.<sup>123</sup> In the Jesuit Relations of 1635, Father Paul Le Jeune lists the Residence of Saint Anne's in Cape Breton, as one of the four Jesuit Residences in New France.<sup>124</sup> They further had a chapel dedicated to her in Quebec, at the church of Notre-Dame de la Recouvrance, as early as 1647, and founded in that city, the Confraternity of Carpenters of Lady Saint Anne in 1657, which reminded its members that their primary purpose was to place under the protection of their saint, "the entire conduct of the temporal affairs of their family, and of the whole French Colony, in its smallness and the weakness of its beginning."<sup>125</sup>

The Jesuits began to eagerly encourage devotion to Saint Anne among the eastern Mi'kmaq, Huron and Montagnais peoples, particularly to the Mi'kmaq in the Maritime Provinces of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and Prince Edward Island.<sup>126</sup> During the eighteenth century, the Catholic Church became a supporter of the Mi'kmaq against British colonial power. Likely, during this time, and prompted by the missionary Abbé Maillard, his prayer book and his writings, the Catholic celebration of Saint Anne's Day grew in importance, lasting several days and ending with a procession to honour the saint.<sup>127</sup> Thanks to the band captains who used Maillard's prayer book, Mi'kmaq traditions were blended with Catholic ritual, and the Mi'kmaq have been making this pilgrimage to Saint Anne on Chapel Island since the 1760s, in the Bras d'Or Lake of Cape Breton, Nova Scotia, now on Chapel First Nation land.<sup>128</sup> They also have long standing ties to Lennox Island where they gather on July 26<sup>th</sup>, the feast day of Saint Anne, in Malpeque Bay,

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<sup>123</sup> Gagné and Asselin, *Saint Anne De Beaupré; Pilgrim's Goal for Three Hundred Years: A Brief History of the Shrine*, 5. Father Vimont wrote six volumes of the Jesuit Relations between 1639 and 1644 when he was Father Superior of the Jesuit's residence in Quebec. See "Notice Biographique" in *Relations Des Jésuites 1611-1636*, 3.

<sup>124</sup> Ibid.

<sup>125</sup> Gagné and Asselin, *Saint Anne De Beaupré; Pilgrim's Goal for Three Hundred Years: A Brief History of the Shrine*, 5-6.

<sup>126</sup> Ibid., 5.

<sup>127</sup> Anne-Christine Hornborg, *Mi'Kmaq Landscapes: From Animism to Sacred Ecology* (Hampshire: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2008), 8.

<sup>128</sup> Chabot, *Submission Report-Place: Lac Ste. Anne Pilgrimage Site*, 22-4 (468-70). See also Hornborg, *Mi'Kmaq Landscapes: From Animism to Sacred Ecology*, 10.



P.E.I.<sup>129</sup> Saint Anne has become the patron saint of the Mi'kmaq, who even today, maintain a special devotion to her and refer to her as “Grandmother Bear.”<sup>130</sup> Likely, the Mi'kmaq adopted the figure of Saint Anne (who if we recall, is believed in Christian tradition to be the grandmother of Jesus), as akin to “Mrs Mooin,” “Bear woman,” or “Grandmother.”<sup>131</sup> This woman was believed to be the grandmother of Kluskap, the Mi'kmaq cultural hero, “trickster figure,” and god who in certain stories has Messianic characteristics akin to Jesus.<sup>132</sup>

Devotion to Saint Anne in Quebec was most powerfully expressed at the pilgrimage to Saint-Anne de Beaupré. In 1658, a French settlement of approximately twenty families, located at Beaupré, then known as “le Petit Cap” and situated north east of today's Quebec City along the north shore of the Saint Lawrence, requested that they be granted permission to build a church for their community. They were granted this permission by the Royal Notary, and Father de Queylus, a Sulpician, Rector of the Quebec Parish, and Vicar General of New France, delegated Father Vignal, chaplain of the Ursuline nuns in Quebec, to bless the site shortly thereafter.<sup>133</sup> Apparently, oral tradition relates that long before 1658, a group of sailors had been saved from a shipwreck and thereafter decided to build a chapel in honor of Saint Anne. However, “no authenticated historical document has been found to establish this tradition,” and it would seem that “Father de Queylus himself decided that the church of the Petit Cap would be dedicated to

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<sup>129</sup> Chabot, *Submission Report-Place: Lac Ste. Anne Pilgrimage Site*, 27-8 (473-4). See also Prins, *The Mi'kmaq: Resistance, Accomodation, and Cultural Survival*, 172-4. In 1870, the London based Aborigines' Protection Society purchased Lennox Island for the exclusive use of the Mi'kmaq of Prince Edward Island, *Ibid.*, 170. Burnt Church in New Brunswick is another important place dedicated to Saint Anne for the Mi'kmaq. *Ibid.*, 172.

<sup>130</sup> Chabot, *Submission Report-Place: Lac Ste. Anne Pilgrimage Site*, 23 (469). See also Prins, *The Mi'kmaq: Resistance, Accomodation, and Cultural Survival*, 85, 172.

<sup>131</sup> Hornborg, *Mi'kmaq Landscapes: From Animism to Sacred Ecology*, 105.

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid.*, 107. Mrs. Mooin took care of Kluskap's wigwam, and when Kluskap leaves to go west with the arrival of the white man, he takes his grandmother with him. *Ibid.*, 105. There are localized stories about Kluskap and his grandmother in different places in Nova Scotia and Cape Breton, which often feature Kluskap turning his grandmother to stone. There are two places in this province known as *Cookumijenawanak* or *Kookoomijenawanak*, (“Grandmother's Place” or “Our Grandmother”) *Ibid.*, 86-8. In one story, Kluskap petrifies his grandmother and promises to liberate her when he finds a new place to live in the West. *Ibid.*, 88.

<sup>133</sup> Gagné and Asselin, *Saint Anne De Beaupré; Pilgrim's Goal for Three Hundred Years: A Brief History of the Shrine*, 7.

Saint Anne.”<sup>134</sup> Strangely, there was an actual shipwreck in 1662, which took place exactly as the oral legend relates, except that the sailors took no vow to build a chapel, and some, such as Redemptorist Father Lucien Gagné writing with Jean-Pierre Asselin, suggest that the oral tradition transferred the incident to an earlier date, and added the chapel-building vow.<sup>135</sup> According to a Jesuit diary, a statue of Saint Anne was brought to the chapel at Beaupré by Bishop François de Laval in February 1662. Those who prayed to her image were miraculously cured.<sup>136</sup> In 1667, Father Morel published accounts of these miracles or “favors” in the Jesuit Relations.<sup>137</sup>

It is important to note the importance of a relic of Saint Anne at the pilgrimage at Beaupré, just as it had become important at Auray after Anne of Austria’s donation in thanks for the birth of Louis the XIV. In 1670 a relic from Carcassone, France, was brought to Beaupré and exposed to the public by Bishop François de Laval. In the certificate of authenticity which accompanied the relic, Bishop Laval wrote:

We have judged...that to further the devotion of the faithful towards the Blessed Anne—a devotion which is continually increasing—nothing would be more efficacious than to expose her holy relic for public veneration in the church of Saint Anne situated in the place commonly called Beaupré.<sup>138</sup>

The relic is allegedly a portion of the bone of Saint Anne's finger.<sup>139</sup> However, the first major relic to Beaupré, a gift from Pope Leo XIII, arrived at the Shrine from a basilica in Rome on July 26, 1892, three years after the pilgrimage to Lac Ste-Anne began. It is believed to be a 4-inch portion of the bone of Saint Anne's forearm.<sup>140</sup>

Indigenous people have also been coming to Ste-Anne de Beaupré at least since the 1700’s and probably even earlier, which reveals an early precedent for the adoption of

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<sup>134</sup> Ibid., 8.

<sup>135</sup> Ibid.

<sup>136</sup> Ibid., 10.

<sup>137</sup> *Relations Des Jésuites 1666-1672*, Vol. 6, (Montreal: Éditions du Jour, 1972), 29-32.

<sup>138</sup> Gagné and Asselin, *Saint Anne De Beaupré; Pilgrim's Goal for Three Hundred Years: A Brief History of the Shrine*, 14.

<sup>139</sup> “Relics of Saint Anne,” Sainte-Anne-De-Beaupré Sanctuaire-Shrine, [http://www.ssadb.qc.ca/eng/2\\_5\\_relics.htm](http://www.ssadb.qc.ca/eng/2_5_relics.htm) (accessed May 14th, 2010).

<sup>140</sup> Ibid.

Catholic symbols, rites and a pilgrimage to Saint Anne by indigenous people in Canada. Gagné and Asselin report that, “Each year, the Hurons would come in a group to make their pilgrimage. The account books give special mention, also, to many gifts offered by Algonquins, Maliseets, Abenakis and Montagnais ...”<sup>141</sup> This record matches accounts in the Jesuit *Relations* which tell of Huron converts offering what the Jesuits called porcelain collars, likely made of wampum or roanoke shells, to the priests in return for images of the infant Jesus placed in their home: One woman allegedly:

... begged the Father to come to her cabin where, in her children’s presence, she besought him to accept a fine collar of 4,000 porcelain [wampum] beads for the infant Jesus. This was given in order to strengthen the friendship which the latter had deigned to show them by choosing their cabin for his first abode in the village; and to implore him to regard them always as persons who, while wholly his from the necessity of their being, and the constant succor of his grace, had, by a voluntary resolve of their own free Will, pledged themselves to serve him the rest of their lives more faithfully than ever. They also besought him not to forsake them; and, although he made his abode in other cabins, to extend to them always a special Providence. The Father accepted the collar at the time, in order not to deprive her of the merit of her generosity and gratitude; but, because of her poverty, he made her take it back again two weeks later, assuring her that our Lord would be as well pleased thereby as if it were used in adorning his Altar.<sup>142</sup>

Just as the Huron from the Loreto church had sent a wampum belt to the Cathedral of Chartres, others offered a wampum belt to the mission of St. Francis of Sales for Christmas in 1683.<sup>143</sup> Apparently they also made an offering of a wampum belt to Saint Anne at Beaupré, in 1672.<sup>144</sup> According to Father Rochemonteix, a Jesuit father, between 1688 and 1768, the Jesuit missionaries who were evangelizing the First Nations tribes would travel to Saint Anne de Beaupré to make their annual eight-day retreat.<sup>145</sup> The Mi’kmaq travelled to

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<sup>141</sup> Gagné and Asselin, *Saint Anne De Beaupré; Pilgrim's Goal for Three Hundred Years: A Brief History of the Shrine*, 16-7.

<sup>142</sup> R.G. Thwaites, ed., *Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents, 1610-1791*, Vol. 55 (Cleveland : The Burrows Brothers Company, 1899), [http://canadachannel.ca/HCO/index.php/Jesuit\\_Relations\\_Volume\\_55](http://canadachannel.ca/HCO/index.php/Jesuit_Relations_Volume_55) (accessed July 22, 2012), 283.

<sup>143</sup> R.G. Thwaites, ed., *Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents, 1610-1791*, Vol. 63 (Cleveland : The Burrows Brothers Company, 1899), [http://canadachannel.ca/HCO/index.php/Jesuit\\_Relations\\_Volume\\_63](http://canadachannel.ca/HCO/index.php/Jesuit_Relations_Volume_63), (accessed July 22, 2012), 25-27.

<sup>144</sup> Chabot, *Submission Report-Place: Lac Ste. Anne Pilgrimage Site*, 25-6 (471-2).

<sup>145</sup> *Ibid.*, 15.

Beaupré from “reserves as far off as Restigouche,” and in the archives at Beaupré, between 1707 and 1852, there are at least seventy-four registrations of baptisms, marriages or burials involving Mi’kmaq people. <sup>146</sup> “Thirty –seven [Mi’kmaq] expressly desired to be buried in the shelter of the ancient shrine of Saint Anne.”<sup>147</sup>

Furthermore, near Montreal in the seventeenth century, both *Canadiens* and First Nations people would have begun to hear about another special woman, the first indigenous woman to be sainted, Kateri or Catherine Tekatwitha, known as the “Mohawk Saint.” The two seventeenth century priests, Fathers Pierre Cholenec and Claude Chauchetière who became convinced that Kateri, the young and sick Iroquois woman in their care, was a saint, and wrote about her, were both Jesuits and both from north western French regions. Father Cholenec, who baptized Kateri sometime before 1677, and published a biography of her in 1717 was from Brittany.<sup>148</sup> Father Claude Chauchetière, who took care of Tekakwitha before she died and also wrote about her, was from Poitiers, a city in the neighbouring region of Poitou-Charentes, also in north-western France.<sup>149</sup> Blessed Kateri Tekakwitha and her relics quickly became known for her healing miracles. People began to make pilgrimages to Sault Ste. Louis, where she was buried, and Jesuit fathers used her relics as medicine to heal people.<sup>150</sup> The Jesuit *Relations* of 1696 contain a description of the healing that prayers to “Catherine Tegakwita” brought to Monsieur De Champigny, the Intendant in Canada, and Monsieur Du Luth, a captain in the navy.<sup>151</sup>

Although traditions in such pilgrimages date back to the medieval period, as we have seen, these two pilgrimages to Auray and Beaupré began when it was necessary to reaffirm the Catholic faith after the Protestant Reformation had caused upheaval. Later, in response to the chaotic (and anti-clerical) aftermath of the French Revolution, and later

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<sup>146</sup> Ibid., 17.

<sup>147</sup> Ibid.

<sup>148</sup> Alan Greer, *Mohawk Saint: Catherine Tekakwitha and the Jesuits* (Cary, NC, USA: Oxford University Press, 2004), <http://site.ebrary.com/lib/ucalgary/Doc?id=10254464&ppg=12> (accessed July 17, 2012), viii, 4

<sup>149</sup> Ibid., 4.

<sup>150</sup> Ibid., 148-57.

<sup>151</sup> R. G. Thwaites, ed., *Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents*, Vol. 65 (Cleveland: The Burrows Brothers Company, 1899), History of Canada Online, [http://canadachannel.ca/HCO/index.php/Jesuit\\_Relations\\_Volume\\_65](http://canadachannel.ca/HCO/index.php/Jesuit_Relations_Volume_65) (accessed July 5, 2011), 24.

still, thanks to new and better modes of transportation such as steamships and trains, both pilgrimages underwent revivals in the second half of the nineteenth century as well, precisely when the Lac Ste-Anne Pilgrimage was also started. Just as pilgrimage practice and shrines were banned and attacked during the Protestant Reformation of the sixteenth century, so were they also during the late eighteenth century. As a result of the French Revolution and the “Age of Reason,” like all religious events and sites at the time in France, the pilgrimage to Ste-Anne d’Auray came under attack, leading to the sacking of the chapel in Keranna, and the burning of Saint Anne’s miraculous statue in 1794.<sup>152</sup>

However, despite the events of the late 1700’s, both this Breton pilgrimage to Auray and the one at Beaupré saw a rebirth in the first half of the nineteenth century, and gained their second revivals between 1860 and 1900, incidentally the period of time coinciding with the initiation of the pilgrimage at Lac Ste-Anne.<sup>153</sup> Auray and Beaupré began to attract even more pilgrims than they had before, as more spectacular visual representations, better modes of transportation, and larger churches insured easier access.<sup>154</sup> In Brittany, thanks to the invention of railway, pilgrimages and “pardons” became enormously popular in the later nineteenth century.<sup>155</sup> Between 1840 and 1860, many new and large churches were built in the region, and the vocations grew as

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<sup>152</sup> A “habitant” managed to save a fragment of it, part of the head, which is encased in the pedestal of the current statue, which dates from 1825. Huchet, *La grande histoire de Sainte-Anne d’Auray*, 161-2.

<sup>153</sup> *Ibid.*, 171. The devotion to Saint Anne was thus particularly well-entrenched in Brittany, a region for whom she is the patron saint : most churches there have a statue of her, and many chapels, villages and places in the region carry her name. See “Le Sanctuaire: Ste. Anne apparaît à Nicolazic,” Sanctuaire Sainte-Anne d’Auray. C.MEDIA, <http://www.sainteanne-sanctuaire.com/01-01.html> (accessed March 16th, 2010). This is also true for Quebec. For Beaupré’s revival see Gagné and Asselin, *Saint Anne De Beaupré; Pilgrim's Goal for Three Hundred Years: A Brief History of the Shrine*, 18-21.

<sup>154</sup> At Ste. Anne d’Auray, a new statue was sculpted in 1825. Huchet, *La grande histoire de Sainte-Anne d’Auray*, 171. New constructions such as the “Scala Santa” (Holy Stairs) and a new basilica were built at Auray between 1865 and 1872. *Ibid.*, 172, 210 According to Gagné and Asselin, the purpose of the “Scala Sancta,” which is a reproduction of a Roman monument, is to make it possible for the faithful to perform an act of penance, that is fully in harmony with the spirit of a pilgrimage Shrine. This act of penance is to mount on ones knees the 28 steps of these stairs, in memory of Christ who, before His death, had to walk up the stairway leading to Pilate’s Praetorium.” Gagné and Asselin, *Saint Anne De Beaupré; Pilgrim's Goal for Three Hundred Years: A Brief History of the Shrine*, 21. In 1889 at Beaupré, the High Altar and seven side altars were solemnly consecrated at the shrine, a new railway was built between Quebec City and the shrine bringing even more pilgrims, and in 1891, a Scala Sancta was also built. *Ibid.*, 77.

<sup>155</sup> Huchet, *La grande histoire de Sainte-Anne d’Auray*, 171.

seminaries began filling with future priests.<sup>156</sup> New rituals were initiated such as the Stations of the Cross which were blessed for the first time at Auray in 1828, and the candlelight procession, or the “procession aux flambeaux,” which was observed for the first time there in September of 1882.<sup>157</sup> As soon as it was dark, people would light their candles, would assemble according to language and to dialect, and would start to walk while singing canticles. All would sing in their own language. The effect would be a strange mix of tongues, harmonies and melodies.<sup>158</sup>

At Ste-Anne de Beaupré in Quebec, beginning in 1844, the steamer *Charles-Édouard* was the first in a line of steamships that would bring thousands of pilgrims to the shrine to Saint Anne in Quebec.<sup>159</sup> New confraternities were also founded there during this time such as *The Ladies of Saint Anne* in 1850, by Oblate Father Honorat.<sup>160</sup> The founding of the *Ladies* was part of a larger expansion of the Catholic Church in Canada which saw the erection of the Archconfraternity of Saint Anne in 1887, to which, by 1966, 1637 confraternities in Canada were affiliated, and whose center is at the Shrine of Beaupré itself.<sup>161</sup> Reinvigoration at Beaupré was also clearer when Saint Anne was made patron saint of the province of Quebec in 1876, by Pope Pius IX.<sup>162</sup> Further, in 1878, the order of the Redemptorist fathers founded, as seen earlier, by the Italian monk Alphonsus Liguori in 1732, and whose moral theology actually inspired those of the Oblates, inherited the care of the shrine.<sup>163</sup>

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<sup>156</sup> Ibid.

<sup>157</sup> Ibid., 210, 178.

<sup>158</sup> Ibid., 178.

<sup>159</sup> Gagné and Asselin, *Saint Anne De Beaupré; Pilgrim's Goal for Three Hundred Years: A Brief History of the Shrine*, 18-9.

<sup>160</sup> Initially established in Montreal, its purpose was “to increase the piety of the women in the Faubourg Quebec and surrounding districts, and make them better Christians.” By 1860, it boasted more than 1200 members and by 1966, this number had grown to 250 000 women across Canada, one of which was the mother of the Oblate father from St. Paul, Alberta interviewed for this study. Oblate Father, (anonymous), *Interview at Foyer Lacombe*, February 3, 2010. Gagné and Asselin, *Saint Anne De Beaupré; Pilgrim's Goal for Three Hundred Years: A Brief History of the Shrine*, 19.

<sup>161</sup> Ibid.

<sup>162</sup> This was on the request of Father E.A. Taschereau, then Archbishop of Quebec. Ibid., 21.

<sup>163</sup> Choquette, *The Oblate Assault on Canada's Northwest*, 15. Gagné and Asselin, *Saint Anne De Beaupré; Pilgrim's Goal for Three Hundred Years: A Brief History of the Shrine*, 22. See also Wuest, Joseph.

This renewed fervour in France and in Quebec must have inspired the Oblates, and the reinvigorated form and devotion at these sites, provided needed models for ceremonies, as well as stories, statues, medallions and relics, for a new fledgling pilgrimage in what would become Alberta. Hence, with the long history of pilgrimage well established, it is now the task to see how these stories and models were told and implemented at Lac Ste-Anne, Alberta, mostly by the Oblates, the subject of the next chapter.

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"Redemptorists." The Catholic Encyclopedia. Vol. 12. New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1911. <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/12683a.htm>, (accessed July 6, 2011). The Redemptorists are still at Ste-Anne de Beaupré, and often send representative fathers to the Lac Ste. Anne Pilgrimage every year.

## CHAPTER TWO: Zealots and Pragmatists: The Oblates at Lac Ste-Anne

*" Ici, c'est la place que Ste-Anne s'est choisie dans les vastes territoires du Nord-Ouest. "<sup>1</sup>*

Bishop Émile Legal, *Lac Ste-Anne Codex Historicus*,  
1897

It is perhaps no coincidence that the Lac Ste-Anne Pilgrimage began during the second half of the nineteenth century. From a European religious perspective, this was a period of renewal for the Roman Catholic Church, characterized by orthodox Ultramontane theology, the creation of new orders and congregations of women and men religious such as the Oblates of Mary Immaculate, an expansion of European missionary activity around the world, and the initiation of the most popular Marian pilgrimages in Europe. Many Marian apparitions (visions of the Virgin Mary) were taking place, and the Catholic Church in Europe initiated or revived ensuing pilgrimages. The pilgrimage to Notre Dame de Salette, in the French Alps began in 1846, and the pilgrimage to Lourdes was initiated in 1858.<sup>2</sup> The pilgrimage to Knock, County Mayo, Ireland began in 1879, while the pilgrimage to Fatima, in Portugal, began in 1917.<sup>3</sup> All these pilgrimages involved the Virgin Mary appearing to poor shepherd children, except at Knock, where she appeared to poor village women and children.<sup>4</sup> Each time the Virgin appeared during a time of crisis, after the French Revolution in France, during the potato famine in Ireland, and during the First World War in Portugal. The church spent much time verifying the "truth" of these visions before officially recognizing them.<sup>5</sup> Once again, however, as it did in places like Auray and Beaupré in the seventeenth century, the church used these examples of the Virgin appearing to peasants and poor villagers to revive the faith among common people. Anthropologists Victor and Edith Turner have called these nineteenth century pilgrimages

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<sup>1</sup> "Here, is The place that Ste-Anne chose for herself in the vast territories of the North West." PAA OMI Collection, *Lac Ste-Anne Codex Historicus 1889-1899* Accession 71.220, Box 99, File 4214, 45.

<sup>2</sup> Harpur, *Sacred Tracks: 2000 Years of Christian Pilgrimage*, 142-43.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 148, 158.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 150.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 161.



“post-industrial” because they all involved the Virgin Mary appearing to one individual or small group of individuals, and are thought to be the result of a people’s fear of the instability and great changes taking place during the industrial revolution and the increasingly secularized modern era, and its need for a more participatory approach to worship.<sup>6</sup> Bishop Eugène de Mazenod of Marseilles, who founded the Oblate order in Aix-en-Provence in 1815, also operated in this spirit of reinvigoration.<sup>7</sup> He hoped to revive the religious spirit among the poorest of the French peasants, whom he believed had fallen back into “paganism” as a result of the French Revolution. The Oblates’ mandate in Canada, when they first arrived in 1841, was to bring Catholic civilization to the First Nations’ peoples, whom they also perceived as “pagan.” When Father Lestanc initiated the Lac Ste-Anne Pilgrimage in 1889, he also hoped to revive the mission at the lake, which had fallen into disarray and disuse.

This chapter builds on the previous one, and continues to discuss the context of the Lac Ste-Anne Pilgrimage from a Euro-Canadian and Oblate perspective. It will reveal how the stories and models imported from France and Quebec were told and implemented at Lac Ste-Anne, Alberta. Essentially, it will show the nineteenth century Oblates’ paradoxical approach to missionary work in what would become Alberta, that is, both their devoted zeal and pragmatic adaptation. On the one hand, the Oblates hoped to baptize and convert as many indigenous people as possible and to establish a European cultural and spiritual pilgrimage among them. On the other hand, the Oblates were in dire straits in the Lac Ste-Anne region, as they were losing First Nations converts to Protestant missions. Thus the pilgrimage was also a pragmatic way for the Oblates to maintain their presence in the area by adapting to indigenous traditions and practices maintained by the Métis and First Nations people, traditions which will be discussed in Chapter Three. This chapter will consider the origins of the Lac Ste-Anne Mission in Alberta, the Oblates’ mandate and

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 13, 142. Nolan and Nolan state that the “resurgence” of pilgrimage in the nineteenth century has been exaggerated, and that the Turners’ “typologies...perpetuate a pervasive, but misleading, model....” They point out that apparitions of the Virgin Mary were documented in Italy and Spain by the fifteenth century, and thus that changes in pilgrimage types “appear to be evolutionary rather than dramatically new.” Mary Lee Nolan and Sidney Nolan, *Christian Pilgrimage in Modern Western Europe* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1989), 98, 112.

<sup>7</sup> Huel, *Proclaiming the Gospel to the Indians and the Métis*, 1.

pragmatism, their subsequent arrival at the mission and their difficulties in maintaining its existence. Further, the problems Father Jean-Marie Lestanc was having just prior to his initiating the pilgrimage, as revealed in files from the Department of Indian Affairs, will be discussed. The chapter will then look at Lestanc's own description of his supernatural summoning in France, as well as the early pilgrimage codices written by Father Zéphirin Lizée, in order to uncover the Oblates' desire, as well as their efforts, to implant in the Canadian North West a culturally European pilgrimage similar to the one in St. Anne de Beaupré, Québec.

The Lac Ste-Anne Mission was the first outpost of the Catholic Church west of St. Boniface Manitoba, in the Canadian North West Territories, and it was founded before the Oblates of Mary Immaculate arrived in what became Western Canada.<sup>8</sup> At the beginning of the nineteenth century, the diocese of Quebec ostensibly included the vast British territories of the North West.<sup>9</sup> These extended from the United States to the Arctic Ocean, and from the Rocky Mountains to Upper Canada (Ontario today), and though claimed by the British, First Nations peoples still maintained their livelihoods hunting game and other fur-bearing animals with relatively little interference, and trading the pelts with fur-traders and trappers from Ontario and Quebec (then known as Upper and Lower Canada) and the British Isles. The intensifying competition of companies by the early 1800s need not be recounted here. However, it is important to note that as "English" from Hudson Bay and "Canadians" from Montreal established post systems in the west, they brought with them an important infusion of ideas, cultural influence and missionary work, Catholic or Protestant. The North West Company, a consortium of Montreal firms had, by 1806, hired 1200 employees, nearly all of whom were French-Canadian or Métis, and Catholic.<sup>10</sup> By 1821, all trading companies in British North America joined together in a common

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<sup>8</sup> Some scholars, such as Brenda Macdougall, have erroneously stated that Île-à-la-Crosse, in northern Saskatchewan, was the first Catholic mission west of St. Boniface. That mission was established in 1846 however, whereas the Lac Ste-Anne Mission, as seen below and in the introduction, was inaugurated two years earlier in 1844, by the secular priest Jean-Baptiste Thibeault. Brenda Macdougall, *One of the Family: Metis Culture in Nineteenth-Century Northwestern Saskatchewan* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2010), XII, 3, 7-8, 131-136, 242

<sup>9</sup> Levasseur, *Les Oblats de Marie Immaculée dans l'ouest et le nord du Canada, 1845-1967 : esquisse historique*, 3.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 3-4.

concern, the new Hudson's Bay Company (HBC), with a single post system and considerable influence in the region. The company provided goods and food to travelers. As they developed overland routes, they largely controlled the commercial movement of people and the transportation of merchandise. Because it was an English company, whose directors belonged to the Church of England, the HBC still tended to naturally favour the Anglican Church. Nonetheless, it supported efforts, including Catholic ones, to "evangelize and civilize" First Nations peoples.<sup>11</sup> In order to maintain peace which was favourable to trade however, it was opposed to the presence of more than one denomination at its posts. It was necessary, then, that to establish a mission, denominations had to obtain the Company's permission, if anything, just to gain its help and support which was usually necessary for survival.

The area between Fort Edmonton, an HBC post which had been established in 1794 on the North Saskatchewan River, and the eastern slopes of the Rocky Mountains was inhabited in the early years of the nineteenth century by First Nations peoples, fur-traders, and the Métis. The First Nations living in this region were mostly Woodland and Plains Cree, but the limits of Nakoda (Stoney) territory as well as that of the Blackfoot Confederacy also overlapped along this corridor, which led to both trading and conflict between all these groups, particularly between the Cree and the Blackfoot.<sup>12</sup> The fur traders were of mostly French-Canadian, but also Scottish and Irish descent. The Métis were descended of predominantly French-Canadian fathers and indigenous mothers. The Métis and the "Canadien" fur traders had remained Catholics, and likely, had spoken of their religion and their ceremonies to the indigenous communities in their contact and trade with them.<sup>13</sup> The Canadiens likely petitioned for priests to minister to them, and Oblate Father Donat Levasseur states that the Métis comprised a "noyau" of the Christian community in the area.<sup>14</sup> Of note among the Métis was a particular branch descended from Iroquois and

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 4.

<sup>12</sup> The Blackfoot Confederacy consists of the Siksika (Blackfoot), Kainai (Blood), Tsuu T'ina (Sarcee) and Pikuni (Peigan) First Nations.

<sup>13</sup> Levasseur, *Les Oblats de Marie Immaculée dans l'ouest et le nord du Canada, 1845-1967 : esquisse historique*, 6.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

Anishinaabe (primarily Ojibway) fur trappers and labourers who had come from the east in the late 1700s, and who had intermarried with local Aboriginal women. However, in order to understand the history of the Catholic Church in Alberta, it is necessary to first look at the Red River Colony in what would become Manitoba.

When Lord Selkirk, a stockholder with the HBC founded the Red River Colony in 1811, the arriving settlers started requesting the presence of Catholic priests. The colony, which comprised today's southern Manitoba as well as parts of Saskatchewan, Ontario, North Dakota and Minnesota, was put under the direction of Miles Macdonnell, who was also named governor for the HBC of the district of Assiniboia. The colony was comprised of Scottish and Irish immigrants who had arrived from 1812 to 1815 to join the more numerous French Canadian "coureurs des bois," Métis and indigenous population.<sup>15</sup> In April of 1816 Selkirk, and Macdonnell both asked Mgr. Octave Plessis, the bishop of Quebec, to send them priests for their colony.<sup>16</sup> However tensions were high between the competing Northwest and Hudson's Bay fur trading companies in the region, particularly when the latter, along with Macdonnell, decided to put restrictions on the movement of pemmican and buffalo hunting.<sup>17</sup> The Battle of Seven Oaks ensued in June 1816, resulting in the death of Robert Semple, the governor of the colony, as well as nineteen settlers, and thus the postponement of Catholic priests to Red River.<sup>18</sup> Although it took a couple of years, three men arrived from Montreal in July of 1818, one of them the "abbé" Norbert Provencher, who would become bishop and head of a new bishopric created in the North West in 1822.<sup>19</sup> These men founded St. Boniface, the first Catholic missionary post in the North West, and began ministering to the different surrounding communities, including the outlying First Nations populations. Provencher wanted to extend his ministry to the more distant First Nations tribes to the west and north of his Episcopal district, as he had heard of

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 4, 6.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 7.

<sup>17</sup> Gerhard J. Ens, *Homeland to Hinterland: The Changing Worlds of the Red River Metis in the Nineteenth Century* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996), 21.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 21. Levasseur, *Les Oblats de Marie Immaculée dans l'ouest et le nord du Canada, 1845-1967 : esquisse historique*, 5, 7.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 10.

the good disposition of the indigenous peoples there towards the priests, in particular, at Fort Edmonton. John Rowand, an Irish-Catholic, and chief factor of the Fort, had requested a Catholic priest for the fort, when he had passed through St. Boniface. Provencher was ready to send him one, but the HBC headquarters in London put off the decision to allow the passage of a priest. The following year, wanting to limit Catholic missionary activity to Red River, the HBC invited Methodist missionaries to the area, and designated Edmonton as the mission post for one of these ministers. Chief factor Rowand again solicited Bishop Provencher in 1841, reiterating the openness of the Aboriginal peoples towards religion, and letting him know how the Methodist minister Reverend Robert Terrill Rundle, was doing in Edmonton.<sup>20</sup>

Finally, in April 1842, Father Jean-Baptiste Thibault, a diocesan priest from Lévis, Québec, who had spent some time learning Cree, was sent out across the western prairies, and arrived in “Fort of the Prairies” or Edmonton where he offered mass on June 19<sup>th</sup>.<sup>21</sup> Thibault then spent twelve days with Louis Piché, a Métis buffalo hunter known as “the White Chief” and his group, instructing and helping “the inhabitants of sixty lodges” until he returned to Fort Edmonton guided by a certain Gabriel Dumont.<sup>22</sup> Likely, this man was Gabriel Dumont Senior, who had allegedly founded the village at Lac Ste-Anne before a mission was established there, became its leader for a time, and was the uncle of the Gabriel Dumont involved in the Riel Rebellion.<sup>23</sup> Thibault continued to travel and to preach in the region the following year, and in October of 1843, made his first visit to the nearby lake, *Manito Sâkahikan*. Here, at a spot where nearby Stoney-Nakoda, Wood Cree and even Blackfoot-speaking plains people met, traded and fished, Thibault baptized the

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 12.

<sup>21</sup> Drouin, *Lac Ste-Anne Sakahigan*, 10.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 11.

<sup>23</sup> Nathalie Kermoal, “Lac Sainte-Anne: A Franco-Amerindian Place of Pilgrimage” *Encyclopedia of French Cultural Heritage in North America*, [www.ameriquefrancaise.org/en/article-347/Lac-Sainte-Anne-A-Franco-Amerindian-Place-of-Pilgrimage](http://www.ameriquefrancaise.org/en/article-347/Lac-Sainte-Anne-A-Franco-Amerindian-Place-of-Pilgrimage), (accessed November 29<sup>th</sup>, 2010). See also George Woodcock, *Gabriel Dumont: The Métis Chief and his Lost World* (Edmonton: Hurtig Publishers, 1975), 24. Kermoal states Dumont Sr. founded the Lac Ste-Anne settlement. Woodcock states that Dumont “performed great services to the Oblate missionaries by guiding them to suitable places for the establishment of parishes among the Indians and the Métis” and indeed guided Jean-Baptiste Thibault into the Saskatchewan country, but he attributes the founding of the Lac Ste-Anne Mission and settlement to Thibault himself.

children of a Métis couple named Jacques l'Hirondelle and Joseph Pilon, the ancestors of Doris Lirondelle, one of the Métis women interviewed for this study.<sup>24</sup>

Thibault hoped at first to establish a mission at Frog Lake in present day Saskatchewan; however, the people at Lake Manitou allegedly wanted him there instead, and he quickly realized that the latter lake was more centrally located.<sup>25</sup> Thus at the end of July 1844, he returned to *Manito Sâkahigan*, meeting up with another diocesan priest from Lévis, Québec, named Joseph Bourassa, who would be his missionary companion for eight years. Allegedly, on September 8<sup>th</sup> of the same year, when the two were finally able to move into their door-less log shack, Thibault put on a surplice and stole, went to the very edge of the lake, blessed it, and renamed it Lac Ste-Anne.<sup>26</sup> Thibault had made a promise to the saint that he would name the first mission that he would father after her.<sup>27</sup> Father Thibault's devotion to Saint Anne reveals again the importance this saint had in Quebec and the predominance of her cult in the cultures of the missionaries who came to the Canadian west. If we recall, Saint Anne was made patron saint of the province of Quebec in 1876, by Pope Pius IX. Until 1852 and 1853 when Fathers Thibeault and Bourassa respectively became ill and had to return to St. Boniface, the two men would each take turns staying at the mission, while his companion would branch out towards other locations.<sup>28</sup>

The mission's location was well situated for resources including furs and lumber, as the area was quite forested.<sup>29</sup> It had an abundant fishery, and already was the main source of white fish for Fort Edmonton, though Arthur Rain, of the Nakoda Stoney Paul Band, states his mother's grandfather, Peter Ironhead, preferred the neighboring Lake Wabamun

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<sup>24</sup> Drouin, *Lac Ste-Anne Sakahigan*, 11. Doris Lirondelle, *Interview at Northland Mall, Calgary*. Pat Sawchuk and Joe Sawchuk, eds., *Origins of the Alberta Metis: Land Claims Research Project, 1978-79* (Edmonton: Metis Association of Alberta, 1979), 384.

<sup>25</sup> Drouin, *Lac Ste-Anne Sakahigan*, 12.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 13. According to the "Notes Historiques" in Fourmond's *Codex* however, it was Bourassa who blessed the lake. See *Lac Ste-Anne Codex Historicus 1870-72*. Most sources however, credit Thibeault.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid. "Historique Du Lac Sainte-Anne Par Le Père Aristide Phillipot, O.M.I." Drouin, *Lac Ste-Anne Sakahigan*, 13. Lac Ste. Anne Historical Society Archives Committee, *West of the Fifth: A History of Lac Ste. Anne Municipality*, 11, 14. Alexis Tetreault O.M.I., "First Catholic Mission in Alberta, 1844," *Western Catholic Reporter* (June 7, 1961), 1. This last article linked to the Lac Ste-Anne Pilgrimage website, [www.lsap.ca](http://www.lsap.ca) (accessed August 24th, 2010).

<sup>28</sup> Drouin, *Lac Ste-Anne Sakahigan*, 16.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 14.

for fish, and settling at that lake instead.<sup>30</sup> Émeric Drouin stated that the lake was a comfortable distance from Fort Edmonton and from its chief factor, John Rowand, who, although a Catholic and generally sympathetic to the priests, was according to Drouin, “a very irascible autocrat more than one hundred per cent dedicated to the interests of the Company,” and very protective of the HBC’s “self-proclaimed monopoly.”<sup>31</sup> The HBC’s relationship with missionary organizations was somewhat complex. Inevitable tensions arose between a commercially-driven company that depended on nomadic or semi-nomadic hunters, and missionaries who mostly advocated more sedentary or community grounded Christian lives. Governor George Simpson, by inclination, did not wish to see settlements spread out across the west at a time when he was encouraging agricultural enterprise at Red River.<sup>32</sup> Thus Thibault had found a location close enough to the HBC support and supply, but adequately clear of Fort Edmonton, its Methodist influence, and autocratic chief factor.

Besides this, Lac Ste-Anne was centrally located for the priests who had a large territory to cover and who envisioned missions into Blackfoot country, eastward beyond Carlton, among the “sedentary” Metis nearby and, most important in this study, at Jasper House, where an Iroquois group from Caughnawaga near Montréal, and Anishinaabe traders from what would become Ontario, had settled early in the nineteenth century. According to Drouin, the latter “tramp back and forth along the trail running from Fort Edmonton to Jasper House,” which “meanders west south-west,” in fact the exact route taken by these Iroquois and Anishinaabe descendants on their way back and forth from trading at Fort Edmonton.<sup>33</sup> Though Drouin does not say it explicitly, it is probable that the missionaries chose the site at Lac Ste-Anne because the people from Jasper House were

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<sup>30</sup> Mr. Arthur Rain, *Interview at Paul First Nation Band Administration Office*.

<sup>31</sup> Drouin, *Lac Ste-Anne Sakahigan*, 13.

<sup>32</sup> Drouin, *Lac Ste-Anne Sakahigan*, 14.

<sup>33</sup> “The trail from Fort Edmonton to Lac Ste. Anne, 1883,” in Herb Belcourt, *Walking in the Woods: A Métis Journey* (Edmonton: Brindle and Glass Publishing, 2006), 10-11. Trudy Nicks, “Iroquois Fur Trappers and their Descendants in Alberta,” in *Origins of the Alberta Métis: Land Claims Research Project 1978-79*, eds. Pat Sawchuk and Joe Sawchuck (Edmonton: Métis Association of Alberta, 1979), 21-2. Lac Ste. Anne Historical Society Archives Committee, *West of the Fifth: A History of Lac Ste. Anne Historical Society*, 31-2.

already making it an important resting place along their trade route. Trudy Nicks and Kenneth Morgan explain of the Iroquois and Anishinaabe Métis group:

During the fall and winter seasons, in particular, the population was distributed in small extended family groups. In spring and summer large groups might have come together in favourable locations, for example where fish and berries were plentiful, or at missions stations... The ingatherings facilitated socializing, arranging of marriages, and the establishment of new economic partnerships among kin for the coming fall and winter.<sup>34</sup>

Nicks and Morgan then claim that it was as much the founding of the Lac Ste-Anne mission in 1844, as the proximity of Fort Edmonton that drew the people from the eastern Rocky Mountain slopes to the Edmonton region in the summer months.<sup>35</sup>

The Lac Ste-Anne mission would only truly gain impetus with the arrival of a missionary order. Having remarked that the secular priests, on their own, were too few to assure the evangelization of his immense missionary field, Mgr. Provencher, along with the bishops of the District of Columbia (which became British Columbia) decided to call upon the order of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate.<sup>36</sup> During a trip to Rome in June of 1841, Monseigneur Ignace Bourget, Bishop of the Québec diocese, had stopped in Marseilles and requested missionaries for his parish from the bishop of that city, Charles-Joseph-Eugène de Mazenod.<sup>37</sup> Appalled by the poverty and so-called paganism that flourished after the French Revolution, Mazenod (1782-1861) created an order in 1815, called “La Société des Missionnaires de Provence.”<sup>38</sup> Using religious exercises and preaching popular missions in the parishes and rural areas, the order sought to reanimate the waning Catholicism among the poor and lower classes in southern France.<sup>39</sup> In 1825, when Mazenod was applying for

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<sup>34</sup> Trudy Nicks and Kenneth Morgan, "Grande Cache: The Historic Development of an Indigenous Alberta Métis Population," in *The New Peoples: Being and Becoming Métis in North America*, eds. Jacqueline Peterson and Jennifer S. H. Brown (Winnipeg: The University of Manitoba Press, 1985), 167.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 168.

<sup>36</sup> Levasseur, *Les Oblats de Marie Immaculée dans l'ouest et le nord du Canada, 1845-1967 : esquisse historique*, 21.

<sup>37</sup> Bourget told Mazenod he would pay for the missionaries' voyage and would find them a place to stay. The Canadian prelate also hoped that once some Oblates arrived in Canada, Canadian priests would join the order, expanding it in Quebec and further. Ibid., 24.

<sup>38</sup> Huel, *Proclaiming the Gospel to the Indians and the Métis*, 1.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.



pontifical approval of his congregation and its rules, he changed the order's name to the perhaps more universally appealing "Oblats de Marie Immaculée."<sup>40</sup> In 1841, Mazenod, who still only had missionaries in the south of France, agreed to send the first six Oblates to Canada.<sup>41</sup>

The word "oblate" generally refers to the doing away with, or the sacrifice of, the self. Specifically, it refers to someone who has dedicated himself or herself to serving God through religious life.<sup>42</sup> The Oblates of Mary Immaculate dedicated themselves in an official ceremony called perpetual oblation or vows, which took place prior to ordination.<sup>43</sup> Like many older Catholic orders before them, they committed themselves to poverty, chastity and obedience.<sup>44</sup> Their motto was *Evangelizare pauperibus misit me*, which means "He sent me to evangelize the poor" and thus they dedicated themselves to what they perceived as helping the most needy people in society.<sup>45</sup> Being "under obedience," each Oblate had sworn a vow of obedience to the Pope upon entering the congregation.<sup>46</sup> They had to renounce the right to build a family in the conventional sense, amass private fortunes, establish permanent homes, and they had to pledge to put their futures into the hands of the order. If their bishop sent them to a particular mission, they were obliged to

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<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 24-5. At first, the Oblates worked solely in the southeastern French region of Provence, however, during the general chapter meeting of 1831, they decided to spread their missions overseas. By 1841 the Oblates were in Canada and Great Britain. They were in Sri Lanka and Oregon in 1847, Texas in 1849, East Africa in 1851, South Africa in 1852 and British Columbia in 1858. Levasseur, *Les Oblats De Marie Immaculée Dans l'Ouest Et Le Nord Du Canada, 1845-1967 : Esquisse Historique*, 23. Huel, *Proclaiming the Gospel to the Indians and the Métis*, 5.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., footnote 4, 305. An "Oblate" generally refers to any person working for a congregation who takes self-abnegation vows, but does not become a member of the order (ie a priest, monk or nun). The Catholic Encyclopedia states the word is "used to describe any persons, not professed monks or friars, who have been offered to God, or have dedicated themselves to His service, in holy religion." Almond, Joseph Cuthbert. "Oblati." The Catholic Encyclopedia. Vol. 11. New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1911, <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/11188a.htm>, (accessed July 5, 2011). See also L. E. Boyle, "Oblate." *New Catholic Encyclopedia*. 2nd ed. Vol. 10, (Detroit: Gale, 2003), 512-513. *Gale World History in Context*. Web. 27 Aug. 2012. The Oblates in Canada however were an actual congregation of priests and brothers, officially approved by the Pope.

<sup>43</sup> Huel, *Proclaiming the Gospel to the Indians and the Métis*, 305.

<sup>44</sup> Choquette, *the Oblate Assault on Canada's Northwest*, 10.

<sup>45</sup> Huel, *Proclaiming the Gospel to the Indians and the Métis*, 10.

<sup>46</sup> Margaret Whitehead, ed., *They Call Me Father: Memoirs of Father Nicolas Coccola* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1988), ix. Choquette, *the Oblate Assault on Canada's Northwest*, 15.

obey. Oblates were also expected to imitate the apostle Paul, and to cultivate saintly qualities within themselves, such as gentleness, chastity, humility, mortification, the love of souls and true piety.<sup>47</sup> Persuaded that they represented the true Christian Church, and bringing the word of the Gospel and redemption to cultures who had not heard of Jesus, the Oblates considered what they were doing to be “l’oeuvre des oeuvres.”<sup>48</sup> They embraced their endeavours with enthusiasm, and thus would work in harsh conditions, enduring extraordinary sacrifice and hardships, viewing all as a test from God to see if they were worthy of walking in the footsteps of the Apostles.

That the Oblates would choose to initiate such an age-old tradition as a Catholic pilgrimage among Aboriginal people in the Canadian North West is explained by the reactionary religious climate in which their order was founded, in the aftermath of sweeping conservative reforms in the Catholic Church, which became controlled by what Robert Choquette calls a “papal iron hand.” Previously the Church in Europe had “long been decentralized and had functioned as a loose confederation of national churches.”<sup>49</sup> In the 1830’s however, the Vatican, adhering to a theology known as Ultramontanism, transformed Rome into the supreme seat of the international Catholic Church after having cracked down on a liberal-minded group of French Catholics.<sup>50</sup> Like most of the other orders that developed in France during the post-revolutionary era, the Oblates “professed the ultramontane ideals of fidelity to the papacy and opposition to liberalism.”<sup>51</sup> Ultramontanism is characterized by its unbending and conservative views. Robert Choquette’s albeit colourful description nevertheless suggests its features:

...by a profound distrust of the modern, liberal, secular societies that were the products of the French Revolution. The ultramontane Catholic sees Satan and his

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<sup>47</sup> Huel, *Proclaiming the Gospel to the Indians and the Métis*, 3.

<sup>48</sup> In other words, the highest “work among works.” Ibid., 3.

<sup>49</sup> Choquette, *The Oblate Assault on Canada's Northwest*, 4.

<sup>50</sup> This group was led by Father Félicité de Lamennais, who challenged the corrupted relationship between the French Church and State. Ibid., 2-4. Ultramontanism literally means “beyond the mountains” and refers to western Europeans looking “beyond the Alps” to the papacy in Rome for guidance and inspiration. Ibid., 25. Having developed in the seventeenth century, it became prominent in the nineteenth century as well, with the rise of liberal secular states. McCarthy, *From the Great River to the Ends of the Earth: Oblate Missionaries to the Dene, 1847-1921*, 211.

<sup>51</sup> Grant, *Moon of Wintertime: Missionaries and the Indians of Canadian Encounter since 1534*, 102.

minions everywhere.... The world is a vale of tears, a battlefield; liberalism is the fount of all heresies; human nature is weak and cannot be trusted; women are the devil's amazons, with their tresses, their bare arms, and their seductive wiles.... In sum, for an ultramontane Catholic, human beings ...must be protected from themselves. Moreover, things have reached such a state that there is no room for negotiating with the enemy. Whoever is not with the Church is against it.<sup>52</sup>

These kinds of dualistic views were formally expressed in a section of the Oblates' constitution and rules that stressed obedience to the pope, as well as in the uncompromising "conviction that the Roman Catholic Church was the only source of grace and salvation," while adherents to all other denominations were heretics.<sup>53</sup> Hence baptism as an induction into the Roman Catholic Church, and as a revelation of its divine truths, became paramount to salvation, and this premise influenced all aspects of Oblate missionary activity, including the development of a missionary strategy whose primary goal "was to carry the message of redemption as quickly and as efficiently as possible to non-Christian populations."<sup>54</sup> "An 1881 Oblate directive on missions clearly identified the objective of missionary activity as the conversion of souls, the re-animation of faith and the strengthening of the Kingdom of God to ensure earthly happiness and the acquisition of eternal salvation."<sup>55</sup> It is with this commitment to baptism and conversion that the Oblates initiated the Lac Ste-Anne Pilgrimage.

However, despite this theological conservatism, the Oblates approached their mission work pragmatically. Bishop Mazenod, their founder, encouraged these missions to bring the message of the Gospels and of redemption primarily through "teaching catechism to children, and preaching popular missions among the poor."<sup>56</sup> These "popular" or "parish" missions consisted of preaching to and instructing the local population in their

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<sup>52</sup> Choquette, *The Oblate Assault on Canada's Northwest*, 4.

<sup>53</sup> Huel, reading Oblate father Claude Champagne, O.M.I., in *Proclaiming the Gospel to the Indians and the Métis*, 2.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, 4. See also McCarthy, *From the Great River to the Ends of the Earth: Oblate Missionaries to the Dene, 1847-1921*, 3-4.

own language, and using words that the people would understand.<sup>57</sup> In this respect, they reinvigorated a form of the seventeenth century Breton Jesuit's retreats.<sup>58</sup> Raymond Huel notes that, "In Canada, these popular missions were known as parish retreats in which residents of town and country were gathered together for an intense period of spiritual regeneration through the intermediary of instruction, preaching, confession and communion."<sup>59</sup> They were also comprised of "a set formula of prayer and preaching over a specific number of days or weeks, and the preaching concentrates on the basic tenets of the Catholic faith."<sup>60</sup> The Oblates' general belief was that in order to convert First Nations people, they had to instill in them "a keen felt need to be redeemed."<sup>61</sup> To attain this goal, they organized a regular mission, usually at a trading post, when First Nations people gathered to trade or hunt, where they provided an introduction to the basic tenets of Catholicism. In the Canadian North West, the Oblates began by proclaiming the Gospel, which was followed by more in depth religious instruction, and in the end by baptism, which led to "spiritual regeneration and membership within the Christian community."<sup>62</sup> Mazenod was pragmatic in that he opposed elaborate sermons that would not have a lasting effect on the masses. Rather, he emphasized an enduring knowledge of the crucifixion of Christ.<sup>63</sup>

Furthermore, Mazenod's direction, as well as that of other Oblate superiors, was not always followed to the letter. In 1853, Mazenod released a statement of "Instructions on Foreign Missions" that declared that "every means" should be used "to bring the nomad tribes to abandon their wandering life and to build houses [and] cultivate fields."<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> Huel, *Proclaiming the Gospel to the Indians and the Métis*, 4. McCarthy, *From the Great River to the Ends of the Earth: Oblate Missionaries to the Dene, 1847-1921*, 3-4.

<sup>58</sup> McCarthy states "The home missionaries of France in the nineteenth century used revivalist methods developed in the seventeenth century Counter-Reformation home missions." *Ibid.*, 3.

<sup>59</sup> Huel, *Proclaiming the Gospel to the Indians and the Métis*, footnote 2, 305.

<sup>60</sup> Margaret Whitehead, ed., *They Call Me Father: Memoirs of Father Nicolas Coccola* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1988), 6.

<sup>61</sup> Huel, *Proclaiming the Gospel to the Indians and the Métis*, 76.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, pg 77.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

<sup>64</sup> Quoted by Kerry Abel, *Drum Songs: Glimpses of Dene History* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1993), 118.

However, according to Kerry Abel, the Oblate missionaries in the northern Athabaska-Mackenzie region never quite followed these orders, mostly because, witnessing the frequent failure of their own gardens, and relying principally on fish for food, they quickly learned that “a sedentary, agricultural life was extremely difficult in the north.”<sup>65</sup> Furthermore, the northern missions received direction more and more from St. Boniface (Red River) where Archbishop Taché, like Provencher before him, “emphasized spiritual conversion rather than cultural or economic change.”<sup>66</sup> Thus, the Oblate missionaries in the nineteenth century accommodated their work to the Dene annual cycle, rather than encouraging impractical and unlikely cultural change. For example, children at the Providence school, near the eastern tip of Great Slave Lake, were taught similar skills to those taught by their parents, and returned home to continue a hunting and trapping livelihood as so-called “Christian hunters.”<sup>67</sup> The Oblates and the Grey Nuns thus believed that “hunters could be good Christians without becoming farmers.”<sup>68</sup> In Lac Ste-Anne too, it was clear that farming was not readily possible, and even the stock of fish in the lake was dwindling. William Christie, Chief Factor of Fort Edmonton, reported in 1862 that:

The country around Lac Ste-Anne is thickly wooded, and not a good place for farming or raising stock. This Lake used to abound in whitefish, but from the number of settlers living there who depend a great deal on their fall fishery, they are getting yearly less plentiful. A fall fishery is made at this Lake for Edmonton House, the men being sent out in October to fish, who remain fishing until the end of December, when the fishery ceases. Potatoes, barley and vegetables are raised at the Lake. Wheat does not ripen....<sup>69</sup>

Thus the Oblates could hardly convince nomadic or semi-nomadic hunting and trapping people to “settle” at this place, where farming was difficult. This difficulty is also exemplified by the varied decisions with respect to settlement made by descendents of the Iroquois/Anishinaabe voyageurs who travelled to the region. The missionaries knew that these people, as long time Catholics, would likely be friendlier to their presence, and more

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<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., 118-19.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid., 119.

<sup>69</sup> *Edmonton Report of 1862* quoted in Drouin, *Lac Ste-Anne Sakahigan*, 39.

apt to settle down and farm. Some of these travellers decided to settle near the missionaries and in September 1878, adhered to Treaty 6 and formed the Michel Band between Fort Edmonton and Lac Ste-Anne. Although this band consciously pursued farming, and was praised in Indian agent reports for “learning the white man’s way very well,” its population never reached more than 231 inhabitants in 1879.<sup>70</sup> A portion of the reserve land was surrendered in 1903, and eventually most of its inhabitants enfranchised until the reserve ceased to exist in 1958. However others, who wished to continue an independent existence, found that Métis scrip was a preferable option to joining Treaty, as it provided ready money without the restraints imposed by treaty status.<sup>71</sup> “In the summer months of 1885 and 1886 the members of the North West Half Breed Scrip Commission met many of the eastern slopes group at the missions around Edmonton and took their applications for scrip.”<sup>72</sup> These people more or less continued a transitory hunting and trapping lifestyle, and were not convinced that settling was the best way of life.<sup>73</sup> Thus, the Oblates were forced to pragmatically “accept” the migratory or nomadic practice of First Nations and/or Métis people, but they knew that once a year, these groups would come to worship and celebrate at Lac Ste-Anne.

Oblate pragmatism reveals itself too in the way certain priests became accepted in their communities by doing favours for the local people, in this case their Métis parishioners, although it should be noted that the Métis/First Nations people were also acting pragmatically. One such “favour” or pragmatic arrangement was the legitimizing of relationships that would normally be considered inappropriate. Father Lacombe, according to oral accounts kept alive by the descendants of Grande Cache Iroquois Métis homesteaders before the Jasper National Park era, legitimized the country marriage of

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<sup>70</sup> Trudy Nicks, "Iroquois Fur Trappers and their Descendants in Alberta," 28.

<sup>71</sup> Nicks and Morgan, "Grande Cache: The Historic Development of an Indigenous Alberta Métis Population," 176. Scrip were “Certificates issued to eligible Métis residents of Western Canada by the Canadian government in recognition – and extinguishment – of their aboriginal rights. The certificates could be redeemed for cash, or for land of equivalent value.” Heather Devine, *The People Who Own Themselves: Aboriginal Ethnogenesis in a Canadian Family, 1660-1900* (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2004), xvii.

<sup>72</sup> Nicks and Morgan, "Grande Cache: The Historic Development of an Indigenous Alberta Métis Population," 176.

<sup>73</sup> Nicks, “Iroquois Fur Trappers and their Descendants in Alberta,” 27-9.

Suzanne Kwaragkwante, the thirty-five year old daughter of the Iroquois patriarch Louis Kwaragkwante who had come west to trade in the late seventeenth century, to twenty-three year old fur trader Henry John Moberly.<sup>74</sup> Lacombe married the two in Lac Ste-Anne in 1861, and along with Father René Rémas, baptized their two country born children, John and Ewen.<sup>75</sup> The husband and wife, who clearly were also being “pragmatic,” allegedly then parted ways, a mere few hours after they were married, and:

...never lived in the same community again. John wandered the northwest until settling late in life at Duck Lake Saskatchewan where he died in 1931; Suzanne returned to the Upper Athabasca River Valley with her children after wintering at Lac Ste-Anne.<sup>76</sup>

Moberly allegedly “left word that she could charge anything to his account with the HBC. However, Suzanne refused to be dependent on him and only used the offer to get suits for her boys when they took their first communion at Lac Ste-Anne.”<sup>77</sup> Lacombe’s “pragmatic” actions helped her gain legitimacy and status in the eyes of the church and her community; however Suzanne was being pragmatic as well. Not coincidentally, 1861 marked the time when she became the matriarch of the homesteaders of the Upper Athabaska River Valley.

The Oblates began to officially administer the Lac Ste-Anne mission in 1854 when pioneer Oblate father René Rémas was sent there to take over from Fathers Thibault and Bourassa.<sup>78</sup> The mission did not really have a stable priest or Oblate presence until the arrival of Father Albert Lacombe in 1852, himself still a secular priest until 1856 when he

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<sup>74</sup> Richard Andre Ouellet, "Tales of Empowerment: Cultural Continuity within an Evolving Identity in the Upper Athabasca Valley" (Master of Arts, Simon Fraser University, 2006), 54. See also Peter J. Murphy, "Homesteading in the Athabasca Valley to 1910: An Interview with Edward Wilson Moberly, Prairie Creek, Alberta, 29 August 1980," in *Culturing Wilderness in Jasper National Park: Studies in Two Centuries of Human History in the Upper Athabasca River Watershed*, ed. I. S. MacLaren (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 2007), 127.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid., 148.

<sup>76</sup> Ouellet, "Tales of Empowerment: Cultural Continuity within an Evolving Identity in the Upper Athabasca Valley," 54.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid., 54-5.

<sup>78</sup> Levasseur, *Les Oblats de Marie Immaculée dans l'ouest et le nord du Canada, 1845-1967 : esquisse historique*, 55.

completed his novitiate there under Father Rémas.<sup>79</sup> Father Lacombe himself left Lac Ste-Anne in 1861 for St. Albert, apparently because there was better farmland there, and no priest was at the mission for most of 1869.<sup>80</sup> Many of the Métis followed Lacombe to St. Albert. Hence the mission struggled to survive. Oblate Reverend Vital Fourmond, a Frenchman who was born in 1828, arrived at the Lac Ste-Anne Mission in 1869 and was “curé” there from January 1870 to October 1873.<sup>81</sup> He made an effort to revive the mission and began to write the first *Codex*, of which more will be said in the next chapter.<sup>82</sup> Unfortunately, Fourmond’s *Codex* ends in 1872, and no *Codex* reappears until 1889. Between October 1873 when Fourmond was transferred to the Our Lady of Peace mission among the Blackfoot people, and the arrival at the Lac Ste-Anne mission in November 1886 of Father Zéphirin Lizée the Québécois priest from Montreal, the mission dwindled further, sometimes going without a resident priest. Still, Brother Henri Grandin, nephew of the Bishop, constructed a new rectory during these years, and “somewhat repaired” the church which hadn’t been maintained in thirty-eight years.<sup>83</sup>

In the midst of this decline at Lac Ste-Anne, Father Jean-Marie Lestanc, O.M.I., became superior at St. Albert in 1883 which would lead to a trip to Europe, a personal revelation, and his initiation of the pilgrimage in 1889. Before discussing Father Lestanc’s experience, it is necessary to briefly outline his biography, in order to show, not only his own Breton heritage, but also to what extent he was experienced at administering and founding missions, and thus the great familiarity he must have had with events like pilgrimages.

When Father Joseph-Jean-Marie Lestanc inaugurated the Lac Ste-Anne Pilgrimage, he already had spent 34 years as a missionary working in the North West Territories, indeed, one of the pioneer Oblates in the region. Father Lestanc was born and spent his

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<sup>79</sup> Drouin, *Lac Ste-Anne Sakahigan*, 23-4.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, 81.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.* See also Brian M. Owens and Claude M. Roberto, eds., *A Guide to the Archives of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate: Province of Alberta-Saskatchewan* (Edmonton: The Missionary Oblates. Grandin Province, 1989), 90.

<sup>82</sup> Drouin, *Lac Ste-Anne Sakahigan*, 43-4.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, 44.



formative years in Brittany, north-western France, a region whose patron saint is Saint Anne. Born in 1830, in St-Pierre-Quilbignon, now part of Brest, Brittany, in north western France, Lestanc entered the minor seminary of St-Pol-de-Léon at the age of fourteen, and then the major seminary of Quimper to complete his initial training by 1853.<sup>84</sup> He left Brittany when he entered the noviciate at Notre-Dame-de-l'Osier, a village in the Grenoble region, which by that time had also become known for its pilgrimages. There, in 1657 (once again during the Counter-Reformation), the Virgin Mary appeared to a Protestant man who converted to Catholicism on his death bed.<sup>85</sup> In 1854, Lestanc took his perpetual vows at age twenty-four, and was ordained a year later in Marseilles in southern France, by Bishop Eugène de Mazenod himself.<sup>86</sup> Only a few months later, he left for the Canadian West in 1855, and spent his first two years at St. Boniface, Manitoba.<sup>87</sup> After twelve years of service in what is now Manitoba, Lestanc was posted to the northwest in present day locations of Saskatchewan and Alberta for 28 years. His last years were spent in Alberta, retiring at the Lacombe Home in Midnapore in 1911, before his death, at age 82, the next year.<sup>88</sup>

Lestanc's missionary career was shaped by founding or building roles, leadership or administrative duties, often as "Father Superior," and close experience visiting and living among the Aboriginal peoples. As a young missionary, he started building a mission at Saint Laurent, Manitoba from 1857 to 1858, and kept visiting it from 1861 to 1870. When

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<sup>84</sup> Hudon, Paul Antoine, O.M.I. transl. "Father Joseph Lestanc," *Book of Memory: Missionary Oblates of Grandin Province*, English Translation of excerpts from Gaston Carrière's *Dictionnaire Biographique*, 1999-2000, no page numbers. See also Father Georges Tétreault O.M.I., "Father Joseph Lestanc, O.M.I." in *Oblates at Rest: Life and Work Sketches of the Oblate Missionaries in the Saint-Albert Cemetery*, ed. Father Antonio Duhaime O.M.I (Edmonton: Inland Printing Ltd., 1983), 85.

<sup>85</sup> "Un village pas tout a fait comme les autres," [http://notredamedelosier.sud-gresivaudan.org/SIT\\_MINI\\_CODEENTREE/SIT\\_MINI\\_URL/4020-presentation.htm](http://notredamedelosier.sud-gresivaudan.org/SIT_MINI_CODEENTREE/SIT_MINI_URL/4020-presentation.htm), Commune de Notre Dame de l'Osier, ( accessed August 17, 2010).

<sup>86</sup> Hudon, *Book of Memory: Missionary Oblates of Grandin Province*. Owens and Roberto, *A Guide to the Archives of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate: Province of Alberta-Saskatchewan*, 109.

<sup>87</sup> Hudon, *Book of Memory: Missionary Oblates of Grandin Province*.

<sup>88</sup> In Manitoba, Lestanc was stationed in St. Norbert and again in St. Boniface. In Saskatchewan he was in Lebrét, Battleford and Onion Lake, while in Alberta he was at St. Albert and Calgary and finally in Calgary, Edmonton, Dunbow, Fort Macleod, Okotoks, Lethbridge and Saddle Lake. See Owens and Roberto, *A Guide to the Archives of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate: Province of Alberta-Saskatchewan*, 109-10 He is buried in the Oblate cemetery at St. Albert, Alberta. Tétreault, "Father Joseph Lestanc," O.M.I., 85.

Saint Boniface's Cathedral burnt down in 1860, he was summoned back to the Bishop's house to oversee its rebuilding from 1860 to 1862. He also founded Fort Pitt's Mission in Saskatchewan in 1877. Father Lestanc was often the "superior" in charge of missions or schools. He took on that role at the house in St Boniface from 1860 to 1870 when he was also superior of the college at Saint Boniface from 1862 to 1864, all the while visiting the Maskegons below St. Peter Fort, and the Saulteaux (Ojibwa) from Fort Alexandre. When he left for Lebret (Qu'Appelle) Saskatchewan in 1870, he ministered to those on the buffalo hunt as far as Cypress Hills and Willow Bunch, Saskatchewan where he became the first residing priest, until 1874. That year, he was sent to St. Albert, Alberta where he became superior until 1877. He was then named superior at Battleford, Saskatchewan until 1882. During those five years back in Saskatchewan, he spent the winter of 1879 at the Pound Maker's Chief residence until he built himself a house where he continued to live while teaching for two years on the reserve. After a trip to Europe in 1882 to attend the General Chapter of the Oblates, he was again named superior in St. Albert from 1883 to 1893.

It was during this time in St. Albert that he became discouraged by the lost impetus of the mission in Lac Ste-Anne which was under his jurisdiction. Along with other Oblate administrators, he was thinking of abandoning it.<sup>89</sup> A large part of Lestanc's discouragement may have had to do with a particular long standing conflict in which he was involved concerning the opening of a Protestant school for the Cree people at the Chief Enoch La Potac reserve in Stony Plain, 40 km east of Lac Ste-Anne.

Two and a half years before the Lac Ste-Anne Pilgrimage started, on December 10<sup>th</sup>, 1886, the Indian Commissioner for the North West Territories, Edgar Dewdney, wrote a letter to the Superintendent General of Indian Affairs, John A. Macdonald (who held this role concurrently as he was Canada's prime minister), declaring that :

...no small dissension has arisen between the Revd. Père Lestanc and the Revd. Mr. Baird representing the Roman Catholic and Presbyterian churches respectively, in

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<sup>89</sup> Drouin, *Lac Ste-Anne Sakahigan*, 45. PAA OMI Collection, *Lac Ste-Anne Codex Historicus 1900-1964* Accession 71.220, Box 99, File 4215, 18.

consequence of the school established on Enoch Lepotac's or the Stony Plain Reserve, being conducted by a member of a Protestant denomination.<sup>90</sup>

This conflict produced over fifty pages of documents in the Department of Indian Affairs files, spanning the years 1886 to 1890, with letters written by both secular and ecclesiastical authorities from the Department of Indian Affairs and the Oblate order in Canada. Leaders such as Father Albert Lacombe, Superintendent General of Indian Affairs John A. Macdonald, and the Reverend Professor Hart, Convenor of the Presbyterian Foreign Missions Committee in Winnipeg, were also implicated. Although no letters exist in this file written by Father Lestanc himself nor by W. Anderson, the Indian Agent accused of stirring up trouble, the file does contain communication from Indian Commissioner Edgar Dewdney, Deputy Superintendent General L. Vankoughnet, Assistant Commissioner (who then became Commissioner) Hayter Reed, Deputy Minister Duncan Campbell Scott, Bishop of St. Albert Vital Grandin, O.M.I., another Oblate father Reverend P.E. Gendreau, and the Reverend Andrew B. Baird himself.

Conflict arose when the *Edmonton Bulletin* in 1886 announced that the First Nations people on the Enoch la Potac Reserve in Stony Plain had requested a Protestant (Presbyterian) minister and school on their reserve. Father Lestanc took issue with this, apparently stating in a letter which accompanied a signed petition to Commissioner Dewdney that:

...almost all of the Indians of the reserve referred to are Roman Catholics, baptised into that church in their infancy by its priests, that these Indians have been regularly and especially in times of sickness visited by the priests – that they had on several occasions asked Mr.[Bishop Vital] Grandin to give them a resident priest and consequently that it was considered almost impossible to credit a statement which appeared in the “Bulletin” to the effect that these same Indians had requested the Presbyterians to give them a minister and a school.<sup>91</sup>

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<sup>90</sup> DIA RG 10 Black Series, “Letter to Superintendent General of Indian Affairs John A. Macdonald from Indian Commissioner for the North West Territories, Edgar Dewdney, December 10<sup>th</sup>, 1886” *Edmonton Agency—Correspondence regarding Dissension between the Roman Catholic and Presbeterian (Sic) Missionaries in Connection with the Stony Plain Indians of the Enoch La Potac Reserve. 1886-1890*, Volume 3773, File 35457.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*

Oblate father superior Lestanc further claimed that the Catholic priests “were afterwards assured by the Indians that they had never invited the Presbyterians, and the outcome was that the Roman Catholic Services were resumed on the reserve fortnightly.” If the people at Enoch had accepted a school, Lestanc charged, it was through “the force of solicitations” and “with the distinct understanding upon the part of the Indians that English would be taught, but without anything of a religious character.”<sup>92</sup> The main thorn in Father Lestanc’s side seemed to have been Indian Agent W. Anderson. Lestanc brought:

...railing accusations of bigotry and active sympathy against agent Anderson, who is accused of having after a failure to intimidate Mr Farming Instructor Redsdale, attempted to force the Indians to rally round the Revd. Mr. Baird, threatening to deprive them of their rations should they keep to build a Catholic church upon the reserve.<sup>93</sup>

That agent Anderson would threaten to deprive the starving Treaty Indians of their rations is very possible, as even Hayter Reed, who became assistant Indian Commissioner in 1883 used these tactics.<sup>94</sup> Reverend Andrew B. Baird, on his side, claimed that he had:

...interviewed the chief and his councillors at the request of the Indians who said that when they took possession of the Reserve they were nearly all Protestants, chiefly Methodists, that they had acquiesced in the visits of priests from St. Albert’s mission, not because they desired to leave the church in which they had been trained but because there was none other convenient, that they wished a school established in their midst Methodist preferred, but certainly Protestant,...<sup>95</sup>

Reverend Baird, supported by agent Anderson who reported that “Père Lestanc had given Enoch a \$50.00 contract to cut logs for the church,” then accused Lestanc of bribing Chief Enoch to sign the petition. The Presbyterian Reverend also strongly discouraged the Department from possibly funding a Catholic school that the Oblates subsequently opened in response to the Protestants’ school on the reserve in January of 1887.<sup>96</sup> He also claimed

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<sup>92</sup> Ibid.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid.

<sup>94</sup> Brian Titley, *The Indian Commissioners: Agents of the State and Indian Policy in Canada's Prairie West, 1873-1932* (Edmonton: The University of Alberta Press, 2009), 98.

<sup>95</sup> “Letter to Superintendent General of Indian Affairs John A. Macdonald from Indian Commissioner for the North West Territories, Edgar Dewdney, December 10<sup>th</sup>, 1886.”

<sup>96</sup> DIA RG 10 Black Series, “Letter to Indian Commissioner Edgar Dewdney from Reverend Andrew B. Baird, January 19, 1887,” Volume 3773, File 35457.

that the priest at the latter school “decoyed” and “detained” students walking to the Protestant school and that “All kinds of means –not stopping short of physical constraint – are used to coax the children away from the Protestant school – even in spite of the wishes of the parents.”<sup>97</sup> Though Commissioner Dewdney, prompted and advised by Father Albert Lacombe and Bishop Vital Grandin, suggested that an investigation be made, Deputy Superintendant General L. Vankoughnet and John. A. Macdonald refused a formal investigation, believing they should adhere to the Department’s policy of non-interference in ecclesiastical matters.<sup>98</sup> However both agreed that Agent Anderson’s actions should be investigated, and the man was eventually dismissed from his position. The Catholics, however, never really got a school on the reserve during this time, though the Protestants did manage to open an Industrial School there a few years later.<sup>99</sup> Significant to the context of Lestanc’s voyage to France in 1887, and his resolve to begin a pilgrimage, Bishop Grandin, in a translated letter dated Nov 15<sup>th</sup>, 1887 and sent to the then Minister of the Interior Thomas White, claimed that though he never wished the man any injury, Agent Anderson:

...has been particularly the cause of nearly all our troubles with the government. Thanks to him, if we have lost our establishment at Lac la Nonne also that of Lac Ste-Anne or nearly so and if it is now impossible for us to minister to the Indians of the reserve at Peace Hills. He was also the cause of all the trouble on the Prairie Assiniboine.... I have been told that he has been dismissed but before his dismissal he was allowed to undermine several of our missions and succeeded in estranging from us the Indians....<sup>100</sup>

Thus, in the sometimes vicious competition between Catholic and Protestant clergy, the Oblates felt that they were swiftly losing First Nations converts at a few missions in the Edmonton area, including those at Lac Ste-Anne. Furthermore, in 1887, in the midst of

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<sup>97</sup> Ibid.

<sup>98</sup> DIA RG 10 Black Series, “Letter to Sir John A. Macdonald, Superintendent General of Indian Affairs, from L. Vankoughnet, Deputy Superintendent, December 16<sup>th</sup>, 1886,” and “Letter to Indian Commissioner E. Dewdney from Superintendent General Sir John A. Macdonald, December 29<sup>th</sup>, 1886,” Volume 3773, File 35457.

<sup>99</sup> DIA RG 10 Black Series, “Letters to Indian Commissioner Hayter Reed from Bishop Vital Grandin, June 12 and 14<sup>th</sup>, 1890,” Volume 3773, File 35457.

<sup>100</sup> DIA RG 10 Black Series, “Translated letter to Minister of the Interior Thomas White from Bishop Vital Grandin, Nov 15<sup>th</sup>, 1887,” Volume 3773, File 35457.

this conflict, Father Lestanc was undoubtedly physically and mentally drained from his thirty years in Canada, when he returned to Europe. From such circumstances at home, Lestanc visited the pilgrimage site at Ste-Anne d'Auray in his native Brittany, and had the experience which would inspire him to rebuild the church and start the pilgrimage at Lac Ste-Anne.<sup>101</sup> While prostrate in front of a statue of Saint Anne at the shrine in France, Father Lestanc heard the saint speak to him.

A few reports of this experience exist in the Oblate records, and as mentioned previously in the introduction, his "revelation" is not considered very significant today. However, it is useful to closely look at Father Lestanc's own account of his experience at Auray. Considering the difficult context of this supernatural summoning, Lestanc's description reveals both the urgency of the situation and the Oblates using the telling of an age-old story to claim the place for Saint Anne and for the Catholic Church. To use Alan Morinis' terms, Lestanc's story and later on, other stories told by indigenous pilgrims, culturally claimed the place and made it important. They developed and projected:

...an image that is a magnification of some accepted ideals of the culture. They represent a higher or purer ideal version of what the potential pilgrim already values and seeks by dint of membership in a culture. Cultural intensification of this sort is the central force in the creation, maintenance, and success of pilgrimage shrines. A center that ceases to embody an intensified version of cultural values goes into decline.<sup>102</sup>

In fact, Father Jean-Marie Lestanc's vision at Auray somewhat resembles that of Yvon Nicolazic, the original pious farmer whose experience instigated the pilgrimage to Ste-Anne at Auray, and, as shall be discussed shortly, is the exact experience of earlier Sulpician fathers, who initiated pilgrimages to Saint Anne in Quebec and in Paris.

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<sup>101</sup> Hudon, transl. "Father Joseph Lestanc," *Book of Memory: Missionary Oblates of Grandin Province*. Drouin, *Lac Ste-Anne Sakahigan*, 52. There seems to be some discrepancy among Oblate scholars as to Lestanc's trips to Europe. Drouin says that when Lestanc went to Auray in 1887, he had not returned home in thirty years. Lestanc himself, claims he went home in 1887, as shall be seen further on. However Lestanc's short biography in the *Book of Memory* states that he had returned to Europe in 1882 for the Oblates General Chapter, thus only five years previous to the 1887 trip. Following his time at St. Albert, he became superior at Calgary for two periods, then at the Dunbow Indian School in High River, Alberta from 1901-2 and at Fort McLeod from 1901-4.

<sup>102</sup> Alan Morinis, "Introduction," in *Sacred Journeys: The Anthropology of Pilgrimage*, 18.

According to Oblate Father and archivist Émeric Drouin, in his 1973 book, *Lac Ste-Anne Sakahigan*, Saint Anne's voice at Auray asked Lestanc, while he was praying in front of her statue, "Why do you want to abandon my Western Canada sanctuary; what have you done in your missionary field?"<sup>103</sup> Lestanc himself, twenty-three years after his revelation, in 1910, recalled the experience in an article of the "Northwest Review," which was then transcribed by another Oblate Father Joseph Portier, in the 1910 *Codex Historicus* of the Pilgrimage. The passage is quoted in full below, as it certainly reveals Lestanc's cultural ties to Brittany and to the region's patron saint, the importance of the special healing shrines known as "pardons" in France, as well as his incorporation of the older pilgrimage story from Ste-Anne d'Auray, to that of his own personal experience. Lestanc recounts:

Through circumstances prepared long beforehand, an old missionary, native of Brittany was at that time (1887) called in France, and obtained the favor of visiting his Brittany. In passing at Auray, this Rev. Father did not forget to go and salute the patroness of the Bretons. What indeed took place during this visit? Here is, very simply told, the compliment which I think I heard while I was kneeling before the statue of St Ann: 'Yes, indeed, it is very nice of you! A child of ... Brittany, a missionary for thirty-two years, and you have never spoken of me!' What could I answer? I begged pardon, pardon for the past and I added: 'I will return, good mother, and with your protection, I will amend the past.' Indeed, after my return to St. Albert, I put to the task all my good will, and in a short time, a new chapel was erected in honor of St. Ann, on the shores of the beautiful lake; a magnificent statue of our Patroness was sent to me by a generous lady (Mrs Gingras) of Montreal, and a fine organ came as if by chance, with the statue on the eve of the feast, just in time for the blessing of the chapel and for the opening of the Pilgrimage. What a happiness it was for me to have been able thus to fulfil (sic) my promise, and to see at the feet of our good St Ann from two to three hundred pilgrims, a year only after my return from Auray.<sup>104</sup>

It is clear that Lestanc's recounting incorporates some important elements of Breton farmer Yvon Nicolazic's experience, and of the traditions at Auray, notably, the significance of confession. The vision and/or voice of Saint Anne were perceived by both Lestanc and Nicolazic while they were in the act of praying, and in a sense, confessing their misdeeds. Lestanc "confessed" to Saint Anne that his mission was not thriving in Canada, and that he

<sup>103</sup> As told by Drouin, *Lac Ste-Anne Sakahigan*, 52.

<sup>104</sup> *Lac Ste-Anne Codex Historicus 1900-1964*, 18.

had not spoken of her in his adopted country. Hence, Lestanc's emphasis on "begging for pardon" was not simply a reflection of what may have been his real shame. It was rather a direct reference to the notion of "pardon," particularly essential to the pilgrimage to Auray, and to Catholic pilgrimages in general, where one confesses and communes before benefiting from a saint's, in this case Saint Anne's, intercessions, healing and renewal.

Furthermore, both Lestanc and Yvon Nicolazic's vision pushed them to rebuild a chapel in honour of Saint Anne, (though Nicolazic was directly told to do so, whereas Lestanc was not) and what is more, in both cases, the discovery or arrival of a statue of Saint Anne was serendipitous. At Lac Ste-Anne, by Lestanc's account, a statue from a certain Mme. Gingras of Montreal, arrived "as if by chance" along with the organ "on the eve of the feast, just in time for the blessing of the chapel and for the opening of the Pilgrimage," which attracted "two to three hundred pilgrims, a year only" after his return from Auray. Further, both men's experiences are most likely recalled as a means to show that confession, hard work, faith, and praying to Saint Anne, reaped rewards, and it is evident that Lestanc adopted elements of Yvon Nicolazic's story and applied it to his own experience, in order to teach that lesson, when he and others would recount the tale of Ste-Anne d'Auray to pilgrims at the Lac Ste-Anne Pilgrimage.<sup>105</sup> Finally, Lestanc's experience is far from unique, neither in France nor in Canada. A manuscript biography of Father de Queylus, the Sulpician Rector of the Quebec Parish who founded the site to Ste-Anne de Beaupré :

... still in the archives of the Sulpicians in Montreal, states that Father de Queylus himself decided that the church of the Petit Cap would be dedicated to Saint Anne. By so doing, it is assumed he would be imitating the saintly Father Olier, Founder of the Sulpicians, who, on his return from a pilgrimage to Auray, had dedicated to Saint Anne a chapel erected in Paris, in the St. Germain Faubourg.<sup>106</sup>

Father Lestanc's experience is strikingly similar to that of Olier. Both men erected or rebuilt a chapel to Saint Anne after returning from a personal voyage to Auray, Olier in Paris, and Lestanc in Lac Ste-Anne. Father de Queylus, imitating Father Olier, also

<sup>105</sup> "Il raconte l'histoire de Ste-Anne d'Auray en France." *Lac Ste-Anne Codex Historicus, 1889-1899*, 8.

<sup>106</sup> Gagné and Asselin, *Saint Anne De Beaupré; Pilgrim's Goal for Three Hundred Years: A Brief History of the Shrine*, 8.



dedicated the chapel in Beaupré to Saint Anne. Thus, as a Catholic missionary and father superior, Father Lestanc was reviving a tradition of pilgrimages dedicated to Saint Anne, and following in the footsteps of previous priests in positions of responsibility. Inspired by a very regional story, the pious farmer of Auray lore, these priests dedicated churches to Saint Anne in far flung French “colonies” where it was necessary to convert people and/or reanimate the faith.

However, it is worth recalling that, long before Lestanc’s experience, or even his arrival on the continent, the devotion to Saint Anne itself had already been entrenched in North America, and particularly visible at the pilgrimage to Beaupré in Québec. Further, from his revelation, Lestanc would bring the structures, beliefs, relics and rituals of the earlier pilgrimage to Auray from his Breton homeland back to Canada, where it would shape the new pilgrimage in Lac Ste-Anne. That the Oblates at the Lac Ste-Anne mission were inspired by Auray and Beaupré, a double legacy from France and Québec, is evident from the references to these earlier pilgrimages in the first Lac Ste-Anne Pilgrimage *Codex*, from the very first day of what became the annual event. These were indeed written by an individual well-aware of such precedents.

Father Zéphirin Lizée, O.M.I., who was born in Montréal, Québec in 1856, studied at the college and seminary in Montréal, entered the noviciate in Lachine, and also studied at the University of Ottawa.<sup>107</sup> Three Oblate biographies state that though he “served St. Albert mission headquarters” from 1885-96, he was only pastor at Lac Ste-Anne for one year, from 1896-1897.<sup>108</sup> However Émeric Drouin listed him as the priest in charge of the Lac Ste-Anne mission from November 1886 to February 1897 (almost 11 years).<sup>109</sup> All sources concur that Father Lizée returned to Lac Ste-Anne as pastor again for another 13

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<sup>107</sup> Hudon, transl., “Father Zéphirin Lizée,” *Book of Memory: Missionary Oblates of Grandin Province*.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid. “Father Zéphirin Lizée, O.M.I.” in *Oblates at Rest: Life and Work Sketches of the Oblate Missionaries in the Saint-Albert Cemetery*, ed. Father Antonio Duhaime O.M.I. (Edmonton: Inland Printing Ltd., 1983), 103. Owens and Roberto, *A Guide to the Archives of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate: Province of Alberta-Saskatchewan*, 111-12.

<sup>109</sup> Drouin, *Lac Ste-Anne Sakahigan*, 81.

years between October 1899 and June 1912.<sup>110</sup> It does seem that Father Lizée was somewhat of a sensitive character, and had a subordinate role, as he was often “sous-diacre” or sub deacon at the pilgrimages, and was often the one collecting the offertory or singing.<sup>111</sup> He often noted both the music and the decorations at the event, and complained when one year he was left to organize everything on his own. He learned Cree, and started a Cree newspaper, but his personal journal reveals how devastated emotionally and guilty he felt when, early on, an indigenous man chastised him about his poor Cree. In any case, Father Lizée wrote most of the *Codex* for the early years, and throughout the first six years of the pilgrimage, he made several references both explicitly and implicitly to Ste-Anne d’Auray and Ste-Anne de Beaupré.

In the very first *Codex*, on Thursday June 6<sup>th</sup>, 1889 Father Zéphirin Lizée writes that on this day “was inaugurated, here at the Mission of Lac Ste-Anne, the 1<sup>st</sup> pilgrimage to the Good Ste-Anne, who, we hope, will not fail here, as she has not *in the other pilgrimage places* (italics mine), to spread her abundant blessings and to manifest her power.”<sup>112</sup> As shall be discussed in chapter four, the first pilgrimage took place on June 6<sup>th</sup> rather than July 26<sup>th</sup> to accommodate farming priorities. The “other pilgrimage places,” can only refer to the pilgrimages to Ste-Anne d’Auray in Brittany, France, and to Ste-Anne de Beaupré in Québec, as the other indigenous-Catholic pilgrimages initiated in the Canadian West were not dedicated to Saint Anne, and began after Lac Ste-Anne’s was well established.<sup>113</sup> Lizée continued to point out that for the first time more than 71 pilgrims

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<sup>110</sup> Ibid., 81. Hudon, “Father Zéphirin Lizée.” “Father Zéphirin Lizée. O.M.I.” in *Oblates at Rest: Life and Work Sketches of the Oblate Missionaries in the Saint-Albert Cemetery*, 103. Owens and Roberto, *A Guide to the Archives of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate: Province of Alberta-Saskatchewan*, 111-12.

<sup>111</sup> *Lac Ste-Anne Codex Historicus 1889-1899*, 5,14, 16.

<sup>112</sup> “C’est aujourd’hui, le six Juin de l’an de Notre Seigneur mil huit cent quatre vingt neuf que s’est inauguré, ici à la Mission du Lac-Ste Anne, le 1er pèlerinage (sic) à la Bonne Ste Anne qui, nous l’espérons, ne manquera pas ici comme aux autres lieux de pèlerinages (sic), de répandre ses abondantes bénédictions et de manifester sa puissance.” Ibid., 1.

<sup>113</sup> It is important to note that though other Indigenous-Catholic pilgrimages were also initiated in Alberta, as for example to Long Lake (Keehewin) or Gurneyville and to Beaver Lake. However, they were not dedicated to Saint Anne, and in any case were all initiated after the LSA Pilgrimage, the above two in the 1940’s and 1951 respectively, and thus Lizée could not have been referring to them in this statement. It is possible however, that aside from Auray or Beaupré, he may have referring to the pilgrimage to Chapel Island, Nova Scotia, which had been taking place since the 1700’s. See Alan Morinis, “Persistent Peregrination: From Sun Dance to Catholic Pilgrimage among Canadian Prairie Indians, 104. See also PAA OMI Collection, “Letter from Emeric Drouin, O.M.I. to Dr. Morinis, April 14<sup>th</sup>, 1983,” Acc 71 220, Box 101, File 4249. “St. Vincent

came from St. Albert to implore assistance from “this Great Saint” and to ask for “some relief from their harms or wrongs and from their pains,” referring almost immediately to the age-old tradition of healing pilgrimages.<sup>114</sup>

A little further in the first *Codex*, Lizée reinforced the relationship to the other two pilgrimages again, when he noted that Father Jean-Marie Lestanc, who initiated the pilgrimage after his own very personal experience at Auray, “had brought a nickel statue of Saint Anne which had touched the relics of the Good Ste-Anne of Beaupré below Quebec.”<sup>115</sup> The statue was placed in the chapel to be venerated for the whole time of the pilgrimage. Five years later, for the Lac Ste-Anne Pilgrimage of 1894, an actual relic was brought from Auray, France by Bishop Vital Grandin, and was carried on a “brancard” during the first ever candlelit procession at Lac Ste-Anne.<sup>116</sup>

During the very first high mass, which took place at 8 am on June 6<sup>th</sup>, 1889, the congregation sang a “cantique” in French to Saint Anne, and Lizée provided a phrase from the song: “Towards her sanctuary, for the last two hundred years...”<sup>117</sup> This cantique was most likely one also sang in Beaupré or Auray, and the “two hundred years” refer to the number of years during which people had been travelling to those “sanctuaries,” which had existed since 1625 and 1658 respectively. Lizée closes the first *Codex* by invoking the healing power of Saint Anne again, and stating his wish for the future, a wish he knows has been fulfilled “in the other pilgrimage places”:

[The Good Ste-Anne] must have seen [the devout pilgrims] with a favourable eye, and been touched by the homage that we’d like to give her in her lost sanctuary, it must be said, and forgotten in these vast regions of the North West. May this modest sanctuary, dedicated to the Good Ste-Anne, one day become a much

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and St. Paul: Memory in Francophone Alberta,” in Alberta Online Encyclopedia, [http://www.abheritage.ca/stvincent-stpaul/search\\_accession.php?accession=387](http://www.abheritage.ca/stvincent-stpaul/search_accession.php?accession=387), (accessed July 8<sup>th</sup>, 2011). Rob McKinley, “Blessed Waters Pilgrimage Held at Beaver Lake,” in *Windspeaker*, Vol 19, Issue 2, 2001, Aboriginal Multi-Media Society, <http://www.ammsa.com/node/14640>, (accessed July 8<sup>th</sup>, 2011).

<sup>114</sup> “cette Grande Sainte ...quelques soulagements à leurs maux et à leurs peines.” *Lac Ste-Anne Codex Historicus, 1889-1899*, 1.

<sup>115</sup> “Le Révérend Père Lestanc avait amené une statuette en nickel de Ste-Anne qui a touché les reliques de la Bonne Ste-Anne de Beaupré en bas de Quebec (sic). Cette statuette a été placée en vénération ici dans la chapelle tout le temps du Pèlerinage (sic).” *Ibid.*, 2.

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*, 30.

<sup>117</sup> “Vers son sanctuaire, Depuis deux cents ans...” *Ibid.*, 2.

frequented Pilgrimage site, and [may] this great saint here [also] radiate her grandeur and her power, by granting to the sick their cures, and to the afflicted, the relief or consolation of their pains.<sup>118</sup>

In the second pilgrimage, which took place about a month and a half after the first, during the appropriate week of July 26<sup>th</sup>, 1889, the statue of Saint Anne Lestanc had referred to, was sent by Mme Gingras of Montreal, and arrived just in time for the opening of this more official “first” pilgrimage, along with a harmonium or organ. The statue of Saint Anne, known 200 years previously as an “image,” was imperative to the cult of Saint Anne, and particularly important to the healing dispensations associated with the pilgrimages, both old and new. During the third pilgrimage, on Sunday July 27<sup>th</sup>, 1890, Father Lestanc “tells the story of Ste-Anne d’Auray in France,” during what would become the customary 2 pm gathering of the pilgrimage day.<sup>119</sup>

At the end of the fourth pilgrimage recorded in the *Codex* of 1891, and again in the eighth pilgrimage *Codex* of 1895, Father Lizée expressed the hope of seeing Saint Anne in the frontier of a new and pagan land: “This sanctuary will be one day for the Canadian North West, which we could call the New Canada, what is today Ste-Anne de Beupré for the old Canada.”<sup>120</sup> It is significant that Father Lizée recorded this last comment as a “Reflection” on the pilgrimage in 1891, which as shall be seen in chapter four, was to be the most important pilgrimage in establishing the power of Saint Anne in the Canadian North West.

Finally, on at least two occasions, in 1897, and presumably in 1898 or 1899 (the document is not dated), Monseigneur Émile Legal, O.M.I., the new Bishop of St. Albert, who attended the pilgrimage, related the ancient history of Saint Anne herself, as well as

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<sup>118</sup> “[La Bonne Ste-Anne] a dû voir [les dévots pèlerins] d’un œil favorable et être touchée des hommages que l’on veut lui rendre dans sont (sic) sanctuaire perdu, il faut dire, et oublié dans ces vastes régions du Nord-Ouest. Puisse un jour ce modeste sanctuaire dédié à la Bonne Ste Anne, devenir un lieu de Pèlerinages (sic) très fréquenté et que cette grande Sainte fasse aussi ici éclater sa grandeur et sa puissance en accordant aux malades leurs guérisons et aux affligés le soulagement ou la consolation dans leurs peines.” *Ibid.*, 3-4.

<sup>119</sup> “Il raconte l’histoire de Ste Anne d’Auray en France.” *Ibid.*, 8.

<sup>120</sup> “Ce sanctuaire sera un jour pour le Nord-Ouest Canadien, qu’on pourrait appeler le Nouveau Canada, ce qu’est aujourd’hui Ste Anne de Beupré pour le vieux Canada.” *Ibid.* In 1895 Lizée writes, “Tous s’accordent a (sic) dire que c’est tous les ans de plus beau en plus beau et que ce Pèlerinage (sic) annuel à la bonne Ste-Anne semble vouloir prendre des proportions grandiose et arrives (sic) sur le même pied que le Grand Pèlerinage (sic) de Ste-Anne de Beupré en (sic) Canada.” *Ibid.*, 34-5.

make explicit reference to the “souvenirs” or memories of both Auray and Beaupré and the saint’s role in founding the church in a new land. In a document which appears to be notes to a speech or sermon, entitled “Pèlerinage de Ste-Anne,” and dated July 14<sup>th</sup>, 1897, Legal wrote:

Happiness to find myself once again at the Sanctuary of Ste-Anne.  
Memory of Ste-Anne d’Auray. On the soil of Keranna dear to the Bretons.  
Numerous favours received There from she whom the The Catholic teachings has called The good Ste-Anne.

Memories of Ste-Anne de Beaupré. The voyageurs and Bretons sailors that came to people Canada during an already distant time did not forget Ste-Anne. They transported with them their devotion to the good Ste-Anne. Favours spread out across the Canadian soil. Here, is The place that Ste-Anne chose for herself in the vast territories of the North West. Here Ste-Anne will once again be as good as she has been everywhere else. Here will be another privileged place where the good Ste-Anne will spread her good deeds [symbol for etc.] the public Renown already the number of favours obtained by the intercession of Ste-Anne.<sup>121</sup>

Thus, from this document, it is evident that Bishop Legal and the Oblates hoped to transplant the stories and power of the two older pilgrimages at Auray and Beaupré to the Canadian West. Legal’s allusion to Saint Anne’s public “renommée” already made explicit by the saint’s intercession and the numerous favours granted, is a reference to the many healing miracles which had allegedly already happened at Lac Ste-Anne, and were recorded for the first time in the pilgrimage *Codex* in 1891. Finally, in the *Codex* of 1899 recorded by Father Valentin Végréville, O.M.I., who took over from Lizée for three years in 1897, two pamphlets, the “Souvenir de Ste-Anne de Beaupré” (costing 25 cents), and a “Manuel du pèlerin à Ste-Anne de B.”(40 cents) figure in a list of religious articles sold to pilgrims at the pilgrimage of 1899.<sup>122</sup> Hence, the first pilgrimage codices reveal the French

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<sup>121</sup> "Bonheur de me retrouver dans un Sanctuaire de Ste-Anne.

Souvenir de Ste-Anne d’Auray. dans (sic) la terre de Keranna chère aux Bretons. Nombreuses faveurs recueillies Là de celle que La prete catholique a nommé La bonne Ste-Anne.

Souvenirs de Ste-Anne de Beaupré. Les voyageurs & marins bretons qui sont venu (sic) peupler le Canada à une époque (sic) déjà (sic) reculée (sic) n’ont point oublié Ste-Anne. Ils ont transporté avec eux leur dévotion (sic) a (sic) la bonne Ste-Anne. Faveurs repandues (sic) sur le sol canadien. Ici, c’est La place que Ste Anne s’est choisie dans les vastes territoires du Nord-Ouest. Ici Ste-Anne sera encore aussi bonne que partout ailleurs. Ici sera encore un lieu privilégiée (sic) ou la bonne Sainte Anne repandra (sic) ses bienfaits [symbol for etc.] la Renommée public déjà (sic) nombre de faveurs obtenues par l’intercession de Ste-Anne.” Ibid., 45.

<sup>122</sup> Ibid., no page number.

cultural basis and precedents for the Lac Ste-Anne Pilgrimage, at least from the perspective of the Oblate organizers, modeled after two already well-known and well-attended pilgrimages in France and in Quebec, which continue to this day. The focus, structures and rituals of the Lac Ste-Anne Pilgrimage, were also modeled after Auray and Beaupré.

The very first pilgrimage was quite simple and lasted only one day, but from the beginning, basic Catholic rituals and the imported European French cultural legacy were well enacted. The event then grew to a two then three day event, to eventually become the six day event it is today. The rituals and ceremonies, and structured organisation of time and space, are apparent in the inaugural pilgrimage of June 6<sup>th</sup>, 1889.

Pilgrims had begun arriving after 11 am the day before the event was to begin. Most would camp overnight near the Lac Ste-Anne Mission, though some would stay with relatives and friends nearby. The actual ceremonies began on the 6<sup>th</sup> at 8 am, with Father Lestanc singing the first “Grande Messe” or High Mass. Significantly, Lizée noted that on three occasions, before this mass, after the “Evangile” (reading from the Gospel) and after the mass, Lestanc also preached in Cree (with “a bit in French”) for half an hour each time, revealing the early Cree audience. The Cree speakers in the audience however were likely not yet Cree people from the reserves but Métis who spoke Cree, French or English, and Michif. Approximately 80 people took Holy Communion at this mass, and the church was almost full. At 11 am, another meeting took place at the church, with a sermon, a recitation of the “rosary of the Holy Virgin and of the Good Sainte Anne” and the blessing of the sick.<sup>123</sup> Lizée did not describe this blessing here but likely referred to the priest asking that parishioners pray for all those they know who are sick. At 3 pm, there was another sermon and the procession to the Stations of the Cross. At 5:30 pm, a monstrance, in which the communion host was displayed, was presented to the adherents during yet another mass referred to as “Le Salut” and also called the Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. At 8pm, all participated in a common prayer.

The second day, people roused themselves from their tents and camps at 3:30 am and the pilgrims began their journey homewards at 5:30 am. As mentioned earlier, a statue that had touched the relic of Ste-Anne in Beaupré was displayed the whole time of this

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<sup>123</sup> “...chapelet de la Ste. Vierge et de la Bonne Ste-Anne, et bénédiction des malades” Ibid., 3.

pilgrimage. Thus, from the very first day, the pilgrimage had a High Mass with Holy Eucharist, the reciting of the rosary, the blessing of the sick, the procession to the Stations of the Cross, the Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament, and the symbolic presence of a relic, through the statue of Saint Anne.

The rituals and practices of this first pilgrimage thereafter settled into a pattern that spread out over three days and centered around July 26<sup>th</sup>. By the sixth pilgrimage *Codex* entry of 1893, Father Lizée provided a very neatly written detailed summary suggesting organizers were establishing a pattern for the event, and a model for future pilgrimages. By 7:30pm the night before pilgrimage day, after the singing of canticles and the reciting of the rosary, the Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament mass was given, followed by the hearing of confessions until late into the night. The next morning, people rose very early, just as had been the custom at Auray, often at 5 am, but sometimes at 4 (given the sun rise at 54 degrees N latitude) and the first low masses began at 5:30. With the day's first light around them, canticles were sung, and many communions took place. By 1900, there was more than one altar, each priest would have taken his turn saying a mass, and a priest would circulate to administer communion during the masses.<sup>124</sup> During the pilgrimage, most of the faithful likely would have communed and confessed the night before, or communed in the morning during the low masses. Lizée seemed pleased, and would often remark that pilgrims had taken communion twice. The early morning low masses would take place every half hour until the "Grande Messe" at 9:30 am.<sup>125</sup> This high mass would include a reading from the gospel, a sermon, and the collection during the singing of the "Credo." Lizée would almost always record a total for what had been collected during the offertory. For example, on July 26<sup>th</sup>, 1893, \$22.53 was collected, but this included the donations given also "au tronc," literally at the "trunk," in front of the relics, and from the sale of objects of piety. On the same day in 1894, a Mme. Royal, assisted by the Indian

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<sup>124</sup> *Lac Ste-Anne Codex Historicus. 1900-1964*, 2.

<sup>125</sup> A low mass is a simplified, more "private" version of a high mass. During high mass, a priest is assisted by a deacon and sub deacon, and the priests say the prayers with the people. During low mass, the priest is alone with one helper, and the people say prayers to themselves. Adrian Fortescue, "Liturgy of the Mass" in *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/09790b.htm> Vol. 9 (New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1910), (accessed 16 May 2010).

Agent Charles de Caze, collected \$24.75 solely from the offertory.<sup>126</sup> At 2 pm, after a canticle and saying the rosary, the sick would be solemnly blessed, as well as objects of piety which the pilgrims could purchase at Mlle. Ada Latulippe's store, such as medallions, rosaries, and small crosses. The relics would be venerated at this time as well, while hymns were sung. A final canticle was sung while people left the shrine. In the evening, weather permitting, a candlelit procession would be organized, or a procession to the cemetery. If not, another Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament mass would take place, at around 7:30 pm. By 1900, confessions would take place late into the evening on pilgrimage day as well.<sup>127</sup> The next morning, on the third day, people would again wake early, at 4:30 am according to Lizée's schedule, and low masses would start again at 5 am every half hour, when many pilgrims would take communion again before leaving.

Rituals that were a result of the nineteenth century Catholic Revival at Auray and Beaupré were observed closely at Lac Ste-Anne. The candlelight procession took place for the first time at Lac Ste-Anne, in July of 1894.<sup>128</sup> As at Auray, where in candle light, canticles were sung in a mixture of tongues, the Lac Ste-Anne procession carried the relic, which had been procured by Bishop Grandin that year from the bishop at Auray "Mgr. Bécél," on a "brancard," a litter, "... by four "whites" from the church to the repository and by four Métis from the repository to the church"<sup>129</sup> Hymns were sung in French, English, Latin and Cree.<sup>130</sup> The "défilé" was not less than half a mile long, and there were many colours from the banners and lights. In 1901, the *Codex* noted that four men representing the Irish, the French, the Métis and the Cree carried the "brancard" now with the statue of Saint Anne and the relic at her feet:

... We then hurry ourselves to organize our procession which we do at 9 ½ hrs tonight. Four men carry on their shoulders a lovely statue of Ste-Anne resting on a small litter, at her feet we have put her relic. These four men that carried the Statue

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<sup>126</sup> *Lac Ste-Anne Codex Historicus 1900-1964*, 27, 30.

<sup>127</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

<sup>128</sup> *Lac Ste-Anne Codex Historicus 1889-1899*, 30.

<sup>129</sup> "fut portée par 4 blancs en partant de l'église jusqu'au reposoir et par 4 métis en revenant du reposoir à l'église." *Ibid.*

<sup>130</sup> *Ibid.*, 31.



in procession were: a Canadien from Morinville, an Irishman, Mr. Quinlan, a Métis Michel Calliot and an Indian José Massinasuwasiiniy.<sup>131</sup>

Michel Calliot was likely Michel Calihoo, the chief of the Michel band mentioned earlier, who had left Lac Ste-Anne and settled on his reserve in 1883, funded two expensive grand masses at the mission in November 1870, and had held a big celebration at the Alexander Reserve, with Chief Alexander, when Archbishop Taché visited Alberta in 1888.<sup>132</sup> José Massinasuwasiiniy, one of the few First Nations people mentioned by name in the codices, appears in a later list made by Father Valentin Végréville.<sup>133</sup>

In many respects, the model established in the 1890s, has proven durable in time. A *Ladies of Saint Anne* was also founded in Alberta.<sup>134</sup> Although there is no “Scala Sancta,” the penitential element certainly remains, as many pilgrims to the present day undertake some of the Stations of the Cross on their knees, and certain groups arrive to Lac Ste-Anne on foot. The first pilgrimage of 1889 indeed set an important example of penitence. Right after the “Salut,” a man named Ferdinand Colanjard arrived, “harassed with fatigue,” from Big Lake. He had left St. Albert with a certain brother Leriche, whom he had abandoned on the way, 12 miles from there. The two had decided to make the 58.2 km journey (an hour car ride today) on foot. Brother Leriche was allegedly so tired, he could not continue walking.<sup>135</sup> The fact that the incident merited recording, as well as mention of the man subsequently sent to rescue brother Leriche, will be discussed further in Chapter Four.

Miracles also took place at the Lac Ste-Anne Pilgrimage, just as they did at Auray and Beaupré, although these miracles would “officially” wane by the late 1920’s. The recording of the first miracles in the *Codex*, the first seventeen of which took place between

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<sup>131</sup> "...Nous nous empressons alors d'organiser notre procession que nous faisons à 9 ½ hrs ce soir. Quatre hommes portent sur leurs épaules une belle statue de Ste-Anne reposant sur un petit brancard, à ses pieds nous avons mis sa relique. Ces quatre hommes qui ont porté la Statue en procession étaient : un candien (sic) de Morinville, un irlandais, Mr. Quinlan, un métis Michel Calliot et un sauvage José Massinasuwasiiniy." *Lac Ste-Anne Codex Historicus 1900-1964*, 7.

<sup>132</sup> Elizabeth Macpherson, *The Sun Traveller: The Story of the Callihoos in Alberta*, (St. Albert: Musée Heritage Museum, 1998), 47-9.

<sup>133</sup> *Lac Ste-Anne Codex Historicus 1889-1899*, no page #

<sup>134</sup> Oblate father (anonymous) *Interview at Foyer Lacombe*.

<sup>135</sup> "Après le Salut arrive du Grand-Lac, à pied, Ferdinand Colanjard tout harrassé de fatigue. Il est parti à pied de St. Albert avec le frère Leriche qu'il a laissé sur le chemin à 12 milles d'ici et tellement fatigué que le pauvre frère ne pouvait plus marcher." *Lac Ste-Anne Codex Historicus 1889-1899*, 3.

1889 and 1891, and then mentioned by Bishop Laval in 1897, will be looked at in more depth in Chapter Four. However, perhaps in the spirit of the “Book of Miracles” at Auray and Father Morel’s testament to the miracles at Beaupré, Father Valentin Vegreville would primarily focus on the recording of miracles in his portion of the *Codex*, becoming quite irate with his superiors when his records did not make it into official church documents, and protesting bitterly when it was decided that a doctor would have to ascertain the true sickness of the pilgrims before they had been cured, and the extent of their “healing” afterwards.<sup>136</sup>

Thus, the competition with Protestant missionaries on the plains perhaps forced the Oblates to be pragmatic in their expectations, and, as predominantly French and Québécois men of the nineteenth century, they tried to implant a French Ultramontane Catholic pilgrimage at Lac Ste-Anne. All of the above mentioned rituals took place, with perhaps slight variation, at the pilgrimages to Auray and Beaupré, and it would seem at first glance, that the power of these earlier pilgrimages and of the Oblate priests absolutely defined the pilgrimage to Lac Ste-Anne, and rendered it a primarily Catholic event. However, the pilgrims themselves were also defining and creating the pilgrimage. The following chapter goes back twenty years before the first pilgrimage and looks at the first Lac Ste-Anne Mission *Codex* written by Oblate Father Vital Fourmond. It reveals the strong likelihood that the First Nations people also had their own precedents for a pilgrimage at *Manito Sâkahikan* or *Wakamne*. It is this native precedent and meaning for the event that is now taken up to better understand the emerging pilgrimage to Lac Ste-Anne.

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<sup>136</sup> Ibid., no page number.

### CHAPTER THREE: A “Rendezvous,” a “Midewiwin,” or a “Sun Dance”

“... so that they may visit one another and give each other feasts, from one end of the prairie to the other.”

-Father Vital Fourmond’s Mission *Codex*, 1871

In the very first Lac Ste-Anne Mission *Codex*, written between 1870 and 1872, Father Vital Fourmond, O.M.I., who was stationed at the mission, stated that 1871 was a remarkable year. Following the defeat of the Cree by the Blackfoot at the Battle of the Belly River in 1870, the two peoples had struck peace in 1871, permitting the Cree to hunt on Blackfoot territory where the buffalo were still relatively plentiful.<sup>1</sup> Fourmond stated that this development was cause for celebration:

The Indians of the prairie know how to profit from this happy circumstance so that they may visit one another and give each other feasts, from one end of the prairie to the other. During this time, they are being evangelized by the Rev. Father Lacombe and by the Brother Scollen, accompanied by the Rev. Father Doucet. On his end, the Rev. Father André is evangelizing the Métis from Carlton (mission of St. Laurence), and accompanies some of them out onto the prairie.<sup>2</sup>

Though Fourmond did not say what kind of celebrations or feasts were taking place across the prairies, nor exactly which people were taking part in them, the above statement exemplifies how his *Codex* at the very least offers revealing glimpses into First Nations and Métis aggregation practices and concerns in the early 1870’s.<sup>3</sup> The missionary was perhaps purposely being vague about what he saw, and his *Codex* poses the same problems of

<sup>1</sup> Olive Patricia Dickason, *A Concise History of Canada's First Nations*, Adapted by Moira Jean Calder ed. (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 2006), 153, 188-9.

<sup>2</sup> "Les sauvages de prairie savent mettre à profit cette heureuse circonstance pour se visiter et se donner des festins, depuis un bout de la prairie jusqu'à l'autre. Pendant ce temps, ils sont évangélisés par le Rév. Père Lacombe et par le Frère Scollen, accompagnés par le Rév. Père Doucet. De son côté le Rév Père André évangélise les métis de Carlton, (mission de St. Laurent) et en accompagne une partie à la prairie." PAA OMI Collection, *Lac Ste-Anne Codex Historicus, 1852-1872*, Accession 71.220, Box 99, File 4212, 8.

<sup>3</sup> In the archives, this *Codex* is listed as for 1852-1872, because Fourmond went back in time before starting his own account, and made a chronological list of events and priests at the Lac Ste-Anne Mission from its beginnings, based on the 1865 journal of the bishop of St. Boniface, Alexander Taché, in an effort it seems, to bring the *Codex* up to date. Taché, whose journal was later published as a book, *Vingt Années de Missions dans le Nord-Ouest de l'Amérique*, was the first Oblate bishop in Western Canada. Raymond J. A. Huel, *Proclaiming the Gospel to the Indians and the Métis*, xxiii

interpretation as those of many other European recorders. Several historians, including Bruce Trigger, Sarah Carter and Winona Wheeler have warned about the use of European records to interpret Native history, as they were often ethnocentric and provided the moral and religious rationale for the colonial enterprise.<sup>4</sup> As shall be seen, Fourmond's *Codex* is no different.

However this chapter will show that, while keeping in mind Fourmond's cultural biases and proselytizing priorities, if we closely analyze Fourmond's words in the historical context, and use what is known from archaeology, ethno history and anthropology, we can gather clues about the events taking place around him. First, in Fourmond's above statement, it is clear that different groups of First Nations' people, those living "from one end of the prairie to the other," and thus including the Cree and Blackfoot, were "visiting one another." Either they were meeting related family groups, or even, in the context of peace, unrelated and former enemy bands. As Treaties had not yet been signed, these bands were traveling back and forth across the prairies, revealing the large distances the people were accustomed to travel, and the knowledge they had of their land. Second, in these last years of the buffalo herds, they were still finding the means to give "each other feasts," in other words engaging in reciprocal transactions likely outside of their habitual communities. Thirdly, the people "knew" how "to profit from this happy circumstance," which means they already had their own traditions of gathering for events such as these, and their own forms of celebration. Finally, Father Fourmond disclosed an important clue about how Catholic missionaries were attempting to introduce Christian rituals and beliefs at these traditional indigenous celebrations when he remarked that, "during this time," the wandering priests, Father Lacombe and two other Oblates also known for their itinerant methods, Fathers Constantine Scollen and Léon Doucet, were present among First Nations bands and preaching to them during these events.<sup>5</sup> Although Fourmond did not record the

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<sup>4</sup> Bruce Trigger, *Natives and Newcomers: Canada's "Heroic Age" Reconsidered* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1985), 168. Carter, "The Missionaries' Indian: The Publications of John McDougall, John Maclean and Egerton Ryerson Young": 27. Wheeler, "The Journals and Voices of a Church of England Native Catechist: Askenootow (Charles Pratt), 1851-1884," 243.

<sup>5</sup> *Lac Ste-Anne Codex Historicus 1870-72*, 8. Huel, *Proclaiming the Gospel to the Indians and the Métis* 51-2. Along with Scollen and Doucet, another Oblate, Joseph Dupin, is also mentioned. *Ibid.*, 78.

month these celebrations took place, we can assume, because he did date other events, and from the order in which he recorded them that they happened in the spring or summer.

While the previous chapter has suggested that Western European forms and traditions of pilgrimage were conveyed to the Northwest Territories, it is nonetheless the case that the Lac Ste-Anne Pilgrimage took on its own meaning and emergent traditions once there, based on older local native practices. Despite fragmentary and largely inconclusive studies to date on such matters, local histories, newspapers and a 1994 CBC radio show entitled “Troubled Waters: The Pilgrimage to Lac Ste. Anne,” have claimed that *Manito Sâkahikan* or *Wakamne* is a very old traditional indigenous gathering place.<sup>6</sup> Furthermore, certain archaeological finds in the area have pointed to the long standing presence of First Nations people at the location.<sup>7</sup> Using interdisciplinary methods, this chapter draws from the first Lac Ste-Anne *Codex* to provide glimpses of First Nations activities and important evidence for Aboriginal precedents to Catholic “pilgrimage” type activities at the lake. The importance of the place in Aboriginal memory, prior to the arrival of Christian missionaries, might not be surprising considering that European pilgrimage initiators had always capitalized on local “pagan” activities and calendar events in order to begin a new Christianized ritual in the landscape. This chapter is not intended to simply reveal the continuation of these precedents but, rather, to add cultural, social, geo-political, and of course spiritual understandings of the pilgrimage from an Aboriginal perspective. This chapter first adopts this view by examining what were known as “rendezvous” traditions in the west, then the specific meanings of native landscapes, and finally applies these views when reading Fourmond’s *Codex*. By approaching the *Codex* with a multidisciplinary analysis, it becomes clear that long standing Aboriginal meanings were incorporated into and added sense to the Lac Ste-Anne Pilgrimage.

The *Codex* first reveals Fourmond as a perplexing character, one alternating between patronizing condescension towards his Aboriginal and Métis parishioners on the

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<sup>6</sup> Chabot, *Submission Report-Place: Lac Ste. Anne Pilgrimage Site*, 4-5 (450-51). Herb Belcourt, *Walking in the Woods: A Métis Journey* (Edmonton: Brindle and Glass Publishing, 2006), 23-4. Fitzpatrick, “20 000 Indians flock to shrine in Lac Ste. Ann pilgrimage,” F4. “Troubled Waters: The Pilgrimage to Lac Ste. Anne” in *CBC IDEAS Sales Catalogue*, CBC Radio, 1994, <http://www.cbc.ca/ideas/IDEAS-Catalog.pdf>, (accessed July 22, 2012), 107.

<sup>7</sup> Chabot, 4-5, (450-51).

one hand, and admiration and affection on the other. On interpreting European recorders of their early dealings with indigenous peoples, Bruce Trigger has said:

...while many of them recorded what they saw accurately, the motives that they ascribed to native peoples and their interpretations of what these people were doing are often erroneous and ethnocentric. Because of this, it is very difficult to ascertain with any certainty why particular native people acted as they did or what specific policies they were pursuing.<sup>8</sup>

Thus, we cannot use Fourmond's record on its own. As shall be seen further on, he at one point expressed the view that the Métis, who had been struck with violence in their community (many now affected by the alcohol trade), had still not learned their lesson from God when he punished them with smallpox and poor hunting. Later, in a similar vein, he attributed the conversion of Nakoda people to the difficulties they were having. These comments suggest that Fourmond felt that the Métis deserved to get punished, and that only affliction, fear and repentance could bring the Nakoda to become proper Catholics.<sup>9</sup> Furthermore, like other missionary contemporaries, including some First Nations priests such as Charles Pratt, Fourmond expressed pity, but what can also be read as "condescending judgements," for what he called the "poor Indians."<sup>10</sup> It is hard to know exactly what Fourmond's feelings and meaning were with those words. Interestingly however, they are the exact terms which Winona Wheeler uses along with the "complaint" to identify themes (or genres) typical in Aboriginal catechists' writings. Paradoxically, these terms describe the catechists' actual condition, "mount a criticism" against their affiliated church for that condition, and apply "self-derogation" in order to express solidarity with their Aboriginal parishioners.<sup>11</sup> Father Fourmond, of course, was not an indigenous catechist, and admittedly, his use of the term "poor Indians" may have been more an expression of self-righteous arrogance or feelings of cultural superiority. However he likely felt general concern for his indigenous neighbours as it certainly was true that

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<sup>8</sup> Trigger, *Natives and Newcomers: Canada's "Heroic Age" Reconsidered*, 168.

<sup>9</sup> *Lac Ste-Anne Codex Historicus 1852-1972*, 7, 18.

<sup>10</sup> Wheeler, "The Journals and Voices of a Church of England Native Catechist: Askenootow (Charles Pratt), 1851-1884," 242.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 251-2.

First Nations and Métis communities were undergoing severe strife at the time that he wrote.

Father Fourmond was also capable of sympathy and admiration. He recorded the leadership and wherewithal, “courage and devotion” of Abraham Salois, a prominent trader at Fort Edmonton and one of the newly elected “first magistrates” of the Métis of Lac Ste-Anne and St. Albert in 1871. He further noted the Cree names for the newly defined limits of Métis lands in what would become Alberta, such as *Nipinânsipîy* for the Pembina River.<sup>12</sup> Fourmond often spoke about the First Nations and Métis people, and while he did not provide detailed ethnographic information, he did mention their practices and concerns, and once quoted them directly. Paradoxically, Fourmond’s *Codex* helps to show that the Catholic pilgrimage at Lac Ste-Anne developed largely thanks to the local Métis and First Nations people who had considerable history and well entrenched practices around the place. Father Fourmond remarked on two occasions, in 1871 and 1872 that the “Assiniboines” or Nakoda Stoney people had seasonally returned to the place to trade as “was customary.”<sup>13</sup> Then, as in the opening quote, and in similar ways to the Anglican and Methodist ministers Henri Budd and John McDougall, who were also operating in the Canadian North West, Father Fourmond noted that First Nations’ bands were having traditional congregations, celebrations and “feasts” across the Northwestern Plains, and once that the Nakoda were doing so specifically at the Lac Ste-Anne Mission.<sup>14</sup> Later in the *Codex*, Fourmond attested to the very difficult situation the First Nation peoples found themselves in, and seemed to hint that their predicament was cause both for their traditional gatherings and their conversion to Catholicism.<sup>15</sup> Thus this early *Codex* also suggests a proactive agency among Aboriginal people, and at the very least, the priest’s consideration for these indigenous celebrations, which in the constrained atmosphere of the 1870’s, were becoming more numerous and intense, and taking on more urgent spiritual and organizational meaning. Father Fourmond’s mission *Codex* disappeared in 1872, and

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<sup>12</sup> *Lac Ste-Anne Codex Historicus 1852-1972*, 12-13, 16.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 13, 17.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 17.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 17-8.

reappeared as Father Zéphirin Lizée's first pilgrimage *Codex* of 1889. The historical context of the "gap" between these two types of codices also provides important clues to why First Nations people would perhaps convert to Christianity during these years and, in 1889, adopt a Catholic pilgrimage as their own.

There are, however, limits to the depths of the writer's descriptions. Fourmond never explicitly described or analyzed these First Nations' gatherings, and thus, in order to determine what he could have been referring to, a comparative and interdisciplinary analysis, using archaeology, local geography, anthropology, ethno and environmental history is needed. Anthropologists, archaeologists and ethno historians who study the seasonal meetings of hunter-gathering peoples around the world speak of "rendezvous." In interior western Canada, French and English fur traders of the eighteenth and nineteenth century applied this term to the annual aggregations of hunter-gatherer groups, which may or may not have involved trade as a significant activity.<sup>16</sup> Environmental history suggests that these gatherings and celebrations were becoming more frequent and important in the second half of the nineteenth century as, by the 1860's and 70's, ecological changes in the North Saskatchewan river basin, notably drought and the dwindling of the buffalo, forced First Nation peoples from different bands and the Métis to coordinate large gatherings, elect leaders, and organize what were large multiethnic buffalo hunts.<sup>17</sup> The meetings for these hunts had spiritual and/or ritualistic aspects to them which could readily be adapted and accommodated during uncertain times. Olive Dickason claims that "The shrinking of the [buffalo] herds had the effect of increasing the ceremonial aspect of the hunt," as "bison were central to the ceremonial life of Plains Amerindians."<sup>18</sup> Thus, though Fourmond did not state it specifically, likely, the gatherings at Lac Ste-Anne had sometimes served both organizational and spiritual purposes for the buffalo hunt, before the Catholic pilgrimage was initiated in 1889.

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<sup>16</sup> Meyer and Thistle, "Saskatchewan River Rendezvous Centers and Trading Posts: Continuity in a Cree Social Geography," 435.

<sup>17</sup> George Colpitts, "The Methodist Great 1869 Camp Meeting and Aboriginal Conservation Strategies in the North Saskatchewan River Valley," *Great Plains Quarterly* 29, no. 1 (Winter 2009): 7-9.

<sup>18</sup> Dickason, *A Concise History of Canada's First Nations*, 191.



Anthropologist Alan Morinis, who attended the Lac Ste-Anne Pilgrimage in 1983, may provide a theoretical explanation of how an indigenous ceremony around the buffalo hunt could be transformed into a Catholic pilgrimage.<sup>19</sup> He proposes the concept of “persistent peregrination,” which is the “transmutation of pilgrimage traditions.”<sup>20</sup> He states that:

Pilgrimage is a practice defined by its structure – the journey to the sacred place – and not by the content of symbols, meaning, rituals, and so on, that fills in the structure. Pilgrimages tend to persist through cultural change because the structure can continue to exist while accommodating new, even radically different cultural contents.... What is considered “sacred” or “ideal” will change with time, but that these qualities are accessible in special locations situated beyond the sphere of everyday life – the basic belief underlying all pilgrimage systems – continues to motivate journeys to sacred places. So long as the character of God is malleable, the same sites or an enduring tradition of sacred journeying can continue to serve pilgrims’ goals throughout history.<sup>21</sup>

This concept applies neatly to the Lac Ste-Anne Pilgrimage, which, though it contained “radically different cultural contents” than pre-missionary indigenous celebrations and/or organizational meetings, was able to exist and continue, because the structure of “journeying to a sacred place” was able to accommodate the cultural change taking place among Aboriginal people in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Morinis’ thesis is that, first, the Lac Ste Anne Pilgrimage (and all other predominantly First Nations attended pilgrimages to Catholic shrines in the Canadian prairies) were initiated at a historical time when traditional Aboriginal summer gatherings “had been recently abandoned, leaving a gaping cultural void into which the new religion stepped.”<sup>22</sup> These “new gatherings” essentially replaced the social, cultural and spiritual activities that took place during the Sun Dance gatherings, or “the pre-missionary summer assemblies that were the high point of the social calendar among all Prairie Indian tribes.”<sup>23</sup> There are

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<sup>19</sup> Morinis, "Persistent Peregrination: From Sun Dance to Catholic Pilgrimage among Canadian Prairie Indians," 104.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 102.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

limits to Morinis' thesis however. First, though traditional prairie summer gatherings were officially banned by the Indian Department in 1895, this law was hard to enforce, because though indigenous ceremonies were modified or altered and certain "objectionable rituals" done away with, they were never totally "abandoned" by the people.<sup>24</sup> Thus the "gaping cultural void" is somewhat exaggerated. Further, the other Indigenous Catholic pilgrimages in Alberta were initiated much later, as for example in the 1940s and 50s. At this time, post-world war indigenous consciousness raising and political expression had begun in 1919 with the League of Indians of Canada, and a more concerted effort was being made to repeal the repressive aspects of the Indian Act.<sup>25</sup> As well, American anthropological interest such as that of David Mandelbaum, who attended two Canadian Plains Cree Sun Dances in 1934 and 1935, launched more support and interest in traditional Aboriginal gatherings. Hence, one ceremony did not just substitute, or transform into, another. More recent indigenous-Catholic pilgrimages were initiated concurrently and alongside, rather than to simply replace, persisting First Nations ceremonies. As shall be seen, First Nations people were reformulating ceremonies over time, and attending both traditional and Christian ceremonies side by side, and for similar reasons. Nonetheless Morinis' concept of "perpetual peregrination," along with the "rendezvous" concept, should certainly be kept in mind when analyzing Father Fourmond's mission *Codex*, which suggests that the event at Lac Ste-Anne was largely one development of earlier "rendezvous" traditions in this region.

Ethnohistorians, anthropologists and archaeologists studying Northern Algonquian, Anishinaabe, and Cree aggregation practices argue that as far back as the 1600's and perhaps even much earlier, indigenous peoples were already gathering in large

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<sup>24</sup> Katherine Pettipas, *Severing the Ties that Bind: Government Repression of Indigenous Religious Ceremonies on the Prairies* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 1994), 4, 137-8. In general, see chapters 6 and 8 of Pettipas' work.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 168-172, 192. Morinis does admit that "the enduring strength of tribal identity...has kept the Sun Dance alive into the present," and states that there was "a transmutation of the summer tribal gathering into an intertribal pilgrimage, in reflection of a new pan-Indian identity, involving Christian elements and a new set of Indian interests beyond the tribal." Morinis, "Persistent Peregrination: From Sun Dance to Catholic Pilgrimage among Canadian Prairie Indians," 104.

groups at least once a year, for celebrations involving religion, politics and trade.<sup>26</sup> Meyer and Thistle state that “Hunter-gatherers throughout the world congregate at least once a year...” and that:

...the gatherings have been variously referred to as “‘aggregation phases’ of bands, or fandangos, or corroborees, or any of a host of other local names”.... Such face-to-face gatherings are clearly necessary to maintain the social, political, and spiritual life of the local group .... Marriages are arranged, disputes are settled..., and religious ceremonies are held.... These aggregations are not simple gatherings of large numbers of people; rather, they are complex events with social, spiritual, political, and economic aspects and functions.... They are the means by which a sense of community, of cultural oneness, is maintained.”<sup>27</sup>

European traders and missionaries in Canada noticed that members of various local regional Aboriginal bands which had formed during both historic and pre-contact times “assembled once a year in the spring and sometimes also in the autumn” for the above mentioned “rendezvous.”<sup>28</sup> These long and mostly walking journeys of various groups to assemble in a set place could easily be perceived as “pilgrimages” by non-indigenous onlookers such as European missionaries. The Jesuit missionaries of “New France” for instance, recorded large gatherings referred to as “trade fairs” by social scientists, of as many as twelve to fifteen hundred people from different Aboriginal societies at Tadoussac on the St. Lawrence River.<sup>29</sup> “A 1670 account indicates that the local ‘Saulteurs’ at the rapids [of Sault Ste. Marie] played host to nine other groups, including some visiting Cree from the north.”<sup>30</sup> Gatherings such as these have been observed in many hunter-gatherer

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<sup>26</sup> Meyer and Thistle, “Saskatchewan River Rendezvous Centers and Trading Posts: Continuity in a Cree Social Geography”: 406-9.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.: 406.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.: 403. The term “pre-contact” refers to the period of history before the arrival of Europeans, and is now preferred by scholars over the term “prehistoric,” which suggested that “history began only with the arrival of Europeans and their written documents.” Carter, *Aboriginal People and Colonizers of Western Canada to 1900*, 22. “The term ‘proto-historic’ is used by scholars to refer to the period of time when the effects of contact were felt, through the spread of disease, for example, or trade goods exchanged along ancient routes, yet face-to-face contact had not taken place.” Ibid., 23.

<sup>29</sup> Meyer and Thistle, “Saskatchewan River Rendezvous Centers and Trading Posts: Continuity in a Cree Social Geography”: 409.

<sup>30</sup> Alan D. McMillan and Eldon Yellowhorn, *First Peoples in Canada*, 3rd Edition ed. (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 2004), 110.

societies, including among the Alaskan Inuit, in Australia and in the western United States.<sup>31</sup>

The Cree and their predecessors, who likely inhabited the whole Saskatchewan River valley during first contact with Europeans in the late 1600s, also had these rendezvous, as they were transhumant hunter-gatherers who moved with the seasons.<sup>32</sup> They “had several levels of social organization: the nuclear family, the hunting group (or local band) and the community (or regional band).”<sup>33</sup> Having spent most of the winter in smaller isolated groups to avoid competing for food, an annual gathering of the whole social group in the spring would have been paramount.<sup>34</sup> Regional bands of “...seventy-five to a hundred and twenty-five people inhabiting a river drainage basin alone or in conjunction with other such groups, ” and themselves composed of several smaller multifamily hunting groups of fifteen to thirty individuals, would gather at least once a year in the spring and/or summer, at a place on their lands where food was seasonally plentiful.<sup>35</sup> McMillan and Yellowhorn state that:

...Three to five nuclear families, usually related though sometimes linked only by bonds of friendship, made up the hunting group, and they lived and travelled together throughout much of the year. The community, the largest social aggregate, consisted of all those who gathered at one location during the summer months, generally at a favoured fishing locale on the shore of a lake, where breezes kept away annoying insects. Later, trading posts became centres of such gatherings. Although it did not function as an economic unit, this larger group provided opportunities for social interaction and for young people to search for spouses.<sup>36</sup>

Although farther to the east, but making entries into the plains by the 1820s, it was among the Anishinaabe of Sault Ste. Marie, that families returned from their winter hunting camps to reunite with others at their major fishing sites in the spring:

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<sup>31</sup> Meyer and Thistle, “Saskatchewan River Rendezvous Centers and Trading Posts: Continuity in a Cree Social Geography”: 409.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.: 405.

<sup>33</sup> McMillan and Yellowhorn, *First Peoples in Canada*, 117.

<sup>34</sup> Meyer and Thistle, “Saskatchewan River Rendezvous Centers and Trading Posts: Continuity in a Cree Social Geography”: 407.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.: 407-8.

<sup>36</sup> McMillan and Yellowhorn, *First Peoples in Canada*, 117.

...Pickerel, pike and suckers could be taken throughout the summer, and the autumns spawning brought whitefish, trout and sturgeon close to shore. Great quantities of fish were netted or speared, and the fisheries served as centres of community life. Particularly good fishing locations attracted large concentrations of people.<sup>37</sup>

As stated above, fur traders understood these gathering centers' importance, and thus, most eighteenth- and nineteenth-century trading posts were built at these places, or occasionally, "between them, at the borders of regional bands."<sup>38</sup> These gatherings "involved days or weeks of intense social interaction" and centered on a series of religious ceremonies, which though in content were not those of a Catholic pilgrimage, certainly had similar purposes and/or structures.<sup>39</sup> Thus we can surmise that the "feasts" which Fourmond noticed, and framed in this highly evocative Christian term, taking place between Aboriginal people, were indeed these rendezvous.

Later on Christian missionaries, both Protestant and Catholic, took note of these gatherings at these sites. For example, in 1857, Reverend Henry Budd, a Swampy Cree from Norway House and the first Aboriginal man ordained into the Anglican Church in Western Canada, established a mission at what the Cree peoples knew as *Pehonan*, today Fort à la Corne, Saskatchewan, situated in the Saskatchewan River valley.<sup>40</sup> Year after year, Budd recorded the sequence of the spring rendezvous at this place in his journals. In 1858, Budd stated that:

The Thickwood Crees...having formed a considerable party, are preparing to commence their spring feasts, &c.; they have brought some of the best of their last winter's hunt for the purpose. They will be feasting and dancing for several days and nights together.<sup>41</sup>

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 110.

<sup>38</sup> Meyer and Thistle, "Saskatchewan River Rendezvous Centers and Trading Posts: Continuity in a Cree Social Geography": 403.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.: 424. Another source states that the mission's name is *Nepowewin*, which seems to be a shortened version of the Cree word for Sundance. See note 13 in Deanna Christensen, *Ahtahkakoop: The Epic Account of a Plains Cree Head Chief, His People, and their Struggle for Survival, 1816-1896* (Shell Lake, Saskatchewan: Ahtahkakoop Publishing, 2000), 730. However *Nepowewin* also resembles *nipowiwinihk*, the name given by Meyer and Thistle for *Nipawin*, an aggregation site eighty kilometres downstream. Meyer and Thistle, "Saskatchewan River Rendezvous Centers and Trading Posts: Continuity in a Cree Social Geography": 414-15.

<sup>41</sup> Budd, as quoted by Ibid.: 424.

Cree social organization is referred to here as the “considerable party” likely included several hunting groups, and perhaps even more than one regional band. The “&c.” reveals that more was happening at these feasts than eating. Budd described these activities there the next day, when he noticed that, “...the Indians are busy this morning putting up a large tent, where they intend to keep their feast and dance.”<sup>42</sup> According to David Meyer and Paul C. Thistle, these people began their Goose Dance or *niskisimowin*, on April 6<sup>th</sup>, which dominated the rendezvous activities, “involved the construction of a Goose Dance lodge and several days of continuous drumming, singing, dancing, feasting, and praying---with pipe ceremonies,” and lasted in this case until April 12<sup>th</sup>.<sup>43</sup> As shall be seen in the Lac Ste-Anne Mission *Codex* of 1870-72, Father Vital Fourmond also noticed that the Stoney Nakoda were gathering in large groups for “festivities” at Lac Ste-Anne. Though he made no mention of Goose Dances, and was less descriptive than Reverend Budd, he did mention they were “celebrating” and “feasting.”

However, though it is impossible to know whether Fourmond witnessed a Goose Dance, common among the Northern Cree, he must have witnessed something like it. He most likely also witnessed Plains Cree varieties. Traditionally, the Plains peoples’ ceremonies centred around the celebration of individual “rites of passage” that socially marked the transition “of an individual from one status to another.”<sup>44</sup> On these occasions, family members shared resources for spiritual offerings, to provide gifts to participants, and to host a feast, and thus perhaps the Nakoda band was simply celebrating the “rite of passage” of one of their members. However, the Nakoda and the Cree also had various communal rites or “rites of solidarity.”<sup>45</sup> Katherine Pettipas states that “Among the Plains Cree, [who were allies of the Stoney Nakoda and often travelled with them] the Thirst (Sun) Dance, Smoking Tipi ceremony, the Masked (or *wîhtikôw*) Dance, the Give Away

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<sup>42</sup> Ibid.: 424.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.: 423, 24. Geese and other waterfowl were an important part of the seasonal diet of certain Cree bands, such as of the Swampy Cree of the Hudson Bay Lowlands, thus the return of migrating geese in the spring was likely an important time. See McMillan and Yellowhorn, *First Peoples in Canada*, 116.

<sup>44</sup> Pettipas, *Severing the Ties that Bind: Government Repression of Indigenous Religious Ceremonies on the Prairies*, 53.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 53.

Dance, the Prairie Chicken Dance, the Pipestem Bundle Dance, the Round Dance, the *mitêwiwin* (Medicine Society Dance, associated with healing), and the Horse, Elk, and Bear dances were the major communal ceremonies.”<sup>46</sup> The days spent together at these traditional indigenous ceremonies reinforced the common culture of the people as they practiced their shared faith.<sup>47</sup> These events were also the main means of sharing material wealth and taking care of one another, as they were often sponsored by an individual who had made a sacred pledge to hold the ceremony and upon whose family rested a major material and spiritual responsibility:

...The status of sponsoring households was a function of their ability to provide the pledger with the necessary goods for ceremonial distribution. This was particularly the case for headmen, who ‘were expected to contribute a larger share of the feast than the other tribesmen,’ and to host visitors.

Offerings of prayers, tobacco, food, prepared hides, horses, consecrated dogs, and one’s person through self-mortification were all means of sacred communication. The sacrifice and distribution of labour-intensive products, such as tanned hides or the highly valued and costly red woollen cloth (stroud) obtained from the fur-trade posts, occurred during these ceremonies.... Offerings of highly valued commodities and personal physical sacrifice were considered to be most potent in establishing favourable and harmonious relationships with the spiritual world.<sup>48</sup>

These offerings and sacrifice for the well-being of the whole community were meant to trigger the same reciprocity in the spiritual world and somewhat resembled the “ex-votos” left by medieval Europeans hoping for a saint’s intercession at Christian shrines: giving to one another cemented relationships and created obligations among band members, and giving such gifts as cloth offerings to the spirit powers ensured that they would respond in kind. Material offerings and the exchange of gifts were part of every ceremony, but the most obvious public demonstration of the sharing of goods happened during the *mâhtâhitowin*, which translates as “passing off something to each other” or “gifts

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<sup>46</sup> Ibid., 53-4. See also David G. Mandelbaum, *The Plains Cree: An Ethnographic, Historical, and Comparative Study*, (Regina: Canadian Plains Research Center, University of Regina, 1979), 183- 214.

<sup>47</sup> McMillan and Yellowhorn, *First Peoples in Canada*, 154.

<sup>48</sup> Pettipas, *Severing the Ties that Bind: Government Repression of Indigenous Religious Ceremonies on the Prairies*, 54.

exchanged are a blessing.”<sup>49</sup> This ceremony, commonly known as the “Give Away Dance,” “epitomized all levels of the economic, political, and social relationships of Plains Cree society.”<sup>50</sup> It extended the availability of natural resources, goods and labour over large distances. It promoted cooperation among related households, and not only strengthened the headman’s ability to care for his followers, but also brought his family prestige.<sup>51</sup> It was the means by which those who had accumulated goods could ensure the survival of all members of the band. When these communal dances were banned in 1895, something else, such as a Catholic pilgrimage where one could trade goods and medicines, may have been a convenient alternative or option.

The most important of these ceremonies however, which could be adapted and transformed into a penitential pilgrimage of healing where one made sacrificial offerings, was what has become known as the “Sun Dance.” Taking a vow to sponsor this dance was (and continues to be) “one of the most demanding spiritual commitments an individual could undertake.”<sup>52</sup> “Gathering at the Sun Dance ... provided opportunities for such social activities as visiting friends, courting, gambling and horse racing. Since the Sun Dance, in its various forms, originated in myth, it was also a time for each group to cement its allegiance to the creator.”<sup>53</sup> The origins and nature of this ceremony remain somewhat controversial. Pettipas states that, although its origins are not known, it is conventionally agreed that the Sun Dance developed into its “classic ‘high plains’ form during the period between 1800 and 1883.”<sup>54</sup> Its swift proliferation across the plains is generally attributed to the acquisition of the horse, which brought more people into contact with one another over larger distances, and the availability of bison herds, which enabled many people to congregate during the summer months. However, Karl Schlesier, somewhat like Alan

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<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 54. David G. Mandelbaum, *The Plains Cree: An Ethnographic, Historical, and Comparative Study*, 206-7.

<sup>50</sup> Pettipas, *Severing the Ties that Bind: Government Repression of Indigenous Religious Ceremonies on the Prairies*, 54.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., 56.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

<sup>53</sup> McMillan and Yellowhorn, *First Peoples in Canada*, 154.

<sup>54</sup> Pettipas, *Severing the Ties that Bind: Government Repression of Indigenous Religious Ceremonies on the Prairies*, 56.



Morinis, believes that the “two great Algonquian ceremonies... the Midewiwin and the so-called Sun Dance,” developed because “existing religious structures” seemed inadequate for the survival of various indigenous societies who, faced with life-threatening conditions over a wide area, initiated these new ceremonies as expressions of “revitalization and reorganization.”<sup>55</sup> He claims that both the Midewiwin and the Sun Dance respectively evolved earlier, between 1634 and 1700, in the western Great lakes area and the neighbouring Minnesota regions. Claiming that they were New Life, or World Renewal ceremonies, and not actually “Sun” Dances, they developed under the impact of depopulation from European epidemic diseases which ravaged Amerindian populations from the St. Lawrence west beyond the Great Lakes, as well as in response to missionization and the political and economic pressures applied by French colonials.<sup>56</sup> The “Sun” Dance’s origins are actually among the Algonquian Suhtais who were part of the Cheyennes, and whose ceremony, the *Oxheheom*, developed in the 1660’s, and was a “...great medicine dance” to be presented ““in times of pestilence or famine or great need....””<sup>57</sup>

This connection between the emergence of these ceremonies and the presence of colonial authorities, missionaries, and illness in particular, is interesting because, as shall be seen further, the Lac Ste-Anne Pilgrimage was initiated in similar conditions, and also grew in attendance during a time of great sickness among the First Nations and Métis people of the Lac Ste-Anne region. Pertinent to this discussion is Schlesier’s insistence that the Sun Dance and the Midewiwin were adaptations and reformulations of older indigenous

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<sup>55</sup> K. H. Schlesier, “Rethinking the Midewiwin and the Plains Ceremonial Called the Sun Dance,” *Plains Anthropologist*, 35, no. 127 (February 1990): 1.

<sup>56</sup> Schlesier shows that only four out of eighteen tribes actually worshipped the sun in their version of the “Plains Sun Dance,” and that the Oglala are one of the only indigenous groups in the North West that had an actual “Sun” dance. Ibid.: 1, 19-20. Other scholars have concurred that the term “Sun Dance” stems from a sun-gazing ritual performed by the Oglala (Sioux) during their ceremony, and is actually a misnomer, as in general, the ceremony did not involve worshipping the sun. The expression of this dance varied from group to group. Pettipas, *Severing the Ties that Bind: Government Repression of Indigenous Religious Ceremonies on the Prairies*, 56. McMillan and Yellowhorn state that “All Plains groups shared the basic ritual though the Sun Dance varied considerably between tribes,” in *First Peoples in Canada*, 153.

<sup>57</sup> Schlesier, “Rethinking the Midewiwin and the Plains Ceremonial Called the Sun Dance”: 13.

ceremonies, which remained in competition with them.<sup>58</sup> “Both introduced new concepts into existing religious structures, both were founded on ancient Algonquian world perceptions.”<sup>59</sup> Just as this thesis argues that the Lac Ste-Anne Pilgrimage took on Aboriginal meanings and in some ways was a reformulation of earlier rendezvous and indigenous gatherings, Schlesier believes that the “proto-historic and historic ceremony called the Plains Sun Dance” was also a local retooling of “specific religious features.”<sup>60</sup> Interestingly, the Kiowa and nearby Kutenai peoples who influenced prairie peoples’ ceremonies, had what is believed to be an ancient tradition using ceremonial dolls in these rites, which could possibly have made the figure of Saint Anne more palatable to First Nations’ peoples. These dolls were sometimes representations of the Earth spirit, “Old-woman-under-the-ground” who had flowing hair, or of “Half-Boy,” one of the twin sons from the Kiowa origin story, who returned from where he lived in a lake with the female earth spirit.<sup>61</sup> Kiowa and Kutenai are not First Nations bands represented in the pilgrimage codices, (though as shall be seen, the name Kootonohay, a variation of Kutenai does appear in the record), however spirit dolls were also common among the Blackfeet and Sarsis who were “certainly influenced by Kutenai ideology,” and as we know, were bands in the region.<sup>62</sup> Blackfeet and Sarsi *Natoas* dolls originate in their legends with Elk Woman, a historical person, and Woman-who-married-a Star or Feather Woman. They were worn in an elaborate headdress by the principal pledger in their ceremony, a medicine woman, who seems to have represented “these women and the female aspect in Blackfeet society in general.”<sup>63</sup> One cannot help noticing the resemblance between the doll, the Earth Spirit and the importance of women among these various groups, and the “ceremonial doll” that was

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<sup>58</sup> Schlesier states that in historic time, there was “a particular ceremony in the Northern Plains among other ceremonies which remained in competition with it.” Though the origins, purpose, and organization of this ceremony varied greatly from tribe to tribe, the tribes who participated in it were loosely connected by shared features. Variants of the ceremony were both recent and old and “each represented reformulations of new outside cultural stimuli drafted on old and specific tribal traditions.” *Ibid.*: 13.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*: 23.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*: 12.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*: 21-22.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*: 22.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*: 17.

the statue of a woman, Ste. Anne, transported at the later Catholic pilgrimage in the candlelight procession to a healing, cleansing and baptismal lake.

Over time, and particularly in the wake of European settlement and disease, the ceremony and its variations spread across the North American west. Among the Blackfeet, an actual “Sun” Dance tradition is clear. The dance was given to them by Napiw, “Old Man” or the Supreme Being who created the Blackfeet universe, and who over time became known as Natos, the Sun spirit.<sup>64</sup> Albertan Archaeologists strongly believe that as early as the eleventh century, before the arrival of the horse on the north western plains, the Blackfoot (the Canadian “Blackfeet”) would gather during their seasonal rounds for “Rites of Intensification,” precursors to Sun Dances or *Ookaan*, which in historic times, occurred at the ripening of serviceberries during the “Berry Moon,” of late July to August.<sup>65</sup> This was also the period of the rut, or the bison’s mating season, which “produced the largest herds compared to any other time of the year,” as it was the only time that male and female buffalo were present in the same herd.<sup>66</sup> With respect to the Plains Cree however, the Sun Dance was likely transmitted to them by their Assiniboine (Nakoda Stoney) allies, and was somewhat different. They called it *nipâhkwêsimowin* or Thirst Dance, “so called because the participants did not drink during its duration.”<sup>67</sup> Pettipas places the timing of this dance for the Cree in the early, rather than late, summer, during what was known as the “moon of the young birds,” *pâskâwêswi-pîsim* or “Hatching Moon.”<sup>68</sup>

In any case, similarly to a Catholic pilgrim walking barefoot for many kilometres and living only on charitable donations of bread and water, the Sun Dance involved individuals refraining from eating, drinking or sleeping while performing for days, and performing the well-known self-mortification rite, as an offering or vow to the Creator in

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<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

<sup>65</sup> Trevor R. Peck and J. Rod Vickers, “Buffalo and Dogs: the Prehistoric Lifeways of Aboriginal people on the Alberta Plains, 1004-1005,” in Michael Payne, Donald Wetherell, and Catherine Cavanaugh, eds., *Alberta Formed, Alberta Transformed* Vol. I (Edmonton: The University of Alberta Press, 2006), 75. See also their footnote no. 134, p. 84. For the term *Ookaan*, see McMillan and Yellowhorn, *First Peoples in Canada*, 153.

<sup>66</sup> Peck and Vickers, “Buffalo and Dogs: the Prehistoric Lifeways of Aboriginal people on the Alberta Plains, 1004-1005,” 75, 77.

<sup>67</sup> Mandelbaum, *The Plains Cree: An Ethnographic, Historical, and Comparative Study*, 183. Pettipas, *Severing the Ties that Bind: Government Repression of Indigenous Religious Ceremonies on the Prairies*, 56.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

a time of need or crisis.<sup>69</sup> The practice, though not exactly the same, was undertaken to attain a similar goal of redemption, healing or renewal. Other scholars concur that in general, “community well-being, world regeneration, and thanksgiving through communal worship were commonly shared motivations for [the Sun Dance’s] celebration.”<sup>70</sup> In short, both “Sun Dances” and Indigenous-Catholic pilgrimages, including the pilgrimage to Lac Ste-Anne, were reformulations of previous ceremonies, and proactive adaptations to a drastically changing world. Further the goals, motivations and social activities of the Sun Dances in the past strongly resemble those of a Catholic pilgrimage though the two events differ in spiritual vocabulary and rituals.

Fur traders and missionaries were no doubt witnessing these various types of “rites of solidarity” and religious ceremonies, including perhaps the Sun Dance in the nineteenth century at the “rendezvous,” even though they did not always precisely understand the focus or content of the rites, and often viewed them as “heathenish rites and superstitions.”<sup>71</sup> Archaeological studies strongly suggest that the recurring seasonal moments of contact and trade between First Nations people and newcomer fur traders and missionaries happened at those places where Aboriginal bands gathered for their seasonal rendezvous. Archaeologists studying the positioning of various French, competing or independent, and Hudson’s Bay Company trading posts that operated in the lower Saskatchewan valley between 1741 and 1875, and the material artifacts found at these sites, reveal that fur trading posts and later cities were likely built based on the geographical placement of First Nations peoples’ traditional aggregation sites. Meyer and Thistle state that “when a given location is named in the historical accounts, it is strong evidence that it was an aggregating center.”<sup>72</sup> They identified and analysed six Aboriginal “aggregation” or “rendez-vous” sites in Manitoba and Saskatchewan.<sup>73</sup> Significantly, and indicating the

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<sup>69</sup> McMillan and Yellowhorn, *First Peoples in Canada*, 153-4.

<sup>70</sup> Pettipas, *Severing the Ties that Bind: Government Repression of Indigenous Religious Ceremonies on the Prairies*, 56.

<sup>71</sup> Meyer and Thistle, “Saskatchewan River Rendezvous Centers and Trading Posts: Continuity in a Cree Social Geography”: 424.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*: 415.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*: 404. In Manitoba, they are located at Grand Rapids (*misîpawistik* or “a large rapid”), Chemahawin (*cîmawâwin* “a seining place” at the entrance to Cedar Lake), and The Pas (*opâskweyâw* “narrows between

importance of the Saskatchewan River to Aboriginal peoples of the Canadian prairie provinces, these sites are situated along the Saskatchewan River valley extending 470 kilometres “west from Grand Rapids on Lake Winnipeg to the confluence of the north and south branches of the Saskatchewan River.”<sup>74</sup> At these locations, and particularly at The Pas, Manitoba and Nipawin, Saskatchewan, Selkirk remains were found, and radio-carbon dated to between 1350-1700 C.E.’ which indicates that these rendezvous centers have existed since long before the time of contact between Europeans and indigenous people.<sup>75</sup> Furthermore, Meyers and Thistle state that the Late Woodland occupation at the aggregation centers which they focus on is “embedded in an extensive complex of older sites” with components dating from 3000- 6000 B.P. suggesting that there are more sites that may even go back to antiquity.<sup>76</sup>

In the late nineteenth century, the placement of First Nations’ reserves was often based on these old rendezvous sites, some of which continue to be important habitation centers today. Some have grown into large cities. Though Lac Ste-Anne itself was not a site included in Meyer and Thistle’s study, like the above mentioned sites, it is also situated in the Saskatchewan River basin, though more to the west, in one of its tributaries, the Sturgeon River basin. It was the site of the first Catholic mission west of St. Boniface, Manitoba, and another Hudson’s Bay Company post. Today, the Alexis Nakoda Sioux reserve, and three other First Nations bands, Paul Nakoda Band, Enoch Cree and Alexander Cree were chosen in the nearby vicinity, in fact more or less framing the pilgrimage site,

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woods”). In Saskatchewan, they are found at *Paskwatinow* (“bare/bald hill”), Nipawin (*nîpowîwinihk* “a standing place”), and Fort à la Corne (*pehonân* “the waiting place”). Ibid.: 415. Meyer and Thistle state that Fort à la Corne or Pehonan also came to be referred to as “nihtawikihcikanis” or “little garden.” In note 6, Ibid.: 435.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid.: 405.

<sup>75</sup> Selkirk materials are pottery, small side-notched arrowheads, and various stone, bone and antler tools from the final precontact (Late Woodland) archaeological cultures normally found in northwestern Ontario, northern Manitoba and Saskatchewan. Ibid.: 410-411 Bruce Trigger defines the Late Woodland period as “Sometime after AD 500 [when] reliance on horticulture in the St. Lawrence lowlands initiated a series of cultural changes that eventually produced the way of life associated with the historical Iroquoians.... This period in turn is divided into the Early, Middle, and Late Iroquoian time spans.” Trigger, *Natives and Newcomers: Canada's "Heroic Age" Reconsidered*, 83. These time spans range from AD 500 to the 16th century of our era. Ibid., 83-101.

<sup>76</sup> Meyer and Thistle, “Saskatchewan River Rendezvous Centers and Trading Posts: Continuity in a Cree Social Geography”: 414.

which sits between the Paul and Alexis bands. The Michel Iroquois Métis reserve, as well as the Sharphead, and Papachase reserves were also in the region, but for various reasons, each of these disbanded over time with members either taking Métis scrip or joining the above mentioned neighboring communities.<sup>77</sup> Lac Ste-Anne is also of course the site of the pilgrimage being studied, and just as it takes place in the summer month of July, two traditional powwows take place in July on the Alexis Nakota Sioux Nation and on the Alexander First Nation, and two more in August on the Enoch Cree nation and Paul Nakoda reserve.<sup>78</sup>

Although officially to date no such in depth archaeological digs have been conducted at, or within five kilometres from, the Lac Ste-Anne Mission and settlement itself, some notable findings have been made in the surrounding region.<sup>79</sup> Stone remainders of an arrowhead or knife allegedly “dated between 5000 and 6000 years old,” were apparently found around the lake in 1994.<sup>80</sup> A projectile point was found in a surface scatter (and not a dig) north of the Lac Ste-Anne settlement during a preliminary survey of the region in 1979, but was not dated.<sup>81</sup> Even without archaeological certitudes for an exact

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<sup>77</sup> For the Sharphead band, see Hugh A. Dempsey, *Indian Tribes of Alberta* (Calgary: Glenbow-Alberta Institute, 1997), 52-3. For the Papaschase band, see *Ibid.*, 61,2. For the Michel band, see *Ibid.*, 97-8.

<sup>78</sup> In Alberta and most of Western Canada, it would seem all traditional powwows take place from May to August. Ya’Gotta Communications and Marketing, "Ya’Gotta," Western Canadian Online Outdoor News, <http://www.yagotta.ca/activities/powwow.htm> (accessed May 9, 2012). Paul First Nation, "Paul First Nation," Wehnimneh Trust Division I.ca, <http://www.paulband.com/default.aspx?ID=Upcoming>, (accessed May 9, 2012). AMMSA - Aboriginal Multimedia Society, "Windspeaker " AMMSA - Aboriginal Multimedia Society, <http://www.ammsa.com/content/home> (accessed May 9, 2012).

<sup>79</sup> The Lac Ste-Anne settlement was registered as an archaeological site in 1975, according to the Alberta Archaeological Survey which keeps track of all archaeological digs undertaken and data found in Alberta. Wendy Unfreed, Alberta Archaeological Survey, *Phone Conversation in Calgary*, November, 29, 2010.

<sup>80</sup> According to Herb Belcourt, a Métis leader who grew up in Lac Ste-Anne, in *Walking in the Woods: A Métis Journey*, 24. Archaeological surveys are periodically done in areas of upcoming development, such as perhaps on the land beyond the LSA settlement. Thus perhaps this knife was found outside of a 5 km radius. Wendy Unfreed, *Phone Conversation in Calgary*. Belcourt is likely citing Oblate father Jacques Johnson, who was quoted in an article from the *Edmonton Journal* of July 25th, 1994 called “Finding hope in the Healing Waters: Believers flock to Lac Ste. Anne in search of medical miracles” in Steve Simon, *Healing Waters: The Pilgrimage to Lac Ste. Anne*, 7, 14.

<sup>81</sup> Wendy Unfreed, Alberta Archaeological Survey, *Email from December 2, 2010*. Simon, quoting John W. Pollock, Staff Archaeologist with the Northeastern Alberta Archaeological Survey of Alberta from “A Preliminary Survey of Isle Lake: Lac Ste. Anne and Adjacent Sturgeon River Basin,” March 1979, reported that “an archaeological survey of the lake in 1979 found evidence of people inhabiting the area before contact with Europeans.” Simon, *Healing Waters: The Pilgrimage to Lac Ste. Anne*, 7.

pre-contact gathering site however, an examination of the geography around Lac Ste-Anne strongly suggests that the lake was an important and strategic indigenous aggregation center, a place well-situated for a rendezvous and later, for a pilgrimage.

Some archaeologists studying the movement and settlement patterns of Aboriginal peoples have lately been adopting indigenous perceptions of the land. Traditionally, First Nations people had a different approach to their ecophysical environment. As Oetelaar and Oetelaar have stated, rather than solely being centered around the placement of resource patches, First Nations' peoples' relationship to the land is defined in terms of pathways, movements and narratives.<sup>82</sup> The Blackfoot would travel over well-known pathways throughout the land during their annual seasonal rounds between their wintering grounds and the place where they would have their Sun Dances in the Cypress Hills. They would stop at points along the way, usually near resource patches such as lakes full of fish, or a bluff full of berries or game, but also at the forks of rivers, erratic boulders, or entrance passages into the mountains. They believed these locations, for various reasons, were focal points of spiritual energy. Usually they were places where a powerful being, such as *Naapi* for the Blackfoot, or *Iktûmnî* for the Nakoda, was believed to have made an appearance.<sup>83</sup> Stopping at these places, they would tell stories, or "recount the associated narratives" and in this way, the land, its pathways and narratives became a repository for the history of the group.<sup>84</sup> Similarly, the Cree maintained a strong sense of identity with the lands they travelled, traded and subsisted within, as expressed through their consciousness of *wahkootowin*, or identity based upon their family relations and interactions with the community and the land itself including "animals, winds, birds, water, rocks, trees, and every other object around them."<sup>85</sup> Thus, reading the topography of an area as well as

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<sup>82</sup> Gerald A. Oetelaar and D. Joy Oetelaar, "People, Places and Paths: The Cypress Hills and the *Niitsitapi* Landscape of Southern Alberta," *Plains Anthropologist* 51, no. 199 (Memoir 38, 2006): 375.

<sup>83</sup> Peck and Vickers, "Buffalo and Dogs: the Prehistoric Lifeways of Aboriginal people on the Alberta Plains, 1004-1005," 67. Chief John Snow, *These Mountains are our Sacred Places: The Story of the Stoney People*, (Toronto: Samuel Stevens, 1977), 9-11.

<sup>84</sup> Gerald A. Oetelaar and D. Joy Oetelaar, "People, Places and Paths: The Cypress Hills and the *Niitsitapi* Landscape of Southern Alberta": 375.

<sup>85</sup> Macdougall, *One of the Family: Metis Culture in Nineteenth-Century Northwestern Saskatchewan*, XII, 3, 7-8, 131-136, 242. Sarah Carter has also mentioned this term with respect to understanding the spirit of the

looking at its food resource potential can reveal where these stopping places and/or gathering sites were.<sup>86</sup>

Lac Ste-Anne is strategically located near the border between the Northern woodlands and the western plains, where peoples from both those environments would meet and trade. The “parkland ecotone” which borders the northern edge of the Great Plains is essentially a region of “transition between prairie and boreal forest.”<sup>87</sup> It contains many lakes and rivers, and is bordered by other lakes important to First Nations and Métis people.<sup>88</sup> As Lac Ste-Anne is situated somewhat in the center of this larger transitional ecotone region, it was conveniently located for different peoples travelling to rendezvous there.

Lac Ste-Anne is further situated at the conjunction of two river drainage basins, and lies between the all important North Saskatchewan river, which flows north and east into the Hudson’s Bay, and the Pembina river, which flows north into the Athabaska river, and finally into the Arctic ocean.<sup>89</sup> Lakes and water ways in general were the single most important land marks for the Cree peoples of the northern Boreal forests, and “account for 79% of [their] place names,” the majority of which “represent avenues of transportation and communication as well as distinctive landmarks or obstructions along the waterways.”<sup>90</sup> The northern Woodland Cree and Dene travelled mostly by canoe in the

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Indian treaties by using Aboriginal concepts or philosophies, *Aboriginal People and Colonizers of Western Canada to 1900*, 126.

<sup>86</sup> Meyer and Thistle, “Saskatchewan River Rendezvous Centers and Trading Posts: Continuity in a Cree Social Geography”: 409-10, 414.

<sup>87</sup> Colpitts, “The Methodist Great 1869 Camp Meeting and Aboriginal Conservation Strategies in the North Saskatchewan River Valley”: 6-7.

<sup>88</sup> Lac-la-Nonne, Egg (Manawan) Lake, Lac-la-Biche, Whitefish Lake, Moose Lake, Muriel Lake, Cold Lake and Frog Lake, to the North and North East, and Pigeon Lake, Buffalo Lake, Beaver Hill Lake, and Sounding Lake to the South and South East. Trent Ernst, *Backroad Mapbook: Central Alberta Outdoor Recreation Guide*, eds. Russel Mussio and Wesley Mussio, 3rd ed. (Coquitlam, B.C.: Backroad Mapbooks Mussio Ventures Ltd., 2010), 8, 14, 24, 36, 38, 41, 47, 51, 52, 54-7.

<sup>89</sup> “The Atlas of Canada: Drainage Basins,” National Resources Canada, <http://atlas.nrcan.gc.ca/site/english/maps/freshwater/distribution/drainage> (accessed March 27, 2010). See also Department of Natural Resources Canada, “083G Wabamun Lake Topo Map” in *Canada Topo Maps*, Yellow Maps, <http://www.canmaps.com/topo/nts250/med/083g.htm> (accessed March 27, 2010).

<sup>90</sup> Gerald A. Oetelaar and David Meyer, “Movement and Native American Landscapes: A Comparative Approach,” *Plains Anthropologist* 51, no. 199 (Memoir 38, 2006): 362.



summer and dog sled in the winter, and used the northern rivers and lakes extensively as they offered an unobstructed wider view of the landscape during both seasons, and an opportunity to monitor the status of resources.<sup>91</sup> Waterways that were deemed navigable were named accordingly. The Cree word *pihtapek* usually “identifies the shortest and safest route from one place to another.”<sup>92</sup> Similarly *otahkwahikan* literally means a “back way” when travelling along the rapid filled rivers of the Boreal forest, and indicates a river running parallel to another, more difficult route. It is possible hence, that Lac Saint Anne was an ancient resting space on a portage route or a “back way” when travelling between two river crossings, drainage basins or two geographic regions. *Nipinânsipïy*, the Cree name according to Father Fourmond for the Pembina River, contains the Cree words for “summer” “cranberry” and “river,” and in a different formulation, for “summer camp river,” which suggests that indigenous peoples would congregate at or near that river, whose shores had plenty of cranberries, for their summer “rendezvous.”<sup>93</sup> The “Pembina” River in Alberta should not be confused with the river of the same name in Manitoba, which drains into the Red River, and was also the name of the Métis settlement on the forty-ninth parallel from which many of the settlers to the Parish of St François Xavier at Red River had arrived. It “had always been more populous than the Red River Settlement as it was the principal rendezvous point for freemen and Métis hunters on their way to the summer plains buffalo hunt.”<sup>94</sup> Many of the Manitoba Métis who had migrated west to Alberta in the 1870s were Pembina Métis.<sup>95</sup>

Waterways were not as significant for the plains peoples in their nomadic journeys. Rivers on the north western plains were not as easily navigable, as they meander back and

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<sup>91</sup> Ibid.: 364-5.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid.: 362.

<sup>93</sup> *Nipin* means “summer” and *sipïy* means “river.” I have not been able to find a translation for the middle syllable “ân.” It is also possible that the word means “cranberry river” as *nîpiniminân* means “high bush cranberry,” “mooseberry” or simply “cranberry.” Earle Waugh, Arok Wolvengrey and Sister Nancy Le Claire, “Nehiyaw Masinahikan: Online Cree Dictionary,” Miyo Wahkohtowin Education Authority, University of Alberta, Department of Canadian Heritage, <http://www.creedictionary.com/> (accessed May 15, 2012). David Mandelbaum lists *nipimin.na* as the word for high bush cranberry in *The Plains Cree: An Ethnographic, Historical, and Comparative Study*, 76.

<sup>94</sup> Ens, *Homeland to Hinterland : The Changing Worlds of the Red River Metis in the Nineteenth Century*, 20.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid., 118-120.

forth extensively through their floodplains, and are vulnerable to fluctuating water levels and thus flooding, especially during spring break up.<sup>96</sup> Thus, the southern peoples did not travel by canoe, but traversed land on foot with dog and later horse travois. They still followed “well established trails, most of which paralleled major river valleys and their tributaries.”<sup>97</sup> However, their pathways were found along the uplands, or the higher land above a river valley, which avoided the steeper segments of ravines and coulees, and also afforded a better view of the surroundings, and potential game in the area. Many of these trails “extended from one river valley to the next.... Between river crossings then, specific camp sites were probably revisited again and again since they contained reliable sources of water, fuel, and food.”<sup>98</sup> “For the Blackfoot... only 28 percent of the named places refer to lakes, river or creeks while 64 percent of the named places relate to important landmarks for travelers moving across the grassland environment on foot.”<sup>99</sup> The people coming to the gatherings, rendezvous and then pilgrimage from all directions would have known the pathways and stories behind the land, and certainly heeded these important waterways.

That Lac Ste-Anne was situated on a portage route or “back way” is clear when one looks at the circuit of the above-mentioned North Saskatchewan tributary, that of the Sturgeon River which nearly connects the North Saskatchewan and Pembina rivers via Lac Ste-Anne, and furthermore, links the town of St. Albert which borders Edmonton, directly to Lac Ste-Anne.<sup>100</sup> According to *West of the Fifth*, a local history book published in 1959 tracing the beginnings and settlement of the Lac Ste-Anne municipality, fur traders and

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<sup>96</sup> Oetelaar and Meyer, *Movement and Native American Landscapes: A Comparative Approach*: 365.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid.: 366.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid.: 367.

<sup>100</sup> From Isle Lake, just east of the Pembina, the Sturgeon River flows east into Lac Ste-Anne, continuing towards the town of Onoway and into Matchayaw or Little Devil’s Lake, through the town of present day Calahoo, down or south into Big Lake, east and north through St. Albert and the Sturgeon valley, and north eastwards into the North Saskatchewan River. Ernst, *Backroad Mapbook: Central Alberta Outdoor Recreation Guide*, 35. Ellie Prepas et al., *Atlas of Alberta Lakes*, “Lac Ste. Anne: Drainage Basin Characteristics,” University of Alberta Press, University of Alberta Department of Biological Sciences, 2004-2005, [http://sunsite.ualberta.ca/Projects/Alberta-Lakes/view/?region=North%20Saskatchewan%20Region&basin=North%20Saskatchewan%20River%20Basin&lake=Lac%20Ste.%20Anne&number=82&page=Drain\\_char](http://sunsite.ualberta.ca/Projects/Alberta-Lakes/view/?region=North%20Saskatchewan%20Region&basin=North%20Saskatchewan%20River%20Basin&lake=Lac%20Ste.%20Anne&number=82&page=Drain_char) (accessed April 15, 2012).

explorers trails were based on old First Nations' trails.<sup>101</sup> Walter McClintock made this adoption of Aboriginal trails by newcomers abundantly clear in his book *The Old North Trail: Life, Legends and Religion of the Blackfeet Indians*, whose title refers to one of the most important trails for the Blackfeet of Montana and the Canadian Blackfoot in their travels "to the far distant North Land and southward as far as Mexico."<sup>102</sup> The northern section became Alberta's main provincial highway, the "number two" or the "Queen Elizabeth II."<sup>103</sup> One of the main two trails from the east into Lac Ste-Anne was a "very old" path which became known as the Lac Ste-Anne Trail.<sup>104</sup> This trail follows the Sturgeon River. It went through well-known Iroquois Métis leader Michel Calihoo's reserve who signed Treaty Six in 1878. For at least a hundred years previous it had been well-used because, as stated above, Lac Ste-Anne had been the main source of fish for Fort Edmonton. When the Catholic mission at St. Albert was established, this path allegedly then became "a veritable highway."<sup>105</sup> Travellers from St. Albert and Big Lake heeded the

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<sup>101</sup> The oldest trail leaving Fort Edmonton for example, went northwest to Fort Assiniboine, and connected the North Saskatchewan River to the Athabasca River. Governor (George) Simpson had a wagon road cut out to make travelling between the two rivers easier, and he used this route to travel between the Hudson's Bay and the Pacific Coast. The other trail, which became known as the Belvedere trail, branched off from the above mentioned Assiniboine trail and went north. "West of the Fifth," the title of the book, refers to the region that lies literally "west of the fifth" meridian from Lac Ste-Anne to the junction of the Athabasca and McLeod rivers or present day Whitecourt. Lac Ste. Anne Historical Society Archives Committee, *West of the Fifth: A History of Lac Ste. Anne Municipality*, 31. See also *Atlas of Alberta Railways*, "Before the Railway: Trails, Canoes and York Boats," Geoffrey Lester et al., University of Alberta Press, <http://railways.library.ualberta.ca/Chapters-2-1/> (accessed April 23, 2012).

<sup>102</sup> Walter McClintock, *The Old North Trail: Life, Legends and Religion of the Blackfeet Indians*, (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, Bison Books, 1999), 3.

<sup>103</sup> This is determined by Brings-down-the Sun's description as told by McClintock: "It forked where the city of Calgary now stands. The right fork ran north into the Barren Lands as far as people live. The main trail ran south along the eastern side of the Rockies, at a uniform distance from the mountains, keeping clear of the forest, and outside of the foothills." *Ibid.*, 435.

<sup>104</sup> Lac Ste. Anne Historical Society Archives Committee, *West of the Fifth: A History of Lac Ste. Anne Municipality*, 32. See also "083G Wabamun Lake Topo Map" in *Canada Topo Maps*, <http://www.canmaps.com/topo/nts250/med/083g.htm> (accessed March 27, 2010), and map of "Western Canada's Established Trails" in *Atlas of Alberta Railways*, "Before the Railway: Trails, Canoes and York Boats," <http://railways.library.ualberta.ca/Maps-2-1-2/> (accessed April 23, 2012). Further, Ernst shows the "Lac Ste. Anne Trail" as today's TWP Rd. 545A just south of Provincial Highway 37, west of the "Rivière-Qui-Barre," along the Sturgeon River towards Calahoo, in *Backroad Mapbook: Central Alberta Outdoor Recreation Guide*, 36.

<sup>105</sup> Lac Ste. Anne Historical Society Archives Committee, *West of the Fifth: A History of Lac Ste. Anne Municipality*, 32.

Sturgeon River all the way to Lac Ste-Anne<sup>106</sup> “As the number of settlers coming into the country increased, Lac Ste-Anne was the nucleus from which the various trails branched off.”<sup>107</sup>

Rendez-vous sites, accessible by such frequently used riverine and land pathways, are often large and flat to accommodate considerable numbers of people, and situated in very strategic places geographically, notably next to a seasonally available food source.<sup>108</sup> The Lac Ste-Anne Pilgrimage site is also expansive and flat, and today covers seventy-eight acres along the south east shore of the lake.<sup>109</sup> The pilgrimage land varied over time, but approximately 26 acres has been part of pilgrimage site belonging to the mission since 1891.<sup>110</sup> Oblate Father Valentin Végréville, who was stationed at the mission from 1897 to 1899, recorded at the pilgrimage of 1898 that pilgrims coming from further afield camped twelve miles away from the site, and received the sacraments from the priest who accompanied them, revealing that a large portion of the region was convenient for stopping to gather and pray.<sup>111</sup> Today the pilgrimage land is cleared away to accommodate the camping pilgrims, but as noted in the previous chapter, the area has generally known to be

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<sup>106</sup> Ibid.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid. An 1877 map of government railway surveyor Sandford Fleming’s proposed prairie railway routes also shows various cart trails. It shows five different cart trails branching off from Fort Edmonton, one of which goes through the St. Albert Mission to Lac Ste-Anne more or less via the Sturgeon River. See Geoffrey Lester et al., *Atlas of Alberta Railways* “Sandford Fleming’s Proposed Prairie Railway Network,” University of Alberta Press, <http://railways.library.ualberta.ca/Maps-4-1-5/> (accessed April 23, 2012).

<sup>108</sup> Meyer and Thistle, “Saskatchewan River Rendezvous Centers and Trading Posts: Continuity in a Cree Social Geography”: 409.

<sup>109</sup> Chabot’s report contains a map showing the above mentioned twenty-six acres from 1891, and fifty-two more acres acquired by the Oblates for a “campground” in 1951. Chabot, *Submission Report-Place: Lac Ste. Anne Pilgrimage Site*, 30(a) (477).

<sup>110</sup> The Oblates at one point owned over 299 acres on the site. This number is arrived at according to Émeric Drouin who stated the Oblates purchased 23 acres in 1960 and a further 138 acres twice in 1963. Émeric Drouin, *Lac Ste-Anne Sakahigan*, 71. The Oblates had 60 acres left “immediately behind the mission compound” just prior to 1973, when they “liquidated” the rest of their property. Ibid., 66. In 2003, the land was shared between the Missionary Oblates of Grandin Province and an Aboriginal trust including but not limited to the Métis, Cree, Blackfoot and Dene people. Chabot, *Submission Report-Place: Lac Ste. Anne Pilgrimage Site*, 2 (448). Today the land belongs to the Lac Ste-Anne Pilgrimage board and the First Nations and Metis people. Crossen, *Interview at Lac Ste-Anne Pilgrimage Rectory and Office*. Morin, *Interview at St. Albert*. Mary Rain, *Interview at Paul First Nation Band Administration Office*.

<sup>111</sup> “Juillet 12 Très chaud. 89. Les pèlerins arrivent en grand nombre tout le jour. Les uns viennent de chez eux; les autres ont campé à 12 milles, et ont entendu la messe dite par les prêtres qui les accompagnent.” *Lac Ste-Anne Codex Historicus 1889-1899*, 47.

well-wooded, and good for timber.<sup>112</sup> In terms of food sources, Lac Ste-Anne was an important source of fish for the fur trading posts that were established in the area, and the main source of fish for the North West Company's Fort Augustus, and also for Fort Edmonton.<sup>113</sup> It was an important source of fish for the Métis people as well.<sup>114</sup> Lac Ste-Anne is still known today for northern pike, walleye, yellow perch and lake whitefish, which support sport fishing, as well as domestic and commercial fisheries.<sup>115</sup> Lake Wabamun, just south of it, used to be called White Whale Lake because of the size of the large lake whitefish that used to (and still) swim in it.<sup>116</sup> Thus, just as was the case for the Anishinaabe who gathered at important fishing sites near Sault Ste. Marie, it would make sense that north western Aboriginal bands would congregate in such a well-wooded region, near or between two lakes and a river which were full of fish.<sup>117</sup>

The overlap of Cree, Nakoda Stoney and Blackfoot territory in this region, or “parkland ecotone” mentioned earlier, points to another reason for gathering in large groups in the second half of the nineteenth century: to organize large hunting parties for

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<sup>112</sup> Lac Ste. Anne Historical Society Archives Committee, *West of the Fifth: A History of Lac Ste. Anne Municipality*, 14. Drouin, *Lac Ste-Anne Sakahigan*, 14, 39.

<sup>113</sup> Lac Ste. Anne Historical Society Archives Committee, *West of the Fifth: A History of Lac Ste. Anne Municipality*, 11, 32. Drouin, *Lac Ste-Anne Sakahigan*, 39.

<sup>114</sup> Lac Ste. Anne Historical Society Archives Committee, *West of the Fifth: A History of Lac Ste. Anne Municipality*, 12.

<sup>115</sup> Prepas et al., *Atlas of Alberta Lakes*, “Lac Ste. Anne: Biological Characteristics ” <http://sunsite.ualberta.ca/Projects/Alberta-Lakes/view/?region=North%20Saskatchewan%20Region&basin=North%20Saskatchewan%20River%20Basin&lake=Lac%20Ste.%20Anne&number=82&page=Biological> , (accessed April 15, 2012) .

<sup>116</sup> The name “White Whale Lake” appears on maps from the 1800's. “The lake's name reverted back to the original Cree name [which means “mirror”] sometime near the turn of the century.” This lake too, is still known today for its lake whitefish, northern pike, yellow perch and walleye. Lake whitefish are still considered the most important commercial species in the lake. Ellie Prepas and others, “Wabamun Lake,” *Atlas of Alberta Lakes* (2005), <http://sunsite.ualberta.ca/Projects/Alberta-Lakes/view/?region=North%20Saskatchewan%20Region&basin=North%20Saskatchewan%20River%20Basin&lake=Wabamun%20Lake&number=87&page=Biological> , (accessed April 15, 2012).

<sup>117</sup> David Mandelbaum, quoting David Thompson and Henry Hind, stated that although the Plains Cree perceived fish as inferior food, and were not known for fishing like the Ojibways, they nonetheless built fish weirs, and gathered at places where there was ample fish, which “not only added to the fare but also expanded the size of the camps and thus enlarged social opportunities.” Significantly however, he also suggested that though the Plains Cree definitely caught river fish, “In general, the tribe kept away from the lakes in their territory, rarely camping along lake shores, never fishing in lakes,” which suggests those who camped at Lac Ste-Anne may not have been Plains Cree. Mandelbaum, *The Plains Cree: An Ethnographic, Historical, and Comparative Study*, 71-4.

buffalo, which were becoming rarer and rarer in this place by the 1860's. John Milloy and Hugh Dempsey have both talked about how the dwindling of the buffalo brought about the intensification of hostilities and warfare between various bands.<sup>118</sup> Beginning in the late 1850s, and continuing into the 1860s, the Plains Cree were forced to adopt alternative measures, both socio-political and practical, in order to survive.<sup>119</sup> Many Cree bands and their allies began venturing onto Blackfoot territory as an armed force, but also accompanied by their families, "a group of people travelling for life" in search of the dwindling buffalo.<sup>120</sup> The Rocky Mountain Cree chief Maskepetoon, accompanied by his former chief Louis Piché's sons, Bobtail and Ermineskin, were forced southwards towards Carlton in the summer in order to find the buffalo.<sup>121</sup>

Furthermore, during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, climate change affected the ways in which various First Nations bands and Euro-Canadian newcomers related to one another and to the natural environment. Acquiring and sharing food resources required more and more cooperation. In the "Neutral Hills" south east of what is now Edmonton, the "Upstream" Cree and their Stoney Assiniboine allies and the southern Blackfoot and Gros Ventres (Atsina) had already cooperated and made tenuous agreements during the winter pounding season.<sup>122</sup> However climate change, which had begun in the 1850's, dried the western grassland and parkland ecotone, abruptly lowering grass-carrying capacity and adversely affecting the wheat, barley, and potato harvests at the missions and fur posts. By the 1860's these ecological changes, notably drought and fire, as well as the "cumulative effects of the large provisions trade for the Hudson's Bay Company," precipitated the decline of the buffalo.<sup>123</sup> Although the dependence of the Plains peoples on

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<sup>118</sup> John S. Milloy, *The Plains Cree: Trade, Diplomacy and War, 1790 to 1870*, (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 1988), 104-5.

<sup>119</sup> Some Cree bands adopted sedentary agriculture, as an alternative to hunting buffalo, without the influence of Christian missionaries. *Ibid.*, 109.

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.*, 108, 109, 114, 115-18.

<sup>121</sup> Louis Piché if we recall, was the "Great White Chief" baptized by Father Thibeault. Hugh A. Dempsey, *Maskepetoon: Leader, Warrior, Peacemaker*, (Victoria: Heritage House, 2010), 71, 104, 113, 148-49, 152

<sup>122</sup> Colpitts, "The Methodist Great 1869 Camp Meeting and Aboriginal Conservation Strategies in the North Saskatchewan River Valley":7.

<sup>123</sup> *Ibid.*

the buffalo has been perhaps over exaggerated by certain historians, it is clear that the drastic decline in buffalo numbers severely impacted indigenous ways of life.<sup>124</sup>

Oral history confirms that the importance of Lac Ste-Anne for indigenous people was tied not only to the buffalo, but also to water and drought. James Tootoosis, who in December 2003, was the oldest living member of the Poundmaker First Nation, Saskatchewan, related to Cynthia Chambers, an Education professor at the University of Lethbridge who studies the use of life stories in First Nations history and research, that “Once the buffalo herds were so vast, once their hunger and thirst so relentless, that they could drink a small prairie lake dry in a single, collective gulp.”<sup>125</sup> Chambers then continues:

But the size and power of manitow sákahikanihk was such that no matter how many buffalo came, no matter how dry the prairie, or how sparse the rain, the waters of this lake never receded. And as the buffalo knew of the lake’s great power, so did the people.<sup>126</sup>

Thus, clearly here, the waters of Lac Ste-Anne are remembered by some Aboriginal elders to have a special power to withstand drought and the thirst of the mighty buffalo, a power not connected to Catholic beliefs and saints, but to their own beliefs about geographical land marks, weather, and resources such as the sacred bison. This connection between the power of the lake, the buffalo and drought also appears in the early codices. As shall be seen further, Father Vital Fourmond spoke of a voracious prairie fire while accompanying the Métis on a buffalo hunt, and Lizée mentioned drought as an element to be contended with during the first pilgrimage.

The buffalo in the years before the pilgrimage were forced westward and southward in the summer, increasing the concentration and competition between different hunters who were now forced to travel further onto the plains and cooperate in different and much more complex ways.<sup>127</sup> Politics became more complicated as large hunting parties, composed of

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<sup>124</sup> W. Keith Regular, *Neighbours and Networks: The Blood Tribe in the Southern Alberta Economy, 1884-1939* (Calgary, Alberta: University of Calgary Press, 2009), 28-30 .

<sup>125</sup> Quoted in Cynthia Chambers, "Things I Carried with Me...."

<sup>126</sup> Ibid.

<sup>127</sup> Colpitts, “The Methodist Great 1869 Camp Meeting and Aboriginal Conservation Strategies in the North Saskatchewan River Valley”: 7-8.

different bands, would often need to elect a leader of a group of fifty tipis and tents or more. George Colpitts discusses First Nations' wildlife management strategies on the Great Plains, and how different Aboriginal bands cooperated with each other as well as with missionaries and fur-traders, notably at the great buffalo hunt of 1869, to preserve access to the few buffalo herds that were left on the plains.<sup>128</sup> At this particular hunt, the Methodists along with the Oblates accompanied various groups of Cree, Nakoda and Métis on one of the largest hunting expeditions of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, in which different indigenous peoples worked together and coordinated an unprecedented effort to oppose the dominant Blackfoot in the still relatively rich buffalo territories near the Nose Hill, southeast of what is now Edmonton. The hunt not only reveals the degree to which missionaries, both Protestant and Catholic were working (sometimes together) to alter some of the content of First Nations' gatherings for their own purposes, but also how Aboriginal people were no doubt adapting to the men of prayer's presence among them, and developing their own "adeptness at refashioning feasts to suit tribal needs."<sup>129</sup> Colpitts provided a colourful picture of the 1869 trek across the prairies, and revealed how the Methodists no doubt would have viewed this congregation from a religious perspective:

From a logistical perspective, the 1869 hunt from Fort Edmonton to Nose Hill, 200 miles to the southeast, was an impressive undertaking. Hunters, women, and children joined an ever-larger column, forming a cavalcade that moved onto the plains. Some 200 horse-drawn carts, with squeaking wooden wheels and screaming greaseless axels, announced the hunters' coming miles ahead. Joshua's trumpets would have been drowned out by the estimated 500 dogs, many of them fighting each other, beaten to keep line, many dragging travois loaded with provisions or bundled with wailing babies. The dangers of prairie travelling, fear of Blackfoot raids, and uneasiness mounting as guides led these travelers onto waterless expanses occasioned the missionaries to draw similarities between these people and Abraham's wandering and besieged tribe, and between the North Saskatchewan River and that of the River Jordan.<sup>130</sup>

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<sup>128</sup> Ibid: 3.

<sup>129</sup> Gerald McKeivitt, *Brokers of Culture: Italian Jesuits in the American West, 1848-1919* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007), 140.

<sup>130</sup> Colpitts, "The Methodist Great 1869 Camp Meeting and Aboriginal Conservation Strategies in the North Saskatchewan River Valley": 4.



The trek made by Abraham's "wandering and besieged tribe" of course, from Ur in Mesopotamia (Iraq) to the land of Canaan, or the Promised Land in Israel is considered the first Judao-Christian pilgrimage, as mentioned in chapter one, and once again we see how non-indigenous onlookers such as missionaries could interpret these First Nations activities, based on their own biblical or spiritual references, and refashion nomadic treks to traditional "rendezvous" sites, as religious pilgrimages. Notably, before leaving the gathering for the 1869 hunt, the Catholic contingent of this group partook in a "pilgrimage" type event: Father Constantine Scollen, the itinerant Irish Oblate who spoke English, French and Cree fluently and would have been familiar with indigenous practices, threw a "festival," a "glorious feast in these wild prairies" where twenty of his assembly made their first communion and confirmation.<sup>131</sup> Thus, it is clear that in the second half of the nineteenth century, not only were related bands such as the Thickwood Crees gathering for traditional festivities at least once a year at certain points along the Saskatchewan river basin, but various competing bands had also been gathering and cooperating in the "Neutral Hills" at least twenty years before the Lac Ste-Anne Pilgrimage was initiated.

Noting the importance of these gatherings and their spiritual nature, including their often multiethnic composition, Christian missionaries, both Catholic and Protestant quickly took the opportunity to try and spread the Christian gospel during these events. They patterned their religious gatherings or missions proper to First Nation seasonal rendezvous at specific places on the prairie where Amerindians congregated, either at fur-trading posts, or elsewhere on the prairie during their buffalo hunts. As previously discussed, the Oblates, like the Jesuits before them, used a technique developed in the counter-reformation with their home missions in France.<sup>132</sup> The practice of living and working among the poor during these popular missions, where Catechism and Catholic tenets were taught in the peoples' own language, was pragmatic and could be readily modified to suit various conditions.<sup>133</sup> The Oblates at first simply held shorter retreats, whose instigation,

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<sup>131</sup> Ibid: 14.

<sup>132</sup> McCarthy, *From the Great River to the Ends of the Earth: Oblate Missionaries to the Dene, 1847-1921*, 3-5.

<sup>133</sup> Ibid., 4-5.

occurrence and length were adapted to local conditions and prescribed according to the lifestyle of Aboriginal populations:

...Missions were held in areas where Indians gathered to hunt, fish or trade and, hence, they had a predictable seasonal cycle. Missions tended to be held, and later permanent establishments built, near an existing HBC post. These posts were usually located in strategic locations and the Indians were accustomed to coming there at fixed times to trade their furs. In addition, these posts were situated in areas that had sufficient water, firewood and food to sustain the Indians who camped there. By making the mission coincide with the exchange of furs the missionary could capitalize on the presence of a captive audience. It is doubtful if Indians would have traveled any distance from their traditional hunting grounds or trading rendezvous for the sole purpose of obtaining religious instruction.<sup>134</sup>

Thus, if the Oblates wished to effectively reach First Nations' populations, they had little choice but to go to a place such as Lac Ste-Anne where the First Nations people already had established a pathway and a narrative on their hunting grounds during their trading rendezvous. Often the timing of these missions was modeled on Aboriginal gatherings. At Île-à-la-Crosse, for example, two such missions were held, one in the spring when First Nations came to trade their furs and one in the autumn when they returned briefly to acquire needed supplies for winter.<sup>135</sup> The fall gathering at this post, which took place in the second half of September and lasted twelve to fifteen days, became a big event and coincided with the arrival there of the HBC supply barges from York Factory. Aboriginal people gathered at the post to obtain advances for their furs as well as food and munitions they needed for the oncoming season, and thus the Oblates scheduled the autumn mission to coincide with their presence there. These missions included "evening and morning prayers, public instructions and sermons, catechism lessons for the young and those about to be initiated into the faith, mass, penitential rites, Sunday observances, visits to individual households and to the sick."<sup>136</sup> In short, the practices at these missions already resembled the activities of the future "pilgrimage." Eventually, the spring rendezvous was called "la grande mission" because it became the larger and more important mission. Overtime the

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<sup>134</sup> Huel, *Proclaiming the Gospel to the Indians and the Métis*, 34-5.

<sup>135</sup> *Ibid.*, 78-9.

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid.*, 78.

fall gathering disappeared – at Île-à-la-Crosse by 1875 the HBC stopped sending their supplies by barge to York Factory -- but the “grande mission” in the spring persisted.

The preference for the *grande mission* eventually waned, as the Oblates readopted itinerant preaching, which the Jesuits had also revived in the Breton French countryside, centuries earlier.<sup>137</sup> Bishop Grandin, when he evaluated the initial Oblate apostolic work among the Cree, concluded that the best method of conversion was not to meet First Nations people at a trading post, but rather to actually go out and live among them “à la prairie” for part of the year.<sup>138</sup> Grandin believed that Father Lacombe had already demonstrated that this practice was possible: having accompanied the Cree on their buffalo hunts in the 1860’s, Lacombe used the people’s daily schedule to his advantage, discovering that the best time to teach them about Catholicism was when they were all back in camp, preparing and drying the meat from the hunt. That was when he provided instruction in his large “tente-chapelle,” “conveniently larger than existing Indian tipis and one undoubtedly useful for the bands dispersed across the winter terrain to meet together, exchange intelligence, and share provisions.”<sup>139</sup> Thus, the Oblates vacillated between two differing methods, itinerant preaching, and the *grande mission*, which they seemed to have alternated depending on the region, the particular bands they were interacting with, and personal preference. In both cases, the missionaries were adapting to First Nation practices. By 1889 when the Lac Ste-Anne Pilgrimage was initiated, the Oblates had already had approximately thirty-five years of experience conducting a “grande mission” once a year in the spring among Aboriginal adherents, and even more years experience following the First Nations bands “à la prairie” as itinerant preachers living and travelling with the people during their seasonal migrations and buffalo hunting trips. The summer gathering at Lac Ste-Anne once a year would have then simply been a modified version of the “grande mission.” The idea of having a retreat or gathering both in the spring and fall persisted for the people around Lac Ste-Anne during the first two decades of the pilgrimage. Fathers

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<sup>137</sup> Alain Croix, *La Bretagne aux 16<sup>e</sup> et 17<sup>e</sup> siècles. La vie, la mort, la foi*, (Paris : Maloine, 1981), 1211-1212.

<sup>138</sup> Huel, *Proclaiming the Gospel to the Indians and the Métis*, 78.

<sup>139</sup> Colpitts, “The Methodist Great 1869 Camp Meeting and Aboriginal Conservation Strategies in the North Saskatchewan River Valley”: 11.

Lizée and Vegreville would mention in the early pilgrimage codices, that indigenous pilgrims would sometimes come on their own to the place either much earlier than the conventional July week (i.e., in the spring) or later (in the fall) and at times that the pilgrims would request a second yearly pilgrimage in the fall.<sup>140</sup>

Protestant missionaries also timed their proselytizing endeavours around First Nations aggregation practices, suggesting again that the Lac Ste-Anne Pilgrimage was a Christian (though in this case Catholic) reformulation of First Nations' activities. Wesleyan Methodist mission work began in the 1840s, with Robert Rundle's outreach to the Cree in the North Saskatchewan and those of the eastern slopes of the Rocky Mountains.<sup>141</sup> The Reverends Henry Bird Steinhauer and Woolsey renewed the Methodists' efforts in Fort Edmonton and Pigeon Lake by 1855-6.<sup>142</sup> John McDougall, son of Methodist minister George McDougall, who had come west with his father in 1861 to establish the Victoria Mission, and later built a mission much farther south, on the Bow River at Morleyville, stated that sometime in October 1875 :

We found that at Buffalo Lake [138 km south east of present day Edmonton], a few miles north of us, a large number of Indian and half-breed hunters were gathering so we moved over there next morning (Saturday) and went into camp. ...

For the purpose of announcing the government's plan of action and also doing missionary work there was now a splendid opportunity. Among these many camps gathered at this time there were people from all over the central portion of the Saskatchewan country – All the region between the Red River, south branch of the Saskatchewan, and Athabasca River, was represented by this nomadic population. We held two large open air meetings on the Sabbath and spent all Monday morning explaining the attitude and purpose of the government.<sup>143</sup>

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<sup>140</sup> *Lac Ste-Anne Codex Historicus 1889-1899*, 48. At the sixteenth pilgrimage in 1901, Father Lizée stated "On dit que probablement il y aura un autre pèlerinage organisé l'automne prochain, vers le mois de Septembre.—..." *Lac Ste-Anne Codex Historicus 1900-1960*, 8. See also Lizée's journal for Wednesday July 12<sup>th</sup>, 1911 in PAA OMI Collection, *Journal, Lac Sainte-Anne 1911-1924*, Acc. 71.220, Box 177, File 6991, 85-6.

<sup>141</sup> Hugh Dempsey, *Maskepetoon*, 66-73. Hugh, Dempsey, ed. *The Rundle Journals 1840-1848*, (Calgary: Historical Society of Alberta, 1977), 23-26.

<sup>142</sup> Hugh Dempsey, ed., *Heaven is Near the Rocky Mountains: The Journals and Letters of Thomas Woolsey, 1855-1869*, (Calgary: Glenbow Museum, 1989), ix-x. Donald B. Smith, "The Steinhauer Brothers: Education and Self-Reliance," *Alberta History*, (Spring 2002): 2.

<sup>143</sup> John McDougall, *Opening the Great West: Experiences of a Missionary in 1875-76*, ed. Hugh A. Dempsey (Calgary: Glenbow-Alberta Institute, 1970), 22.

Like Father Fourmond in the Lac Ste-Anne *Codex*, Reverend McDougall did not mention why this varied and “large number” of hunters were gathered. Likely however, they were “celebrating,” “feasting,” performing spiritual rituals not recognized by McDougall, and talking about buffalo hunting. Similarly to the Oblates, the Methodists benefited from the large multiethnic religious and organizational gatherings of indigenous people, in order to preach their religion and in this case, the British Empire’s “attitude and purpose.” The “two large open air meetings on the Sabbath” refers to the Methodists’ own proselytizing tactics, their tent evangelism with well-established rituals and organization, which they had already developed by 1869, the year of the great buffalo hunt: <sup>144</sup>

To these ministers, a large hunt adhering to the model of a camp meeting held tantalizing evangelical possibilities.... [They] invested great hopes in a Plains gathering. The “terror theology” still preached in camp meetings, the intense prayer that followed, and the almost inevitable emotional transport of individuals were effective means of moving others to conversion. Such events had already proven successful in the evangelical frontier areas of Upper Canada, most importantly, among Native people. <sup>145</sup>

Camp meetings and open air congregations produced some of these missionaries’ most ardent Aboriginal followers, such as Ojibwa missionary Shahwanegezhick, or Henry Bird Steinhauer, and Kahkewaquonaby, or Peter Jones. <sup>146</sup> Steinhauer had developed a system of a “movable camp-meeting” during his travels to the Plains among smaller parties of Christianized hunters. Like Father Lacombe who adapted to his indigenous companions’ daily schedule with his “tente-chapelle,” Steinhauer seems to have timed his sermons to coincide with his adherents’ assemblies. The morning and night Sunday meetings had already been taking place between the Whitefish Lake and Victoria mission hunters north of Edmonton, and brought them back to a central unifying meeting place where they not only prayed with the missionaries, but also discussed and coordinated their hunts in relative safety from Blackfoot parties. Thus their own hunting activities, which traditionally already

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<sup>144</sup> Colpitts, “The Methodist Great 1869 Camp Meeting and Aboriginal Conservation Strategies in the North Saskatchewan River Valley”: 6.

<sup>145</sup> *Ibid.*: 6.

<sup>146</sup> *Ibid.* Donald B. Smith, *Sacred Feathers: The Reverend Peter Jones (Kahkewaquonaby) & the Mississauga Indians*. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987), 57-61.

had a spiritual component, remained tied to spiritual practices, but with prayers led by newcomer missionaries. Furthermore, though the missionaries from both denominations interpreted their adherents as “converting” to either Catholicism or Protestantism for spiritual reasons, the hunters themselves were more likely allying themselves in various ways according to hunting allegiances, rather than spiritual denomination, and to prevent dissension around the hunt itself.<sup>147</sup> Thus at least twenty to thirty years before the Lac Ste-Anne Pilgrimage began, both Catholic and Protestant missionaries were establishing in time and space, their proselytising events and missions. Whether via Catholic retreats or Protestant tent meetings, and sometimes both at the same time, the missionaries’ events coincided with the seasonal “rendezvous” and organizational activities of the First Nations’ peoples, at traditionally important places “from one end of the prairie to the other” such as the Neutral Hills, and most likely Lac Ste-Anne itself. The existence of these kinds of events in and around the Canadian northwestern plains, attended by various competing bands and missionaries, suggest that *Manito Sâkahikan* or *Wakamne* had long also been an indigenous landmark and traditional gathering place, which had become more important with the dwindling of the buffalo and the need to gather, coordinate and cooperate with other bands for hunting purposes.

The earliest Lac Ste-Anne *Codex Historicus*, recorded by Oblate Father Vital Fourmond between 1870 and 1872, provides evidence that these kinds of events were indeed also taking place at Lac Ste-Anne, at a time when life was getting more difficult for indigenous people, and particularly for the Métis.

In the very first *Codex* of 1870, Father Vital Fourmond stated that the “fléau,” scourge or curse of “La Picotte,” the great smallpox epidemic that year, ravaged St Albert and Ste Anne, “reaping” a few hundred Cree, Blackfoot and “Assiniboines,” and also affecting the Métis who were in touch with the Blackfoot during the spring hunt.<sup>148</sup> The

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<sup>147</sup> Colpitts, “The Methodist Great 1869 Camp Meeting and Aboriginal Conservation Strategies in the North Saskatchewan River Valley”: 13-14.

<sup>148</sup> “...nos deux missions de St. Albert et de Ste. Anne ont été ravagées par le terrible fleau (sic) de la picotte, qui a d’abord sévi sur les sauvages des prairies, moissonnant plusieurs centaines de Cris de Pieds-noirs et d’Assiniboines. Les métis s’étant trouvé en rapport avec les Pieds-noirs dans la chasse du printemps, ont rapporté à leur retour, la redoutable maladie.” *Lac Ste-Anne Codex Historicus, 1852-1872*, 5-6. Fourmond’s use of the word “moissonnant,” literally “reaping” or “harvesting” is a literary use of the word, personifying Death, the Grim Reaper.

small pox epidemic of 1870 (the “Picotte”) severely diminished First Nations populations, leaving them bereft of leaders and important family members, often including their own shamen, and placing them in a weakened and vulnerable position.<sup>149</sup> However, also notable here, is Fourmond’s record that the Métis had had dealings with the Blackfoot during the *spring* hunt, suggesting once again the seasonal coordination that was taking place in the area between different and sometimes warring groups of people, a coordination which likely eventually helped to develop a Catholic pilgrimage. Fourmond mentioned “La Picotte” again in 1871, stating that the Assiniboines (or Stony Nakoda) came “as customary” to trade at Lac Ste-Anne in the fall, having stayed away the previous year “dans le bois” (in the woods) because of the disease, from which they were spared.<sup>150</sup> As shall be seen, the seasonal return of the Nakoda to Lac Ste-Anne also sets an important precedent for the pilgrimage there.

In 1870, Fourmond continued, “The last day of the month of August, I leave Lac Ste-Anne to accompany the Métis on the prairie and I return near the end of November.”<sup>151</sup> Hence, for the three fall months, Fourmond traveled with the Métis people on their buffalo hunting trips “à la prairie.” The fire and drought, precipitated by climate change in the region at that time noted by environmental historians, and which eventually instigated prayers for rain at the early Lac Ste-Anne pilgrimages, are revealed when Fourmond states immediately afterwards that, on September 9<sup>th</sup> at noon, he and his Métis companions barely escaped a prairie grass fire, which overtook their camp, and which forced them to arrange horses, the sick, wagons and tents topsy turvy in their “Rond.”<sup>152</sup> Immediately after this

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<sup>149</sup> Carter, *Aboriginal People and Colonizers of Western Canada to 1900*, 36-9.

<sup>150</sup> “Les Assiniboines, éloignés l’année dernière par la picotte, sont venus comme de coutume traiter cet automne; ils ont été épargnés par le terrible fléau. Ils ont toutes les peines du monde à vivre dans le bois.” *Lac Ste-Anne Codex Historicus, 1852-1872*, 13.

<sup>151</sup> “Le dernier jour du mois d’août, je pars du Lac Ste Anne pour accompagner les métis à la prairie et j’en suis de retour vers la fin de novembre.” *Ibid.*, 6.

<sup>152</sup> Though Fourmond makes no mention of it, the prairie fire may actually have been a result of political conflict, rather than environmental conditions. The Cree, who in this time of buffalo depletion, viewed Métis encroachments upon Cree territory “with feelings of jealousy and enmity” sometimes deliberately set prairie fires “to frustrate organized Métis hunts,” thus driving “... the game beyond their reach.” Milloy, *The Plains Cree: Trade, Diplomacy and War, 1790-1870*, 107. A “rond” likely refers to the “round” type of camp the Métis usually set up, with women and children’s tents in the middle, and hunters’ wagons arranged in a circle around them for protection against hostile visitors. George Woodcock, *Gabriel Dumont: The Métis*

misfortune, Fourmond then reported, without further comment, that same morning, thirty hunters who had left to pursue the buffalo had seen a vision somewhat akin to those Marian visions experienced by poor peasants in Europe. The buffalo hunters saw in the rising sun, successively, a cross, a heart, a monstrance and a church, and allegedly all had given the same account.<sup>153</sup> It is not clear from the *Codex* how Fourmond interpreted the sighting. Considering he had just spoken of the prairie fire misfortune, and from what directly followed in his report the following year in 1871 however, it seems that he may have hoped this was a sign to the Métis to maintain good Catholic practices, and stop hunting buffalo and settle down to farm. The next year, Fourmond stated that God had punished the Métis but he does not directly say how or why they transgressed.<sup>154</sup> Fourmond proceeded to conclude his report of 1870 with the alleged “punishments,” stating there had been 122 deaths on the prairie, and approximately 200 (from smallpox) at St. Albert and Lac Ste-Anne. Then, aside from briefly noting that the cathedral in St. Albert was built (was this the church which the Métis had seen in the sun?), that Father Léon Doucet had been ordained and that he himself and another Oblate, Father Bourguine had professed their vows, Father Fourmond finally concluded that year’s entry with “Bad fishing, worthless hunt, shortage of food,” revealing the generally bad year everyone had had.<sup>155</sup>

In 1871 Fourmond continued to chastise the Métis, despite noting that their first annual buffalo hunt had been abundant. He related a sad and grisly episode, bemoaning the violence that afflicted the Métis community during the hunt and stating that they hadn’t understood or heard the “Good Lord’s justice” the previous year when they had been punished with the epidemics, suggesting that they still needed to reform, or that the violence itself was a punishment.<sup>156</sup> Though Fourmond made no mention of alcohol, likely

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*Chief and His Lost World* (Edmonton: Hurtig Publishers, 1975), 37. Ens, *Homeland to Hinterland: The Changing Worlds of the Red River Metis in the Nineteenth Century*, 39-43, 91.

<sup>153</sup> “Le matin de ce même jour, trente chasseurs absents pour chasser le buffalo, voient dans le Soleil levant, une croix, un cœur, un ostensor et une église, le tout successivement, tous ont rendu le même témoignage.” *Lac Ste-Anne Codex Historicus 1852-1872*, 6-7.

<sup>154</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

<sup>155</sup> “Mauvaise pêche, chasse nulle, disette de vivres” *Lac Ste-Anne Codex Historicus 1852-1872*, 7.

<sup>156</sup> “...malheureusement les métis ont prouvé qu’ils n’avaient pas compris ou du moins pas écouté la terrible leçon que leur avait infligée, l’année dernière, la Justice du bon Dieu; car plusieurs d’entre eux, pendant la chasse, ont donné de grands scandales.” *Ibid.*



he was referring to what the Oblates perceived as the hunters' frequent bouts of debauchery, and continued debilitating involvement in the buffalo robe, pemmican and alcohol trade. By 1874, Bishop Taché advised his clergy that they would no longer be able to accompany the Métis in their winter camps, as he believed the encampments were too risky and "that the presence of a missionary encouraged the Métis to continue to hunt rather than settle on the land and farm."<sup>157</sup>

The events recorded by Fourmond in the 1871 *Codex* suggest that alcohol related violence may have indeed been common in Métis communities at the time. Allegedly, the wife of Charlot (Charlie) Gladu was stabbed in the right arm while courageously "defending her niece's innocence," and lost the use of her right hand. The attacker, the "terrible" Kisikawâsis, whom Fourmond referred to as "some kind of Métis savage, without religion nor morality," was condemned by the "prairie counsel" and ordered to give a horse to Gladu's wife (who was not named) in compensation. Fourmond then pointed out, perhaps to express sorrow or empathy, but likely also to emphasize the chaos afflicting the Métis, that the perpetrator murdered his wife at Fort des Prairies one year later.<sup>158</sup> It was perhaps partly in response to this incident that "the law established itself" at the end of the year in St. Albert and Lac Ste-Anne, when the fur trader Abraham Salois and Chief Factor of Fort Edmonton Alexander Christie were named first magistrates, François-Xavier Plante the elder named second magistrate, and the limits of Métis land were chosen.<sup>159</sup> Fourmond consoled himself with the fact that he had nonetheless managed to baptize about twenty Sarcee children during this same first buffalo trip of 1871, revealing the proselytizing zeal and ultramontane attitude discussed in the previous chapter.<sup>160</sup>

As stated in this chapter's introduction, it was also in 1871 that Fourmond referred to the peace re-established between the Cree and Blackfoot and their celebrations. More compelling, however, is Fourmond's account that a First Nation ceremony took place right at Lac Ste-Anne itself, but this time among a group already known to the Oblates, and who,

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<sup>157</sup> Raymond J. A. Huel, *Archbishop A.-A. Taché of St. Boniface: The "Good Fight" and the Illusive Vision*, (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, Western Canadian Publishers, 2003), 152-3.

<sup>158</sup> *Lac Ste-Anne Codex Historicus 1852-1872*, 8.

<sup>159</sup> *Ibid.*, 12-3.

<sup>160</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.

according to later codices, would continue to return for many years afterwards, including to the present day. These were the “Assiniboines,” or neighboring woodland Nakoda Stoney who eventually settled on the Paul Band and Alexis Sioux reserves at Wabamun and at Lac Ste-Anne itself. In the autumn of 1872, Fourmond recorded the return of the Nakoda Stoney people to trade at Lac Ste-Anne yet again, “en plus grand nombre” or in larger numbers this time, and yet again, he spoke of a celebration: “They celebrated a big festival, thanks to the generosity of Mr. Adams chief factor of the Fort.”<sup>161</sup> What the Stoneys were “celebrating,” Fourmond did not say, and we are left to speculate, however it is clear that something significant was taking place at this “big festival.” The “larger numbers” means more than one regional band was likely attending, and thus that people were coming from further away. In his journal, Father Zéphirin Lizée later revealed that related Nakoda bands came to Lac Ste-Anne from as far away as Morley, 400 km south of there.<sup>162</sup> Yet what could have been prompting this “celebration” and “feast” at Lac Ste-Anne in the fall of 1872 among the Nakoda? Immediately following the account of the Stony celebration, Father Fourmond indicated:

They are not without anxiety about the measure taken by the Company, after the abolition of all the debts, to no longer give on credit. It's our death, some of them were saying. To this anxiety was added yet another: it's the news about the work that is being done by the famous railway, “The Pacific.” The poor Indians from all parts say it is done, we will soon not find any animals, neither in the woods, nor in the prairies; if the Great Spirit does not take pity on us we will all perish.<sup>163</sup>

Here, ostensibly directly quoting his indigenous neighbors, Fourmond was indicating a real time of crisis for First Nations people. He was speaking of Aboriginal people “from all parts,” thus not simply the Nakoda, but in this general atmosphere of “anxiety” among all

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<sup>161</sup> “Nos Assiniboines sont venus traiter en plus grand nombre que les années précédentes. Ils ont célébré un grand festival, grâce à la générosité de Mr. Adams commis en charge du Fort.” *Lac Ste-Anne Codex Historicus 1852-1872*, 17.

<sup>162</sup> See Lizée's journal for Wednesday July 12<sup>th</sup>, 1911 in *Journal, Lac Sainte-Anne 1911-1924*, 85-6.

<sup>163</sup> “Ils ne sont pas sans inquiétude (sic) de la mesure prise par la Compagnie, après l'abolition de toutes les dettes, de ne plus donner à crédit. C'est notre mort, disaient quelques uns. A cette inquiétude est venue encore s'en joindre une autre : c'est la nouvelle que font les travaux du fameux chemin de fer, ‘Le Pacifique’. C'en est fait, disent de toutes parts les pauvres sauvages, nous ne trouverons bientôt plus d'animaux, ni dans les bois ni dans les prairies ; si le Grand Esprit ne nous prend en pitié nous allons tous périr.” *Lac Ste-Anne Codex Historicus 1852-1872*, 17-8.

Amerindian communities, and because the last two citations directly follow one another, it seems Fourmond is suggesting the Nakoda had a gathering and feast in order to remedy the shortages and difficulties they were all experiencing. However, it is difficult to be certain of Fourmond's interpretation of the celebration because, returning to his missionary role, he then suggests that it is precisely these worries that have made the Catholic Nakoda more serious about religion, and labels his next entry, "Improvement in the moral state of the Indians:"

It is most likely these serious worries that have brought our Catholic Assiniboines this year to turn themselves seriously to the side of religion, finally emerging from their fatal indifference and showing an extraordinary zeal to be taught and to pray. May the Good Lord and the Most Holy Virgin Mary take pity on them and cover them with the wings of their all powerful protection.<sup>164</sup>

Fourmond used somewhat the same language as his contemporaries: Methodist Minister George McDougall allegedly reported of the Ojibwas of Garden River, "...they are fast passing away. Nor are they ignorant of it. Many of them are now ripe for the Gospel."<sup>165</sup> Yet the "generosity" of Mr. Adams mentioned by Fourmond earlier suggests that First Nations bands, including the Nakoda, though perhaps converting to Catholicism, were also still organizing and holding more Give Away Dances or *mâhtâhitowin*, which in the context of the small pox epidemic, would make sense. The chief factor of the HBC post at the lake may have been taking on a similar role as an Aboriginal headman would during a traditional Give Away Dance, and providing goods, perhaps on credit, to the Nakoda, in order for them to hold a traditional ceremony. Why a chief factor may be taking on this role is explained by the context of economic crisis for First Nations people at the time.

Since the earliest days of the fur-trade between First Nations trappers and the Hudson's Bay Company, the "debt-gratuity system" had helped to tide the Amerindians

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<sup>164</sup> "C'est sans doutes ces sérieuses inquiétudes qui ont porté cette année, nos assiniboines catholiques à se tourner sérieusement du côté de la religion, sortant enfin de leur funeste indifférence et montrant un zèle extraordinaire à se faire instruire et à prier. Puissent le bon Dieu et la Très Sainte Vierge Marie les prendre en pitié et les couvrir des ailes de leur toute puissante protection." *Lac Ste-Anne Codex Historicus* 1852-1872, 18.

<sup>165</sup> Quoted in Grant, *Moon of Wintertime: Missionaries and the Indians of Canada in Encounter since 1534*, 245.

over during times of meagre hunting and trapping, as the company advanced outfits of goods to indigenous people in return for products from future hunts.<sup>166</sup> However, as First Nations hunters became more specialized economically, and as resource depletion (to which Fourmond and his Amerindian neighbors referred), became more and more problematic, these hunters became more vulnerable to food shortages and low fur returns, and the “debt-gratuity system became increasingly troublesome.”<sup>167</sup> Traditional sharing practices did continue within First Nation bands, but over time, scarcity could only be counteracted by depending on the Hudson’s Bay Company posts for gratuities and credit. By the second half of the nineteenth century, changes within the system began to cause alarm among Aboriginal bands. Isaac Cowie, an HBC trader, remarked that in 1868, the HBC dismantled its ancient “made-beaver” currency to adopt the Canadian dollar as an exchange value. His native clientele was thrown into alarm by the change in denominational values.<sup>168</sup> Later the arrival of the railway also opened the southern portions of Rupert’s Land to increased competition, and also brought company rivals who paid cash for Aboriginal products. Although Arthur Ray argued that a cash economy and competition actually helped First Nations’ traders, as it allowed them to look for the best prices for the commodities they needed, the initial dislocation of the market was distressing.<sup>169</sup> Father Fourmond opined that the abolition of debts and credit would render indigenous traders more “wise in their trading, most of them prefer solid things to shiny ones, and some even prefer to trade more food.”<sup>170</sup> Thus a new economic system no longer based on the debt-gratuity system, and made-beaver exchange values, which had previously sustained First Nations traders through tough times, was a disconcerting economic change. Given these changes taking place in their lives, First Nations people,

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<sup>166</sup> Arthur J. Ray, "Periodic Shortages, Native Welfare, and the Hudson's Bay Company, 1670-1930," in *Out of the Background: Readings on Canadian Native History*, eds. Ken S. Coates and Robin Fisher, 2nd Edition ed. (Scarborough: Irwin Publishing, 1998), 92.

<sup>167</sup> Ibid.

<sup>168</sup> Isaac Cowie, *The Company of Adventurers: A Narrative of Seven Years in the Service of the Hudson's Bay Company during 1867-1874*, (Toronto: William Briggs, 1913) 306-307.

<sup>169</sup> Arthur J. Ray, "Periodic Shortages, Native Welfare, and the Hudson's Bay Company, 1670-1930," 93.

<sup>170</sup> "L'abolition des dettes et du crédit les rendra plus sages dans leurs traites, la plupart préfèrent le solide au brillant, un certain nombre même à traiter plus des vivres." *Lac Ste-Anne Codex Historicus 1852-1872*, 18.

including the Nakoda, were most likely reuniting in the 1870's to talk and to participate in traditional ceremonies, somewhat "pilgrimage like" that would bring them strength and hope. However, a look at the socio-political context for indigenous people at the time, which coincides with the gap in the Lac Ste-Anne *Codex*, and its transformation from a mission *Codex* to a pilgrimage *Codex*, reveals even more urgent and important changes that were taking place among First Nations people.

We saw in the previous chapter, how Father Joseph Lestanc initiated the pilgrimage during a time of great strife for himself, but also for the Oblates in the Canadian Northwest, where they were losing indigenous converts to Protestant missions. However, it is clear that the event was initiated during a time of crisis for First Nations people as well. When one takes note of the ebb and flow of the Oblates' *Codex Historicus*, its disappearance in 1872 conspicuously coincides with the beginning of a period of great upheaval for Plains Aboriginal people, one which shall be characterized here as of restriction and control. During the seventeen years between 1872 and 1889, many important events and changes took place in the Canadian prairie west, which had a profound impact on the lives of the Aboriginal peoples there. When the *Codex* reappeared in 1889, the transformation in their lives was more or less complete.

The clear difference between Father Vital Fourmond's early 1870-72 mission *Codex* for Lac Ste-Anne and Father Zéphirin Lizée's 1889 pilgrimage *Codex* is that the former provides a broader idea of the context of life around the mission, whereas the latter focuses primarily on the pilgrimage itself. This is clear in later years as well. In 1935, Oblate Father Pierre Le Bré writes in that year's *Codex*:

If it were not for the pilgrimage days, the Lac Ste Anne Mission would not have much to report every year. As well, the 'codex historicus', often contents itself with mentioning this sole important detail of the mission.<sup>171</sup>

Certainly, the disappearance of the Lac Ste-Anne Mission *Codex* in 1872 corresponds to the rising prominence of the neighboring Catholic mission of St. Albert, shortly after Father Lacombe left Lac Ste-Anne, and to the concentration of Catholic activities in that

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<sup>171</sup> "N'étaient les jours de pèlerinages, la Mission du Lac Ste Anne n'aurait pas grand chose à signaler chaque année. Aussi, le 'codex historicus', bien souvent se contente de mentionner ce seul détail important de cette mission." *Lac Ste-Anne Codex Historicus 1900-1964*, 45.

settlement. However, the *Codex's* changing nature from a mission *Codex* to a pilgrimage *Codex* also points to a rapid constriction of Aboriginal life and the restriction of their practices, the tenuous existence of the mission at Lac Ste-Anne, the “need” for a pilgrimage, and the transformation perhaps of one form of celebration, a First Nation’s gathering, into a Catholic pilgrimage.<sup>172</sup>

In the wake of drought, the virtual disappearance of the buffalo, the small pox epidemic of 1870, (the “Picotte”), the depletion of food resources, and the change in Hudson’s Bay policies, many changes in “Indian Policy” also took place between 1872 and 1889, as the Indian Branch of the fledgling federal government rapidly developed first as part of the Department of the Interior in 1873, and in 1880 officially becoming the Department of Indian Affairs (DIA).<sup>173</sup> The Indian Department, whose origins were in the military wing of the British Colonial government, was given a nation building mandate in 1867, to oversee the “smooth transfer” of Indian lands to New Canadian settlers and industrial development.<sup>174</sup> The DIA accomplished their goals mainly in two ways: the signing of the numbered treaties beginning in 1871 and the Indian Act of 1876 with all its ensuing ramifications including the permit and pass systems of 1880 and 1886. These pieces of legislation contributed to putting the First Peoples in both a more precarious and constrained situation, more likely to negotiate the meanings of a traditional journey and gathering place, and, quite possibly, more in need of a pilgrimage. Also important to mention was the creation of the North West Mounted Police (NWMP) in 1873, who arrived in southern Alberta shortly after, to control the cross border liquor trade and maintain law and order.<sup>175</sup> Though the police undoubtedly helped to curtail the American whisky trade, their presence also contributed to the general atmosphere of restriction, assimilation and

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<sup>172</sup> It is important to note however, that some of the later Oblate missionaries who were put in charge at Lac Ste-Anne, such as Father Patrice Beaudry, the second Métis Oblate, did note their comings and goings at the mission throughout the year and did not simply focus on the pilgrimage days. *Lac Ste-Anne Codex Historicus 1900-1964*, 20-33. Beaudry’s entries in the *Codex*, as well as his personal papers from 1896 -1940 could form part of a study on indigenous-Oblate priests. PAA OMI Collection, *Father Patrice Beaudry O.M.I., Personal Papers* Acc. 71.220 Box 143.

<sup>173</sup> Brian Titley, *The Indian Commissioners: Agents of the State and Indian Policy in Canada’s Prairie West, 1873-1932*, (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 2009), 7.

<sup>174</sup> *Ibid.*, 3, 7-9. Carter, *Aboriginal People and Colonizers of Western Canada to 1900*, 113-14.

<sup>175</sup> Titley, *The Indian Commissioners*, 10.

control.<sup>176</sup> Finally, in 1895, six years after the pilgrimage began in 1889, a further ramification to the Indian Act banning the Sundance (and later, at a more general level, other religious and cultural behaviour deemed “beyond the law”) was also instated following the earlier banning of the Potlatch among west coast bands in 1885.<sup>177</sup> These new policies, paradoxically aimed to protect what were then considered “naïve” and “primitive” First Nations people from ostensibly “worldly” and more “evolved” Euro-Canadian settlers, in practice repressed their freedom of movement and isolated them.<sup>178</sup> These laws, which were meant to “assimilate” Aboriginal peoples, and enacted in the well-known residential school experience, denied them their culture, and left them socially, politically, and legally marginalized for many years.

The signing of the numbered treaties had already begun in 1871 with Treaties 1 and 2 in southern Manitoba. However Treaties 4, 5, 6 and 7 signed in 1874, 1875, 1876 and 1877 respectively, directly impacted the Native peoples of what would become southern and central Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta, many of whom possibly already traveled to *Manito Sâkanikan*, *Wakamne*, or Lac Ste-Anne every summer. The treaties effectively extinguished Amerindian land title and confined Aboriginal people to reserves. They had the right to hunt and to fish on reserve land, but “title did not include either sovereignty or ownership in fee simple.”<sup>179</sup> In other words, though First Nations people could live on “reserved” land and hunt on all unclaimed Crown lands, the land itself belonged to the government to do with as it pleased, sell to settlers or lease to developers.<sup>180</sup> Though the point here is not to make a direct cause-and-effect relation between the treaties and the pilgrimage, it is nonetheless the case that treaties were made only when they were necessary, when development or land settlement warranted them. These priorities were clear from as early as 1791, with the relinquishing of First Nations land for the colony of Upper Canada, through Treaties 1 and 2 of 1871 which negotiated the surrender of valuable

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<sup>176</sup> Carter, *Aboriginal People and Colonizers of Western Canada to 1900*, 127-30.

<sup>177</sup> Pettipas, *Severing the Ties that Bind*, 3.

<sup>178</sup> Trigger, *Natives and Newcomers: Canada's “Heroic Age” Reconsidered*, 35-43. Pettipas, *Severing the Ties that Bind*, 19-21.

<sup>179</sup> Dickason, *A Concise History of Canada's First Nations*, 173.

<sup>180</sup> Carter, *Aboriginal People and Colonizers of Western Canada to 1900*, 119, 121.

agricultural land in Manitoba. Further, when lieutenant-governor and Indian Superintendent David Laird arrived in the West just before the signing of Treaty 7 in 1877, he observed and recorded the economic potential of the land for the government, and his interest in local coal deposits.<sup>181</sup> Thus, the Treaties serve as a good barometer of local change, development and settlement. Treaties 8 (1899), and 11 (1921) which affected the Dene in the northern regions of Athabasca and Mackenzie, both coincided with new uncertainty in indigenous lives, and especially with subsistence needs.<sup>182</sup> It is perhaps not surprising that the presence of the Dene was recorded in the pilgrimage *Codex* in subsequent years. Father Pierre-Marie Le Bré noted in 1925 that to everyone's admiration, both Cree and "Montagnais," chiefs were honoured to be the first to hoist the new banner and canopy.<sup>183</sup> "Montagnais" was the French fur traders' way to refer to the Dene, and does not refer here to the Amerindian tribe from Quebec.<sup>184</sup> Thus, from at least 1925 (there is no *Codex* between 1919-1923), and ranging from three to twenty-four years after Treaties 8 and 11, the Dene peoples have made the long trek from their northern communities to Lac Ste-Anne. This is astonishing considering they did not yet have motor vehicles, and were travelling several hundreds of kilometres. In 1927, and despite bad weather and roads which lowered numbers of pilgrims in general, the Dene still came, and were able to sing two canticles to Ste. Anne, composed by Oblate Léo Balter, in their own language, indicating that there must have been enough of them present to warrant this new development, and that there may be a correlation between Treaty signing and attendance at the pilgrimage.<sup>185</sup>

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<sup>181</sup> Titley, *The Indian Commissioners*, 3,11,50.

<sup>182</sup> McCarthy, *From the Great River to the Ends of the Earth: Oblate Missions to the Dene, 1847-1921*, 172-4.

<sup>183</sup> "...a (sic) la procession de l'après-midi, les chefs cris & montagnais furent très honorés d'être les premiers à porter la nouvelle bannière & le nouveau dais qui firent l'admiration de tous." *Lac Ste-Anne Codex Historicus 1900-1964*, 35.

<sup>184</sup> McCarthy, *From the Great River to the Ends of the Earth: Oblate Missions to the Dene, 1847-1921*, 14. See also McCarthy's footnote no. 6, p. 213, as well as Chabot, *Submission Report-Place: Lac Ste. Anne Pilgrimage Site*, 8 (454).

<sup>185</sup> "Les Montagnais étaient fiers de pouvoir pour la 1<sup>ère</sup> fois chanter 2 cantiques dans leur langue à la Bonne Ste. Anne, cantiques composés par le Père Balter." *Lac Ste-Anne Codex Historicus 1900-1964*, 38. That same year, the following day, Polish newcomers sang the Vespers, likely in Polish, in the church with their respective priests, Fathers Niksa and Zcudarek, during the Veneration of the Relic, revealing again the



The signing of the Indian Act in 1876 put further restrictions on indigenous people. Its fundamental purpose was to assimilate indigenous people and compel them to become settled farmers, via the two “pillars” of education and agriculture. However, instead of encouraging Euro-Canadian-Aboriginal interaction, it contained First Nations peoples on their reserves, interfered in a heavy-handed way with many aspects of their lives and made it difficult for any kind of exchange, economic or otherwise, with the outside world to take place. Sarah Carter stated that the Indian Act:

...consigned Aboriginal people to the status of minors; they were British subjects but not citizens, sharing the status of children, felons, and the insane, and it established the federal government as their guardians. Those who came under the act were not allowed to vote in federal or provincial elections, and as they were not voters they were legally prohibited from the professions of law and politics, unless they gave up their Indian status. Through the administration of this act, government agents were able to control minute details of everyday life. There were restrictions on Aboriginal peoples’ ability to sell their produce and resources, on their religious freedom and amusements.... It also specifically denied Indians rights available even to complete newcomers to the country. It stipulated, for example, that ‘no Indian...shall be held capable of having acquired or of acquiring a homestead....’<sup>186</sup>

An amendment to the Act in 1880, which legitimized what is known as the permit system, “permitted the government to restrict ‘the sale, barter, exchange or gift, by any band or irregular band of Indians...of any grain or root crops, or other produce grown upon any Indian Reserve in the North-West Territories.’...To make such business transactions extremely risky for recipients, any produce or materials acquired from Indians could be seized.”<sup>187</sup> Thus, from early on in the reserve period, Treaty Indians were not permitted to oversee their own affairs and freely seek interaction with the outside world, whether of a business, economic or spiritual nature. Instead, they had to seek permission or approval for any transaction from state authorities such as their Indian Agent, a government official working for the Department of Indian Affairs and present on the reserve. This constrictive

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continuation of an age old multinational or multilingual aspect of Catholic pilgrimages discussed in chapter two. *Ibid.*, 39.

<sup>186</sup> Carter, *Aboriginal People and Colonizers of Western Canada to 1900*, 117-18.

<sup>187</sup> *Indian Act and Amendments, 1868-1950*, quoted in Regular, *Neighbours and Networks: The Blood Tribe in the Southern Alberta Economy, 1884-1939*, 21.

and repressive atmosphere led them to severe demoralization, as revealed by Reverend Edward Ahenakew further on.

In 1881, another amendment to the Act increased the powers of the Indian Agent. This amendment “made him justice of the peace with powers to effect an arrest, conduct trials, and pass sentence.”<sup>188</sup> The Frenchman Charles De Caze, often mentioned in the early pilgrimage *Codex*, was the first such Indian agent for the reserves in the Lac Ste-Anne vicinity. Following the Louis Riel Rebellion of 1885, the government restricted the movement of Amerindians even further, increasing the number of Indian Agents, and strengthening the NWMP.<sup>189</sup> According to Keith Regular, “Without legal justification and mostly on his individual initiative, Assistant Commissioner (of the Department of Indian Affairs), Hayter Reed began imposing pass restrictions” on indigenous peoples.<sup>190</sup> After the 1885 Rebellion, the government enthusiastically responded to Reed’s initiative, and “issued books of passes to Indian agencies across the West in 1886.” Aboriginal people now had to ask for permission to leave the reserve and the “passes soon evolved into general application in attempts to control Indian movement for all manner of purpose, including food-gathering activities, off-reserve work, excursions, social activities, and the curtailing of parental access to children at the various residential schools.”<sup>191</sup>

Finally, in 1895, Sun Dances were also banned. The last “formally reported instance of piercing” at a Sun Dance allegedly happened on Piapot’s reserve in Saskatchewan’s Qu’Appelle area in the late 1890’s.<sup>192</sup> However First Nations responded to this ban with persistent opposition, in the forms of petitions for example. They also simply continued to carry out modified versions of these events (generally without self-mortification) even in the presence of police officers, as was the case in the 1920’s among the Hobbema Cree.<sup>193</sup> Giveaway ceremonies often escaped the notice of officials.<sup>194</sup>

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<sup>188</sup> *Ibid.*, 19.

<sup>189</sup> Dickason, *A Concise History of Canada's First Nations*, 207.

<sup>190</sup> Regular, *Neighbours and Networks: The Blood Tribe in the Southern Alberta Economy, 1884-1939*, 20.

<sup>191</sup> *Ibid.*, 20.

<sup>192</sup> Pettipas, *Severing the Ties that Bind: Government Repression of Indigenous Religious Ceremonies on the Prairies*, 137.

<sup>193</sup> *Ibid.*, 171.

However, despite these efforts, their opportunities for worship and communal dances and activities were nonetheless severely limited and controlled.

The other impact was social. Hayter Reed, who was Assistant Commissioner became Indian Commissioner in 1888, and his:

... administration showed that he was a firm believer in the department's long-established policy of "protection, civilization and assimilation." "If the Indian," he said, "is to become a source of profit to the country, it is clear that he must be amalgamated with the white population." Before this goal could be accomplished the Indian would have to acquire an occupation and become "imbued with the white man's spirit and impregnated by his ideas."<sup>195</sup>

It was under Reed that the peasant farming policy was introduced, which was based on the idea that in order for First Nations people to achieve the level of progress of Euro-Canadian settlers, they needed to "evolve" through the intermediate agricultural stage experienced by medieval European peasants, and thus were only allowed to use simple implements such as sickles, scythes and wooden dowels rather than the more modern machinery of their non-indigenous neighbours.<sup>196</sup> Reed also preferred industrial schools over day schools as they were more likely to "obliterate" Aboriginal children's earlier "habits and associations," which they had learned from their parents, including knowledge of their own languages.<sup>197</sup> He made efforts to have the schools operate twelve months of the year, without summer holidays, so that the students would not be exposed during the holidays to "undesirable influences at home."<sup>198</sup> Finally, as Sarah Carter has described, the Indian agents on reserves worked with missionaries to regulate marriage, annul polygamous unions and enforce monogamy.<sup>199</sup>

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<sup>194</sup> Ibid., 138.

<sup>195</sup> Titley, *The Indian Commissioners*, 101.

<sup>196</sup> Ibid., 103-104.

<sup>197</sup> Ibid., 106-7.

<sup>198</sup> Ibid., 107.

<sup>199</sup> Sarah Carter, *The Importance of Being Monogamous: Marriage and Nation Building in Western Canada to 1915*, (Edmonton and Athabasca: University of Alberta Press and Athabasca University Press, 2008), 129-30.

Edward Ahenakew, a Saskatchewan Cree who became an Anglican minister, and was related to Chiefs Ahtakakoop, Poundmaker, and Mistawasis, spoke in later years of the oppressive nature of the Indian Act, particularly the permit system, that would most likely prompt more First Nations people to attend Catholic pilgrimages and continue their traditional Sun Dances incognito, as a form of resistance and maintenance of their culture.<sup>200</sup> Ahenakew was faced with the challenges of being a Native Catechist, and thus was careful about explicitly criticising the Anglican Church and the British government.<sup>201</sup> However, speaking through the voice of a fictional yet largely autobiographical elder named “Old Keyam,” he nonetheless pointed out the real inadequacies of the various policies:

Certain abuses, however, make [the permit system] most offensive. ...the fact is that every man on the reserve must go begging for a permit every time he wants to sell even a load of hay.

This may be “kindly supervision,” but it is most wretchedly humbling to many a worthy fellow to have to go, with assumed indifference, to ask or beg for a permit to sell one load of hay that he had cut himself, on his own reserve, with his own horses and implements.

....

As for our cattle – there again, they are not ours. A white man, owning cattle and having no ready money, draws up a plan for himself which includes selling. An Indian may have more cattle than that white man has, but do you think that he can plan in that same way? No. He is told that the commissioner has said that no cattle are to be sold until the fall. It is useless to plan under this system, yet planning is what successful work requires....

Why should [a man] not own that which he has bought? I have known Indians who wanted to buy cattle when they had money after a successful hunt, but they would not because the ID (Indian Department) brand would be put on the cattle, and that would be the end of any say they had in the matter.<sup>202</sup>

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<sup>200</sup> Edward Ahenakew, *Voices of the Plains Cree*, ed. Ruth M. Buck (Regina: Canadian Plains Research Center, 1995), 110-11.

<sup>201</sup> Wheeler, “The Journals and Voices of a Church of England Native Catechist: Askenootow (Charles Pratt), 1851-1884,” 247-9, 252-3.

<sup>202</sup> Ahenakew, *Voices of the Plains Cree*, 101-2.

Thus, according to Ahenakew, the patriarchal Indian Policies were degrading and embarrassing, and prevented or at least discouraged Treaty Indians from nurturing the kind of individual initiative and Protestant work ethic deemed necessary to be successful as a farmer in the Canadian West. Not surprisingly, Reverend Edward Ahenakew, as Old Keyam, also had something to say about pilgrimages and Sun Dances. Somewhat echoing Martin Luther's reservations about pilgrimages from 200 years previously, cited in the first chapter, and promoting a strong work ethic, Ahenakew argued that if indigenous people were permitted to miss work to go on Catholic pilgrimages, which they felt were beneficial, they should also be allowed to attend Sun Dances:

To my mind, the strongest objection to the Sun Dance is the time wasted by the Indians who often go to other reserves to take part in these rites, when they might be far better employed doing their work at home. And yet every year other Indians go on long pilgrimages to Roman Catholic shrines; they too leave their work, and no one can convince them that they do not receive benefits that more than balance whatever may be their material loss in being absent from their work and homes. Certainly, the worthy fathers of that Church would object strongly if their adherents were told that they might have to serve time in jail for going on a pilgrimage to Lac Ste. Anne or some other shrine. ... to the Indian who takes part in the Sun Dance it is as real as the pilgrimage is to his fellow Indian."<sup>203</sup>

Thus, though Ahenakew expressed concern that some pilgrims may be squandering their time, and would be better off working on their farms, he still defended First Nations people's right in general to attend either pilgrimages or Sun Dances, based on the "benefits" that outnumber the material loss from not staying and working at home. Likely Ahenakew, his people, and indigenous Catholic adherents, were continuing to go to these events as a form of resistance against or adaptation to colonialism, and in order to maintain their culture. Going on a Catholic pilgrimage to Lac Ste-Anne may have continued to be a "right of solidarity," and a strategy to get around the restrictions placed upon them, to a place situated, for some pilgrims, many days away from the reserve, and across traditional hunting grounds.

Thus, considering the difficulties the First Nations peoples were going through after the 1870's and leading up to 1889, they had good reason to adopt Catholic practices, or at

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<sup>203</sup> Ibid., 95.

the very least, to start attending a Catholic pilgrimage, even though they may have actually maintained their own, or had more mixed beliefs. Despite government authorities' efforts to dissuade them, they may have seen the Lac Ste Anne pilgrimage as a complimentary or similar version of their traditional travels, gatherings, Midewiwins, Sun Dances, or "rendezvous," and a place to tap into a power that could alleviate their problems.

According to Oblate archivist Émeric Drouin, Father Zéphirin Lizée, who wrote the pilgrimage codices from 1889 to 1896, in the latter year stated that: "The [Lac Ste-Anne] pilgrimages serve a two-fold purpose – spiritual and social – after the disappearance of the buffalo herds (1877-1880), Lac Ste-Anne's role as a gathering place for hunters and their families also vanished. With this lost role went the festive activities and the religious dedication attached to the great hunt. The pilgrimages fill this vacuum."<sup>204</sup> This statement by the Oblate father stationed at the Lac Ste-Anne Mission resembles the arguments of Morinis and Schlesier. However, it also clearly states that Lac Ste-Anne had the role of "a gathering place for hunters and their families" and more significantly that when this role was lost, so were the "festive activities and the religious dedication attached to the great hunt." The "great hunt" can only refer to the buffalo hunt, as no other hunt required as high a degree of planning, organization and logistic coordination between people. The "festive activities" and "religious dedication" which Lizée referred to, could be interpreted as more proof that previous to the pilgrimage, Aboriginal people had gathered at Lac Ste-Anne to pray and to organize and celebrate buffalo hunts in more traditionally indigenous ways, and perhaps for Midewiwins, Matahwiwins, Goose Dances, Sun Dances and their variations. Yet Émeric Drouin made no more mention of this purpose. As shall be seen in the next chapter, Father Zéphirin Lizée's pilgrimage codices from 1889 to 1896 also suggest, when read very carefully, that First Nations' people had been coming to Lac Ste-Anne for their own reasons, besides for the spiritual prerogatives of a Catholic pilgrimage, sometime before the pilgrimage started. A closer reading of the pilgrimage codices, and piecing together information gathered from these with local histories, and Métis genealogical

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<sup>204</sup> Drouin, *Lac Ste-Anne Saskatchewan*, 53.

studies, reveals the identity of people and their origins, and provides a glimpse of what other sorts of “truths” the archives’ assertions on their own, do not make explicit.

## CHAPTER FOUR: Miracles, Lizée's Lists, and the "Local" Peoples

*During the high mass, all of the sick are brought once again into the church. -- After the office, we noticed that three of these sick people had become visibly and sensibly better.*

-Father Zéphirin Lizée, *Lac Ste-Anne Codex Historicus* 1891<sup>1</sup>

In the early Lac Ste-Anne Pilgrimage *Codex* of 1889 onwards to 1892, reports of traditional First Nation and Métis activities and preoccupations are conspicuously absent. Unlike Father Fourmond's earlier *Codex* which noted the presence of the Cree, the Blackfoot and the Assiniboine, there are virtually no references to particular Aboriginal bands in the area, nor their activities or concerns. At a first reading, the pilgrimage *Codex* gives the impression that this was a banal account of a primarily Catholic gathering, attended and administered by mostly Euro-Canadian francophone Catholics.<sup>2</sup> Even though most pilgrims were Aboriginal and/or Métis, and transitioning from traditional lifestyles to a more settler-like life based on mixed farming, references to them were engulfed in a mass designation of indistinct "pilgrims" in the *Codex*, as if they were Euro-Canadian farmers and their assimilation was complete.

In fact, based on names gleaned from studies of the region by Trudy Nicks and Elizabeth Macpherson, it is clear that Iroquois and Anishinaabe Catholic Métis pilgrims predominated at the event in its early stages, and helped the Oblates in establishing the popular healing power of Saint Anne at the lake. The only two lists of pilgrims' names in the entire pilgrimage *Codex* between 1889 and 1951, compiled by Oblate Father Zéphirin Lizée, who was curé for the mission during the first pilgrimages, reveal the

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<sup>1</sup> "Pendant la grand' messe, tous les malades sont de nouveau apportés dans l'église. -- Après l'office, on a constaté que trois de ces malades avaient pris un mieux très visible, très sensible." *Lac Ste-Anne Codex Historicus 1889-1899*, 17.

<sup>2</sup> In order to find evidence of First Nations and Métis presence or support, one must sift through the reporting of conventional and practical Church activities. Along with the age-old Catholic rites and rituals taking place at the pilgrimage previously discussed in Chapter Two, the fathers piously recorded almost every year the names of priests and their roles in the different masses and sacraments, as well as reports of the weather, the canticles, important inauguration events such as the blessing of "Anna" the bell, the construction of new buildings, and at least an idea of the numbers of pilgrims attending the event. *Ibid.*



Iroquois/Anishinaabe Métis' significant presence at the initial pilgrimages. Admittedly, these two lists are in themselves problematic, as the basis on which Lizée compiled them is not clear. However, when one cross-references the names which appear on them with the names cited in both studies mentioned above, as well as with names that appear elsewhere in the *Codex*, both the Iroquois/Anishinaabe Métis influence is revealed at the early Lac Ste-Anne Pilgrimages, as well as the complex nature of popular participation in general, at fledgling Catholic pilgrimages. Already familiar with Catholic beliefs and practices, the long time Catholic Iroquois/Anishinaabe descended Métis naturally performed the rites. At what can legitimately be called the first healing pilgrimage of 1891, all three pilgrims who healed publically in front of the congregation were themselves of Iroquois or Anishinaabe Métis descent, and/or had ties through marriage to the group as shall be seen. A man named Magloire Belcourt, who was a direct descendent of Louis Kwaragkwante, one of the original Iroquois fur traders from the Grande Cache region, played an important role in 1891, and is mentioned more than once in the codices. As the pilgrimage gained more popular, or grassroots, momentum through the years with the attendance of First Nations people from the surrounding reserves, these Iroquois Métis acted as brokers between the Oblates and the Amerindians, often becoming Catholic role models. Furthermore, the neighboring Nakoda Stoney also helped to develop both the importance and "spiritual magnetism" at Lac Ste-Anne, as having intermarried with Cree and Métis in the region, they seem to have been the first Aboriginal band to start adopting Catholic rites and attending the pilgrimage.

The following chapter first focuses on Father Zéphirin Lizée's entries in the Lac Ste-Anne Pilgrimage *Codex* for 1889-1892. In particular, it will take a close look at two official lists of pilgrims compiled by Father Lizée in 1889 and 1890, and the "Healing Pilgrimage of 1891" which reveal the strong presence of Iroquois descended Métis at the event. Using Nicks' and Macpherson's studies, and paying attention also to the names of clergymen and nuns, donors and godparents, the sick, and to the occasional anecdote at the early pilgrimages, one can gain a more balanced and full picture of the development of a local grassroots gathering during the early years of the event. Furthermore, two specific references to the neighboring woodland Nakoda band members and their relatives from

Morley, as well as the little written history that exists about them, reveal that this pilgrimage was an important event for many of their people, whether nominally Protestant or Catholic, and hence that the importance of the gathering and the place, once again, must have pre-missionary or pre-contact origins.

In the very first *Codex*, Father Zéphirin Lizée indicates that “farmers” and their families specifically, were the “pilgrims.” The first pilgrimage was supposed to take place on Ste. Anne’s feast day, July 26<sup>th</sup>, 1889, but the Oblates moved it to June 6th, thinking that people would be too busy in the fields at the later date.<sup>3</sup> At the fourth pilgrimage of 1891, pilgrims prayed for specific material and spiritual “graces” during mass. One of these “Material graces to ask for” was “Good harvest throughout the land.”<sup>4</sup> At the eighth pilgrimage, which took place on July 18<sup>th</sup>, 1895, Father Lizée stated that the pilgrimage occurred eight days earlier than the customary July 26<sup>th</sup> that year because the 18th was a bit before “le commencement des foins” or the beginning of haying season.<sup>5</sup> Furthermore, farmers needed to water their crops, and according to Lizée, one of the principal goals of the very first pilgrimage was to ask for rain, “to stop this drought that is beginning to be alarming.”<sup>6</sup> Lizée would then often note that rain did come and was, perhaps miraculously, traditionally part of pilgrimage week, which had always been rainy. At the first pilgrimage, he noted at the end of pilgrimage day, “Today, the Good Ste. Anne sends us a bit of rain.”<sup>7</sup> The morning after, he wrote, “At 3 ½ hours this morning, we rose. At 5 ½ hours departure of the pilgrims. The sky is cloudy and are falling a few drops of rain. One hour after their departure, it’s raining for all and good.”<sup>8</sup> Thus farming priorities, the need for rain, and the ensuing showers ostensibly granted by Ste. Anne, all imbue the pilgrimage codices with a European Catholic atmosphere.

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid. 1

<sup>4</sup> “Grâces matérielles (sic) à demander ... Bonne récolte dans tous (sic) le pays.” Ibid., 16.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 32.

<sup>6</sup> “de faire cesser cette sécheresse qui commence à être alarmante.” Ibid., 1.

<sup>7</sup> “Aujourd’hui, la Bonne Ste-Anne nous envoie un peu de pluie.” Ibid., 3.

<sup>8</sup> “—A 3 ½ h. ce matin, lever. A 5 h ½ d/part de pèlerins (sic). Le temps est couvert et tombe (sic) quelques gouttes de pluie. Une heure après leur départ il pleut pour tout de bon.” Ibid., 3.

Certainly, by now, many Métis and First Nations people had signed treaties, were living on reserves, and had received some farming or ranching instruction, thus, the Oblates were likely indeed thinking of them as farmers. Sarah Carter has documented the real and determined efforts Treaty Indians were making in these years and how they were thwarted by racist policy, neglect, and inappropriate laws.<sup>9</sup> Mary Rain of Paul Nakoda Band recounted how some of her best childhood memories were of accompanying her father during the haying season in what would have been the late 1940's, and she proudly spoke of the greenhouses her parents maintained when she was young.<sup>10</sup> In any case, in the late 1880's, it is clear that the priests wanted the pilgrimage to support rather than interfere with agricultural activities starting on reserves.

As well, the *Codex* often mentioned the arrival of the first named "pilgrims," the priests, religious brothers, and nuns, imparting a European Catholic stamp to the gathering. The *Codex* also mentioned prominent pilgrims who helped contribute to the offertory, such as the Count De Caze, or Mr and Mrs. Taylor, without pointing out that De Caze was the French-born Indian agent for the area, and that Mr. Taylor was the local Hudson's Bay post's chief factor.<sup>11</sup> Furthermore, the names of what were likely prominent Euro-Canadian pilgrims' names appear in the codices, referring to people not actually in attendance. Hence though Mr. and Mrs. Larue and Mr. Mc Kenney did not actually attend the pilgrimage in 1895, they acted as godparents to "Anna" the new church bell, and respectively sent \$10.00 and \$5.00 in absentia, thus their names were recorded in the *Codex*.<sup>12</sup> Therefore the *Codex* did not distinguish between Aboriginal and non Aboriginal pilgrims, and, it would seem that Lizée and the congregation at the pilgrimage were predominantly Euro-Canadian

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<sup>9</sup> "Those who stress that the fundamental problem was that Indians were culturally or temperamentally resistant to becoming farmers have ignored or downplayed economic, legal, social and climatic factors. Reserve agriculturalists were subject to the same adversities and misfortunes as their white neighbours were, but they were also subject to government policies that tended to aggravate rather than ameliorate a situation that was dismal for all farmers." Sarah Carter, *Lost Harvests : Prairie Indian Reserve Farmers and Government Policy* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1990), 12-13.

<sup>10</sup> Mary Rain, *Interview at Paul First Nation Band Administration Office*.

<sup>11</sup> *Lac Ste-Anne Codex Historicus 1889-1899*, 5, 32.

<sup>12</sup> "Les principaux parrain (sic) et marraines furent Mr. Le Cte. De Caze et sa dame, Mr. J. O'Donnell et sa dame, Mr. et madame Larue. Ces derniers n'ayant pu venir à l'invitation nous envoyèrent \$10.00. Mr. McKenney était aussi un des parrain (sic), il n'a pu venir mais il nous envoyé (sic) \$5.00." *Ibid.*, 34.

clergy and farmers. Written in a period of farm improvement, the codices reveal the event's planning around farming which would have been a priority in the district on and off reserves.

However, as shall be demonstrated when closely reading the pilgrimage codices, it is clear that the pilgrimage was a continuing indigenous event, which fulfilled a variety of purposes beyond what the Oblates had in mind. Although Euro Canadian pilgrims did come, they seem only to have become an important presence in 1895, when for the first time, and for reasons not revealed in the *Codex*, two separate high masses were given for "Indians" and "Whites" respectively, the Métis attending the "Indian" high mass.<sup>13</sup> Important to note, however, is that despite this separation during high mass, peoples were still mixed together in the other activities and rites, such as the candlelight procession, the adoration of the relic, and the Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament. This is clear from Lizée's note in 1901, as described in chapter two, that four men, representing the francophone, anglophone, Métis and First Nations populations carried the litter with Ste. Anne's statue and relic, during the candlelight procession.<sup>14</sup> In 1893, apparently due to very bad roads, numbers were down by half at the pilgrimage, and Father Lizée noted "not as many Whites," suggesting again the importance of the place for First Nations and Métis people, who came despite poor weather and travel conditions.<sup>15</sup> This insistence of Aboriginal people to attend, rain or shine, while Euro-Canadians stayed home, is indicated in further years as well.

Nonetheless, more Euro-Canadian newcomer pilgrims began attending in 1917, as Father Patrice Beaudry mentioned Fathers Boniface and Kulawy providing sermons respectively in German and Polish at the pilgrimage for those respective communities, as well as others providing sermons in the customary English and French (Father Beaudry did not mention Cree sermons that year).<sup>16</sup> Finally, in the early 1920s, Father Pierre-Marie

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 33.

<sup>14</sup> *Lac Ste-Anne Codex Historicus 1900-1964*, 7.

<sup>15</sup> " ...Mais il y a eu la moitié moins de monde que l'an dernier. Pas autant de blancs. Cependant le temps a été très beau, à part les chemins qui on été très mauvais. Deux ou trois voitures se sont brisées en route." *Lac Ste-Anne Codex Historicus 1889-1899*, 25.

<sup>16</sup> "Père Boniface a chanté la messe. Il a prêché en Allemand. Père Kulawy en Polonais. Père Pilon en anglais et C. Mr. Gueston (?) en français (sic). Une vingtaine de prêtres étaient présent (sic)." *Lac Ste-Anne Codex*

LeBré, O. M. I., yet another “Breton” Frenchman who was stationed at the Lac Ste-Anne Mission for four periods, from 1923-27, 1930-38, 1938-9, and 1944-47, spoke for the first time in 1924 of separate consecutive pilgrimage days for “Indians and Métis” on July 23, and then for “Whites” on July 24<sup>th</sup>, and again without providing a reason.<sup>17</sup> It is not clear when the first segregated pilgrimage took place. It definitely occurred sometime between 1919, when Métis Oblate Father Beaudry left, and November 1923, when Father LeBré arrived, (there are no codices between those years), however it may have taken place earlier, as certain details in the *Codex* suggest authorities were limiting interaction and the gathering of large groups of people during the years leading up to the Spanish Flu epidemic of 1919. At the 1918 pilgrimage, the Canadian National Railway did not send a special train that year for pilgrims. Thus, as Father Beaudry revealed, “everything was done in one day:” Euro-Canadian pilgrims had their high mass with sermons in English and French at the mission church, while Aboriginal and Métis people attended theirs with a sermon in Cree given by the Métis Beaudry himself, outside “in the park.”<sup>18</sup> Mary Rain stated that when she attended the pilgrimage in her childhood, she and her family had to camp far out “in the bush,” away from the site, because they weren’t allowed to “dirty up” the area with a team of horses.<sup>19</sup> However illness was likely not the only reason for segregation, as we learn from Drouin that the last segregated pilgrimage took place in 1972.<sup>20</sup>

In any case, there must have been a large enough number of Euro-Canadian pilgrims to warrant a separate day for them by the early 1920’s, but this point too is misleading with respect to numbers and who was present: though indigenous people could

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*Historicus 1900-1964*. Paul Kulawy, O.M.I., who gave the Polish sermon, died in the Auschwitz concentration camp on Aug 30, 1941, at age 64 after having returned to Poland to serve there. Owens and Roberto, *A Guide to the Archives of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate: Province of Alberta-Saskatchewan*, 96-7.

<sup>17</sup> *Lac Ste-Anne Codex Historicus 1900-1964*, 33. For Father Le Bré, see “Father Pierre-Marie Le Bré,” in Hudon, transl., *Book of Memory- Missionary Oblates of Grandin Province*.

<sup>18</sup> “24 Juillet Pélérinage annuel. N’ayant pu obtenir du C.N.R. un train spécial, tout s’est fait dans un jour. On comptait à peu près 1500 pèlerins (sic). Il y a eu deux grandes messe (sic) une à l’Église pour les blancs

Le Père Z. Lizée y a chanté la messe et le P. L. Simard y a prêché (sic) en anglais et en français. L’autre grand (sic) messe a été chantée dans le parc par le Père E. Petour : le Sermon en cris par le Père P Beaudry.” PAA OMI Collection, *Lac Ste-Anne Codex Historicus 1900-1964*, 25-6.

<sup>19</sup> Mary Rain, *Interview at Paul First Nation Band Administration Office*.

<sup>20</sup> Drouin, *Lac Ste-Anne Sakahigan*, 62.

not attend the Catholics rites on that particular day, they were nevertheless still camping at the site, though at what seems to have been a “safe” distance, particularly during times of illness. Thus, though more Euro-Canadian pilgrims began to attend in the early twentieth century, the number of indigenous people also grew, despite segregation during the masses and rites. The number of “White” pilgrims seems to have reached its height in the 1920’s, most likely in a period of automobile travel; 2500 came in 1925, compared to 2000 Aboriginal pilgrims who attended that year.<sup>21</sup> However, in the 1930’s, non-indigenous pilgrims started to decrease; in 1935, 2000 indigenous people came as compared to 1200 “Whites, and in 1938, 4500 Aboriginal and Métis arrived compared to 1000 Euro-Canadians”<sup>22</sup> Drouin stated that by 1947, “Indians are more numerous than ever.... The Whites are diminishing from year to year.”<sup>23</sup> By 1950, 6000 Aboriginal pilgrims attended, some even from California and South Carolina, as compared to 2500 non-indigenous folk who attended the following day.<sup>24</sup>

In fact, the names that appear in the pilgrimage codices reveal that the Catholic pilgrimage at Lac Ste-Anne owes its florescence in large part to two groups of Métis buffalo hunters and fur traders. The first had migrated west to the Fort Edmonton, Lac Ste-Anne, and Lac la Biche regions where it was still possible to hunt buffalo and other game, and live much like their Cree, Anishinaabe (Ojibway) and Saulteaux ancestors.<sup>25</sup> Following the decline of the buffalo robe trade in the 1870’s they had come from the Manitoba Red River colony, and mostly from the St. Francis-Xavier parish which had been populated by Métis from the old Pembina settlement.<sup>26</sup> The second group, most relevant to this Catholic pilgrimage, however, was descended from a particular group of “Nepissings...Algonquins... Iroquois,” and French-Canadian fur traders who had come

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<sup>21</sup> Drouin, *Lac Ste-Anne Sakahigan*, 57.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 59.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 60.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 61.

<sup>25</sup> Pat Sawchuck and Joe Sawchuk, eds., *Origins of the Alberta Metis: Land Claims Research Project, 1978-79* (Edmonton: Metis Association of Alberta, 1979), 13-14.

<sup>26</sup> Ens, *Homeland to Hinterland: The Changing Worlds of the Red River Metis in the Nineteenth Century*, 20-1, 118, 154.

west from the Montreal area seventy to eighty years earlier, to “act as boat men” and trap for furs on the eastern slopes of the Rocky Mountains.<sup>27</sup> These fur traders had moved West from what is now Quebec and Ontario in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries and become freemen in the Jasper and Grande Cache regions. The Iroquois came from missions near Kahnawake, Québec. The “Nepissings” referred to a group of Amerindians who now prefer to be called Anishinaabe, and who “held the land around Lake Nipissing, in what is now Ontario, to the north of the Huron between the Ojibwa and Algonkin.”<sup>28</sup>

Alexander Mackenzie noted that a group of these Iroquois and Anishinaabe people had settled on the Saskatchewan River in the 1790s “to escape the improvements of civilization” in the East and to live the life of their ancestors.<sup>29</sup> David Thompson had noticed these men in 1800 and their efficiency at trapping large numbers of beaver.<sup>30</sup> As early as 1803, Iroquois freemen had started to trap fur-bearing animals along the Smoky River.<sup>31</sup> In 1819, the Hudson’s Bay Company trader at Fort St. Mary’s post near the Smoky River’s junction with the Peace river, remarked on the presence of “a small band of free Iroquois, who are in the habit of killing a large quantity of furs” near the foot of the Rocky Mountains, in today’s Jasper and Grande Cache regions.<sup>32</sup> Several studies of this particular group exist.<sup>33</sup> Nicole St. Onge looked at North West Company renewal contracts

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<sup>27</sup> Dempsey, *Indian Tribes of Alberta*, 95.

<sup>28</sup> Although the Algonquin, Ojibwa and the Nipissing were three distinct groups, they along with others which include the western Saulteaux, the Mississauga, and the American Chippewa, have adopted a shared identity as Ojibwa language speakers, and today prefer to be referred to as Anishinabeg or Anishinaabe. McMillan and Yellowhorn, *First Peoples in Canada*, 109.

<sup>29</sup> Nicks and Morgan, "Grande Cache: The Historic Development of an Indigenous Alberta Métis Population," 165.

<sup>30</sup> Dempsey, *Indian Tribes of Alberta*, 95.

<sup>31</sup> Nicks and Morgan, *Grande Cache: The Historic Development of an Indigenous Alberta Métis Population*, 165.

<sup>32</sup> Dempsey, *Indian Tribes of Alberta*, 95. Nicks and Morgan, *Grande Cache: The Historic Development of an Indigenous Alberta Métis Population*, 165.

<sup>33</sup> Dempsey, *Indian Tribes of Alberta*, 95-8. Elizabeth Macpherson, *The Sun Traveller: The Story of the Callihoos in Alberta* (St. Albert, Alberta: Musée Heritage Museum, 1998). Murphy, "Homesteading in the Athabasca Valley to 1910: An Interview with Edward Wilson Moberly, Prairie Creek, Alberta, 29 August 1980." Nicks, "Iroquois Fur Trappers and their Descendants in Alberta," 17. Nicks and Morgan, *Grande Cache: The Historic Development of an Indigenous Alberta Métis Population*, 163. Ouellet, "Tales of Empowerment: Cultural Continuity within an Evolving Identity in the Upper Athabasca Valley." Nicole St. Onge, "Early Forefathers to the Athabasca Métis: Long Term North West Company Employees," in *The Long*

of *hivernants* (winterers) and voyageurs operating in the Athabasca interior.<sup>34</sup> Though this important fur-trading company was mostly managed by Montreal Highland Scots and Loyalist descendants, the labourers were almost all St. Lawrence valley French-Canadians and Iroquois. Between 1790 and 1821, the North West Company hired more than nine thousand voyageurs and “hivernants” for its trading actions in the northwest. Half of these men were summer men who returned to Montreal; however, “The other half signed contracts of one to five years and worked not only as voyageurs but also as the fabled winterers in the far reaches of the trading frontier.”<sup>35</sup> A minority of these men eventually stayed in the northwest, and became the paternal forefathers of the Athabasca Métis. They married predominantly Cree women, but also Athapaskan speaking Beaver from the far north west of Alberta, and Sikani who lived near the Athabasca River and in the mountains near Jasper House. In fact “approximately four hundred French-Canadian and Iroquois employees are the traceable paternal ancestors for the majority of Western Canada’s Métis population.”<sup>36</sup>

The original three Iroquois names that figure in the fur-trade records tied to the Grande Cache region are those of Ignace Waniande, Joachim Tonatanhan and Louis Kwarakwante or Karaconte.<sup>37</sup> Of note are these men’s first names, which, although are undoubtedly adopted Christian names, are all nonetheless derived from Counter-Reformation Breton French and/or Jesuit culture discussed in Chapter One. Ignace is the name of Ignatius Loyola, founder of the Jesuits, Joachim was traditionally St. Anne’s husband, and Louis of course, was the name of a few French kings, including the sun king, Louis the XIV. Many francophone Iroquois fur traders who came west carried one of these

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*Journey of A Forgotten People: Métis Identities and Family Histories*, eds. Ute Lischke and David T. McNab (Waterloo, Ontario: Wilfred Laurier University Press, 2007), 109.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 109-10.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 109.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 125.

<sup>37</sup> These names do not appear in St. Onge’s study which focused on renewal contracts with the NWC in the interior, but figure in other studies that look at other fur-trade records. Dempsey, *Indian Tribes of Alberta*. Macpherson, *The Sun Traveller: The Story of the Callihoos in Alberta*. Nicks, "Iroquois Fur Trappers and their Descendants in Alberta," 17. Nicks and Morgan, "Grande Cache: The Historic Development of an Indigenous Alberta Métis Population," 163.



three first names, or were named after the apostles such as “Jacques” or “Paul”<sup>38</sup> “Ignace Nowaniouter, un Iroquois” appears as working for the North West Company at Lake Athabasca along with a voyageur name “Paul Cheney-echoe, un Iroquois,” and “Jacques Quiter Tisato, Mohawk.”<sup>39</sup> Nowaniouter was a free trapper in the Smoky River area, and married a Sekani woman.<sup>40</sup> His last name became “Waniande,” or Wanyande, one of the Grande Cache Métis names and also common at the Lac Ste-Anne settlement. Joachim Tonatanhan’s name appears in 1818 for the North West Company in the Athabasca district.<sup>41</sup> In 1853, Father Albert Lacombe formalized Tonatanhan’s long time marriage to a local indigenous woman at Jasper. Tonatanhan’s descendents took his first name Joachim as their family name. Louis Calehuis or Kallehuis is another Iroquois name tied to the region, which may either refer to a completely separate individual, or be a variation, or different spelling of Kwarakwante, and which then developed into the names Calliot, Calliou and/or Callihoo.<sup>42</sup> His name appears as a voyageur along with another likely Iroquois man, listed as Ign. Saliohony for “Fort des Prairies” which became Fort Edmonton.<sup>43</sup> The Callihooes were an important Métis family in the region and Chief Michel Callihoo, mentioned previously, who was the son of Louis Kwarakwante (or Callihoo),

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<sup>38</sup> Louis-Rodrigue Masson, *Les Bourgeois de la Compagnie du Nord-Ouest : récits de voyage, lettres et rapports inédits relatifs au Nord-Ouest canadien : publiés avec une esquisse historique et des annotations. Volume 1*, (Québec : L’Imprimerie générale A. Coté et cie., 1889), “Our Roots Nos Racines: Canada’s Local Histories Online” University of Calgary and University of Laval, 2008. <http://www.ourroots.ca/page.aspx?id=848866&qrID=c95a10c9-56f3-4436-ba35-1e5fc7c0ecfb> (accessed July 17, 2012). Besides the names indicated above, an Iroquois voyageur listed as Ig. Canawatiron working in Lac la Pluie also carries the “Ignatius” first name. *Ibid.*, 413, image 554, <http://www.ourroots.ca/page.aspx?id=849419&qrID=c95a10c9-56f3-4436-ba35-1e5fc7c0ecfb> (accessed July 17, 2012).

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 396, image 537, <http://www.ourroots.ca/page.aspx?id=849402&qrID=c95a10c9-56f3-4436-ba35-1e5fc7c0ecfb> (accessed July 17, 2012).

<sup>40</sup> Nicks and Morgan, "Grande Cache: The Historic Development of an Indigenous Alberta Métis Population," 167.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>42</sup> Macpherson, *The Sun Traveller: The Story of the Callihooes in Alberta*, 7. Nicks, “Iroquois Fur Trappers and their Descendants in Alberta,” 24. See also footnote 4 in Murphy, “Homesteading in the Athabasca Valley to 1910: An Interview with Edward Wilson Moberly, Prairie Creek, Alberta, 29 August 1980,” 148. Each discuss the difficulty with this name but all concur that Louis Calihuis and Louis Kwaragkwante were likely the same man.

<sup>43</sup> Masson, *Les Bourgeois de la Compagnie du Nord-Ouest*, 398, image 539, <http://www.ourroots.ca/page.aspx?id=849404&qrID=552f0349-2b89-4788-a295-f084a57031a5> (accessed July 17, 2012).

signed Treaty 6 in 1878 and founded the Michel Reserve, between Lac Ste-Anne and St. Albert.<sup>44</sup> Jacques L'hirondelle who also worked in Lake Athabasca was originally from Quebec as well.<sup>45</sup> He settled at Lac Ste-Anne and was married to Josepte Pilon by Father Thibeault.

Over time, the daughters of these men intermarried with other French-Canadian, Métis, Euro-Canadian, and some English trappers who settled in the region.<sup>46</sup> Moberly is another family name with direct ties to the Iroquois freemen. As noted in chapter two, Henry John Moberly, a man from Ontario who became Hudson's Bay Company factor at Jasper House from 1855 to 1861, married Suzanne Kwarakwante, who was the daughter of Louis Kwarakwante, mentioned above, and Marie Katis La Sekanaise.<sup>47</sup> Nicks, however, states that from founding until 1880, this group of Iroquois freemen were largely endogamous in their marriage practices, meaning they generally married other Iroquois Métis descendants in their community.<sup>48</sup> Some of the descendants of all of these unions stayed in the Grande Cache and Jasper region, some moved north into the Athabasca and Peace River regions of Alberta today, and still others settled in Lac Ste-Anne or signed Treaty 6 and stayed at Iroquois-Métis Chief Michel Calihoo's Reserve, between Lac Ste-Anne and Fort Edmonton.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> See the Belcourt family tree in Belcourt, *Walking in the Woods: A Métis Journey*, 8. Macpherson, *The Sun Traveller: The Story of the Callihos in Alberta*, 21.

<sup>45</sup> Masson, *Les Bourgeois de la Compagnie du Nord-Ouest*, 396, image 537. Belcourt, *Walking in the Woods: A Métis Journey*, 8. Sawchuck and Sawchuk, *Origins of the Alberta Metis: Land Claims Research Project, 1978-79*, 384.

<sup>46</sup> St. Onge states that "Over 2 200 French Canadian, Iroquois, and some English men worked for the NWC during the final decade of its existence." She also notes that "...short-term employees also left a progeny in the West, but these children were either raised as Amerindians by the maternal tribe or taken in, along with the mother, by another *hivernant* who would raise them as his own." St. Onge, "Early Forefathers to the Athabasca Métis: Long Term North West Company Employees," 111, 125.

<sup>47</sup> Murphy states that Marie was "also an Iroquois," but her name "La Sekanaise," suggests that she was Sikani. Murphy, "Homesteading in the Athabasca Valley to 1910: An Interview with Edward Wilson Moberly, Prairie Creek, Alberta, 29 August 1980," 123, 126-7.

<sup>48</sup> Nicks and Morgan, "Grande Cache: The Historic Development of an Indigenous Alberta Métis Population," 176.

<sup>49</sup> Nicks, "Iroquois Fur Trappers and their Descendants in Alberta," 21, 22, 27. Nicks and Morgan, "Grande Cache: The Historic Development of an Indigenous Alberta Métis Population," 165, 168.

Trudy Nicks states that initially, when these men and their families had seasonally travelled back and forth between the boreal forests of the northwest to the plains south and east, they had assembled at Lac Ste-Anne where “a summer ingathering of social, economic, and religious significance spread out over an entire summer.”<sup>50</sup> Thus, for approximately fifty to seventy years before the pilgrimage, these trappers and their families had instigated and attended a gathering at Lac Ste-Anne that “once lasted for weeks or even months as people visited, received religious instruction and bought supplies from nearby commercial centers.”<sup>51</sup> Even though in the early days, the Catholic “pilgrimage” itself had lasted only three days according to the Oblate records, these Iroquois trappers were the principal Métis stopping and travelling through Lac Ste-Anne, and staying there during the summer months, thus a core portion of the first “pilgrims,” and the major impetus behind the pilgrimage’s origins. Once a modern wage economy arrived at Grande Cache in the 1960s however, their trapping life became secondary to jobs in town which led to the pilgrimage lasting only 4 days, the time for travel and prayer, whereas up until then, many of the participants likely camped in the area the whole summer.<sup>52</sup> This group of Métis also maintained some forms of mixed farming either locally or elsewhere. The Moberlys burned areas near Jasper for grazing and hay for their horses and milk cattle, but also for mountain sheep upon which they depended for wild meat.<sup>53</sup> Thus, when Lizée spoke of accommodating farmers in the *Codex*, he likely had these Métis in mind as well.

A look at the surnames of Métis families, names which appear in the earliest Lac Ste-Anne Pilgrimage *Codex*, and are attached to people with key roles in the promotion and smooth running of the event reveal the importance these families had, and the extent to which the Oblates relied on them. Although a full-scale genealogical study of the people at Lac Ste-Anne was not undertaken here, the practice of using names to determine the presence of people at the pilgrimage however, was a complex endeavour. First of all, the

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<sup>50</sup> Ibid., 173.

<sup>51</sup> Nicks, “Iroquois Fur Trappers and their Descendants in Alberta,” 30.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid. Nicks and Morgan, “Grande Cache: The Historic Development of an Indigenous Alberta Métis Population,” 172.

<sup>53</sup> Murphy, “Homesteading in the Athabasca Valley to 1910: An Interview with Edward Wilson Moberly, Prairie Creek, Alberta, 29 August 1980,” 125.

spelling of names, as recorded by priests, fur traders and other authorities, was never consistent, and depended both on the language of origin of the recorder himself, and of how he heard the name. Nicole St. Onge, in her study remarked on the difficulty in trying to link Iroquois names, on early nineteenth century North West Company renewal contracts, to those on initial contracts written up earlier in Montreal: “Both the Montreal notaries and the Scottish clerks transcribed these long unfamiliar names phonetically,” which meant that she could only hypothesize as to whether an Ignace Canastighon and another Ignace Kanatsiakayan were the same man.<sup>54</sup> As Alan Greer has pointed out, Iroquois names were quite complex for both French and English recorders, as it was hard for them to choose between the ‘k’ and ‘g’ sounds “because the Mohawk sound they wished to reproduce falls somewhere between those two letters as pronounced in French (or English).”<sup>55</sup> Further, many different people either had the same given name, or alternately, one individual had more than one given name. As shall be seen in Lizée’s two lists of pilgrims, the names Jhony or Jhon, Jean-Baptiste, Elzéard, Louis, Joseph, and Edouard were common for men or boys, and Emilie, Marie (or Mary), Angèle, Thérèse, Josepte, and many versions of Louise (Marie-Louise, Louisa, Lalouise) for women or girls. These names appear often and sometimes refer to two different people.<sup>56</sup> A look at the many names noted in Elizabeth McPherson’s study of the Calihoo family in Alberta reveals the same types of difficulties, as for example when she lists Louis Calihoo’s seven children, four boys and three girls, with his third wife Marie Patenaude: Michel the eldest (who later led the Michel band) and Thomas the second son, both married women named Marie (Savard and Finlay respectively) like their mother, and this same Thomas had previously married a woman named Marguerite Collin, who had the same given name as their youngest sister, Marguerite. Jean Baptiste, the third son, married Angélique Bruneau, who also had the same name as their middle sister Angélique, who married Louis (same name as her father) Loyer. Cécile, the eldest daughter, married Jean-Baptiste Belcourt who

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<sup>54</sup> St. Onge, “Early Forefathers to the Athabasca Métis: Long Term North West Company Employees,” 110-11.

<sup>55</sup> Allan Greer, *Mohawk Saint : Catherine Tekakwitha and the Jesuits*. (Cary, NC, USA: Oxford University Press, 2004), xi, <http://site.ebrary.com/lib/ucalgary/Doc?id=10254464&ppg=12> (accessed July 17, 2012).

<sup>56</sup> *Lac Ste-Anne Codex Historicus 1889-1899*, 1-2,10-12. See Appendix C.

had the same name as the above mentioned third son and then a man with two family names, Edward Berland Valade. Finally, a fourth son, Louis (the third with this given name here) is also named, who died at age twenty.<sup>57</sup> As shall be seen further down, most of these family names, and all of the given names appear in Lizée's two lists for 1889 and 1890.

Heather Devine has explained that "Métis naming practices are an amalgam of Euro-Canadian and First Nations approaches to naming."<sup>58</sup> Often, Euro-Canadian parents would rename a newborn after an older sibling who died, and in Quebec and Lower Canada, parents were partial to using a same given name over and over, "christening their children after grandparents or godparents (who were often aunts or uncles)."<sup>59</sup> Among Northern Algonquian peoples, naming children was a spiritual practice, where usually, one year after birth, a child was named by his or her grandfather in a special naming ceremony.<sup>60</sup> This name was given to the grandfather by his "spirit helper" in a vision, and thus instead of using this very personal name in everyday life, the child would have a nickname. Often there are variations in given names and surnames. The use of multiple and hyphenated first names, and the use of surname aliases – what are sometimes referred to as "dit" names such as that of Edward Berland Valade above, make it difficult for a researcher to determine the specific identity of a person. Although there is only one instance of "dit" names in the Lac Ste-Anne Pilgrimage *Codex*, certain names which do appear but on their own, such as Berland and Valade, are actually alias names, and show the interrelatedness (and hence Iroquois link) between different families.<sup>61</sup> Thus, in order to distinguish

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<sup>57</sup> Macpherson, *The Sun Traveller: The Story of the Callihoos in Alberta*, 21.

<sup>58</sup> Heather Devine, *The People Who Own Themselves: Aboriginal Ethnogenesis in a Canadian Family, 1660-1900* (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2004), 223, <http://site.ebrary.com/lib/ucalgary/Doc?id=10116357&ppg=243> (accessed July 17, 2012). "The term 'dit' was used by the French as a means of differentiating between non-related families sharing identical surnames, or to differentiate between descendent branches of the same family. A family would have their primary surname, and then a secondary surname would be attached by the word "dit" to differentiate the specific branch of the family from other branches. This was a necessary strategy, given that there might be several branches of a family living in one area, and that many of the adults and children from different branches could have identical given names." Ibid., 224-5.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., 224.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., 230.

<sup>61</sup> A man named Pierre-Jean Berland *dit* Valade is noted. Macpherson, *The Sun Traveller: The Story of the Callihoos in Alberta*, 37.

different individuals, "it is important to be able to trace families and individuals geographically and identify kinship networks to cross-reference the use of these names."<sup>62</sup> Overall, Devine cautions that, due to the abundance of "given names, surnames, and their aboriginal, English, and French aliases," it is impossible to rely upon a single source, particularly when one wants to cross-reference names.<sup>63</sup>

The importance of Iroquois Métis support for the event at Lac Ste-Anne is first suggested in Father Lizée's *Codex* when, during the first pilgrimage of June 6<sup>th</sup>, 1889, a man named Ferdinand Colanjard arrived from Big Lake, in St. Albert, just northwest of present day Edmonton, after the evening mass and monstration, "harassed with fatigue."<sup>64</sup> He and a certain Brother Leriche had decided to make something resembling a penitential pilgrimage, the 58 km journey to Lac Ste-Anne from St. Albert on foot, without a horse and wagon. Approximately half way there, Brother Leriche stopped because he could no longer walk, and Mr. Colanjard continued on to the mission. When Father Lestanc, who was father superior and in charge of the pilgrimage, heard of the elderly Leriche's collapse, he sent a man with "le cheval et la voiture de la mission ici," or what was then known as a "buckboard," to retrieve him.<sup>65</sup>

The person sent with the "buckboard" to rescue Brother Leriche, who had collapsed somewhere along the "Lac Ste-Anne Trail," was a man whose name was Isidore Gladu. This boy's family name, if we recall, also appeared for the wife of Charlot Gladu in Father Fourmond's *Codex*, discussed in the previous chapter, revealing the long standing presence of people with that family name at Lac Ste-Anne. Isidore Gladu was the man Fathers Lizée and Lestanc relied on to get themselves and a fellow clergyman out of a bind, and furthermore, to do the "work," that is, to drive along bad roads late at night and retrieve an ailing missionary. He was also an Iroquois Métis descendent. His identity is substantiated by the fact that an "Isadore" Gladu (first name spelled differently) with parents Celestin

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<sup>62</sup> Devine, *The People Who Own Themselves: Aboriginal Ethnogenesis in a Canadian Family, 1660-1900*, 226.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, 235.

<sup>64</sup> *Lac Ste-Anne Codex Historicus 1889-1899*, 3.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, 3. See also the excerpt from the *Codex* of St. Albert, written by Father Valentin Végréville, included with the 1889-1899 *Codex*.

Gladu, and Margaret or Margrite Calliou both born at Lac Ste-Anne in 1859 and 1856 respectively, appear in an Iroquois Métis family tree of the Gladu family in Alberta.<sup>66</sup> Isidore, their son, thus would have been the great-grandson of Louis Kwaragkwante on his mother's side, and the great-great grandson of Jacques L'Hirondelle and Joseph Pilon who were married by Father Thibeault, on his father's side. Information exists about Celestin Gladu, Isidore's father, which reveals the ties the Iroquois Métis had to Lac Ste-Anne, their knowledge of the place through hunting, trapping and fishing, and their often transient existence and dispersal throughout Alberta and eastern British Columbia at the mercy of the Indian Act, Treaty signing and scrip taking. Celestin, who was from St. Albert, entered treaty in 1884 as part of Michel Callihoo's band. He then left treaty in 1886 and took scrip.

...Later, his name appears among the applications in 1900 for half-breed scrip for his deceased son, Celestin Jr. [Isidore's brother] At that time he was living at Lac Ste. Anne, where he lived by trapping. In the summer, he was sometimes engaged in freighting activities, and the family would often go gold panning on the Saskatchewan and Smokey Rivers. After Lac Ste. Anne, they moved to the Grande Prairie area and homesteaded. These homesteads were later abandoned, and the family moved to Kelly Lake, B.C.<sup>67</sup>

Thus, though this particular Gladu family did at first sign treaty and also homesteaded in Grande Prairie for a time, from the quote above, it seems the family was far from "settled" in one place for any length of time.

Besides anecdotal evidence for Iroquois support and presence at the pilgrimage however, there are also Father Zéphirin's two lists of pilgrims.<sup>68</sup> Father Zéphirin Lizée compiled a list of seventy-one pilgrims' names for the first pilgrimage *Codex* of 1889, and made a second list of 241 pilgrims in 1890. These lists provide an idea of the families that were present, but also which people (and how many) were known by the church, and were most likely participating in the Catholic rituals of the pilgrimage. However, it is difficult to know both how comprehensive these lists are, and who exactly the people on the lists were. The lists may simply point to a "core group" of committed/confirmed Catholic members,

<sup>66</sup> Sawchuck and Sawchuk, *Origins of the Alberta Metis: Land Claims Research Project, 1978-79*, 382-86.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, 387.

<sup>68</sup> *Lac Ste-Anne Codex Historicus 1889-1899*, 1-2, 10-12. See Appendices A and B.

and likely do not include many of the longer resident “local” Métis who had settled in the Lac Ste-Anne region, nor other more “transient” pilgrims still maintaining a somewhat “nomadic” life subsisting on hunting and trapping, both of which perhaps contained more “lukewarm” believers, and/or not fully or clearly converted “Catholics.” As shall be seen, Lizée clearly reveals, in passing and almost unconsciously in 1889, that there were other “local” people at the first pilgrimages, more numerous in number, who are not named on his lists.

Of Lizée’s two lists, the first one from 1889 is more helpful, because a few of the people in this list are also referred to anecdotally in the 1889 *Codex* itself, and by Oblate Father Valentin Végréville as well, in the St. Albert Mission *Codex* of that year, so some cross-referencing can be done.<sup>69</sup> Thus, besides appearing in Father Lizée’s anecdote about the penitential pilgrimage, the three men involved, Ferdinand Colanjard, Brother Leriche and Isidore Gladu all figure in his first list of 1889, and Brother Leriche is mentioned in Végréville’s account. Furthermore, in this list, Father Lizée recorded the names in two recognizable groups. However, there is no grouping of people in the second list of 1890, and aside from one small detail which will be mentioned further down, there is no additional reference to the people in that 1890 list anywhere in that year’s *Codex*. None of the above three men’s names are recorded in the second list of 1890, indicating that none of them returned to the pilgrimage the following year, though as shall be seen many more people with the family name Gladu do appear.<sup>70</sup> Thus the bulk of analysis will be done concerning the first list, with which we will begin, while the second list will simply provide numbers and names of people.

Father Lizée splits up his 1889 list of seventy-one people into two groups: twenty-one names, those of Oblates, other clergymen, one nun, and what seem to be single helpers or orphans raised by the church, figure in the first part. They were among the first pilgrims

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<sup>69</sup> See again the extract from the 1889 St. Albert Mission *Codex*, written by Father Valentin Végréville, *Ibid*.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid*. 10-12. (Incorrectly numbered in *Codex*. Actually there are 4 pages and this should read pages 10-13).

Many people who volunteer and work at the pilgrimage today, have the same family names and are descendents of the original pilgrims on either or both lists, among them Auger, Beaudry, Cardinal, Chalifoux, Letendre, L’Hyronnelle (also spelt Lirondelle) and Plante.



to arrive at the pilgrimage. The second part of this list is made up of fifty people.<sup>71</sup> From his placement among the clergymen in the first part of the list and from his title, Brother Leriche's identity is fairly clear. He was likely an Oblate brother from France or Quebec who, given his elderly years, decided to embark on what became an unreasonable walking pilgrimage.<sup>72</sup> Isidore Gladu's name, like that of Brother Leriche, also figures in the first part of the list, with the religious fathers, brothers and sisters. Appearing in this first part of the list, along with the Catholic clergy, are what seem to be orphans and single helpers of the church.<sup>73</sup> Another "Jean-Marie Lestanc" listed in this section is most likely the orphan that appears in the treaty pay lists of the Lac Ste-Anne Mission of 1889 and was perhaps given Father Lestanc's name.<sup>74</sup> A "M. Boyle" or "Adam" we are directly told, was employed by the nuns. The placement of Isidore in this part of the list, and the fact that he was sent to rescue Brother Leriche, suggest that he was also an "unattached" helper in the service of the church. Isidore's parents would have been in their thirties, as deduced from their previously cited birth years in the Gladu family tree, and too busy themselves hunting, trapping, freighting and engaged in other activities. Thus, they probably sent their teenage son alone to the pilgrimage that first year, as a service to the Oblates. By 1890, many more (and mostly female) Gladus appear on the *Codex* list. Based on the Gladu family tree, three of the Gladu women in the 1890 *Codex* list, Mary, Isabelle and Maggie, could respectively

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<sup>71</sup> Lizée's first list is split up over two pages. The twenty-one clergy men, sisters and helpers are on the first page. The remaining fifty people are split up with 14 names on the first page and 36 on the second. See Appendix A. Drouin who was the Oblate archivist at St. Albert is most likely the one who wrote in the margins of the *Codex* "Lac Ste-Anne" on the second page of the list, suggesting that the people listed there were from Lac Ste-Anne. Strangely however, there are thirty-six names here, not thirty-one as he states in his book. Drouin, *Lac Ste-Anne Sakahigan*, footnote 2, p. 62.

<sup>72</sup> Végréville noted here, "...vers 9 h. notre vieux pèlerin était au milieu de nous à moitié mort de froid, de faim et de fatigue. Je pense que la leçon sera bonne et qu'il n'entreprendra plus de pareils pèlerinage (sic) à pieds (sic)." "Excerpt from St. Albert *Codex Historicus*," 1889.

<sup>73</sup> After the clergymen's names and "Sr. Mongrain," the sole nun listed that year, three other single women are listed without titles, followed by two men, one of which is another Jean-Marie Lestanc (the father superior with the same name is listed separately at the very beginning of the list along with the other clergymen), followed by Isidore Gladu, three more single men, and finally "l'homme des soeur (sic) M. Boyle (Adam)." *Lac Ste-Anne Codex Historicus 1889-1899*, 10.

<sup>74</sup> DIA "Treaty 6 Orphans Paid at St. Albert Mission, 1889" *Treaty Annuity Paylists for Treaties 4,6 and 7*, Vol 9422, Box 7, 413.

be Isidore's niece, young daughter and then either his sister, mother or aunt who were all named Margarite.<sup>75</sup>

Ferdinand Colanjard's family name appears only twice in the *Codex* of Lac Ste-Anne, in the incident recorded above, and among the fifty people in the second part of the 1889 list, thus as a "civilian" pilgrim and not as a "helper." Colanjard's name, and the fact that he is undertaking walking pilgrimages along the "Lac Ste-Anne Trail" with a Catholic brother, suggests that he is French-Canadian or French, rather than Métis, and was likely a French newcomer who settled in either Lac Ste-Anne or St. Albert. It is possible that he transported this tradition, so typical of French and Québécois pilgrimages, with him to his new home. A man named Francis (and not Ferdinand) Colenjeard (different spelling of last name), who is perhaps the same man as the one listed in the *Codex* is noted as having been the second husband of Hélène Calihoo (1845-1894), daughter of Iroquois Métis leader and Chief of the Michel Reserve, Michel Calihoo, in Elizabeth McPherson's history of the Iroquois Callihoo family in Alberta, *The Sun Traveller*.<sup>76</sup> Likely, this is the same man, and Lizée noted his name in the *Codex*, because he was married into an important Iroquois Métis family. Ferdinand walked from St. Albert to Lac Ste-Anne, suggesting he was from the former settlement, and McPherson notes that this same Hélène Colengeard lived in St. Albert at the time of her death in 1894, suggesting the two were indeed married as they both lived in St. Albert around the same time.<sup>77</sup>

The discrepancy in Colanjard's first names (though both start with an F) can be attributed to two possible explanations. First, perhaps either Lizée or McPherson are mistaken. Lizée did make spelling mistakes, and inconsistently spelled the names of people. He sometimes spells the name Cunningham without the third 'n' in his lists of pilgrims for example. McPherson referred to the wife of Magloire Belcourt, another Iroquois descendent of whom more will be said later, as "Christine" Letendre but

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<sup>75</sup> Sawchuck and Sawchuk, *Origins of the Alberta Metis: Land Claims Research Project, 1978-79*, 383-4. To make matters even more confusing, Marie-Annabelle seems to also have been called "Emma" as seen on p. 383 but not on p. 384, but clearly referring to the same woman.

<sup>76</sup> Macpherson, *The Sun Traveller: The Story of the Callihos in Alberta*, 37.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, 47-8.

Christine's great grandson, Herb Belcourt identifies her as "Constance" in his book.<sup>78</sup> Secondly, and more probably, Colanjard, probably went by both names, as many people did. Devine has explained that "people of mixed ancestry... may be identified by their European name, their European "dit" name, their aboriginal nickname, their aboriginal nickname as expressed in English or French, or diminutive (shortened) versions of any of these names."<sup>79</sup> Either of Colanjard's first names could have been his godparents' name. Though Ferdinand was likely not Métis, his wife Hélène and her family were, and Francis was perhaps easier (and shorter) to say than Ferdinand for everyone including his Métis in-laws.

Many of the Iroquois descended Métis names show up in Lizée's two lists of the first pilgrims at the Lac Ste-Anne Pilgrimage. Trudy Nicks, studying this group in other circumstances, like Nicole St. Onge, concluded that, from these original Iroquois voyageurs, through intermarriage, are descended many if not most Alberta Métis families. Nicks compiled the names of families removed one and two or more steps from the main Iroquois family line.<sup>80</sup> The names Joachim or Tenawatanahow (or Tonatanhan), Karaconte, Calliou and Waniyande refer to families "descended directly from eastern Iroquois lines," and except for the name Calliou, they do not appear in Lizée's lists, though the names Joachim and Waniande do appear elsewhere in the Lac Ste-Anne *Codex*.<sup>81</sup> Among those removed one step from the main Iroquois family line are the families Belcourt, Berland (or Breland), Cardinal, Delorme, Gaucher, Grey, Loyer, and Plant.<sup>82</sup> Families removed two steps or more are Berard, Chalifoux, Gladu, Letendre, and l'Hyronnelle.<sup>83</sup> Beauguard and

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<sup>78</sup> Ibid., 98-9. Belcourt, 31-32.

<sup>79</sup> Devine, *The People Who Own Themselves: Aboriginal Ethnogenesis in a Canadian Family, 1660-1900*, 230.

<sup>80</sup> Nicks, "Iroquois Fur Trappers and their Descendants in Alberta," 23.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid., 23. In 1985, Nicks stated that the original five Métis kin groups residing in Grande Cache in 1975 were the Joachim, Wanyande, Delorme, Moberly and McDonald families. Nicks and Morgan, "Grande Cache: The Historic Development of an Indigenous Alberta Métis Population," 166-7. *Lac Ste-Anne Codex Historicus 1889-1899*, 1-2, 10-12.

<sup>82</sup> Nicks, "Iroquois Fur Trappers and their Descendants in Alberta," 23. These names also appear throughout Macpherson's book, *The Sun Traveller: The Story of the Callihoos in Alberta*, 21.

<sup>83</sup> Nicks, "Iroquois Fur Trappers and their Descendants in Alberta," 23.

Chastellain are also names descended from varying branches of these original voyageurs.<sup>84</sup> The name Calliou which again is a first generation name, and all of the above mentioned second or third generation Iroquois associated names appear in Father Lizée's two lists of pilgrims from 1889 and from 1890.<sup>85</sup> The Gladu family name, as seen above, is included as a third generation name. Other names tied to this group according to Nicks that figure elsewhere in the Lac Ste-Anne Pilgrimage *Codex*, though not in Lizée's lists, are Findlay, Desjarlais, Nipissingue and Courteoreille.<sup>86</sup> Nipissingue and Courteoreille are names tied to this group through the Anishinaabe traders rather than the Iroquois.<sup>87</sup> Macpherson noted that Alexander Henry, a NWC manager, said a group of "Courte Oreilles" from Michilimakinac (Sault Ste. Marie) had come to Lesser Slave Lake before the nineteenth century.<sup>88</sup> The name Gray or Grey may also be tied to the Anishinaabe according to Trudy Nicks and local history, but this claim "is not supported by church or fur trade documents."<sup>89</sup> Finally Elizabeth McPherson suggests that the family names Bellerose, Boudreau, Bruneau, Savard, Laderoute dit Séguin and Valade, which all appear in Lizée's lists as well, are also tied through intermarriage to the Iroquois.<sup>90</sup> If a count is made up of these names on the list, it becomes clear that though they may not have been the majority when considering the total amount of pilgrims, these people were very significantly

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<sup>84</sup> For Beaugard, see *Ibid.*, 23, and Macpherson, *The Sun Traveller: The Story of the Callihoo's in Alberta*, 21. For Chastellain, see Nicks and Morgan, "Grande Cache: The Historic Development of an Indigenous Alberta Métis Population," 168.

<sup>85</sup> The names of the original Iroquois trappers do not appear in Lizée's lists, though the name Calliot or Calliou does appear eleven times. *Lac Ste-Anne Codex Historicus 1889-1899*, 1-2, 10-12. See also Appendix C.

<sup>86</sup> Nicks, "Iroquois Fur Trappers and their Descendants in Alberta," 23. For Desjarlais see Nicks and Morgan, "Grande Cache: The Historic Development of an Indigenous Alberta Métis Population," 168.

<sup>87</sup> Nicks, "Iroquois Fur Trappers and their Descendants in Alberta," 25.

<sup>88</sup> Macpherson, *The Sun Traveller: The Story of the Callihoo's in Alberta*, 12.

<sup>89</sup> Nicks, "Iroquois Fur Trappers and their Descendants in Alberta," 25.

<sup>90</sup> For Savard, Bellerose, and Séguin dit Laderoute, see Macpherson, *The Sun Traveller: The Story of the Callihoo's in Alberta*, 33. Michel Callihoo, Louis Kwaragkwante/Callihoo's son, married a Marie Savard. Another son, Jean-Baptiste, married Angélique Bruneau. See *Ibid.*, 37. She appears in Lizée's second pilgrimage list of 1890. Valade was a name related to Berland. Louis Kwaragkwante/Callihoo's daughter Cécile and granddaughter Adelaide, each respectively married Edward Berland Valade and Pierre Jean Berland dit Valade. *Ibid.*, 21, 37. Michel Callihoo's daughter Elise married a François Boudreau. *Ibid.*, 37. He also appears in Lizée's list from 1890 as Francis Boudreau.

represented at these two pilgrimages, and the single largest individual group of people attending.

Lizée's first list for the very first pilgrimage of 1889 was made up of twenty-six different names representing a total of fifty people.<sup>91</sup> The Métis family names often show up more than once in different parts of the lists, and are usually more numerous. The most numerous Métis family name in the lists is Cunningham, which is *not* tied to the Iroquois, and of which more will be said further on. However, the second most numerous family name in the lists is Lirondelle, which is tied to the Albertan Iroquois trappers, through the voyageur Jacques Lirondelle.<sup>92</sup> Five L'hyrondelle's appear in the 1889 list and eight different individuals with that name, sometimes spelled l'Hyrondelle, and once L'Hirondelle appear in 1890, for a total of thirteen times. Other Iroquois names from Nicks' study which appear numerous times are Calliot or Calliou, referring to eleven people, Delorme which indicates twelve individuals, Chalifoux, thirteen, and of course Gladu, which refers to nine people (Isidore Gladu himself was not counted in 1889). If we include the names Bellerose, Savard and Laderoute dit Séguin as Iroquois related names, as Elizabeth McPherson suggests in her book, these refer to eleven, ten and another ten incidences of these names respectively. Based on Trudy Nick's studies alone, seven out of twenty-six names in the first 1889 list are tied to the Iroquois Métis, and refer to eighteen out of fifty people.<sup>93</sup> That is twenty-seven percent of the names, and thirty-six percent of the people. Lizée's second list for the third pilgrimage of 1890, again excluding five clergymen, has seventy names and 235 people. Again based on Nick's studies, sixteen

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<sup>91</sup> This is not counting the eleven clergymen, one nun and ten helpers or orphans, including Isidore Gladu. See Appendix C.

<sup>92</sup> The name is not exclusively Iroquois, as three individuals with that name also appear in a list from the Red River Band. See "Table 1: Genealogies of Red River Households, 1818-1870." D. N. Sprague and R. P. Frye, *The Genealogy of the First Métis Nation: The Development and Dispersal of the Red River Settlement 1820-1900* (Winnipeg: Pemmican Publications, 1983). The family name "Lherondelle" also appears for the Saint Francis Xavier parish in "Table 4: Geographical Location and Children of Manitoba Families, 1870." Ibid.

<sup>93</sup> *Lac Ste-Anne Codex Historicus 1889-1899*, 1. Eleven priests, brothers and one nun were listed as pilgrims in Lizée's first list, but were not counted here. The eight "helpers" and two orphans who seemed to have come with the men and women religious, were also not counted, as they were at the pilgrimage directly as a result of being with the church. Isidore Gladu, who has an Iroquois name, did appear in 1889. However, as I classified him as a "helper," and no other obviously Iroquois names appeared as "helpers" in the 1889 list, I did not include him in the calculations of proportions of Iroquois pilgrims. See Appendix C.

Iroquois associated names representing seventy-three people appear there.<sup>94</sup> That is twenty-three percent of the names and thirty-one percent of the people. If, as McPherson suggests, the names Bellerose, Bruneau, Boudreau, Laderoute, Savard and also Valade are also considered as tied to the Iroquois, and which also appear in the lists, the proportion of Iroquois names grows higher, and represent fifty-two percent of the people in 1889 and forty-four percent in 1890.<sup>95</sup> These numbers are gleaned from the only two lists Lizée provided, but in subsequent pilgrimages, Iroquois and/or Anishinaabe names not on these lists appear elsewhere in the *Codex*. The names “Findlay” and “Nipissingue” for example, which are tied to the Iroquois/Anishinabe according to Nicks’ studies, though not present in Lizée’s lists, do figure in the names of the sick brought into the church for the pilgrimage in 1891.<sup>96</sup> The original Iroquois family name “Waniande,” also not present in the original lists, nonetheless appears in the *Codex* of 1896 when we are told that a man named Adam Waniyande and his brother Pierre built a large new cross for the cemetery, again showing the “work” these Iroquois Métis did on behalf of the Oblates, the Lac Ste-Anne Mission, and its pilgrimage.<sup>97</sup> Therefore, even if they are not represented in the official lists, these Iroquois descended or related names tend to show up elsewhere in the *Codex*.<sup>98</sup>

One would think that such an important group of people to the region and to the pilgrimage would be directly identified and spoken about by Oblate fathers such as Zéphirin Lizée, but that is not the case. The Oblates did mention this group fairly often, but they repeatedly referred to them simply as “gens de la Montagne” or “people of the Mountains,” and usually only referred to them when their children were getting ready for

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<sup>94</sup> Lizée lists 241 pilgrims, but five are priests and one is crossed out for appearing twice. In this list, Lizée does not seem to differentiate between “helpers” and the rest. *Lac Ste-Anne Codex Historicus 1900-1964*, 10-12.

<sup>95</sup> Ten out of twenty-six names representing twenty-six out of fifty people on the first list, and twenty-two out of seventy names representing 104 out of 235 people on the second list. See Appendix C.

<sup>96</sup> *Lac Ste-Anne Codex Historicus 1889-1899*, 15.

<sup>97</sup> “Cette croix a été construite par Adam Waniyande et son frère Pierre....” Ibid. 41.

<sup>98</sup> Of course, because there were no other complete lists of pilgrims for those years in which these other Iroquois descended pilgrims attended, we cannot know the proportion of these pilgrims at the pilgrimages for those years. However the fact that their names continuously appear throughout the codices shows that they were an important component of the pilgrimage attendance.

confirmation or first communion.<sup>99</sup> For example at the second more official pilgrimage of 1889, twelve children “de la Montagne” took their first communion, and in 1892, Bishop Grandin confirmed fourteen people, of whom four were once again, “de la Montagne.”<sup>100</sup> However, nowhere in the early Lac Ste-Anne *Codex*, is it explicitly mentioned who exactly these people were, where they were from, their history or culture, or their importance at the pilgrimage. Finally in mid January of 1948, Father Edouard Rhéaume, the Oblate father in charge of the Lac Ste-Anne Mission since 1947, travelled with another Father Gamache to visit the people of “Entrance” and Grande Cache near the “puits d’huile” or oil wells around Jasper. Here he stated that they held mass at the homes of the Plantes and the Moberlys, and that the “Métis trappeurs” of Grande Cache were kind and generous to the priests, had good Catholic habits, and interestingly, all spoke, read, and wrote in Cree.<sup>101</sup> An Oblate archivist, likely Émeric Drouin, later specifically identified these people when he wrote “Missions to the Mountains” and “Métis Iroquois” in the margin of that year’s *Codex*.<sup>102</sup>

It is important to note that when the pilgrimage was initiated in 1889, these Iroquois and Anishinaabe Métis had already been Catholic for at least 100 years. Trudy Nicks states that along with formalizing their marriages, Father Lacombe baptized both Louis Kwaragkante’s and Joachim Tonatanhan’s wives, who were local women, in 1853 as the men had already received the sacrament in the east.<sup>103</sup> These voyageur forefathers had interacted with the Jesuit (and Sulpician) fathers from the eastern regions, whom if we recall, had instigated the pilgrimage to Beaupré and knew of Kateri Tekagwitha. This presence of Catholic ideas and rites among Métis people in the Canadian North West, before the arrival of the Oblates was not limited to this group of Iroquois Métis at Lac Ste-

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<sup>99</sup> These “gens de la Montagne” should not be confused with the group of Dene referred to by the same name, who “lived around the upper waters of the Liard River, ... [and] traded at Fort Liard after the HBC closed Fort Halkett. They were known to the traders as ‘*mauvais monde*’ because of their warlike character.” McCarthy, *From the Great River to the Ends of the Earth: Oblate Missionaries to the Dene, 1847-1921*, 14-15.

<sup>100</sup> *Lac Ste-Anne Codex Historicus 1889-1899*, 5, 23.

<sup>101</sup> *Lac Ste-Anne Codex Historicus 1900-1964*, 65,70-3.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*, 70-1.

<sup>103</sup> Nicks, “Iroquois Fur Trappers and their Descendants in Alberta,”24.

Anne. According to Brenda McDougall, when the Oblates first arrived at Île-à-la Crosse in current day Saskatchewan:

...they encountered a population infused with a spiritual understanding of the world similar to several of the Church's own doctrines. In particular the Roman Catholic emphasis on the Holy Family—Jesus, Mary, and Joseph—as the spiritual embodiment of the living family was a concept Aboriginal people understood because it made a real connection between the living and spirit worlds. Furthermore, the [Île-à-la Crosse] mission was established in the mid-1800s among a populace that, to the missionaries' surprise already understood and practiced the blessings of the sacraments, observed the Sabbath regularly, and acknowledged the power of the saints over their lives.<sup>104</sup>

French-Canadian voyageurs to the north from Lower Canada had continued to adhere to these practices and beliefs in order to maintain and “recreate familiar socio-cultural values within this unfamiliar, foreign space” and introduced them to the First Nations people there, who accepted the practices because they had respect “for the manner in which new ceremonies were introduced and conceived of in this new landscape.”<sup>105</sup> The Iroquois voyageurs who arrived in the Jasper area no doubt played a similar role among the different Aboriginal bands they met, as the French-Canadian voyageurs did at Île-à-la Crosse. Thus, Catholicism and its age-old rituals were already well-known to them, and the concept of “conversion” as an imposition of Catholicism by the Oblate fathers upon the indigenous people in this region becomes more complicated.

Besides the names of Iroquois and Anishinaabe Métis Catholic descendents however, other Métis names were also present in Lizée's two lists. As stated above, the family name that appeared the most often when counting both lists together was Cunningham, which though Métis, is not an Iroquois name. Four Cunninghams came to the first pilgrimage of 1889, including a man named James Cunningham and his wife who returned in 1890 along with fifteen other Cunninghams. Likely this family was related to Edward Cunningham O. M.I., who was the very first Métis Oblate, and spent much time ministering in the region, including at Lac Ste-Anne from 1917-1920.<sup>106</sup> Two “Edouard”

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<sup>104</sup> Macdougall, *One of the Family: Metis Culture in Nineteenth-Century Northwestern Saskatchewan*, 4.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*, 4-5.

<sup>106</sup> “Father Edward Cunningham, O.M.I.,” in Duhaime, ed., *Oblates at Rest: Life and Work Sketches of the Oblate Missionaries in the Saint-Albert Cemetery*, 111.



Cunninghams appear in the 1890 list, both of them likely named after their older relative, who was ordained a priest four months earlier, on March 19<sup>th</sup> of that year. Neither name likely refers to the priest himself, as he (assumedly) would have been included with the five other priests on the list, and there is no mention of Father Cunningham anywhere else in the *Codex* for that year. Other Métis names which figure prominently on the list, such as Courtepatte, which appears twice in 1889 and eight times in 1890 are also not necessarily related to this eastern group. The name “Letendre,” which is another Métis name tied to the region, is the maiden name of Murleen Crossen who was interviewed for this study.<sup>107</sup> That name often appears on the map of the Lac Ste-Anne settlement and property included by Emeric Drouin, but strangely only appears once in the lists, referring to Joseph Letendre in 1890.<sup>108</sup> Trudy Nicks includes Letendre as a third generation name in her compilation of Iroquois descendants. However, according to Lac Ste-Anne pioneer Victoria Callihoo, who was the granddaughter of Joseph Belcourt, another voyageur from the east, and the great-granddaughter of John Rowand, chief factor at Fort Edmonton, the Letendres are descended from the Beaver peoples in the Peace River country.<sup>109</sup> The only clearly Aboriginal, and likely Cree family name that appears in Lizée’s lists is that of “the Elder Papameweu,” who came to the pilgrimage in 1889, then brought his wife “la vieille Papameweu” and their granddaughter, Josephine the following year in 1890. This family seems to have been friendly to the Oblates as religious travellers from St. Albert on the way to Lac Ste-Anne would camp near their place at Little Devil’s or *Matchayaw*’s Lake, before crossing the Sturgeon River at Noye’s Crossing.<sup>110</sup> Father Lizée also mentioned Papameweu in his personal journal: on Thursday February 3, 1887, the elder man came to camp at the mission to say his prayers and Lizée confessed him that evening. After dinner, Magloire Belcourt came to visit, and along with a brother “Frère Landry” and helper named Pierre, he and

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<sup>107</sup> Crossen, *Interview at Lac Ste-Anne Pilgrimage Rectory and Office*.

<sup>108</sup> See Appendix 4 in Drouin, *Lac Ste-Anne Sakahigan*, 92-6.

<sup>109</sup> See the afterword, “Early Life in Lac Ste. Anne in the 1870’s,” by Victoria Belcourt Callihoo in Belcourt, *Walking in the Woods: A Métis Journey*, 193,197.

<sup>110</sup> See excerpt from the St. Albert *Codex Historicus*, written by Valentin Végréville in papers pertaining to the pilgrimage included with *Lac Ste-Anne Codex Historicus 1889-1899*. Lizée records this family name as “Papameweu,” however Végréville, giving his own report of the first pilgrimage in the St. Albert *Codex*, recorded the name somewhat differently, as “Pepameoweu.”

Papameweu helped Lizée practice speaking Cree. The next morning, Papameweu took communion and Lizée gave him the portraits of Pope Pie IX and of a certain Father Provôst.<sup>111</sup> No other First Nations name appears in the *Codex* until 1891, when Paul Mustus or “Apetchis,” the Nakoda Chief arrived at the pilgrimage with his people, and, as seen previously, also in 1901 when José Massinasuwasiiniy is listed as one of the four men carrying the litter for the candlelight procession that year.

Finally of course, there are very likely non-indigenous French-Canadian and Anglo-Canadian pilgrims’ names appearing in Lizée’s lists, notably Ada Latulippe, whose family name shows up for the first time in 1890 with two other individuals, Joseph and Amandine, and who, we are told in the *Codex* of 1900, ran the store which sold religious articles.<sup>112</sup> Mr. J. O’Donnel and his wife, who with Bishop Grandin, were three of the principal godparents to “Anna” the bell in 1895 and gave what was considered a generous \$5.00 to the offertory, were either the John and Mme O’ Donnel who appeared in the 1889 list or perhaps the James and Elizabeth O’Donnel of 1890, though these last two were not listed as married, and were perhaps relatives and/or children of the former couple.<sup>113</sup> Though, once again, a full investigation into the exact identity and background of the people on Lizée’s lists was not undertaken, we can nonetheless guess that some of the pilgrims were neither indigenous nor Métis because of their ethnic Anglo-Scot, Irish, or French names on the one hand, but mostly because their names do not seem to show up often in Métis studies or genealogical compilations. Furthermore, we can guess their background because of how they are grouped in the lists. A Métis name seems to show up repeatedly and often,

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<sup>111</sup> "Ce soir, visite du vieux Papamaweu qui vient camper pour faire ses dévotions, je le confesse ce soir. – Après souper, visite de Magloire Belcourt, nous parlons ensemble du cris le Fr., Pierre, Magloire, le vieux Papamaweu et moi. J’ai appris quelques mots et quelques expressions.

4 Vendredi—Beaucoup moins froid—Le vieux Papamaweu communie ce matin. Je lui donne le portrait de Pie IX et celui de P. Provôst." PAA OMI Collection, Father Zéphirin Lizée's *Personal Journal from Lac Ste-Anne*, 1887-1888, Acc. 71.220, Box 177, File 6990, 6.

<sup>112</sup> " -- La vendeuse cette année était encore Mlle Ada Latulippe, elle a fait près de \$85.00 avec les objets de piété (sic) et les chandelles; beaucoup plus que l’année dernière quoiqu’il y avait moins de monde." *Lac Ste-Anne Codex Historicus 1900-1964*, 3. Objects of piety and images began to be sold at the fourth pilgrimage of 1891, which as shall be seen further, was the first “Healing Pilgrimage.” Earnings from the 1891 sales were \$5.70 for a total of \$30.56 if collection earnings and donations at the relic are counted. By 1896, when Father Lizée had more objects requested from “Canada,” earnings from the sales of objects alone increased to \$40.00. *Lac Ste-Anne Codex Historicus 1889-1899*, 21, 36.

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.* 34.

because of the extensive kinship networks, but in different parts of the lists. What are deemed non-Aboriginal or non-Métis names tend to show up in only one place in the lists, sometimes referring to one single individual who came alone, often referring to two or three people who came together as a small family unit, most often just as husband and wife, or occasionally as mother and children. For example, Angèle Bourassa came alone both in 1889 and 1890, Mr. A.A. Ringuette and his “Mme” appeared in 1890, Jhony Maréchal came alone in 1889 but Pascal Maréchal and his “Mme” came in 1890. Mme. Louis Beaupré came with what were likely her children Augustin and Marguerite in 1890. Despite these likely non-Aboriginal pilgrims present at the early pilgrimages however, it is clear that, with the exception of the Cunninghams and the Courtepattes who were also well represented at the early pilgrimages, most of the Métis present were Iroquois descendants and represent a large percentage of the pilgrims.<sup>114</sup>

However, even at this point, and despite Lizée’s lists of pilgrims, there is actually still confusion about who specifically was at the pilgrimages, which, though showing Iroquois/Anishinaabe Métis presence, raises questions about the exclusively Catholic and/or exclusively spiritual nature of the gathering. From the outset, Lizée directly states that the seventy-one people listed as pilgrims, including the eleven clergymen and ten church helpers/orphans, were all from St. Albert.<sup>115</sup> However, shortly after providing the seventy-one names, the father states that at the first high mass of 8 am, “There were many of the local people there (about a hundred); the church was almost full.”<sup>116</sup> Thus though he did not say it explicitly, Lizée’s first list did not include everybody: aside from these seventy-one “pilgrims,” who were allegedly all from St. Albert, there was a larger, more numerous group made up of “local people” who attended the first pilgrimage. Father Émeric Drouin, the Oblate archivist who wrote his book on the pilgrimage in 1973, provided conflicting numbers and origins to Lizée’s listed pilgrims of the first pilgrimage,

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<sup>114</sup> A fairly large percentage of the names are likely non-Métis, however they do not represent a large percentage of the people, as explained above. No formal “calculation” of Euro-Canadian pilgrims was made, as it is difficult, without further research, to determine the exact background of each pilgrim.

<sup>115</sup> “Pour la première fois, plus de soixante onze 71 pèlerins (sic) sont venus de St. Albert...” *Lac Ste-Anne Codex Historicus 1889-1899*, 1.

<sup>116</sup> “Il y avait beaucoup de gens de la place (une centaine); l’église était presque remplie.” *Ibid.*, 2.

then did not cite where he found the information.<sup>117</sup> Nonetheless Drouin also differentiated between the seventy-one pilgrims in the list and the one hundred local people. Thus he confirmed that Lizée referred to “other” unnamed pilgrims who do *not* appear on the official lists, and yet were present, some of them attending mass. In any case, according to the numbers provided by Lizée, at least one hundred people attended mass, but most likely, the number was higher, closer to 200, if one counts the seventy-one listed pilgrims.

It is possible that Lizée was simply recording names of people who came from outside of Lac Ste-Anne (ie those who had “travelled” to get to the place), and thus that he was simply excluding the 100 “local” inhabitants from his list because they were technically not “pilgrims” come from afar. He excluded himself from both lists, presumably because he “lived” at Lac Ste-Anne. However, we know that the Papameweus, who *were* included on the list were *not* from St. Albert. Further, many of the Callious and Gladus, also on the lists, were from the Michel Reserve, not St. Albert, and even then, as seen from Celestin and Isidore Gladu’s family, were not technically “settled” there. Thus, altogether, the fathers’ statements confuse rather than confirm this last explanation, and the basis on which Lizée compiled his lists is not clear, and one must wonder about who these “local” unnamed pilgrims were, and the nature of their participation in the pilgrimage.

The confusion about the origins and numbers of the pilgrims, despite Lizée’s lists, suggests that many of the “local” pilgrims, not included on Lizée’s lists, were likely attending the pilgrimage for other reasons, perhaps more “popular,” either social, political or economical, and beyond the purely spiritual. These varied motives for attendance by pilgrims is suggested when Lizée also specified that during this same 8:00 am High Mass on pilgrimage day in 1889, eighty people took communion, which, he stated, included the

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<sup>117</sup> Drouin reads the numbers in Father Lizée’s first pilgrimage list the following way: “...some forty from St. Albert, leaving early on the fifth, and thirty-one *from elsewhere* (italics mine) are at the rendezvous. During the ceremonies, some one hundred local parishioners also attend.” We can assume the forty from St. Albert include the twenty-one church people and helpers on the list, as, if we remember, the mission at Lac Ste-Anne had lost its impetus, and most church activity had been moved to St. Albert. Thus the bulk of the properly “religious” pilgrims would indeed have come from there. This leaves approximately nineteen more from that settlement (to make forty). Yet who are these thirty-one people that Drouin lists from “elsewhere” and where exactly is “elsewhere?” It is not clear where Drouin got this information, but he clearly contradicts Lizée’s statement that they were all from St. Albert. He footnotes the very same *Codex* list being read here, but even stranger, his footnote says only *twenty-one* people are listed, a clear contradiction of numbers which he just stated, and what is likely either a misprint or solely a reference to the twenty-one church people. Drouin, *Lac Ste-Anne Sakahigan*, 53, 62.

local people, and which is a different (and larger) number than the official seventy-one pilgrims on the list. If we assume all seventy-one pilgrims on the list attended the main High Mass of the pilgrimage and took communion, which Lizée, needless to say, did not make clear, this means only nine of the “local” people (to make eighty) took communion, but we are not given those details either. Thus, out of at least 171 total people that are almost certainly in the church at that mass, only eighty took communion, which leaves ninety-one (more than half) that did not. This lack of participation in communion suggests that the local people attending that mass may have had their own versions of spirituality, were perhaps curious about the “new” religion, and that not all those at the church were necessarily confirmed Catholics. Hence, the vagueness raises questions about which pilgrims from where were doing what? What exactly these unnamed “local” people were doing at the pilgrimage is not mentioned, except that many came to the 8:00 am high mass and about nine of them took communion. This was only the very first pilgrimage, but what this vagueness suggests is that people were attending for varying and complex social, political, economic, intellectual as well as spiritual reasons. There is evidence that people from very varied backgrounds, including non-Catholics, certainly had joined in the social happenings at Lac Ste-Anne. One such person was Peter Erasmus, the mixed-blood Cree-Dane who was Methodist minister Thomas Woolsey’s interpreter as of 1856. Though Reverend Woolsey “was personally opposed to dancing,” Erasmus allegedly appreciated him as, “he had no hesitation in permitting Erasmus to attend such a gathering in the Catholic community of Lac Ste-Anne.”<sup>118</sup> Later, at the pilgrimage of 1902, Father Lizée stated that 300 people, including little children, came to venerate the relics of Ste. Anne, and even the Protestant children of Mr. Peter Gunn kneeled and kissed the Holy Relics. Lizée then commented on Gunn’s children’s actions, stating, “May this religious act, by the intercession of the Good Ste. Anne, obtain for them the grace of not dying in the Protestant religion.”<sup>119</sup> The participation of this man’s children is significant because Peter Gunn became in charge of

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<sup>118</sup> Dempsey, ed., *Heaven is Near the Rocky Mountains: The Journals and Letters of Thomas Woolsey, 1855-1869*, xii.

<sup>119</sup> “Trois cent personnes en comptant les petits enfants, sont venus vénérer les reliques de Ste. Anne, voire même les enfants protestants de Mr. Peter Gunn, sont venus s’agenouiller et baiser les Stes. reliques. Puisse cet acte de religion, leur obtenir, par l’intercession de la bonne Ste. Anne, la grâce de ne pas mourir dans la religion protestante.” *Lac Ste-Anne Codex Historicus 1900-1964*, 10.

the Hudson's Bay Post at Lac Ste-Anne in 1900, and during the eight years he spent there, was also Fishing Inspector, Dominion Land Agent, and Postmaster.<sup>120</sup> He later became Justice of the Peace. Thus Gunn's attendance at the pilgrimage, and his children's participation was perhaps for more social, cultural, political and/or economic reasons, rather than for solely spiritual ones.

The 1890 *Codex*, which contains Lizée's second list of 241 people, is also vague and reveals inconsistencies. Lizée claims that on the Saturday 26<sup>th</sup>, the day before the pilgrimage, pilgrims arrived "en foule" from St. Albert, Edmonton, "des Baraques et d'autres endroits."<sup>121</sup> The "Baraques" likely refer to the traditional log cabins that were built at the Lac Ste-Anne settlement, and thus once again indicate the presence of the local people.<sup>122</sup> But we are not told anything more about these "autres endroits."<sup>123</sup> However, along with the priests arriving from the mission, Father Lizée refers to a man by the name of Baptiste Surprenant who accompanied them, but who is not listed as a clergyman, and once more, must have served as a kind of helper.<sup>124</sup> Yet that man's name does not figure in that year's official list of 241 pilgrims, though the other clergymen of course do.<sup>125</sup> Why would Lizée exclude Surprenant from the official list? Who made it onto his lists? Who was considered a proper pilgrim? Obviously, as is the case with Surprenant, being present at the place and known by the Oblates was not enough. Only seventeen years, thus not even a generation, earlier, we know from Father Vital Fourmond's mission *Codex* that the Métis, Stoney, Cree, and Blackfoot had been reuniting and having big festivals across the plains. The Stoney in particular had done so at the Lac Ste-Anne Mission site in what was likely a traditional indigenous fashion. From Trudy Nicks' study, we know the Iroquois Métis had traditionally been gathering for four months at Lac Ste-Anne. Clearly these groups would not have simply stopped coming to the lake once the pilgrimage was initiated, and likely

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<sup>120</sup> Lac Ste. Anne Historical Society Archives Committee, *West of the Fifth: A History of Lac Ste. Anne Municipality*, 28.

<sup>121</sup> *Lac Ste-Anne Codex Historicus 1889-1899*, 7.

<sup>122</sup> Belcourt, *Walking in the Woods: A Métis Journey*, 38.

<sup>123</sup> "Other places"

<sup>124</sup> *Lac Ste-Anne Codex Historicus 1889-1899*.

<sup>125</sup> Lizée also excluded himself from both lists.

they continued to attend the gatherings, camping on the shores of the lake, but either only partially (coming to mass but not taking communion) or wholly without, participating in the Catholic rites. However the Oblates, with the help of their Iroquois Métis adherents, would be “blessed” at the fourth pilgrimage of 1891, what can legitimately be called the “First Healing Pilgrimage,” with a powerful conversion tool: the public occurrence during mass of three healing “miracles;” a phenomenon that helped to make their pilgrimage compelling and enduring to both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal pilgrims.

In *Lac Ste-Anne Sakahigan*, Oblate archivist Émeric Drouin claimed that the arrival of the new statue of Saint Anne and “the presence of the saintly Bishop Grandin” who called for “a special blessing upon the project” at the second pilgrimage of 1889, are what ensured the pilgrimage’s “development and... permanence.”<sup>126</sup> An article written in 1961 in the *Western Catholic Reporter*, and posted on the current Lac Ste-Anne Pilgrimage website reiterates the importance of Grandin’s blessing.<sup>127</sup> However, a close reading of the Lac Ste-Anne *Codex* reveals that it is rather the proceedings and events of the fourth pilgrimage of 1891, what can legitimately be called “The First Healing Pilgrimage,” that had a special significance in establishing the longevity of the event.

By 1890, the health of many First Nations and Métis communities in the St. Albert and Lac Ste-Anne regions had deteriorated considerably. As stated previously, the smallpox epidemic of 1870, and the large scale warfare between Cree and Blackfoot twenty years earlier, had already dealt a blow. Many Cree warriors and leaders were killed in the conflict, and smallpox continued to be a threat throughout those years. In 1886, a bout of measles and in 1889 and 1890, influenza epidemics virtually obliterated the Sharphead Stony group who had settled near Ponoka, forcing most of the survivors to relocate to the Paul Nakoda Band on Wabamun Lake, situated thirty-five kilometres south of Lac Ste-Anne, and whose members were related to the Alexis Nakoda Band, situated on Lac Ste-Anne itself.<sup>128</sup> In 1890, a bout of Russian influenza also affected St. Albert and Lac Ste-Anne, and it is very likely that faced with such dismal circumstances, First Nations began

<sup>126</sup> Drouin, *Lac Ste-Anne Sakahigan*, 53.

<sup>127</sup> Alexis Tetreault O.M.I., “First Catholic Mission in Alberta, 1844,” *Western Catholic Reporter* (June 7, 1961), <http://www.lsap.ca/history.htm> (accessed August 24th, 2010).

<sup>128</sup> Dempsey, *Indian Tribes of Alberta*, 52-3.

to try alternative healing methods to their own traditional practices, and thus to rely more and more on the remedies of the priests, and to hope for miracles.

By 1891, miracles in the spirit of Beaupré and Auray had reportedly taken place in conjunction with the earlier three Lac Ste-Anne Pilgrimages. Émeric Drouin, who read through the Lac Ste-Anne *Codex*, included a list, in Appendix 3 of his book, of twenty-seven extraordinary cures which took place between 1889 and 1927.<sup>129</sup> However the first thirteen of these cures only officially appear for the first time in the archives in the fourth 1891 gathering's *Codex*, which was the first to truly emphasize the miraculous healing aspect of the pilgrimage. No mention of these miracles appears in the *Codex* from 1889-1891. Though the *Codex* never directly mentions influenza, small pox or measles, all, or nearly all of the 1891 pilgrimage activities centered on healing. More detailed or different information was recorded in 1891 for virtually all of the activities and rites; the idea of "healing" was emphasized over and over again with priests telling their own personal stories, specific prayers for certain sick people being noted, and most importantly past miracles officially being announced during mass, and then three more publically taking place in front of the whole congregation.

The point here is to identify historically when and how Lac Ste-Anne became more compelling from an outwardly Catholic standpoint, and began to draw more and more people to its shores. Clearly the Oblates, like the Jesuits before them, benefited to a certain degree from the chaos and illness that was afflicting First Nations peoples, by attributing what were likely veritable instances of healing, to the power of Saint Anne and belief in Catholicism and its practices. However, the pilgrimage's "development and... permanence" was not solely thanks to Oblate presence, organization, ritual practices and age-old Catholic belief in miracles. In order for the pilgrimage to grow, the Oblates needed the "popular" agency of the regional people. Two other Métis and First Nations groups in particular, directly identified in the *Codex*, were also instrumental in certifying the healing power of the pilgrimage, and developing the "spiritual magnetism" at Lac Ste-Anne. Though they were not homogeneous in spiritual beliefs or cultural background, the fact that their band or family names often appear in the codices with respect to healing or support

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<sup>129</sup> Drouin, *Lac Ste-Anne Sakahigan*, Appendix 3, 89-91.



for the Oblates, mean they were important to the fathers, and pivotal actors in helping the men of prayer with their projects. The first of these groups were once again, the Iroquois and Anishinaabe (Ojibway) Métis. As stated earlier, their specific cultural indigenous affiliations and background were never mentioned. Most often, they were simply known as the local people. The Métis' pious acts, good deeds, and ensuing reported reward from Ste. Anne, were publically demonstrated to the other pilgrims, perhaps in the hopes of convincing the "less" faithful and non-Catholics, that they too could benefit from this devotion, if they acted appropriately and practiced the same rites. The second group was the neighbouring Stoney Nakoda peoples, who were the first distinct Aboriginal band listed as "pilgrims" in the pilgrimage *Codex* of 1892, and who had settled on the banks of Lac Ste-Anne and the neighbouring Wabamun Lake.

Three healing miracles were attributed to three Métis pilgrims who had ties to Iroquois or Anishinaabe forefathers. Though Drouin noted these miracles, he failed to identify these Iroquoian ties. One begins to notice the particular emphasis on healing in 1891 when one compares the ways the reporting of confessions and communions differ from the other pilgrimage years, as do the priests' announcements and sermons, the particular emphasis and detailed description of the blessing of the sick and finally, miracles both past and present.

On July 25<sup>th</sup> of 1891, the eve of pilgrimage day, the priests began listening to confessions earlier in the day than the customary time that was recorded for the previous three pilgrimages, and continued to listen to them all afternoon:

All afternoon, we heard confessions from the women and men. But after mass, the Father Superior announces that in the evening, we will only hear confession from the men. – It is 11:30. When we close the church, there were still people until this hour.<sup>130</sup>

Hence, after the customary opening Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament mass at 7:30pm, the night before the pilgrimage day, Father Lestanc announced that only men would be allowed to confess. As the quotation suggests, the confessions, even if only by men,

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<sup>130</sup> "Toutes (sic) l'après midi nous avons entendu les confessions des femmes et des hommes. Mais après le salut, le Père Supérieur annonce que dans la soirée nous n'entendrons que les hommes en confession.—Il est 11 ½ hrs. Quand nous fermons l'église, il y a toujours eu du monde jusqu'à cette heure." *Lac Ste-Anne Codex Historicus 1889-1899*, 15.

continued until 11:30 pm when they closed the church. Although Lizée noted, on the eve of the second pilgrimage of 1889, “many confessions heard today,” he did not provide more details, while for the first pilgrimage in 1889, and the third in 1890, confessions are not even recorded.<sup>131</sup> Lizée’s 1891 note of them is the first and most detailed mention of confessions since 1889, until 1896. Furthermore, the next day, Lizée also records 240 communions at the first low mass of 6 am, and in all 400 communions would be recorded for the pilgrimage, many of whom had taken the Holy Eucharist twice.<sup>132</sup> This number exceeded the same for such activities recorded at two of the three previous pilgrimages.

Likely, in the context of smallpox, measles and Russian influenza epidemics, more people were willing to participate in these rites because they hoped to be healed of an illness or misfortune. As mentioned, thirteen healing miracles had allegedly already taken place before, since the first pilgrimage of 1889, and people in the region had likely heard talk of the cures.<sup>133</sup> However, it is only in 1891 that these healing miracles are officially listed for the first time in the *Codex*, and announced to the people in church.<sup>134</sup> As shall be seen, a fourteenth miracle was related to them by a priest at the first low mass. Considering the tradition of the “pardon” at Auray, and the belief that one had to confess one’s sins and take communion before being able to benefit from a miracle, it is possible that in the context of widespread illness, even non believers or lukewarm adherents would agree to confess themselves, and take communion in order to show their faith, so that the power of Ste-Anne would show itself more visibly at the pilgrimage of 1891. As it turns out, a special ceremony for the sick, and three miracles publically took place in the church at that very pilgrimage.

As already seen, the first pilgrimage established a tradition of setting aside a particular time in the day, 2 pm the afternoon of pilgrimage day, for the blessing of the sick. However, in 1891, the timing of this rite was changed; the blessing of the sick was done at two actual masses, low and High, including the important High Mass on pilgrimage day,

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<sup>131</sup> “grand nombre de confessions entendues aujourd’hui” *Lac Ste-Anne Codex Historicus 1889-1899*, 4.

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid.*, 15, 21.

<sup>133</sup> Drouin, *Lac Ste-Anne Sakahigan*, 90.

<sup>134</sup> *Lac Ste-Anne Codex Historicus 1889-1899*, 17. See also Drouin’s Appendix 3 in *Lac Ste-Anne Sakahigan*, 89-90.

and the plight of the sick figures largely in that year's *Codex*. On Sunday July 26<sup>th</sup> of that year, after recording that the low masses started at 6 am, that Father Gabillon was saying the first one, and that there was a "large number of communions approximately 240 at this 1<sup>st</sup> [low] mass," Lizée stated<sup>135</sup>:

All the sick local inhabitants and some that have come with the pilgrims assist at this mass and take communion for the most part. Some, being too sick, are lying down or almost in the church. Here are approximately all their names :

- 1) Magloire Belcourt's wife, sick for 6 months, absolutely unable to walk.
- 2) Victoire Calliot, sick for more than 19 months.
- 3) Jn. Bte [Jean-Baptiste] Nipising, sick for almost 3 years, unable to walk.
- 4) The preceding man's son, an epileptic.
- 5) Nancy Hamelin, wife of Narcisse Kootonahay, almost dying.
- 6) A young man of Pierre Gray of the Mountain.
- 7) And several other sick people.<sup>136</sup>

Thus, all the sick local inhabitants, and some that had come with the pilgrims were brought early in the morning to the church during the first low mass of 6 am, and most of them took Holy Communion. Notably, aside from Jean-Baptiste Nipising's son, who is listed as epileptic, what the sick are suffering from is not recorded, only that they are "malade" or "sick."

The way Lizée points out that some of the pilgrims, being too sick, are lying down or are almost lying down in the church, lends drama and poignancy to the event, and once again are adoptions of practices from Lourdes, France and Beaupré, Québec where the sick would be brought close to the altar, with crutches, cranes and wheelchairs.<sup>137</sup> Lizée further lists the names of the afflicted and their condition, something not done to that point in the *Codex*, and not done in subsequent codices either. The names provided are mostly those of "people from the mountains": Magloire Belcourt, as we have seen, but also Victoire Calliot, Jean-Baptiste Nipising, his son, and Pierre Gray de La Montagne. Nipising is an Anishinaabe (in this case Algonquin rather than Ojibwa) name from the mountain voyageurs who came from the Lake Nipissing area in Ontario. Pierre Gray's name is linked

<sup>135</sup> "grand nombre de communions environs 240 à cette 1ère messe," *Lac Ste-Anne Codex Historicus 1889-1899*, 15.

<sup>136</sup> Ibid.

<sup>137</sup> Gagné and Asselin, *Saint Anne De Beaupré; Pilgrim's Goal for Three Hundred Years: A Brief History of the Shrine*, 84.

to the Anishinaabe as well, but he was also a grandson of Louis Callihoo.<sup>138</sup> The “young man” that was listed as working for him was likely a man named Charly Waniande, whose name is directly Iroquois as stated previously.<sup>139</sup> The only exceptions are the names Hamelin and Kootonohay, though likely Hamelin is tied here to the Anishinaabe Métis, as shall be seen below. The name Kootonohay is most likely related to the Stony as, according to a story about a Kootenay boy who was adopted by the Nakoda, the name Kootenay and its variants are traditionally associated to the Nakoda people of the region who have ties through trade and war, to the Kootenay people, who lived west of them in the Rocky Mountains.<sup>140</sup> Furthermore, according to a census from 1901, a 41 year old Narcisse Kootenhayo is listed as a father, as a Roman Catholic Stony and married to a Vernona Kootenhayo in a 1901 census of the Joseph Band (likely the Alexis Nakoda band), and four people with the “Hamlin” name appear for the Michel Band, as Roman Catholics, and belonging to the “Salteau” Nation, though no Nancy is listed.<sup>141</sup> Hence, special attention is paid to the sick in this 1891 pilgrimage, and the names listed for the most part, are people descended of the Iroquois and Anishinabe Métis, with one couple having ties to the Stony from the Alexis band.

Once all the sick were in the church at 6 am, Oblate Father Victorin Gabillon, who was in charge of the mission at Hobbema, began his sermon. After his mass, Lizée reported that Gabillon said a few words in French, Cree and English, telling how he was personally healed thanks to Saint Anne. Drouin, using Lizée’s account, listed Gabillon’s story as an additional and thus fourteenth official miracle that took place before 1891.<sup>142</sup> Here is Lizée’s account about Gabillon from the *Codex*:

Saying that since last summer’s pilgrimage, he has no longer been feeling any pain at all, that he is feeling radically healed. Upon arriving here last year, he had been forced to go to bed, so ill had he been feeling, but since that pilgrimage night, he’s

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<sup>138</sup> Macpherson, *The Sun Traveller: The Story of the Callihos in Alberta*, 86.

<sup>139</sup> Ibid.

<sup>140</sup> Dianne Meili, “Nancy Potts: Stoney, Alexis Reserve,” in *Those Who Know: Profiles of Alberta's Native Elders* (Edmonton: NeWest Press, 1991), 16.

<sup>141</sup> Yvonne B. Hill, ed., *Alberta District Indian Agency Enumerations* (Lethbridge, AB: Ancestor Answer's, 1998), 56, 61.

<sup>142</sup> Drouin, *Lac Ste-Anne Sakahigan*, 90.

felt good and since then he's improved rapidly so that today he feels [like he's been] perfectly well for a long time. That's why this year, he did not want to miss coming to thank the good Ste. Anne for such an remarkable favor.<sup>143</sup>

Of note is Gabillon's presence at the shrine in order to thank Ste. Anne, reminiscent of the vows and the return trips of thanks to shrines that Medieval Christian pilgrims would make when they were healed. Significant is also the very personal and private nature of the story. Father Gabillon was not visibly healed in front of the people assembled. A miraculous story like this, and its inclusion in the *Codex* that year, however, suggests that it held meaning in its context, for the sick people brought into the church that year in hopes of healing. It relayed a personal tale of suffering and redemption from a priest, a man of some authority, and seeing him alive and well there in front of them, undoubtedly mattered a great deal to his audience. Gabillon told his story during the first early morning mass, before all the sick would reassemble once again at the high mass of 9:30am.

At the "Grande Messe" of 9:30 am on July 26<sup>th</sup>, pilgrimage day of 1891, three official secular authorities attended, lending credit to the religious event, and one conspicuously was a doctor. Lizée simply noted that "Le Conte De Caze, le Docteur Wilson et Mr. Taylor assistent à la messe."<sup>144</sup> The Count De Caze was of French nobility who had come to the region with his wife and daughter, bought property on "Constance Island" in the middle of Lac Ste-Anne, and began building a large stone house. He died before finishing the building. However, he was the first Indian Agent appointed by the Dominion Government for Winterburn, Wabamun, Alexander, Calahoo and Alexis bands.<sup>145</sup> Thus though it is very likely that the French born Decaze may have been attending the pilgrimage for his own cultural and spiritual reasons, the fact that he was also the Indian Agent in the area, and intimately involved in the life of most of the pilgrims,

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<sup>143</sup> "Disant que depuis le pèlerinage (sic) de l'été dernier, il n'a plus du tout ressenti son mal, qu'il se sentait radicalement guéri. En arrivant ici l'an dernier, il fut obligé de se mettre au lit, tant il se sentait malade, mais depuis le soir du pèlerinage (sic) il s'est senti bien et depuis ce temps il a pris du mieux rapidement de sorte qu'aujourd'hui il se sent parfaitement bien depuis longtemps. C'est pourquoi cette année, il n'a pas voulu manquer de venir remercier la bonne Ste. Anne d'une faveur si insigne." *Lac Ste-Anne Codex Historicus 1889-1899*, 15-6.

<sup>144</sup> Ibid.

<sup>145</sup> Lac Ste. Anne Historical Society Archives Committee, *West of the Fifth: A History of Lac Ste. Anne Municipality*, 28.

reveals he may have also been there for more secular, economic, or administrative reasons not specifically stated in the *Codex*. Further, Dr. Wilson was a government doctor “sent to treat the sick and...vaccinate everyone against smallpox.”<sup>146</sup> Thus, he too, was likely present at the pilgrimage for other reasons besides his own spiritual needs. Finally, Mr. Taylor, was Thomas Taylor, the Hudson’s Bay Company manager that had come to Lac Ste-Anne in 1885 with his wife Blanch Hardisty of a known farming family in the community.<sup>147</sup> As many of the pilgrims and local people continued to live off hunting and trapping, the presence of Mr. Taylor was likely also for social credibility and economic, as well as spiritual reasons.

Lizée then noted that after the Gospel at this same High Mass, Father Lestanc, who led the mass, gave announcements, recommendations and then his sermon. Prayer recommendations are commonly made during a Catholic mass, when parishioners are asked to pray for certain sick people in the community. However Father Lizée usually did not note this in the *Codex*; certainly not in such detail:

[Lestanc] recommends for prayers all the above-mentioned sick people and all the Indians of the area. He more particularly recommends Magloire Belcourt’s wife and Magloire himself who had the kindness to haul for the pilgrims two trips of dry wood to make their fires, asking for payment only that we pray for his poor wife and for his defunct parents.<sup>148</sup>

Interestingly, “all the Indians of the area” are recommended in the same breath or sentence as all the sick lying in the church, an indication either of the Oblates’ concern for the real materially poor and sickly state of affairs for First Nations’ peoples at the time, or perhaps alternately, of the Oblate missionaries belief that, as Aboriginal people were “heathens” and not yet introduced to a Catholic God, they were also in need of prayers. Also of significance, Father Lestanc at the “Grande Messe” recommended to prayers the very

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<sup>146</sup> Macpherson, *The Sun Traveller: The Story of the Callihooos in Alberta*, 65.

<sup>147</sup> Lac Ste. Anne Historical Society Archives Committee, *West of the Fifth: A History of Lac Ste. Anne Municipality*, 28.

<sup>148</sup> "Il recommande aux prières tous les malades ci-dessus mentionnés et tous les sauvages du pays. Il recommande plus particulièrement la femme de Magloire Belcourt et lui-même Magloire qui a eu la complaisance de charroyer pour les pèlerins (sic) 2 voyages de bois sec pour faire leurs feux, demandant pour tout payement qu'on prie pour sa pauvre femme malade et pour ses parent défunts." *Lac Ste-Anne Codex Historicus 1889-1899*, 16.

family who will almost immediately benefit from a miracle. Lestanc doesn't simply name Magloire, his wife and family as suffering and in need of prayers, but publically announces Magloire's good deeds: the direct Iroquois descendent of Louis Kwaragkwante made two voyages to deliver dry wood for the pilgrims' fires, asking only in return, that people pray for his wife and his parents. What is clear is that Magloire was well-known among the Oblates, and took somewhat of a leadership role, by bringing wood for the pilgrims, and hoping that his generosity would win both the prayers of his neighbours, and the favour of Saint Anne. Like Isidore Gladu, sent to rescue Brother Leriche, Belcourt was a kind of "helper" for the Oblates. As previously mentioned, Lizée stated that Belcourt helped him learn Cree. Belcourt was also the descendent of Grande Cache people, and the ancestor of the Belcourt Métis family of today. Belcourt's mother was Cecile Calihoo, daughter of Louis Kwarakwante, the aforementioned Iroquois patriarch from Quebec.<sup>149</sup> In 2006, Herb Belcourt, who was an entrepreneur and very active in the Métis community, published memories of his youth in Lac Ste-Anne, and Magloire Belcourt was his great grandfather.<sup>150</sup> The Oblates perhaps hoped others would follow Magloire's example. Father Lestanc, at this same mass, then listed the names of the fourteen people that had been healed since the first pilgrimage of June 6<sup>th</sup>, 1889, including the aforementioned Father Gabillon.<sup>151</sup> Significantly, only the person's name and what they were healed of is generally listed; no details are given about the condition of their illness, nor the timing and circumstance of their healing. For example, "John Perrant, Mr. Adolphe Perrant's 8 year old little boy, suddenly healed of a deadly illness...Marie Courtepatte "main desséchée" [without feeling, paralyzed] healed... Janvier l'Hyronnelle, healed of an advanced "cécité," [near blindness] he could not distinguish a person 30 feet away...."<sup>152</sup> Sometimes, Lizée noted how long the illness had lasted : "Mme Finley, Mme Thomas Calliot, healed of a

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<sup>149</sup> Belcourt, *Walking in the Woods: A Métis Journey*, 8.

<sup>150</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.

<sup>151</sup> *Lac Ste-Anne Codex Historicus 1889-1899*, 17.

<sup>152</sup> "John Perrant, petit garçon de 8 ans, de Mr. Adolphe Perrant, guéri soudainement d'une maladie mortelle....Marie Courtepatte (main dessechée) guérie.... Janvier l'Hyronnelle, guéri d'une cécité avancée, il ne pouvait distinguer une personne à 30 pas...." *Ibid.* 17.

sore foot that made her suffer for 4 years.”<sup>153</sup> Of notice again are the names l’Hyronnelle, Finley (derivative of Findley) and also Calliot.

The nature and circumstances of these former fourteen miracles were set apart from the three more that then took place, publically, in front of all the pilgrims assembled at 9:30 am. These three miracles established the importance of healing to the pilgrimage for years afterwards, and even to the present day. After stating that the sick were brought back into the church for the Grande Messe at 9:30 am, Father Lizée described miracles granted to Jean-Baptiste Nipissing, the wife of Magloire Belcourt, and Victoire Calliot. All three were cured during the same mass, in front of all the people:

“After the office, we noticed that three of these sick people had become visibly and sensibly better. In Bte Nipising, a man from the Mountain, that we had brought into the church, lying down on a mattress, after mass, he got up and left on his own, walking properly without any help. He left a stick in the church, which he used sometimes to very painfully take a few steps. Without being perfectly healed, he feels nonetheless, that he is much stronger. To everyone’s surprise, he walked alone and with a firm step like all the others. Nevertheless he affirmed to us that before mass, he could not take 2 to 3 steps without a large effort. He no longer feels his pain. The only thing is that he still feels a little weak.”<sup>154</sup>

Jean-Baptiste Nipissing, whom Lizée described as "un homme de la montagne," who could not walk without excessive pain, and was carried into the church on a mattress, stood up and walked out of the church visibly healed, “with a firm step like all the others.” His healing is public, that is, we are to assume, the way Lizée tells the story, that those who are at church with Nipissing see him leave. Furthermore, although the cure was visible, (Nipissing was in pain, and could not, or needed help to, walk before mass, whereas afterwards, he walked without pain on his own), his cure is not particularly sensational or extraordinary. Subsequent healing incidents, no matter how commonplace or mundane,

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<sup>153</sup> “Mme Finley, Mme Thomas Calliot, guérie d’un mal de pied qui l’avait fait souffrir depuis 4 ans.”

<sup>154</sup> "Après l’office, on a constaté que trois de ces malades avaient pris un mieux très visible, très sensible. In Bte Nipising, homme de la Montagne, qu’on avait entré dans l’église, couché sur un matelat (sic), après la messe il s’est levé et est sorti de lui-même, marchant comme il faut sans aucun secours. Il a laissé dans l’église un bâton dont il se servait quelquefois pour faire bien péniblement quelques pas. Sans être parfaitement guéri, il sent pourtant qu’il est beaucoup plus fort. À l’étonnement de tous, il a marché seul et d’un pas ferme comme tous les autres. Cependant il nous a affirmé qu’avant la messe il ne pouvait pas faire 2 ou 3 pas sans un grand effort. Il ne ressent plus ses douleurs. Seulement il se sent encore un peu faible." Ibid., 17-8.



could then be interpreted the same way, that is, attributed to the power of the pilgrimage, the place, and Saint Anne.

This particular 1891 pilgrimage however, is made more conspicuous, because Nipissing performed an age-old Catholic pilgrimage tradition rite: he left the first “ex-voto,” his own walking stick, symbolically demonstrating that he no longer needed it, and in thanks to Saint Anne’s intercession. Lizée clearly labelled this section of the *Codex* in the margin as “1<sup>er</sup> ex-voto.” Showing prudence however, he then stated, “If he is properly healed, this will then be the 1st ex-voto left in this modest sanctuary of the Good Ste. Anne.”<sup>155</sup> The *Codex*, unfortunately does not later confirm Nipissing’s “proper healing.” Further, neither Lizée nor Drouin said anything about Nipissing’s identity except that he was a “man from the mountains.” This surely means once again that he is from the eastern slopes of the Rockies, and his name suggests that he is a descendent of the Anishinaabe fur traders from the east, previously known as the Algonquin from Lake Nipissing in Ontario, and who came west along with the Iroquois. Thus, the first public miracle was experienced by an eastern Métis, who left the first ex-voto.

The second miracle would also be experienced by someone intimately tied, through marriage, to the “people of the mountains.” Lizée writes:

Another sick person who certainly obtained great relief, was the wife of Magloire Belcourt. For the last six months, she’s been keeping to her bed, incapable of walking. Two men carried her into the church in their arms to seat her in a sofa-chair. Well, she too, after mass, in everyone’s sight she walked out of the church on her own, without any outside assistance, she no longer felt her pains.<sup>156</sup>

The *Codex* does not provide Belcourt’s wife’s name, but Herb Belcourt stated her name before marriage was Constance Letendre. If we recall, Trudy Nicks included her family name as a third generation Iroquois name. It was also the name of many of the original Métis settlers at the Lac Ste-Anne Mission, showing again the intermarriage taking place

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<sup>155</sup> “S’il est guéri comme il faut, ce sera là le 1er ex-voto déposé dans ce modeste sanctuaire de la bonne Ste. Anne.” Ibid., 18.

<sup>156</sup> “Une autre malade qui a certainement obtenu un grand soulagement, c’est la femme de Magloire Belcourt. Depuis 6 mois qu’elle gardait le lit, incapable de marcher. Deux hommes l’apportèrent sur leurs bras dans l’église pour l’asseoir sur un fauteuil. Et bien, elle aussi, après la messe, à la vue de tout le monde elle est sorti (sic) seule de l’église, sans aucun secours étranger, elle ne ressentait plus ses douleurs.” The *Codex* never provides her first name, and always refers to her as “la femme de Magloire Belcourt.” Ibid.

between different Métis groups, Europeans and First Nations in the region.<sup>157</sup> Her cure, like Nipissing's was also visible but not sensational. Lizée precisely indicates that after having had to be carried into the church by two men, after the mass, "in everyone's sight" Constance Belcourt walked out of the church on her own and without any pain. She did not leave an ex-voto, but the next day, July 27<sup>th</sup>, at 5 am, Lizée recorded that Constance came on her own "à la maison," or "to the house" to confess and commune once again, in thanks for the healing she received. Lizée confirmed that "She walks properly, without effort [or fatigue]," and emphasized her gratefulness, stating, "The poor woman and her dear husband are both overflowing with joy for the favor they have just received from Ste. Anne."<sup>158</sup>

Finally, the third miracle is even less sensational. One wonders if it can be called a miracle as the person was not even healed but her pain simply abated:

A third sick who, it seems, felt sensibly better, is Victoire Calliot, sick for 19 months ; but not as much as the two preceding ones. She still cannot walk; but she says that a large part of her pains have disappeared. She still feels some pain in her left side and in the bones of her legs. But she hopes, as do Jn Bte Nipising and Magloire's wife that the good Ste. Anne will complete their healing and return them to perfect health. Let's hope that their wishes will be granted<sup>159</sup>

Thus the miracle here is simply that "a large part of her pains have disappeared." Clearly, the fact that these three miracles happened publically, at the same mass, in favour of the first three Iroquois/Anishinaabe Métis people Lizée listed earlier as sick, reveals the role these people had at Oblate events, and the importance of this particular "Healing Pilgrimage" of 1891.

Perhaps the most significant actor in the 1891 pilgrimage was Magloire Belcourt, whose wife was one of the three people miraculously cured during that year's pilgrimage.

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<sup>157</sup> Crossen, *Interview at Lac Ste-Anne Pilgrimage Rectory and Office*.

<sup>158</sup> "Elle marche comme il faut, sans fatigue... La pauvre femme et son cher mari ils sont tous deux au comble de la joie pour la faveur qu'il (sic) viennent d'obtenir de Ste. Anne." *Lac Ste-Anne Codex Historicus 1889-1899*, 20.

<sup>159</sup> "Une troisième malade qui, paraît-il, a ressenti un mieux sensible, c'est Victoire Calliot, malade depuis 19 mois; mais pas autant que les 2 précédents. Elle ne peut pas encore marcher ; mais elle dit qu'une grande partie de ses douleurs ont disparues. Elle ressent encore une petite douleur au côté gauche et dans les os des jambe. (sic) Mais elle espère, ainsi que Jn Bte Nipising et la femme de Magloire que la bonne Ste. Anne va achever leur guérison et les rendre à une santé parfaite. Esperons que leur vœux seront accomplis." *Ibid.*, 18.

Before his wife was cured, Magloire Belcourt performed some very important public acts of faith and leadership, which Lizée noted in the *Codex*, and which most likely served as an example to the “other” pilgrims. In addition to delivering dry wood for the pilgrims and asking them to pray for his wife and parents as previously cited, Belcourt also procured some olive oil which was kept burning in a small lamp kept at the foot of the statue of Saint Anne for the entire duration of the pilgrimage.<sup>160</sup> As we already know, his wife was cured, and it seems that Lizée wanted his readers to understand that her cures were a result of both her own faith, her husband’s pious acts, and his adherence to very old Catholic rituals, such as abiding by the sacraments of confession and communing, being generous to the pilgrims, and leaving oil burning near the relic of a saint, or a symbolic representation of it. The Belcourts’ example and the two other miracles set a precedent, and were probably what convinced the other pilgrims of the power of Ste. Anne. Magloire Belcourt, at the pilgrimage of 1900 again brought wood for all the pilgrims to take on condition that they pray this time for his eldest son, who had become “almost mad,” in order for him to recover his senses.<sup>161</sup>

Thus, the pilgrimage of 1891, what can be called “The Healing Pilgrimage,” was most likely what established the healing tradition, from a Catholic perspective at Lac Ste-Anne. That year, more people attended, confessions started earlier in the day, the day before the pilgrimage, and were unusually numerous, and many more people took communion. Confessions and communions, as we have seen, are prerequisites for healing. Instead of the customary blessing they received at two in the afternoon, on pilgrimage day, all the sick parishioners and many sick pilgrims were brought into the church for mass *twice in the same morning* on pilgrimage day, the first time during the first low mass at 6 am where a priest related his own personal story of healing, and the second time during the first high mass at 9:30 am, where the pilgrims were told of all the previous miracles. During this same high mass, three healing miracles were reported actually taking place, and

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<sup>160</sup> By 1891, when the miracles took place, the first statue, which, we must remember, had “touched the relics of Ste-Anne” at Beaupré, had been replaced by another, donated by Mme. Gingras, the charitable woman from Montreal. *Ibid.*, 2, 5.

<sup>161</sup> “Magloire Belcourt avait placé 2 voyages de bois de chauffage sur la place où campent ordinairement les pèlerins (sic), à l’usage de ces derniers, à la condition qu’ils prient pour son fils aîné (sic) devenu presque fou, afin qu’il recouvre complètement sa raison.” *Lac Ste-Anne Codex Historicus 1900-1964*, 2.

the first ex-voto of the pilgrimage, a walking stick, was left at the church. Furthermore, just as the man sent to retrieve an ailing walking pilgrim in 1889 was an Iroquois Catholic Métis from the mountains, the individuals who were granted cures in 1891 were also Iroquois or Anishinabe Métis descended from the people “de la Montagne.” Of primary importance to the 1891 pilgrimage was the role of Magloire Belcourt. This man’s demonstrations of piety, generosity and good will that year, all publically announced and endorsed by the Oblates, and the ensuing healing granted to his wife Constance Letendre and to two other pilgrims, were perhaps the single most important factors in establishing the Catholic power of Ste. Anne at the lake, and ensuring the continued growth of the pilgrimage. Two specific pieces of evidence from later pilgrimages confirm the importance these early three miracles of 1891 had in establishing the affluence of the pilgrimage.

The increase in pilgrims attending the pilgrimage the following year in 1892, seems to confirm the success of the Belcourts’ role. In July of 1892, double the number of pilgrims came to the pilgrimage and from further away. Lizée remarked that approximately 915 people came. Most significantly, Lizée recorded one hundred members of a second group of people, not previously mentioned in the pilgrimage codices up to that point, but already well-known to the Oblates, notably to Father Vital Fourmond, who had recorded their presence at Lac Ste-Anne to trade, in 1870-72. These people, returning to Lac Ste-Anne yet again, Father Zéphirin Lizée listed as “Sauvages Assiniboines” in 1892. Although Cree had been spoken at the pilgrimage, and the Métis pilgrims attending the pilgrimage were generally part Cree (or Iroquois, Beaver, Sikani, or Anishinaabe as seen above), the “Assiniboines” were the first Aboriginal band to be recorded and recognized as a cohesive group in any official tally of pilgrims in the Lac Ste-Anne Pilgrimage *Codex*. Accompanied by their chief Paul Mustus, or *Apetchis*, they were the neighbouring Nakoda people from what was then known as White Whale Lake, now called Lake Wabamun, which became the site of the Paul Band Reserve.<sup>162</sup> Conspicuously, even though Mustus and his people

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<sup>162</sup> White Whale Lake was so called because of the very large whitefish that inhabited the lake. Valentin Végréville, who recorded the Lac Ste-Anne *Codex* from 1897 to 1899, included a list (without a title) of names of Aboriginal and Métis people, who were likely all part of one community, either Lac Ste-Anne itself, or perhaps one of the neighboring reserves of Alexis or Paul Band. Alongside each name are dates, mostly ranging from 1890-95, of what seems to be when that person performed a Catholic rite, either communion or confession. Iroquois Métis names from the region that have already been mentioned also appear here, such as

were considered “Protestant,” they nonetheless are recorded as coming to venerate or literally kiss the holy relic of Ste. Anne.<sup>163</sup> This group is related to another band of Nakoda who had settled at Lac Ste-Anne itself, and now make up the Alexis Nakoda Sioux Nation.

This particular group of Nakoda is not often mentioned in the conventional historiography on the Stony in Alberta, which largely focuses on the Protestant influenced Chiniki, Bearspaw, and Goodstoney bands in south western Alberta, near Morleyville.<sup>164</sup> H  l  ne Chabot stated that the presence of the Stony at the pilgrimage did not prove the pre-contact history of the gatherings or rendezvous, as they were newcomers to the region.<sup>165</sup> Alan Morinis, in contradiction to Liz  e’s *Codex*, stated that no Stony people attended the pilgrimage as they were all Protestant.<sup>166</sup> Though it is true that the Nakoda presence was relatively new in the western plains at the outset of the Catholic pilgrimage, the facts that Father Vital Fourmond spoke of them gathering at the lake in the early 1870s as noted in the previous chapter, that Father Z  phirin Liz  e then recorded them as the first Aboriginal band to attend the pilgrimage, and finally that its members continue to host one of the masses today shows that these people played a role in the pilgrimage’s expansion, and likely became convinced of the “power” of the Catholic priests and their event, following the miracles of 1891. Part of the reason for this Stony attendance is because many who had settled either on the Alexis or Paul Band reserves were part Cree or M  tis and had

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Cardinal, Delorme, Gray, Joachim, Laroque, Nepising, and Waniande. However, names also appearing are those of Joseph Massinasuwasiniy mentioned above, as well as Peter Massinasuwasiniy and Joseph Ekakawapit *dit* Mustus, whose *dit* name is the same as that of Paul Mustus, who was the chief of Paul Band, mentioned by Father Liz  e as “Apetchis” in 1891. As well, Antoine, Joseph, and Marie Mustus *dit* Ekakawapit appear, as well as a Marie and Michel Kaapisisit, and a Michel Mustus *dit* Kaapisisit. “Apetchis” may have been Father Liz  e’s way of hearing (and writing) the name Kaapisisit. *Lac Ste-Anne Codex Historicus 1889-1899*, no page number.

<sup>163</sup> “V  n  ration des Reliques pendant laquelle on chante divers cantiques. Plusieurs sauvages protestants du Lac Blanc   taient pr  sents aux diff  rents exercices du P  lerinage et sont venus m  me v  n  rer les reliques comme les autres, entre autre le chef Paul Mustus (Apetchis).” *Lac Ste-Anne Codex Historicus 1889-1899*, 23.

<sup>164</sup> McMillan and Yellowhorn. *First Peoples in Canada*, 159-161. Adolf & Beverly Hungry Wolf, *Indian Tribes of the Northern Rockies* (Summertown, TN: Native Voices, 1991), 51-8. Dempsey, *Indian Tribes of Alberta*, 49-55. Chief John Snow, *These Mountains are our Sacred Places: The Story of the Stony People*.

<sup>165</sup> Chabot, *Submission Report-Place: Lac Ste. Anne Pilgrimage Site*, 5 (451).

<sup>166</sup> Alan Morinis, “Persistent Peregrination: From Sun Dance to Catholic Pilgrimage among Canadian Prairie Indians,” 106.

converted to Catholicism. It is useful to outline briefly the history of these two groups in the region.

All of the Nakoda Stoney of Alberta are descended from a much larger group of Siouan language speakers from the headwaters of the Mississippi.<sup>167</sup> Hugh Dempsey stated that “The Stoneys of Alberta are part of a much larger group which had its origins among the mighty Sioux nation. Yet as allies of the Crees, they became fierce enemies of the Sioux before beginning their long migration to the slopes of the Canadian Rockies.”<sup>168</sup> A branch of this group, linguistically very related to the Nakota, Yanktonais, or Yankton Sioux, “split from the Sioux sometime before 1640, and were mentioned by Jesuit priests as a distinctive tribe north of Lake Superior by 1658.”<sup>169</sup> They moved northwest to ally themselves with the Cree where they became known as “Assiniboines.”<sup>170</sup> Assiniboine” comes from “Assinipwat” which means “stone people.”<sup>171</sup> According to Adolf and Beverly Hungry Wolf, the name “Stony” “was first given [to the Nakoda] by white explorers because of the specific method used for making native broth.”<sup>172</sup> Scholars disagree as to when the schism took place between the Assiniboine/Nakoda and the Sioux, but “it is becoming increasingly evident that the division occurred” before the seventeenth century, as documentary evidence reveals that “by 1700 Assiniboine bands occupied the parklands and forests of the lower North Saskatchewan River area.”<sup>173</sup> The earliest Euroamerican travellers noted two groups with noticeably different cultures, the North Assiniboines, who were more familiar with the parklands, and the South Assiniboines, who were more

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<sup>167</sup> Dempsey, *Indian Tribes of Alberta*, 49.

<sup>168</sup> *Ibid.*, 49.

<sup>169</sup> Theodore Binnema, *Common and Contested Ground: A Human and Environmental History of the Northwestern Plains*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004),78.

<sup>170</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>171</sup> *Ibid.*, 49. Meili, *Nancy Potts: Stoney, Alexis Reserve*, 16.

<sup>172</sup> In order to bring water to a boil for cooking, they would dig a hole in the ground, line it with a clean, wet rawhide, then place water, pieces of meat and wild vegetables into it. They would then bring small very hot stones from a nearby fire and drop them into the rawhide bowl, which swiftly brought the water to a boil and cooked the food without burning through the rawhide. Adolf & Beverly Hungry Wolf, *Indian Tribes of the Northern Rockies*, 51.

<sup>173</sup> Binnema, *Common and Contested Ground: A Human and Environmental History of the Northwestern Plains*,78.

oriented to the grasslands.<sup>174</sup> By 1754, and thus one hundred and thirty-five years before the first Lac Ste-Anne Pilgrimage, there were two main groups of Assiniboines in what became Alberta. The Strong Woods were buffalo-hunting plains people, and the Swampy Grounds lived in the woodland regions. In 1811, Alexander Henry the Younger believed there were eleven bands of Assiniboines, “including the Strong Woods who had 40 tents and hunted on the Battle River, and 30 tents of Swampy Grounds who lived along the Pembina River, northwest of Edmonton.”<sup>175</sup> The latter allegedly never frequented the plains, and were excellent beaver hunters.

Likely, from this latter group are descended some of the people today who make up the Alexis and Paul bands. Conflicts with the Gros Ventres and the Blackfoot forced several of the Stoney bands to move east, but the Strong Woods continued to hunt on the edge of the plains and the foothills. They often travelled with the Crees, but maintained their identity and language. “While some intermarriage took place, it was never a factor in Stoney identity.”<sup>176</sup> Dempsey notes the influence on the Stoney of Methodist missionary Robert T. Rundle, who arrived at Fort Edmonton in 1840, as well as the Reverends George and John McDougall who established a permanent mission at Morleyville on the Bow River in 1873. By the 1870’s, the Nakoda had separated into various small bands, among them the Bearspaw, Chiniki and the Goodstoney who were more southern groups established along the foothills from Crowsnest Pass, north of the Bow River and up into the Kootenay Plains. North of the North Saskatchewan River were the two Woodland bands considered here, whom Dempsey claims “had intermarried to a limited extent with the Crees in the area” and “were led by chiefs named Paul and Alexis,” which are the names of the two bands today.<sup>177</sup> These two remained more isolated, subsisting off hunting and fishing northwest of Edmonton. A sixth band relevant to this discussion was that led by Sharphead, whose members were descended from the old Strong Woods group, hunted in the Pigeon Lake and upper Battle River regions, and gravitated more towards the buffalo-

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<sup>174</sup> Ibid.

<sup>175</sup> Dempsey, *Indian Tribes of Alberta*, 50.

<sup>176</sup> Ibid.

<sup>177</sup> Ibid.

hunting Crees. In contrast to the Sharphead, Alexis, and Paul bands who joined Treaty Six in 1876, the southern bands of Goodstoney, Chiniki and Bearspaw joined Treaty Seven instead, even though their territory extended north of the Red Deer River.<sup>178</sup> This division lead Dempsey to state that the more southern bands were polarized in that region, influenced by “their missionary” either Rev. George or John McDougall, “who was concentrating his efforts on the Bow River, which caused them to ignore [the signing of Treaty Six].”<sup>179</sup> The Treaty Six bands chose reserves on their traditional hunting grounds, thus Alexis’ band, with 42 families, settled on the shores of Lac Ste-Anne, and Paul Band established itself on Lake Wabamun.<sup>180</sup> At first the two bands were both considered part of the Alexis community, however, in 1886, Peter Ironhead was able to get his own band on Lake Wabamun. Ironhead was Arthur Rain’s mother’s grandfather. Of his own maternal grandfather, Rain stated, “...My mother's father, Alexis Paul, ...had some Cree...whether he was Cree, I really can't tell you, but he spoke Cree. And he read Cree. And he read the Catholic bible in a Cree version.”<sup>181</sup> Meanwhile, when Ironhead died in 1887, and Alexis Paul became chief, the reserve was named “Paul Band.”<sup>182</sup> Sharphead’s people were at Pigeon Lake, but when the fisheries failed in 1883, they were pushed to take a reserve on Wolf Creek, south of present day Ponoka. Sharphead’s band’s story is a tragic one. Comprised of 36 families in 1883, a measles epidemic afflicted them three years later and, “in 1889 and 1890, epidemics of grippe and influenza reduced them to a mere handful” leading to the closure of their reserve the latter year, with seventy survivors moving to Paul’s band and a few to Morley.<sup>183</sup> The timing of these epidemics of course coincide with the first two years of the Lac Ste-Anne Pilgrimage; the “Healing Pilgrimage” of 1891 took place a year later, and one year later still, in 1892, the “Protestant” Stony from Lake

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<sup>178</sup> Chief John Snow, *These Mountains are Our Sacred Places: The Story of the Stoney People*, viii.

<sup>179</sup> Dempsey, *Indian Tribes of Alberta*, 51.

<sup>180</sup> *Ibid.*, 52.

<sup>181</sup> Arthur Rain, *Interview at Paul First Nation Band Administration Office*.

<sup>182</sup> Indian Claims Commission, *Paul First Nation: Kapasiwin Townsite Inquiry* (Ottawa, February 2007), 5, 13.

<sup>183</sup> Dempsey, *Indian Tribes of Alberta*, 52-3. Indian Claims Commission, *Paul First Nation: Kapasiwin Townsite Inquiry*, 13.



Wabamun, among whom were likely some of Sharphead's survivors and Arthur Rain's ancestors on his father's side, are noted as pilgrims for the first time in the *Codex*, and as venerating the holy relic.<sup>184</sup>

The Iroquoian Metis descendants in the region proved crucial to supporting the pilgrimage and shaping, in particular, its healing associations. They undoubtedly served as intermediaries between the Oblates and the soon growing Aboriginal participation in the annual events. However, many Aboriginal pilgrims, both Métis and non, Catholic and non, among them the Nakoda Stony and the Iroquois/Anishinaabe Métis who had been gathering there in older Aboriginal ways since 1872, and probably much earlier, likely continued to perceive the lake in its traditional understandings, either in concordance to its Catholic functions, or alternately simply not adhering to them. Certainly the complex nature of Aboriginal conversion to Christianity and the ambiguous purely "Catholic" attachment to *Manitow Sâkahikan* or *Wakamne* Pilgrimage is evident in the less "official" writings in Oblate journals, where the Fathers were much less hesitant to record unusual or unexpected behaviour. An excerpt from Father Zephirin Lizée's personal journal reveals that First Nations's peoples were very likely open to the healing and ritualistic ideas behind Christian spirituality, which at Lac Ste-Anne, had probably been introduced to them by the Iroquois Métis. However, it also suggests that First Nations peoples had had a long standing habit of coming to Lac Ste-Anne before the first pilgrimage of 1889, and for their own reasons. On Wednesday July 12<sup>th</sup>, 1911, approximately two weeks before the yearly pilgrimage, Father Lizée wrote:

Today we receive the visit of about 15 protestant assiniboine indians, from the Stony Reserve, near Morleyville. Even though they are non-catholics, they come to do a kind of pilgrimage, them too, in their own way. They are of all ages and genders. Their chief tells me that there are about 30 more on their way from Wabamun, who will arrive tonight or tomorrow. Among them, there was one, with some instruction, speaking English perfectly ...but not Cree. He acted as my interpreter, I made a small speech in English which he repeated in Assiniboine. I told them other things that I was very happy to see them, that I admired their courage to have come from so far (300 miles) to pray in this way, that I wished for them with all my heart that one day they would all embrace the true religion which would help them to

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<sup>184</sup> "And my parents ..., my father is a descendant of the Sharphead Indian Reserve." Arthur Rain, *Interview at Paul First Nation Band Administration Office*.

reach Heaven; that I sincerely prayed to God that He bless them all. I strongly encouraged them to return often. Now that we will have the railway, they can come more easily and more often if they desire. I bade Father Ladet to go to the church with them. He took a surplice & a stole, recited a few prayers, blessed them with holy water, as well as the little crosses that I had given them, and they left content and satisfied.<sup>185</sup>

Whether the Nakoda pilgrims actually “left content and satisfied” we cannot know. However, if Anglophone Nakoda people, who had allegedly, by Lizée’s own assertions, already converted to Protestantism, were travelling 300 miles to what twenty-two years earlier, had become a Catholic place of prayer, and what’s more two weeks before the official gathering time, something besides Christianity, whether Protestant or Catholic, was drawing them there. Clearly, though they were accepting to be blessed by a Catholic priest, it did not matter to them that the denomination represented at Lac Ste-Anne was different from the one on their reserve. Most likely, all that mattered was that they could still embark on both a spiritual and geographical journey as a community, leave the reserve for a while and gain some respite from the oppressive atmosphere being developed as a result of the Indian Act (particularly the Permit and Pass systems), and the Treaties discussed in chapter three. They could thus engage in a traditional practice of travelling “from one end of the prairie to the other” for a kind of celebration, even if that celebration had drastically changed in name and rites. Further, Lizée would have had everything to lose, had he turned the Stony people back for being Protestant, Anglophone, and for not coming during the official pilgrimage week around the 26<sup>th</sup> of July. On the contrary, he accepted “their” pilgrimage as legitimate, praised them for their courage, gave them gifts of small crosses and his blessing, and in short, did everything he could to try to win them over to “the true religion.” This passage reveals again both the competition that was taking place between Protestant and Catholic missionaries for the souls of indigenous people, and the adoption and adaptation by the Aboriginal peoples of whatever rituals, rites, sacred objects, symbols and names in a time of crisis, to be able to continue and maintain, now in a manner well established by Iroquoian Métis, something of their own traditions and practices.

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<sup>185</sup> Father Zéphirin Lizée, *Personal Journal from Lac Ste-Anne, 1911- 1924*, 85-6.

## CONCLUSION

Just as the seasonal renewal and reinvigoration gatherings of indigenous peoples in the Northern forests and on the North Western Plains had undergone transformations throughout at least 1000 years, the annual meeting and the landscape at what are today called the Lac Ste-Anne Pilgrimage and Lac Ste-Anne, have been negotiated between Catholic missionaries and indigenous “pilgrims,” since 1844, when diocesan priest Jean-Baptiste Thibault established a mission on the banks of *Manitow Sâkahikan* or *Wakamne*. Until today the lake and its associated narratives continue to have “spiritual magnetism,” and the gathering maintains its fundamental purposes of healing, prayer, socializing, trade and the reassertion of identity and vitality.

The French and Québécois congregation of the Oblates of Marie Immaculate had inherited from Europe and eastern Canada, and notably from Ste-Anne d’Auray in Brittany and Ste-Anne de Beaupré along the St. Lawrence River, the powerful precedents to create their own “spiritual magnetism” around the lake and place in Alberta. These were the rituals based around the stories of the Holy Family of Saint Anne, her husband Joachim, their daughter the Holy Virgin Mary and her husband Joseph, and finally Mary’s son, Jesus Christ the Saviour. In this particular story, Saint Anne, the grandmother of Jesus, had the leading role. Symbolically represented by the presence of her statue and her relics, she, like hundreds of saints similarly revered across Europe, was reputed to bring much needed healing, solace and relief to such afflicted people as were the members of First Nations and Métis communities by the end of the nineteenth century. Surrounded by sick and dying family members and friends, their modes of subsistence changing with the dwindling of the buffalo, and their lives exasperated by government policies such as the Indian Act, Aboriginal people may have felt that only a “miracle” could resolve their problems.

However despite the Oblates’ “power” in such circumstances, they were faced with other Protestant missionaries, competing for access to potential indigenous converts. These competitors, such as the Reverend Andrew Baird who not three years before the first pilgrimage, came into direct conflict with Father Jean-Marie Lestanc over the opening of a school for the Enoch Cree band in Stoney Plain, also had their stories and approaches.

Representing the denomination of the ruling colonial power, Protestant missionaries had somewhat of an advantage in the Lac Ste-Anne region, which forced the Oblates to make cultural concessions to their own Aboriginal adherents.

However the Oblates in Lac Ste-Anne were fortunate for the involvement in their endeavours of a particular group of Métis descended from Iroquois and Anishinaabe (Ojibwa and Algonkin) beaver trappers who had made their home in the Jasper and Grande Cache region on the eastern slopes of the Rocky Mountains. These people, who had nonetheless maintained many of their “nomadic” hunter-trapper traditions and communicated almost exclusively in Cree, had already been practicing Catholics for at least one hundred years, and had yearly travelled through, stopped and camped at Lac Ste-Anne on their way to trade at Fort Edmonton. The Oblates relied on these people in order for their pilgrimage to succeed and to gain popular support: in order to establish the truth and legitimacy of Saint Anne’s healing power among local indigenous bands, the Oblates depended on the long standing knowledge these Iroquois and Anishinaabe Métis had, not only of local indigenous beliefs and ties to the land, but also of Catholic practices and beliefs, which were already part of their identity. It is likely thanks to these “people of the Mountains” from Entrance, Jasper and Grande Cache, that local Aboriginal bands, including members of the neighboring Nakoda Stoney who had intermarried to some degree with them, became Catholics, and/or at least started to attend the Catholic pilgrimage. Some, such as the “Protestant” Nakoda chief Paul Mustus, who had recently allowed the survivors of the Sharphead band to join his reserve, even participated in some of the devotional rites, such as kissing the relic of Saint Anne at the pilgrimage of 1892. Though the adoration of Saint Anne’s relic is no longer part of the ceremonies at the Lac Ste-Anne Pilgrimage today, venerated, including the sick, kissed the glass of the reliquary until at least 1956, and the rite continued to exist until 1977.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> “The most touching rite is the veneration of the Relic. In orderly fashion the Indians file to the Communion rail, many helping crippled, blind and ailing relatives, there to press their lips reverently to the glass covering the Relic.” See David Willock, “Prairie Pilgrimage of Faith: From hundreds of miles around Indians travel to Lac Ste. Anne in transportation which ranges from humble carts to Cadillacs,” in *The Edmonton Journal Weekend Magazine*, Vol. 6, No. 29, July 21, 1956, 4. “The procession ended at the main Shrine of St. Anne and the sick were given individual blessing with the sacrament followed by the veneration of the relics.” See “Pilgrimage: Spectators and vendors galore but religious mood still prevails” in *Saint John’s Edmonton Report*, August 1, 1977, 40.

Furthermore, the local indigenous peoples at “Lac Ste-Anne” had also long developed their own “spiritual magnetism” around the place. The lake was and remains today a traditional indigenous landmark and gathering place, arrived at via different important and well-known age-old Aboriginal pathways through the Boreal forests of the north and across the Northwestern plains of what is now Alberta and Saskatchewan. The diocesan priests Joseph Bourassa and Jean-Baptiste Thibault, and the Oblate fathers including Jean-Marie Lestanc all knew, when they respectively established a mission at Lac Ste-Anne in 1844 and again when they initiated the “pilgrimage” in 1889, that they were placing themselves and their rituals precisely at the conjunction of these pathways across the prairie and through the forests, and at a distinctive feature of the land -- *Manitow Sâkahikan* or *Wakamne* -- a lake to which the First Peoples had already attributed important spiritual power and significance. Early fur-traders and voyageurs in the region were even afraid of the lake, calling it “Lac du Diable,” or “Devil’s Lake.” The early Oblates of the North West would have been aware of the meaning of the place, as they had travelled and lived with the First Nations’ and Métis peoples in the area for over thirty years. Walking was the principal means of travel and survival for Aboriginal hunters and gatherers, whose repeated seasonal journeys across known landscapes became their principal mode of retaining memory and identity, and the history of their people. When the Catholic missionaries began referring to the journey to Lac Ste-Anne as a “pilgrimage,” this must have been seen as an alternative concept by the Aboriginal and Métis peoples, who in the difficult and repressive context of 1889, adopted the reformulated event as yet another version of their own Renewal or buffalo hunting ceremonies, and adapted it to fit their needs.

There are still many aspects of the Lac Ste-Anne Pilgrimage that could largely benefit from further study from an Aboriginal point of view. An oral history of the pilgrimage would reveal more potent aspects of the “spiritual magnetism” of the place from an indigenous perspective, as stories abound surrounding the area, and from different Amerindian cultures, regarding various portentous extraordinary and/or supernatural objects or creatures. These include a special meteorite which fell into the lake, other distinctive rocks, and similarly to “Ogopogo” in Lake Okanagan, British Columbia, or the

“Loch Ness Monster” in Scotland, a snake that inhabits Lac Ste-Anne, and passes through a tunnel between that lake and neighboring Lake Wabamun just to the south.<sup>2</sup> This snake is perhaps derived from the Cree *misikinipik*, (Ojibwa *missikinepik*), or “great snake” in older Aboriginal spirituality. It has similar frightening subterranean or underwater characteristics as the Cree “Michi-Pichoux” (*Misipisiw*), “Great Horned Lynx” or “Water Lynx,” and may be another explanation for the earlier name of “Devil’s Lake.”<sup>3</sup> Often tales about the appearance and power of these objects and/or creatures are “quasi-christianized,” to use Wendy Wickwire’s term, and have the ability to “make statements about the present and the future.”<sup>4</sup> A potential area of inquiry could be how, for indigenous people, these myths can take “a historic tragedy of monstrous proportions and [transform] it into an affirmation of their own moral values and of the destiny to survive as a people.”<sup>5</sup>

Further, there is little known in conventional academic circles about the origins of the two Stoney Nakoda bands, Paul and Alexis, who live on the shores of Wabamun Lake and Lac Ste-Anne respectively, and whose past has not been included in the earlier historiography of the Stoney peoples in Alberta. These bands, who have their own oral history about how the two groups came to be split, may have been influenced by opposing denominational priests, and seem to have been created by the arrival of two Nakoda brothers Pon and Aranazhi (Anikshi) with their families, who then mixed to a certain extent with the Iroquois Métis from the Michel Band, and the Plains Cree peoples who were close to the Sharphead Nakoda group.<sup>6</sup> As this area was a crossroads for several different

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<sup>2</sup> Mr. Louie Auger, *Interview at Ermineskin Band Waste Removal and Treatment Office*, February 4th, 2010. Mrs. Murleen Crossen, *Interview at Lac Ste-Anne Pilgrimage Rectory and Office*, February 5th, 2010. Doris Lirondelle, *Interview at Northland Mall, Calgary*, August 19th, 2010. Marlene Morin, *Interview at St. Albert*, February 5th, 2010. Mrs. Mary Rain, *Interview at Paul First Nation Band Administration Office*, March 11th, 2010. Mr. Arthur Rain, *Interview at Paul First Nation Band Administration Office*, March 11th, 2010.

<sup>3</sup> Brown and Brightman, eds., *“The Orders of the Dreamed”: George Nelson on Cree and Northern Ojibwa Religion and Myth, 1823*, 108-9. McMillan and Yellowhorn, *First Peoples in Canada*, 107-8. Mrs. Mary Rain, *Interview at Paul First Nation Band Administration Office*.

<sup>4</sup> Wendy Wickwire, *Living by Stories: A Journey of Landscape and Memory* (Vancouver: Talonbooks, 2005), 22-3.

<sup>5</sup> Wickwire, quoting Emilienne Ireland, *Ibid.*, 22.

<sup>6</sup> Meili, “Nancy Potts: Stoney, Alexis Reserve,” 16. Nakoda (Stoney) Elder Woman, Anonymous. *Interview at Paul First Nation Band Council Chamber, Mary Rain present*, March 11th, 2010. See also Sgwe Productions, “Alexis Nakoda Sioux – Education,” Presentation for the Nakoda Sioux in South Dakota Education conference, <http://www.facebook.com/video/video.php?v=108547635494> (accessed April 6,

peoples, further research based on oral histories, genealogy, and information gleaned from both the Oblate records and Department of Indian Affairs files, would reveal the complexity of indigenous cultural dispersal and formation in the Canadian northwest, as well as spiritual conversion.<sup>7</sup>

Considering the breadth and depth of the Oblate archives, there is still much further research to be done on the many facets of the Oblates' work in Alberta, including during the later years at the Lac Ste-Anne Pilgrimage.

There were political aspects to the pilgrimage, which need further research. The event was, after all, initiated four years after the Riel Rebellion of 1885, when government officials were trying to prevent and/or discourage large groups of indigenous people from gathering, and had tightened restrictions with respect to the use of passes on reserves. Oblate Father Valentin Végréville, the proud French nationalist who was fluent in Cree, who attended the early pilgrimages, and was stationed three times at the mission including between 1887 and 1889, had been imprisoned in Batoche in 1885, then subsequently released to serve at St Albert until his return to Lac Ste-Anne.<sup>8</sup> Further, as seen on Father Lizée' pilgrimage list of 1890, a man named Antoine Blandion appeared, who may have been the brother of Big Bear, the Cree chief held responsible for the problems at Frog Lake.<sup>9</sup> Was this the same man, and if it was, what was the nature of his attendance at the pilgrimage? Pilgrims and people working at the pilgrimage today, continue to refer in various subtle ways to the apocalyptic Prophet movements of the Dene peoples, and the

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2011), and linked to the LSAP website, "Lac St. Anne Pilgrimage: Gathered in Unity," <http://www.lsap.ca> (accessed March 18, 11).

<sup>7</sup> Mr. Arthur Rain, *Interview at Paul First Nation Band Administration Office*. Mrs. Mary Rain, *Interview at Paul First Nation Band Administration Office*. Nakoda (Stoney) Elder Woman, (anonymous), *Interview at Paul First Nation Band Council Chamber, Mary Rain Present*. Indian Claims Commission, *Paul First Nation: Kapasiwin Townsite Inquiry*(Ottawa, February 2007), 5. Dempsey, *Indian Tribes of Alberta*, 49-55. Ouellet, "Tales of Empowerment: Cultural Continuity within an Evolving Identity in the Upper Athabasca Valley," 53, 55.

<sup>8</sup> "Father Valentin Vegreville, O.M.I." Duhaime, ed., *Oblates at Rest: Life and Work Sketches of the Oblate Missionaries in the Saint-Albert Cemetery*, 120. Hudon, transl. "Father Valentin Végréville," *Book of Memory: Missionary Oblates of Grandin Province*, no page numbers.

<sup>9</sup> Devine, *The People Who Own Themselves: Aboriginal Ethnogenesis in a Canadian Family, 1660-1900*, 234, <http://site.ebrary.com/lib/ucalgary/Doc?id=10116357&ppg=243> (accessed July 17, 2012).

Ghost Dances from the United States.<sup>10</sup> An interesting study would consider the possibility that the pilgrimage for some, was very much a political, as well as spiritual event.

Further, though there has lately been considerable work done on Protestant Native catechists such as the Reverends Henry Budd, Henry Steinhauer, Charles Pratt, and Peter Jones, very little work, if any, has been done on Métis Oblates, *all* of which, with the exception of Father Patrick Mercredi who nonetheless was present at some of the pilgrimages, had been stationed at one point at Lac Ste-Anne.<sup>11</sup> Significantly, Father Edward Cunningham, the first Métis Oblate, was at Lac Ste-Anne to help his colleague Father Patrice Beaudry, the second Métis Oblate, during the flu epidemic years of 1918-1919, and the two, needless to say, were kept very busy attending to their many sick (and mostly Aboriginal) parishioners.<sup>12</sup>

Oblate fathers Zéphirin Lizée, Valentin Végréville and Jean-Marie Lestanc, who were all at the early pilgrimages, kept massive personal journals, and/or corresponded profusely in letters. The same can be said for fathers Albert Lacombe, who completed his noviciate at Lac Ste-Anne, and Léon Doucet, who was one of the initial itinerant Oblates in the West, operated more in southern Alberta, and who was mentioned by Father Vital Fourmond in the first Lac Ste-Anne Mission *Codex* of 1870-72. Much can be gleaned from these documents, if only to learn about the life stories and personalities of these men.

Finally however, looking at the origins of the Lac Ste-Anne pilgrimage has also opened up another fascinating area of inquiry, that of the importance of walking, both for Aboriginal people even today, but also for historical psycho-social aspects of human health and well-being in general.<sup>13</sup> Walking for indigenous people was principally tied to the hunt, and thus essential for survival of peoples largely dependent on trap lines, wild game and

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<sup>10</sup> Mr. Louie Auger, *Interview at Ermineskin Band Waste Removal and Treatment Office*. Buresi, *Personal Observation at Lac Ste-Anne Pilgrimages*, Lac Ste-Anne, Alberta, July 2009 and 2010.

<sup>11</sup> Drouin, *Lac Ste-Anne Sakahigan*, 81-2. Fitzpatrick, "20 000 Indians Flock to Shrine in Lac Ste. Ann Pilgrimage."

<sup>12</sup> *Lac Ste-Anne Codex Historicus 1900-1964* Accession 71.220, Box 99, File 4215.

<sup>13</sup> This link was first pointed out to me by Father Jean-Paul Vantroys, O.M.I., who had spent many years in Northern Alberta ministering to the Woodland Cree, accompanying them on their trap lines. He had worked for a time with Father Rogier Vandersteene, O.M.I., who devoted his life to the people around Wabasca, Alberta, and who attempted to truly develop a Cree Church. Father Jean-Paul Vantroys O.M.I., *Interview at Foyer Lacombe*, St. Albert, Alberta, February 3rd, 2010.



the buffalo. Researchers studying indigenous concepts of geography have also made the link between travelling (if not walking) and hunting.<sup>14</sup> Thus, the fundamental “walking,” “journeying,” and “travelling” aspects of a pilgrimage, are perhaps what allowed the Oblates and the indigenous people to find common ground, to meet up, and to pray together. The concept of a wandering journey, both spiritual and material (or geographical), is perhaps the most significant notion which both Oblate missionaries and north western plains and woodland First Nations people could share and tailor to their own uses. At the end of the nineteenth century, indigenous people in the Canadian North West were still principally nomadic hunters and gatherers, travelling very long distances by foot and on horseback, sometimes with Red River wagons, across the prairie and through the woodlands in search of buffalo and wild game. The Métis too, though of mixed heritage, were still embarking on buffalo hunts, living off hunting and trapping, and only beginning to settle into farming. These peoples’ relationship to the land, their perception of geography, their stories and beliefs, their culture and their spirituality, were necessarily tied to these seasonal walks across their territory. The Oblate missionaries, who initially were mostly “foreigners,” had inherited from Medieval and Counter-Reformation Europe a long pilgrimage tradition that included wandering Irish hermits, ascetic and monastic journeying among the pagan and the poor, and the concept of life on earth itself as a spiritual journey towards heaven. Initially too, they were *peregrinus* or wanderers. Working primarily as itinerant priests, they lived and travelled with First Nations bands and Métis groups, attempting either to convert them to Catholicism or to make sure that they were not led “astray.” Saint Anne, whose fertility and healing powers perhaps resembled the features of indigenous female figures such as “Old Woman under the Ground” or the earth spirit, was likely a palatable and compelling figure to Aboriginal converts.

Thus, investigating the origins of the Lac Ste-Anne Pilgrimage reveals the complexity of conversion: at Lac Ste-Anne, Catholic pilgrimage traditions blended with the practices and ideas of the indigenous people of the North-American west, people for whom walking and wandering had already been infused with spiritual and vital significance. The

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<sup>14</sup> Béatrice Collignon, *Knowing Places: The Inuinait, Landscapes and the Environment* (Edmonton: Canadian Circumpolar Institute Press, 2006), 64.

“Catholic Métis” or “Catholic Indians,” such as the Iroquois Métis Gladus and Belcourts who still had trap lines and spoke Cree, and the “Elder Papameweu” who camped near the mission and helped Father Lizée practice his Cree, did not all and readily give up their culture. Further, not all who attended the pilgrimage and even participated in the rites – Nakoda chief Paul Mustus (Apetchis) and his band, the Protestant Nakoda from Morley, Peter Gunn’s children, and perhaps even the very Protestant associated Danish-Cree Métis Peter Erasmus – were necessarily converted Catholics. The early Oblates claimed that their Saint Anne chose the place to bring her blessings to new Christians, and that they initiated the event with Father Jean-Marie Lestanc’s experience in Brittany. Yet, clearly such claims are complicated by longer histories of Catholic knowledge and practice in the west, and the seamless ways that Christianity and Aboriginal spiritual practices could be adapted, blended and recreated at a lake dedicated to a powerful and compelling female figure and grandmother, and to which many pilgrims continue to walk. Lac Ste-Anne finally, is simultaneously an age-old “nomadic” resting and gathering place, and a place of Christian retreat and prayer, both of which share the common power for renewal, rejuvenation and healing.

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**Appendix A**

**EXCERPT from Lac Ste-Anne Pilgrimage *Codex Historicus*, June 6, 1889: List of Pilgrims at First Pilgrimage Compiled by Father Zéphirin Lizée, O.M.I.** Translated from French, 2 pages, pp. 1-2 in *Codex*.

The night before the 5 June Wednesday

At 11 ½ h. yesterday the 5, the pilgrims started to arrive. First three wagons from the Mission in which were the Rvds. Fathers Lestanc and Bourguine. The R. F. Blanchet had arrived from yesterday. Then the brothers: Lalican, Péréard, Boisgontier, Brochard, Landry, Leriche and Callac. Sr. Mongrain, Hélène Morin, Marie Leblanc, Emilie Rousse, Michel Normand, Jean-Marie Lestanc, Isidore Gladu, Gaspard Beauchamp, Vital Leblanc, Arthur Blandion; the sisters' man M. Boyle (Adam).

(21)

Henry Leblanc	Justine Beauregard
Louis Chatelain	Marie Plante
Olivier Bellerose	Mme. Majeau
Mme. O. Bellerose	Jhon O'Donell
Mme. W. Cust	Mme. J. O'Donell
Mme. Beauregard	Pierre Bellerose
Julien Beauregard	Mme. Veuve [Widow] Cunningham

June 6 First Pilgr....

Marie Poteau	Octave Majeau
Mme. Alex. Savard	Jhony Maréchal
James Cunningham	Mme. James Cunningham
Adélaïde Gouin	Napoleon Gouin
Magloire L'hyrondelle	Janvier L'hyrondelle
Melina Majeau	Martin Loyer
Daniel Loyer	Le Vieux Papamawew [ <i>The Elder Papamawew</i> ]
Theodore Savard	Patrice Blandion
Grégoire L'hyrondelle	Angélique Calliot
Olive L'hyrondelle	Sophie Cunningham
Mary Hudson	Elise Delorme
Angèle Bourassa	Scolastique Delorme
Marguerite Bruno	Cyrile Boucher
Thimothée Calliot	Marie Courtepatte
Jhonny Larocque	Joseph Calliot
Ursule L'hyrondelle	Marie Bellerose
Norbert Beauregard	Helene Bellerose
Ferdinand Colenjard	(71 pilgrims)
Josepte Courtepatte	

Appendix B

**EXCERPT from Lac Ste-Anne Pilgrimage *Codex Historicus*, July 26-28, 1890: List of Pilgrims at Third Pilgrimage Compiled by Father Zéphirin Lizée, O.M.I.** Translated from French, four pages, pp. 10-12 in *Codex* but should be 10-13 as one page was not numbered.

July 27

Here now is the list, more or less complete of the pilgrims who came this year to implore the help of the Good Saint Anne.

A.A. Ringuette	*R. P. Lestanc
M. de Ringuette	" " Vegreville (sic)
Xavier Paquette	" " Blanchet
Jhony Chalifoux	" " Gabillon
Joseph Latulippe	" " Beillevaire
Amandine Latulippe	Florestine Cunningham
Ada Latulippe	Jhony Cunningham
Evéline Duplesis	Patrick "
Baptiste Pepin	Florestine Cunningham
M. de B. Pepin	Mary "
Angus Morison	M. de George Gagnon
M. de Morison	Laurent Gagnon
Albert Cunningham	Mathilda "
M. de Alb. Cunningham	James Cunningham
Aimé Renaud	Madame "
Charly Whelan	Hermine "
Rosalie Whelan	Napoléon "
Baptiste Courtepatte	Cyrile Boucher
M. de Courtepatte	Jhony l'Hyronnelle
Nancy Courtepatte	Louise Boucher
M. de Dieudonne Court...	Gérémie Auger
Jhony Courtepatte	Thomas Auger
Clara Courtepatte	Emilie Munreau
Edouard Courtepatte	Bethsy Gouin
Samuel Cunningham	Philomène Munreau
M. de Rosalie Cunnigham (sic)	Adélaïde Gouin
Edouard Cunnigham (sic)	Peter Hudson

July 27

Francis Monnereau  
 Marie-Louise L'Hirondelle  
 Marguerite Dumont  
 Charles Paradis  
 M. de Paradis  
 M. de David Chevigny  
 Augustin Gladu  
 Marie-Isabelle Gladu  
 Maggie Gibban  
 Mary Gibban  
 Louisa "  
 Geremie Gladu  
 Mary "  
 Gérome "  
 Isabelle "  
 Maggie "  
 Elzeard Loyer  
 Cyprien "  
 Abraham Nault  
 Philomène Besson  
 Adélaïde Nault  
 Jhon "  
 Marie-Rose "  
 Maria "  
 Rosalie Besson  
 Emilien Ward  
 Laurent "  
 Pascal Savard  
 Rosalie Petit  
 Thêrèse Besson  
 David Savard  
 Justine Calliou  
 Flora Savard  
 Samuel "

Ursule Savard  
 Narcisse Belrose  
 Anne Laderoute  
 M. de Michel Calliou  
 Victor Laurent  
 Catherine Bruneau  
 Lucie L'Hyrondel  
 Marie Plante  
 Olive Belrose  
 Julien Savard  
 George Garner  
 Bte. Calliou  
 Angélique Bruneau  
 Madelaine Calliou  
 Noël Delorme  
 M.de Noël Delorme  
 Pascal Marechal  
 M. de Marechal  
 Marie-Louise Delorme  
 Sophie Brazeau  
 Edouard Durocher  
 Catherine Parent  
 Madelaine Durocher  
 Xavier Paquette  
 James Paquette  
 Louis Chatelin  
 M. de Chatelin  
 Dolphus Rolland  
 M. de Rolland  
 James "  
 Mathilde "  
 Clara "  
 Joseph Chalifoux  
 Julie Campion

July 27

Edouard Chalifoux

Paul "

Emilie "

Rose "

Eugène "

Julien "

Janne "

M. de Louis Beaupré

Augustin "

Marguerite "

Nancy Champion

Genevieve "

Thérèse Besson

Felix Dumont

Justine Nault

Alexis Dumont

Laurent "

Victor "

Ursule Larocque

Louis Loyer

Angèle Calliou

Samuel Loyer

Marie-Rose Cardinal

Dolphus Majeau

M. de Majeau

Melina

Vital Majeau

Edmont Brousseau (fils) [son]

Josephine Laderoute

Henery Laderoute (sic)

Augustin Berard

Jeannette Delorme

Pierre Delorme

Francis Berard

Jn. Bte. Berard

Anne-Marie Berard

Vital Delorme

Angèle Delorme

Joseph Letendre

Scolastique Delorme

Sophie Bruneau

Armillia Bruneau

Julien "

Angèle Bourassa

Elzéard Chalifoux

Elyza "

Louis Land

Maria "

Emerance Savard

Alexandre Delorme

Peter Aubert

M. de Gardener

1 child "

1 child "

Josepte Klynne

Marie Calliou

Elizabeth Plante

1 child "

1 child "

Jhonny Gray

Ursule Beauregard

James O'Donnel

Elizabeth "

Le Vieux Papamaweu [*The Elder (man)...*]La vieille " [*The Elder (woman)...*]Josephine (their little girl) [*granddaughter*]

William Champion

Jn. Bte. L'hyrondelle

July 27

Catherine Loyer  
 Elise Beaudry  
 Xavier L'hyrondelle  
 James L'hyrondelle  
 Emilie "  
 Justine Calliou  
 Marie-Janne Donald  
 Hélène Belrose  
 Marguerite Gaucher  
 Catherine Blandion  
 Nancy Blandion  
 Justine "  
 Pierre "  
 Zéphyrin Auger  
 Luc Dumont  
 Lalouise Boucher  
 Pierre Valade  
 Anne Gray  
 Nancy Cunningham (sic)  
 Samuel Laderoute  
 Ernestine "  
 Adélaïde Dumont  
 Marie Laderoute  
 M de Gibban  
 Josepte Gladu  
 Joseph Laderoute  
 241 pilgrims

George Chalifoux  
 Antoine Blandion  
 Elzeard Chalifoux  
 Marie Savard  
 Marie-Louise Delorme  
 Elyza Belrose  
 Norbert Belrose  
 M de. Octave Belrose  
 Josepte Belcourt  
 Julienne Laurence  
 Victor Loyer  
 Aimé Arnaud  
 Jhon L'hyrondelle  
 Francis Boudreau  
 Marguerite Courtepatte  
~~Adélaïde Guin~~  
 Edouard Cunningham (sic)  
 Justine Berland  
 Emilienne Berland  
 Josephine Laderoute  
 Frank "  
 Cécile Calliou  
 Jim Laderoute  
 Mary Gladu  
 James Cunningham (sic)

### Appendix C

#### **Chart of Pilgrims' Names and Calculations of Proportion of Iroquois/Anishinaabe related Names on Father Zéphirin Lizée's Lists of Pilgrims (See Appendices A and B) from the Lac Ste-Anne Codex Historicus of 1889 and 1890 (First and Third Pilgrimages to Lac Ste-Anne), according to Studies by Trudy Nicks and Elizabeth Macpherson.**

Family names are listed in the first column of the chart in order of appearance first for the pilgrimage of 1889, followed by that of 1890.

#### Legend

- 1) One star\* next to the family name and the grand total in the chart means the family name only appeared on the first pilgrimage list, whereas two stars \*\* means the family name only appeared on the second list. No stars next to the family name and grand total means that name appeared on both lists.
- 2) When there were two or more different spellings of a particular family name, the full name of the individual was included in the list of persons for each year of the pilgrimage.
- 3) Numbers followed by a parenthesis in the **Family Name** column, whether for 1889 or 1890, indicate the number of **NEW** family names up to that point that year. (For 1889, this will be the same as the number of total names, ie. 26) Numbers followed by a parenthesis in the **Total Number of Individuals** column for 1890 simply indicate the total number of family names up to that point for that year. In this way, we can determine that 22 names appear both years, 4 names from 1889 do not appear in 1890 and 48 new names appear in 1890.
- 4) Regularly underlined first names are assumed to be of the same individual who likely came to both pilgrimages. If an individual returned to the pilgrimage of 1890, their family name was counted twice for the grand total, thus noting the **incidence of people with a certain family name** at both pilgrimages and **not the number of actual physical individuals with that name**. For example, Angèle Bourassa came alone to the pilgrimage in 1889 and returned in 1890. Although she is just one person, her name was counted as appearing twice. In this way, the fact that members of a family, whether allegedly Iroquois/Anishinaabe Métis or not, returned to the pilgrimage, was factored into the calculation. Thus, the **Grand Total** for both years in the last column of the chart below shows the number of incidences of a **family name** at both pilgrimages, and does NOT refer to the total number of individuals with that name both years.
- 5) *Italicized first names* indicates names that appear at least two times at the *same pilgrimage the same year*, but are not the same individual. This is simply for clarity.
- 6) **Highlighted** family names and grand totals are **numbers of 10 or higher** (and thus an **important family presence** at the pilgrimages)
- 8) Family names boldly underlined once and/or accompanied by Nicks are associated to the Iroquois/Anishinaabe Métis according to Trudy Nicks.
- 9) Family names underlined twice and/or accompanied by Mcpher are associated to the Iroquois/Anishinaabe Métis according to Elizabeth Mcpherson.

Family Name	First pilgrimage 1889 (Individual first names, unless of wife which is almost invariably not provided and simply listed as "Mme" or "M. de").	Third pilgrimage 1890 (Same as for first pilgrimage).	Total Number of Individuals with that family name 1889	Total Number of Individuals with that family name 1890	Grand Total of Incidence of a Family Name (For both pilgrimage)
1889 List					
1) Leblanc*	Henri		1		1*
2) <u>Chatelain</u> , <u>Chatelin</u>	<u>Louis Chatelain</u>	<u>Louis Chatelain</u> +Mme,	1	1) <u>2</u>	<u>3</u>
3) <u>Bellerose</u> , <u>Belrose</u>  <u>Mcpher</u>	Olivier Bellerose+Mme, Pierre, Marie Bellerose, <u>Helene Bellerose</u>	Narcisse Belrose, Olive Belrose, <u>Hélène Belrose</u> , Elyza Belrose, Norbert Belrose, Mme Octave Belrose,	5	2) <u>6</u>	<u>11</u>  <u>Mcpher</u>
4) Cust*	Mme W.		1		1*
5) <u>Beauregard</u>	Mme, Julien, Justine, Norbert,	Ursule,	4	3) <u>1</u>	<u>5</u>
6) <u>Plante</u>	<u>Marie</u> ,	<u>Marie</u> , Elizabeth+2 enfants,	1	4) <u>4</u>	<u>5</u>
7) Mageau	<u>Mme, Melina</u> , Octave,	Dolphus+ <u>Mme, Melina</u> , Vital,	3	5) <u>4</u>	7
8) O'Donell, O'Donnel	John+Mme O'Donell,	James O'Donnel, Elizabeth O'Donnel,	2	6) <u>2</u>	4
9) <u>Cunningham</u>	Mme Veuve, <u>James</u> , <u>Mme James</u> , Sophie,	Albert+Mme, Samuel, M. de Rosalie, <u>Edouard</u> , <u>Florentine</u> , Jhony, Patrick, <u>Florentine</u> , Mary, <u>James+Mme</u> , Hermine, Napoléon, Nancy, <u>Edouard</u> , <u>James</u>	4	7) <u>17</u>	<u>21</u>
10) Poteau*	Marie		1		1*
11) <u>Savard</u>  <u>Mcpher</u>	Mme Alex, Theodore,	Pascal, David, Flora, Samuel, Ursule, Julien, Emerance, Marie,	2	8) <u>8</u>	<u>10</u>  <u>Mcpher</u>
12) Gouin	<u>Adélaide</u> , Napoleon,	Betsy, <u>Adélaide</u> , (Adélaide written twice this year but crossed out by Lizée)	2	9) <u>2</u>	4
13) <u>L'hyrondelle</u> , <u>e. l'Hyrondele</u> , <u>L'Hirondelle</u>	Magloire L'hyrondelle, Grégoire	Jhony l'Hyrondele, Marie-Louise L'Hirondelle, Lucie	5	10) <u>8</u>	<u>13</u>  <u>Nicks</u>



<u>Nicks</u>	L'hyrondelle, Olive L'hyrondelle, Ursule L'hyrondelle, Janvier L'hyrondelle,	L'Hyrondel, Jn-Bte L'hyrondelle, Xavier L'hyrondelle, James L'hyrondelle, Emilie L'hyrondelle, Jhon L'hyrondelle,			
14) <u>Lover</u>	Daniel, Martin,	Elzeard,Cyprien, Louis, Samuel, Catherine, Victor,	2	11) <u>6</u>	<u>8</u>
15)Hudson	Mary	Peter,	1	12)1	2
16)Bourassa	<u>Angèle</u>	<u>Angèle</u>	1	13)1	2
17) <u>Bruno</u> , <u>Bruneau</u>	Marguerite Bruno,	Catherine Bruneau, Angelique Bruneau, Sophie Bruneau, Armillia Bruneau, Julien Bruneau	1	14) <u>5</u>	<u>6</u>
18) <u>Calliot</u> , <u>Calliou</u>  <u>Nicks</u>	Thimothée Calliot, Angélique Calliot, Joseph Calliot,	<i>Justine Calliou</i> , Mme Michel Calliou, Bte Calliou,Madelaine Calliou, Angèle Calliou, Marie Calliou, <i>Justine Calliou</i> , Cécile Calliou,	3	15) <u>8</u>	<u>11</u>  <u>Nicks</u>
19)Laroque	Jhony,	Ursule,	1	16)1	2
20)Colanjard*	Ferdinand		1		1*
21) <u>Courte-patte</u>	Josepte, Marie,	Baptiste+Mme, Nancy, Mme Dieudonné, Jhony, Clara, Edouard, Marguerite,	2	17)8	<u>10</u>
22)Maréchal	Jhony,	Pascal+Mme,	1	18)2	3
23)Papa- mewew	<u>Le Vieux</u> ,	<u>Le Vieux</u> , La Vielle, Josephine (grd daughter),	1	19)3	4
24)Blandion	Patrice,	Catherine, Nancy, Justine, Pierre, Antoine,	1	20)5	6
25) <u>Delorme</u>  <u>Nicks</u>	Elise, <u>Scolastique</u> ,	Noël+Mme, <i>Marie- Louise</i> , Jeannette, Pierre, Vital, Angèle, <u>Scolastique</u> , Alexandre, <i>Marie- Louise</i> ,	2	21) <u>10</u>	<u>12</u>  <u>Nicks</u>
26)Boucher	<u>Cyrile</u> ,	<u>Cyrile</u> , Louise, Lalouise,	1	22)3	4

<b>1890 List</b>					
1)Ringuette**		A.A.+Mme,		23)2	2**
2)Paquette**		<i>Xavier, Xavier, James,</i>		24)3	3**
3) <b>Chalifoux</b> **		Jhony, Joseph, Edouard, Paul, Emilie, Rose, Eugène, Julien, Janne, <i>Elzéard, Elyza, George,</i> <i>Elzeard</i>		25) <b>13</b>	<b>13**</b>
<u>Nicks</u>					<u>Nicks</u>
4)Latulippe**		Joseph, Amandine, Ada,		26)3	3**
5)Duplessis**		Évéline,		27)1	1**
6)Pepin**		Baptiste+Mme,		28)2	2**
7)Morison**		Angus+Mme,		29)2	2**
8)Renaud**		Aimé,		30)1	1**
9)Whelan**		Charly, Rosalie,		31)2	2**
10)Gagnon**		Mme George, Laurent, Mathilda,		32)3	3**
11)Auger**		Gérmie, Thomas, Zéphyrin,		33)3	3**
12)Munreau, Monnereau**		Emilie Munreau, Philomène Munreau, Francis Monnereau,		34)3	3**
13)Dumont**		Marguerite, Felix, Alexis, Laurent, Victor, Luc, Adélaide,		35)7	7**
14)Paradis**		Charles+Mme,		36)2	2**
15)Chevigny**		Mme David,		37)1	1**
16) <b>Gladu</b> **	Isidore Gladu helper (not counted in calculations)	Augustin, Marie- Isabelle, Geremie, <i>Mary, Gérome, Isabelle,</i> <i>Maggie, Josepte, Mary</i>	1	38) <b>9</b>	<b>9**</b>
<u>Nicks</u>					<u>Nicks</u>
17)Gibban**		Maggie, Mary, Louisa, Mme,		39)4	4**
18)Nault**		Abraham, Adélaide, Jhon, Marie-Rose, Maria, Justine,		40)6	6**
19)Besson**		Philomène, Rosalie, <i>Thérèse, Thérèse,</i>		41)4	4**
20)Ward**		Emilien, Laurent,		42)2	2**
21)Petit**		Rosalie		43)1	1**

22) <b>Laderoute</b> **		Anne, <i>Josephine,</i> Henery (sic), Samuel, Ernestine, Marie, Joseph, <i>Josephine,</i> Frank, Jim,		44) <b>10</b>	<b>10**</b>
<u>Mcpher</u>					<u>Mcpher</u>
23)Laurent**		Victor,		45)1	1**
24)Garner**		George,		46)1	1**
25)Brazeau**		Sophie		47)1	1**
26)Durocher**		Edouard, Madelaine		48)2	2**
27)Parent		Catherine		49)1	1**
28)Rolland**		Dolphus+Mme, James, Mathilde,		50)5	5**

		Clara			
29)Campion**		Julie, Nancy,Genevieve, William,		51)4	4**
30)Beaupré**		Mme Louis,Augustin, Marguerite,		52)3	3**
31) <u>Cardinal</u> **		Marie-Rose,		53) <u>1</u>	<u>1</u> **
32)Brousseau**		Edmont (fils),		54)1	1**
33) <u>Berard</u> **		Augustin, Francis, Jean-Bte. Anne- Marie,		55) <u>4</u>	<u>4</u> **
34) <u>Letendre</u> **		Joseph		56) <u>1</u>	<u>1</u> **
35)Land**		Louis, Maria		57)2	2**
36)Aubert**		Peter,		58)1	1**
37)Gardener**		Mme+2 enfants,		59)3	3**
38)Klyne**		Josepte		60)1	1**
39) <u>Gray</u> **		Jhonny, Anne,		61) <u>2</u>	<u>2</u> **
40)Beaudry**		Elise,		62)1	1**
41)Donald**		Marie-Janne,		63)1	1**
42) <u>Gaucher</u> **		Marguerite,		64) <u>1</u>	<u>1</u> **
43) <u>Valade</u> **		Pierre,		65) <u>1</u>	<u>1</u> **
44) <u>Belcourt</u> **		Josepte,		66) <u>1</u>	<u>1</u> **
45)Laurence**		Julienne,		67)1	1**
46)Arnaud**		Aimé		68)1	1**
47) <u>Boudreau</u> **		Francis		69) <u>1</u>	<u>1</u> **
48) <u>Berland</u> **		Justine, Emilienne,		70) <u>2</u>	<u>2</u> **
Total # of individuals 1889			50	-----	
Total # of individuals 1890			-----	235	
Total incidence of Iroquois/Anishinaabe associated names according to Nicks' study only.			18	73	91
Total incidence of Iroquois/Anishinaabe associated names according to both Nicks' and McPherson's studies.			26	104	130

## Clerics, Brothers, Sisters and Mission Helpers

<u>1889</u>	<u>Clerics</u>	<u>Brothers</u>	<u>Sisters</u>	<u>Helpers</u>	<u>Total</u>
	Père Lestanc Père Bourguine Père Blanchet	Lalican Péréard Boisgontier Brochard Landry Leriche Callac	Mongrain	-Hélène Morin -Marie Leblanc -Emilie Rousse -Michel Normand -Jean-Marie Lestanc (orphan) -Isidore Gladu -Gaspard Beauchamp -Vital Leblanc (orphan?) -Arthur Blandion -L'homme des sœur (sic) M. Boyle (Adam)	
<u>Total</u>	3	7	1	10	21
<u>1890</u>	Pères Lestanc, Vegreville, Blanchet, Gabillon et Beillevaire <i>[Lizée and Baptiste Surpenant do not appear and no helpers identified from St. Albert Mission.]</i>				
<u>Total</u>	5				5

**PEOPLE (clerics and mission helpers excluded)**

	1889		1890		Total both years	
Total	50		235		285	
Likely Iroquois/Anishinaabe descended	Nicks only	Nicks +McPherson	Nicks only	Nicks +McPherson	Nicks only	Nicks +McPherson
	18	26	73	104	91	130
Percentage likely Iroquois/Anishinaabe descended	36%	52%	31%	44%	32%	46%

**PEOPLE (clerics and mission helpers excluded)****Total 1889: 50****Total 1890: 235**

**Total both years: 285** (Again, this number does not reflect the number of individuals, as those who returned were counted twice. The total number of people on these lists for both years is actually 273, as 12 people returned in 1890. Thus:  $285 - 12 = 273$ . Or alternately:  $235 - 12 = 223$ , thus 223 new people came in 1890.  $223$  new people from 1890 + 50 from 1889 = 273)

**Total likely descended Iroquois/Anishinaabe (hereafter just Iroquois) Nicks 1889: 18/50****Total Iroquois including McPherson 1889: 26/50****Total Iroquois Nicks 1890: 73/235****Total Iroquois including McPherson 1890: 104/235****Total Iroquois both years Nicks: 91/285**

**Total Iroquois both years including McPherson: 130/285** (Again, the Total Iroquois for both years does not refer to the physical number of individuals, as explained above)

**Percentage Iroquois Nicks 1889: 18/50, 36%****Percentage Iroquois including McPherson 1889: 26/50, 52%****Percentage Iroquois Nicks 1890: 73/235, 31%****Percentage Iroquois including McPherson 1890: 104/235, 44%****Percentage Iroquois both years Nicks: 91/285, 32%****Percentage Iroquois both years including McPherson: 130/285, 46%**

**NAMES (clerics and mission helpers excluded)**

	1889		1890		Total both years	
Total	26		70		74	
Likely Iroquois/Anishinaabe associated	Nicks only	Nicks +McPherson	Nicks only	Nicks +McPherson	Nicks only	Nicks +McPherson
	7	10	16	22	16	22
Likely Percentage Iroquois/Anishinaabe associated	27%	39%	23%	31%	22%	30%

**NAMES (clerics and mission helpers excluded)****Total 1889: 26**Names of families from 1889 that **did not return in 1890: 4**Names of families from 1889 that **returned in 1890: 22****Total 1890** including 22 names that had also appeared in 1889: **70****Total new names 1890: 48** ( $70 - 22 = 48$ )**Total both years**, including names of families who did not come both years: **74** ( $26 + 48 = 74$ )**Total likely Iroquois/Anishinaabe associated** (hereafter just **Iroquois**) Nicks **1889: 7/26****Total Iroquois** including McPherson **1889: 10/26****Total Iroquois** Nicks **1890: 16/70** (All 7 Iroquois names from 1889 were also represented in 1890, so 9 more Iroquois names appeared in 1890 to make 16 total)**Total Iroquois** including McPherson **1890: 22/70** (All 10 Iroquois names from 1889 were also represented in 1890, so 12 more Iroquois names appeared in 1890 to make 22 total)**Total Iroquois** Nicks **both years: 16/74** (Total Iroquois name for both years is necessarily the same as in 1890, as all those from 1889 returned in 1890)**Total Iroquois both years** including McPherson: **22/74****Percentage Iroquois** Nicks **1889: 7/26, 27%****Percentage Iroquois** including McPherson **1889: 10/26, 39%****Percentage Iroquois** Nicks **1890: 16/70, 23%****Percentage Iroquois** including McPherson **1890: 22/70, 31%****Percentage Iroquois both years** Nicks: **16/74, 22%****Percentage Iroquois both years** including McPherson: **22/74, 30%**

### Appendix D

**EXCERPT from Lac Ste-Anne Pilgrimage *Codex Historicus*, Sunday July 26<sup>th</sup>, 1891: **List of the Sick Brought into the Church at the “First Healing Pilgrimage” of 1891 Compiled by Father Zéphirin Lizée, O.M.I.** One page, p. 15 in *Codex*.**

Tous les malades de la place et quelques uns venus avec les pèlerins assistent à cette messe et y communient pour la plupart. Quelques uns, étant trop malades, sont couchés ou presque couchés dans l'église. Voici a (sic) peu près tous leurs noms :

- 8) La femme de Magloire Belcourt, malade depuis 6 mois, absolument incapable (sic) de marcher.
- 9) Victoire Calliot, malade depuis plus de 19 mois.
- 10) Jn Bte Nipising, malade depuis près de trois ans, incapable de marcher.
- 11) Le fils du précédent, épileptique.
- 12) Nancy Hamelin, femme de Narcisse Kootonahay, presque mourante
- 13) Un jeune homme de Pierre Gray de la Montagne
- 14) Et plusieurs autres malades.